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# FLAGLER CARES—SOAR PROGRAM

Health and Human Services Summit May 2021



**FlaglerCares**



## WHO AM I?

DeAnna OFlaherty, Project Director at Flagler Cares

SOAR Processor

SOAR Certified, to process SOAR SSI/SSDI applications.

SOAR Supervisor, I supervise other SOAR processors at Flagler Cares.

SOAR Local Lead, I help train other SOAR professionals in my geographical area covering Volusia, Flagler and St Johns Counties.

HUD Certified Housing Counselor



## WHAT IS SOAR?

### SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, & Recovery



SOAR programs increase access to Social Security disability benefits for eligible adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or co-occurring substance use disorder.

The SOAR model differs from a person applying on their own or with a person simply filling in the application, as the SOAR program does a complete assessment of the client's disability and writes a Medical Summary Report (MSR).

## WHAT DOES A SOAR PROCESSOR DO?

A SOAR Processor is trained to assist clients who are homeless or at risk for becoming homeless, to complete the screening and application process for Social Security benefits.

A person can find us through other programs, professional services, they can self-refer by calling our offices.

We do screenings by phone and in the field.



## WHAT IS HOMELESS?

Different programs define homelessness in different ways. For most SOAR programs, a person is homeless if they meet the HUD definition:

(I) Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning: (i) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation; (ii) Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter; or (iii) Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution



## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SSI AND SSDI?

**SSI** is an **i**ndigency (need based) program. It is for people who cannot work and have never worked enough to be granted SSDI. The maximum amount of SSI benefits today is \$794 per month.

Q. I have a client on SSI who gets less than \$794 per month, why is this?

A. If a client is paying back child support or paying back a previous over payment, their SSI amount may be lower. If they are receiving exactly \$529 per month, this is because of their previous housing situation and may be raised if they are now homeless or paying for a rental.



## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SSI AND SSDI?

**SSDI** is an insurance program. It is for people who worked and contributed at least 40 credits into the SSDI system over their working life. The monthly amount is typically higher than SSI as it is based on their earnings history.

Q. Can someone qualify for SSI and SSDI at the same time?

A. Yes, if a person has enough credits to qualify under SSDI but is currently indigent, they will be considered eligible for both programs. This can lead to confusion as they will get letters from both programs at the same time, which will seem to contradict each other.

## WHAT DOES DISABILITY MEAN TO SSA?

Social Security determines a person to be disabled when they have a physical or mental illness (they are graded and counted equally) that they have been able to prove through medical documentation to have lasted for more than 12 months or likely to last for more than 12 months **and** that **SEVERELY** impairs their ability to earn more than \$1310 per month.



Q. My client had her leg amputated but continues to work in a call center, earning about \$2,000 per month, is she disabled for Social Security entitlement?

A. No, she has a documented medical impairment but is still earning above the allowed amount.

## HOW LONG DOES DISABILITY TAKE?

It can take 1-3 months to gather all the medical records needed to submit a complete and accurate claim. Social Security takes a few weeks after the claim is filed to prepare the “entitlement” then it is transferred to DDS.

A homeless client is “flagged” in the system and is assigned to an agent the same week it is received. A non flagged file can take 60-90 days to reach an assigned representative.

After assignment, the file can progress quickly, and a decision is usually made in about 90 days. Total time from screening to award can be 12 months.



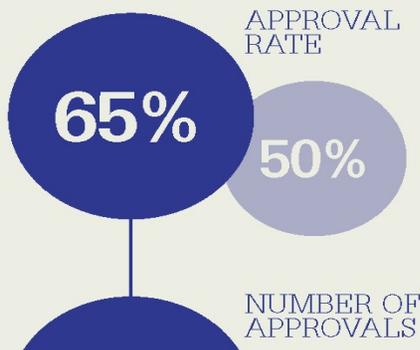
# WHY USE A SOAR PROCESSOR?



## 20/20 National Outcomes

### 2020 Outcomes

INITIAL APPLICATIONS - ●  
APPEALS - ●

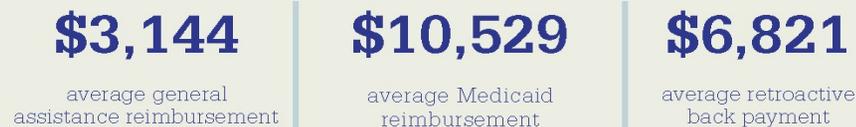


### Cumulative Outcomes

CUMULATIVE INITIAL APPROVAL RATE / **65%**



### Financial Outcomes



## WHERE CAN I FIND A SOAR PROGRAM?

Flagler Cares- Flagler

Flagler Cares, in partnership with AdventHealth- Volusia

SMA- Volusia

FirstStep Shelter- Volusia

VFCCH- Volusia

CLSMF- Volusia

**To schedule a screening: 386-319-9483 Ext 1**



## SOME TYPICAL QUESTIONS?

Q. Will the client get Medicaid or Medicare if they get disability benefits?

A. Yes, when a person is awarded SSI (based on being indigent and disabled), they will also be awarded Medicaid benefits. A person awarded SSDI (based on their insurance through SSA) they will also be awarded Medicare – 2 years after the date their disability began. Therefore, establishing the correct date of onset is so important.

## SOME TYPICAL QUESTIONS?

Q. My client told me she is physically disabled but cannot get either program, is this possible?

A. Yes, when a person is married their household income could disqualify them for SSI (no proof of need) and her lack of work history could disqualify her for SSDI.

Q. My client has SSI, but his payments stopped, and he does not know why?

A. SOAR processor can use their contacts at SSA to help connect the client to the correct resources over the phone to restart benefits.

## SOME TYPICAL QUESTIONS?

Q. My client got a letter saying he is denied, just a few days after applying. Can he be denied so quickly?

A. Yes and No. Every application to SSA is reviewed for both SSI and SSDI, if he is denied for one, the letter will go out, but the other application will continue.

Q. My client got approved for benefits with backpay but only some of the backpay was deposited?

A. Backpay for SSDI can be deposited at the full amount but due to the asset (\$2,000) limit for SSI only \$2,382 can be deposited at a time so payments come every 6 months until all back pay is deposited.

## SOME TYPICAL QUESTIONS?

Q. My client is disabled by his chronic back pain but never goes to the doctor or gets any treatment. Can SOAR help him?

A. A SOAR Processor would likely advise him to begin getting treatment through a free clinic while he begins his application. DDS can send him to their doctor, but this is less useful than his own doctor.

Q. My family member never graduated from high school and can only find very low paying jobs. His epilepsy is well controlled on medication, is he disabled?

A. He has a vocational problem rather than a disability. An illness that can be disabling but is not limiting his ability to work, does not qualify. He should seek vocational training.

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■ Questions?

