

SOAR Dialogue Highlights

2/25/16

Attendees: Emily Carmody, Sioux Free, Sandra Johnson, Elizabeth Lewin, Tashira McGill, Candice Chilton, Tanzania Tabb, Faye Pierce, Dolores Huffman, Nitki Kilgore, TJ Reynolds Emwanta, Pamalia Davis

Introductions

- Emily Carmody, NCCEH, Raleigh- Getting ready for a SOAR training in March in Raleigh, please tell anyone who is interested to complete an application
- Sioux Free/Sandra Johnson, Pisgah Legal Services, Asheville- Had some approvals and denials this month
- Elizabeth Lewin, PATH, Statesville- Some approvals and denials this month
- Tashira McGill, LATCH, Henderson- Had 1 approval and 1 denial because of land ownership
- Candice Chilton, LATCH, Durham- Sad to see Liz Lumley move on, getting ready to hire a new case manager for SOAR
- Tanzania Tabb, United Community Ministries, Rocky Mount- no updates this month
- Faye Pierce, New Reidsville Housing Authority- happy to be on the call today
- Dolores Huffman, Partners Behavioral Health- In process with 1 application and getting the person into housing
- Nitki Kilgore, Pisgah Legal Services, Hendersonville- Continue to get approvals, expanded to cover Rutherford, Polk and Transylvania

Announcements

- National SOAR program held a webinar about 2015 SOAR outcomes
 - Check out the presentation on their website:
<https://soarworks.prainc.com/article/2015-national-soar-outcomes>
 - NC named in the Top 10 SOAR states again!
- Be sure to check out the SOAR positions posted on the NCCEH jobs board:
<http://www.ncceh.org/jobs/>
- Lots of new participants in the SOAR Caseworker Certification process
 - Congratulations to Diamond Jenkins Nelson, Tara Jaworski, and Grace Maynard
 - Please check out the information about SOAR Certification on our website:
<http://www.ncceh.org/caseworkers/>

SSA Field Office Outreach and Engagement

SOAR Caseworkers report out about current relationships with SSA Field Offices:

- Davie Field Office-Staff does not understand the SSA definition of homelessness or the available services in the area
- Hickory Field Office- Helping a lot with new SOAR caseworkers to make sure they understand the paperwork

- Hendersonville Field Office- Not connecting 1696 Rep forms to cases and not sending mail or information to SOAR caseworkers who are Reps
- Statesville Field Office- After a rough start, things are going very well with the office
- Asheville Field Office- Going very well, the office designate a point person to handle applications and that is helping
- Durham Field Office- Having a large amount of lag time in getting cases to DDS but have started to see an improvement in this
- Henderson Field Office- Communication has continued to improve and have received responses to emails
- Field offices that have a Claims Representative (CR) assigned to all SOAR cases: Durham, Charlotte, Asheville, Winston-Salem, Greensboro

Tips from SOAR Caseworkers on Improving Engagement

- Getting the SSA Field Office to Attach the 1696 Rep Form to the Application
 - Establish an email communication with someone in the office so they can check on paperwork filed (this could be someone you know in the office or get to know who can look in the system for you)
 - Hand-deliver all paperwork to the office
 - Get your SSA office to designate one CR to handle cases and follow up with them frequently
 - Email often works better than phone calls but understand how CRs want to be contacted when issues come up
- Other Tips
 - Winston-Salem office set aside time for SOAR caseworkers/applicants to come in to file paperwork
 - Schedule this time at the 2 month mark from the fax date
 - Can be with or without client
 - Make sure to do online applications and complete the 8000 in the field
 - In and out of the office in 30 minutes
 - Durham office communication improved with emails
 - Increased response
 - Increased efficiency in processing cases
 - Try to get your SSA office to designate a CR to handle SOAR applications
 - Easier to develop a relationship with one person
 - Good to have one person to contact about any application
 - Use the other SSA offices with designated CRs as examples
 - Cookies!
 - Take cookies or treats to your SSA office
 - Show them appreciation for the hard work they do
 - SSA staff are not often recognized for their work

- Set up a local meeting with the manager, SOAR contact and all SOAR caseworkers in the community
 - Have the meeting at the SSA office to avoid travel restrictions
 - Go over SOAR process and preferred way of filing applications
 - Have all SOAR caseworkers there so everyone is on the same page and can ask questions
- Offer to do a training for your local field office on SOAR
 - Do at beginning of the day or during hours where closed to public
 - Discuss homeless specific issues and the SOAR program
 - Helps the CRs to put your face to a name and understand your goals
- Levels of Support
 - If you have an issue with your local field office, first try to address it with the SOAR point person in the office
 - If that does not help, contact Emily Carmody
 - She can reach out to the SSA field office
 - Has helped to set up meetings and presentations for field offices
 - If Emily cannot help, she can contact Randy in the Area Director's Office to assist

**Next SOAR Dialogue Call will be on March 17, 2016 at 10 AM. Please register for the call here:
<http://www.ncceh.org/events/977/>**