

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) are disability income benefits administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA) that also provide Medicaid and/or Medicare health insurance to eligible individuals. The application process for SSI/SSDI is complicated and difficult to navigate. Nationally, about **28 percent** of individuals who apply for these benefits are approved on initial application and appeals take an average of **1 year** to complete.

## The Issue

For people who are homeless or who are returning to the community from institutions (jails, prisons, or hospitals), access to these programs can be extremely challenging. Approval on initial application for people who are homeless and who have no one to assist them is about **10-15 percent**. For those who have a mental illness, substance use issues, or co-occurring disorders that impair cognition, the application process is even more difficult – yet accessing these benefits is often a critical first step in recovery.

## A Solution

**SOAR-trained case managers submit complete and quality applications that are approved quickly. The SOAR TA Center provides a three-step approach to SOAR implementation:**

### Strategic Planning

Strategic planning meetings bring key **state/local stakeholders** (e.g., SSA and Disability Determination Services (DDS); State Mental Health Agency and Department of Corrections leadership; and community homeless, health, and behavioral health providers) together to **collaborate and agree** upon a SOAR process for the submission and processing of SSI/SSDI applications and **develop** an action plan to implement their SOAR program.



Since 2006, over **31,356** initial SOAR SSI/SSDI applications have been approved.

### Training Leaders

Training of case managers using **SAMHSA's Stepping Stones to Recovery** curriculum. Available in-person or online, this training includes a step-by-step explanation of an improved SSI/SSDI application process. A **Leadership Academy** program creates strong local leaders to support SOAR-trained case managers and coordinate local SOAR programs.



The 2016 allowance or approval rate on initial SOAR applications averages **67 percent** in an average of **101 days** (from date of application submission to date of decision).

### Technical Assistance

Individualized technical assistance for supporting **action plan implementation**, identifying funding opportunities for **sustainability**, developing **quality review** procedures, and assisting with **tracking outcomes** to document success and identify areas for improvement and expansion.



In 2016 alone, SSI/SSDI brought at least **\$317,641,152** into the state and local economies of the participating states and localities.

## Outcomes