

SSI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR)

Many homeless adults, particularly those who have mental illness and are chronically homeless, do not receive Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits. While many are likely to be eligible, only 11% of the people who are homeless are currently estimated to receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) benefits. Nationally, only 37% of SSA disability applicants are approved for benefits upon initial application. Although approvals increase to 53% after appeal, that process can take years. Using SSI/SSDI Outreach Access and Recovery (SOAR) methods, initial approval rates can increase to 60 to 90% of applicants, without appeals. Information about the SOAR model can be found on the Policy Research Associates (PRA) website at <http://www.prainc.com/soar/>

The Division of Housing and Community Development, Bureau of Supportive Housing supports the SOAR Program by providing a combination of PATH and Mental Health Block Grant funds to develop local programs that coordinate services and benefit assistance for homeless persons with mental illness utilizing the SOAR model. A select group of homeless service providers participate in this program. For 2009, these agencies are as follows:

- Couleecap, Inc. (Lacrosse County area) — (608) 634-3104
- Emergency Shelter of the Fox Valley — (920) 882-0346
- Hebron House of Hospitality (Waukesha County) — (920) 549-8720
- Health Care for the Homeless of Milwaukee — (414) 374-7903
- Starting Points, Inc (Chippewa County) — (715) 726-7937
- Rock County Human Services — (608) 757-5739

Staff members of Hebron House of Hospitality and Health Care for the Homeless of Milwaukee are certified to teach the SOAR model. Please contact them if you are interested in learning more about this training.

Other questions may be directed to Donna Wrenn at (608) 264-7625 or donna.wrenn@wisconsin.gov.