

Preliminary Outcomes from the SOAR Technical Assistance Initiative

Preliminary outcomes for states that participated in the initial round of the SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery) Technical Assistance Initiative are presented below. Prior to receiving HHS and HUD-sponsored SOAR training and technical assistance:

- Approvals for homeless applicants were typically 10-15% on initial application (the national average for all applicants is 37%).
- The time to initial decision was about 120 days (the national average for all applicants) or longer.

SOAR Preliminary Outcomes (as of 3/23/07)				
States/Communities Reporting	# SSI Initial Decisions	# Approved on Initial Application	Allowance Rate (% Approved)	Time to Approval (Days)
Florida				
▪ Broward County	49	30	61%	NA
Georgia				
▪ Columbus	15	11	73%	62
▪ Savannah	10	6	60%	44
Kentucky				
▪ Covington	36	24	67%	57
▪ Louisville	54	34	63%	97
▪ Balance of State	60	22	37%	132
Montana	8	7	88%	58
New York (SOAR Pilot)	52	46	88%	93
Ohio	22	13	59%	80
Oklahoma	25	16	64%	81
Oregon	60	40	67%	96
Tennessee				
▪ Nashville	33	32	97%	59
Virginia				
▪ Hampton	1	1	100%	45
▪ Norfolk	18	17	94%	69
▪ Richmond	73	57	78%	94
▪ Virginia Beach	8	4	50%	180
Utah	297	146	49%	105
TOTAL	821	506	62%	Mean: 87 days

Persons assisted by the states had been homeless an average of **33 months**. Following training using SAMHSA's *Stepping Stones to Recovery* curriculum, **62 percent** on average -- with many communities reporting higher allowance rates -- were approved for SSI, a substantial increase from an estimated 10-15 percent prior to the training. The variability in allowance rates appears to be dependent on the extent to which SOAR critical components are implemented in each community (www.prainc.com/SOAR/about/CriticalComponentsChart.pdf). The number of days to an initial SSA decision decreased from more than 120 days to **87 days or less on average**.

Other Systemic Outcomes:

- *Community Trainings*. To date, the 92 SOAR trainers have conducted 129 *Stepping Stones to Recovery* trainings in 24 states and 79 cities with more than 4,000 participants in attendance.
- *Increased Access to Housing*. There is limited, but very positive indications that SSI approval leads to quicker placement in permanent housing for people who were homeless.

- Columbus, GA: 100 percent of persons approved for SSI were housed; had been homeless for average of 16 months.
 - Covington, KY: 71 percent housed within seven days or less; had been homeless for average of 12 months.
 - Nashville, TN: 56 percent housed; had been homeless for average of 77 months.
- *Collaboration with SSA and DDS.* In several states, DDS identifies and “flags” applications from people who are homeless so that data can be collected and reported separately. Other States go further and have DDS offices that have designated staff or a specific unit to work with applications from people who are homeless.
 - *Fewer Consultative Exams (CEs).* All States are seeing fewer CEs requested by DDS. These are requested when DDS doesn’t have enough information to make a decision and are almost never helpful for applications from homeless persons.
 - *Increased Use of SSA Form 1696.* Case managers in States with the highest allowance rates are using SSA Form 1696 (Appointment of Representative form www.ssa.gov/online/ssa-1696.pdf.) which allows them to receive SSA correspondence and act on the applicant’s behalf during the application process.
 - *Cost Savings.* Utah reports that the state has recovered \$170,000 in general assistance benefits from SSA during the first four months that SOAR was implemented in one area of the state. A program in Covington, Kentucky, reports that a local hospital which partially funded a local SSI outreach project recouped its initial investment of \$18,000 and more in less than a year by recovering uncompensated care from Medicaid.

Eleven additional States started SOAR in September 2006.¹ They are beginning to conduct trainings in their states and will begin data collection this summer.

For more information, contact Deborah Dennis at Policy Research Associates, Inc. (518-439-7415 ext. 238; or ddennis@prainc.com) or visit the SOAR website at www.prainc.com/soar for additional information and training opportunities.

¹ The 24 SOAR states are: Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia and Washington.