

Where help meets Hope

Social Security Outreach Access Recovery (SOAR)



SOAR helps people with serious mental illness apply for SSI/SSDI benefits when they are unhoused or may lose their housing.



SOAR uses trained Navigators who walk side by side with people through Social Security's disability process.



Navigators support the individual to collect needed papers, talk with providers, and help make sure applications are correct and complete.

Need Support?

Visit your Disability Access Point



Iowa Aging and Disability
Resource Center
Iowa HHS



Why does SOAR work?

- SOAR works with you to gather the information needed for Social Security forms.
- SOAR gives you one main person to contact.
- SOAR support helps lower stress and keeps your application on track.
- SOAR helps shorten the time it takes to get a disability decision after you apply.

Terrance, 22, has long navigated the effects of mental health challenges and a childhood brain injury. After his initial Social Security application was denied, a SOAR Navigator supported his reconsideration by ensuring his full story and medical history were accurately represented.

He also received help applying for the Brain Injury Waiver, connecting with an MCO, completing a psychological evaluation for an autism diagnosis, and strengthening medical documentation.

Through strong collaboration among Disability Determination Services, SSA, his family, Iowa HHS, the MCO, HUD's Mainstream Voucher program, HCBS, and medical providers, Terrance was approved at reconsideration after 210 days, with just 132 days of SOAR involvement.

His journey reflects resilience and the life-changing impact of coordinated, person-centered support.

Dee, 41, wanted to contribute to her household but had no income. She is blind in one eye, losing vision in the other, and depression made completing important paperwork difficult. With support from a SOAR Navigator, she connected to a mental health provider, worked with her doctors, and gathered the documentation needed for her Social Security application.

Through close coordination with Social Security, Disability Determination Services, her medical team, the local health center, and her girlfriend, Dee was approved on her first application in just 124 days.

Now, with stable income, Dee can help with household expenses and feels supported as she moves forward.

Sal, 57, was living in a Residential Detention Center while waiting for safe housing.

He had past homelessness and ongoing mental health needs. Although he had been approved for SSI, he couldn't access his benefits because of where he was living.

When SOAR became involved, his navigator acted quickly—gathering necessary documents, coordinating with Social Security, and ensuring his approval was maintained. They also supported Sal in securing medical and housing resources.

With this teamwork, Sal's SSI approval was finalized in 189 days, with only 22 days of SOAR involvement.

Sal's journey shows his resilience and how timely, person-centered support can help someone find safety, stability, and hope.

