

# SOAR WORKS

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IN WESTERN NEW YORK

# What is SOAR?

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- SOAR stands for SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery
- For people who are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness
- Sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in collaboration with SSA since 2005
- All 50 states currently participate; no direct funding provided to states

# The SOAR process:

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# SOAR has results: Changing Lives Since 2005

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- 22,863 persons experiencing or at risk for homelessness have been approved on initial application
- 65% approval rate overall, in an average of 94 days in 2014
- Compares to 10-15 percent for unassisted applications from people who are homeless and 29 percent for all applicants
- Appeals can take a year or more; many people give up and do not appeal

# Who is SOAR for? The SOAR Applicant

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## Who can be helped by SOAR?

- Adults who are experiencing or at risk for homelessness
- *And* who have mental illness, co-occurring disorders or other physical disabilities

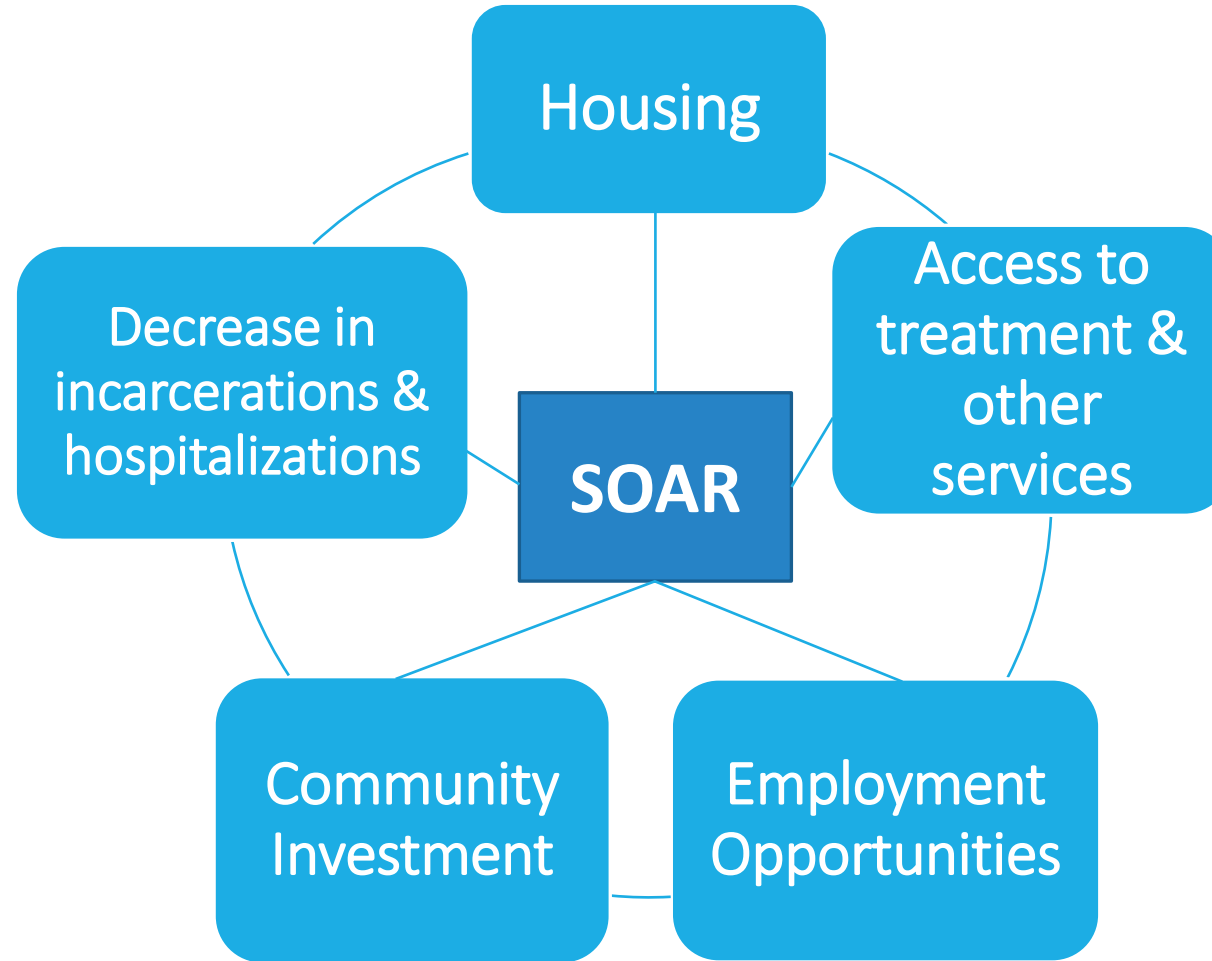
## Who is considered “homeless”?

- Moving from place to place throughout the month
- Living “doubled-up”
- Living in uninhabitable housing, outside or in shelters

## Who is considered “at-risk for homelessness”?

- Living in unstable or non-permanent housing
- Exiting jails or prisons with no stable place to live
- Permanent housing for those recently experiencing homelessness with limited income or relying on grant funding to sustain housing
- Youth transitioning out of foster care

# SOAR Has Broader Goals



# Who is involved: SOAR Partners



SSA

- Social Security Administration
- Federal agency that administers SSI/SSDI
- Makes the non-medical decision



DDS

- Disability Determination Services
- State agency under contract to SSA
- Makes the medical/disability determination



Medical

- Medical/Treatment providers
- Assessments/evaluations
- Medical records



You

- SOAR trained case managers are actively involved every step of the process

# A Complete SOAR Packet Includes:

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1. SOAR Checklist as a cover sheet for the completed application package
2. **SSA-1696** Appointment of Representative form
3. SSA-827 Authorization to Disclose Information to SSA
4. SSA-8000 signed and dated by applicant
5. MSR signed by the SOAR provider as well as the applicant's physician or psychologist
6. Copies of all medical records in chronological order
7. SSA-3368 and SSA-16 submitted on-line **24-48 hours** before turning in completed application package (Items 1-6)



# Medical Summary Report (MSR)

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- The MSR is a letter which describes the individual and his/her functional limitations and struggles
  - Supports medical records submitted
  - Helps DDS “see” the person you are working with
  - Illustrates the connection between the applicant’s functional limitations and the impairment
  - Answers the question: “Why is the applicant unable to work?”

# Link to Functional Impairment

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- Critical to connect symptoms/effects of illness with marked functional impairments
- To the extent possible in all four functional areas
- Demonstrate impact of illness(es) on ability to work
- Medication – effects and side effects
- Support and effect of support
- Compare with lack of support

# Next Steps

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- **Take the free online course.** It takes approximately 16-20 hours and includes 16 CEUs from NASW upon successful completion.
  - <http://soarworks.prainc.com>
- **Use the SOAR model** to complete at least four SSI/SSDI applications within the next year.
- Attend a one day **fundamentals training**
- Attend and Participate at **SOAR Steering Committee Meetings**
- Record outcomes on **OAT**

# Thank You Questions?

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