

Connection to Income: Benefits Payments through VA and SSA

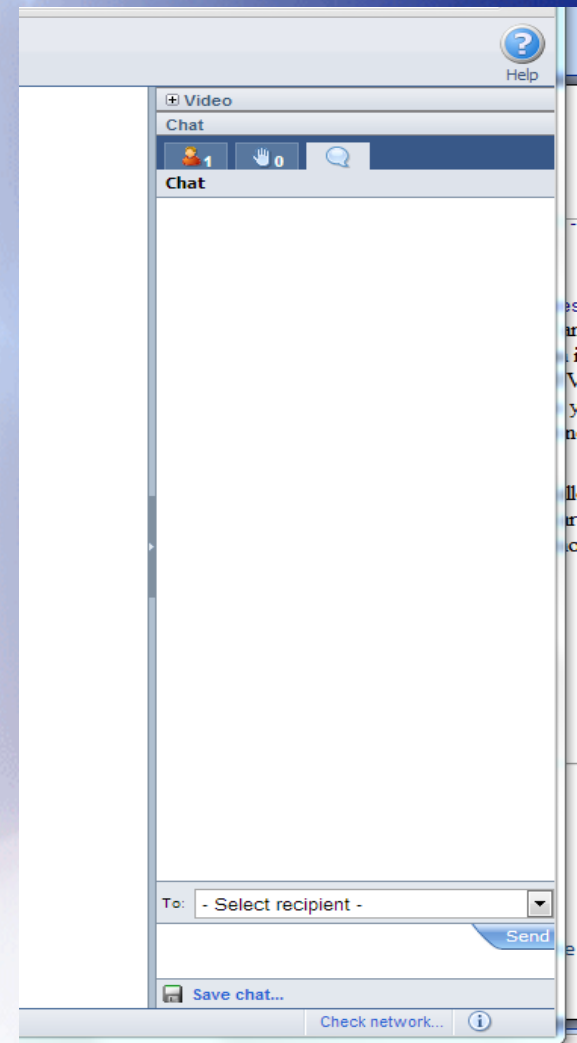
August 5, 2014

Logistics

- Asking questions during the webinar
 - All participant phone lines are muted
 - You'll be unable to ask questions by phone
 - Please type your question in the on screen chat box
 - There will be two opportunities during the webinar to ask questions
- Post webinar survey
 - Kyle McEvelly, Communications and Program Assistant (NCHV), kmcevilly@nchv.org

Asking Questions During the Training

- Submit questions in the chat box on the webinar
- E-mail questions to Kyle McEvilly at kmcevilly@nchv.org
- Submit questions through the post-training survey



The background of the slide is a stylized American flag, featuring a blue field with white stars in the upper left and a red and white striped field in the lower right. The stars are slightly blurred and have a soft glow.

Working with Local VSOs to Connect Veterans to VA Benefits

**Paul Varela
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)**



Using SOAR to Connect Veterans to Social Security Benefits

SSI/SSDI OUTREACH, ACCESS, AND RECOVERY
SAMHSA SOAR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

Sponsored by:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

August 2014

Agenda

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- ❑ What is SOAR?
- ❑ Differences in definitions – Social Security vs. VA disability benefits
- ❑ Social Security fast track programs for Veterans
- ❑ How Social Security and VA benefits impact one another
- ❑ Incorporate SOAR into your program

SOAR

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- ❑ SOAR stands for SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery
- ❑ Focus is on people who are homeless or at risk for 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

Changing Lives Since 2005

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- ❑ Over 19,000 persons experiencing or at risk for homelessness have been approved on initial application
- ❑ 65 percent approval rate overall
 - ❑ Top eight states served over 4000 individuals and have an 89 percent approval rate
 - ❑ Compares to 10-15 percent for unassisted applications from people who are homeless and 29 percent for all applicants
- ❑ Approvals were received in an average of 100 days
- ❑ Appeals can take a year or more; many people give up and do not appeal

SSI & SSDI: The Basics

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- ❑ SSA: Social Security Administration
- ❑ SSI: Supplemental Security Income; needs based; federal benefit rate is \$721 per month in 2014; provides Medicaid in most states
- ❑ SSDI: Social Security Disability Insurance; amount depends on earnings put into SSA system; Medicare generally provided after 2 years of eligibility
- ❑ The disability determination process for both programs is the same

Definition of Disability

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- ❑ The definition of disability and application process is different for VA and SSA benefits
 - ❑ Discharge status is not a factor in SSI/SSDI determination
 - ❑ Disabling condition does not need to be related to military service
 - ❑ Those denied for VA benefits may still be eligible for SSI/SSDI
 - ❑ Veterans can access SSA benefits while they are waiting for VA benefits
 - ❑ There is no partial disability with Social Security

SSA Definition of Disability

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- ❑ For SSI/SSDI, the Veteran needs to show:
 - ❑ Evidence of a physical or mental health condition, which results in functional impairments that limit their ability to work at a substantial gainful level (quantified as \$1070/month in 2014).
 - ❑ That the disabling condition has lasted, or is expected to last, for 12 months or end in death.
- ❑ Why is the applicant unable to work?

SSA Fast Track Programs

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100% Permanent and Total Veterans Initiative

- ❑ Began March 2014
- ❑ Expedites SSI/SSDI applications from Veterans who have 100% P&T rating from the VA
 - ❑ Does not guarantee SSI/SSDI approval
- ❑ Veterans should identify themselves as a “Veteran rated 100% P&T” when initiating the SSI/SSDI application, and should provide the VA rating notification letter to SSA.

SSA Fast Track Programs

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Wounded Warriors

- ❑ Veterans who received disabling mental or physical health injuries while on active duty on or after October 1, 2001, regardless if the injury occurred in the U.S. or in combat.
- ❑ When initiating the SSI/SSDI application, Veterans should inform SSA that their injury occurred while on active duty.

SSA & VA Benefits: Impact On Healthcare

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- ❑ SSI and SSDI come with Medicaid and Medicare
- ❑ Assists those without access to VA healthcare services
- ❑ Veterans who qualify for VA healthcare can use Medicaid or Medicare to pay for services not covered by the VA
 - ❑ Helps Veterans located in areas that have limited access to VA facilities

SSA & VA Benefits: Impact On Cash Benefits

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- ❑ The Veteran comes out ahead – adds cash benefit and health coverage
- ❑ SSI – Supplemental Security Income
 - ❑ Needs based program, so VA benefits will affect SSI cash amount, depending on the amount of VA benefits
- ❑ SSDI – Social Security Disability Insurance
 - ❑ SSDI benefits are not affected by income through VA benefits.
- ❑ See *SSA and VA Disability Benefits: Tips for Veterans* for calculations and details

Incorporate SOAR into HVRP Services

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- ❑ Increases housing stability for Veterans while they are seeking and after obtaining employment
- ❑ Veterans can work while applying for SSA benefits and after receiving them
- ❑ For details on SSA work incentives, see issue brief: *SOAR and Employment for SSI/SSDI Beneficiaries*
- ❑ Connect with SOAR in your community
 - ❑ Training opportunities
 - ❑ Community collaboration for SSI/SSDI applications

SOAR Online Training

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<http://soarworks.prainc.com/>

- ❑ Free, web-based course to train case managers in completing SSI/SSDI applications using SOAR
- ❑ Standardized, self-paced training
- ❑ Includes completion of a practice SSI/SSDI application
- ❑ Individualized feedback from the SOAR TA Center
- ❑ 16 CEUs from NASW
- ❑ Class 1 of the course provides a SOAR 101

Get Involved with SOAR

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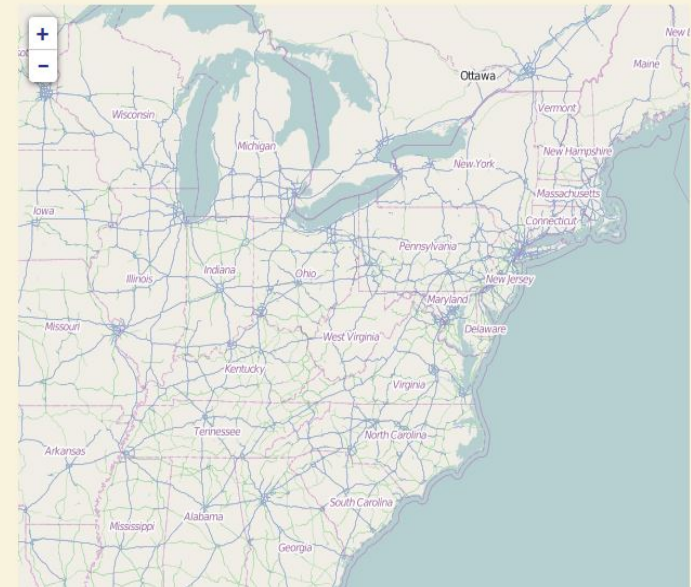
<http://soarworks.prainc.com/directory>

- ❑ Find your SOAR TA Center Liaison
- ❑ Find your SOAR State Team Lead
- ❑ Connect with SOAR in your community
- ❑ Problems? Let us know!

SOAR In Your State

Browse by Community

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii



For More Information

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Visit the SOAR website at:

<http://soarworks.prainc.com/>

Jen Elder

Senior Project Associate

SAMHSA's SOAR Technical Assistance Center

Policy Research Associates, Inc.

518-439-7415 x 5256

jelder@prainc.com

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