



North Carolina Balance of State Continuum of Care

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www.ncceh.org/BoS

NC Balance of State CoC Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

March 5, 2024

Regional Leads Present: Derek Lancour, Emily Lowery, Amber Story, Pamela Hinton, Erin Gaskin, Kerry Bashaw, Emily Locklear, Shawanda Barnes, LaTasha McNair, Kisha Darden, Lynne James, Brian Fike

At-Large Members Present: Rachelle Dugan, Melissa Hewitt, Catherine Kastleman, Lisa Phillips, Erin Joy Crossfield, Brooks Ann McKinney, Cassandra Rowe, Joseph Chilton

SC Members Absent: Natasha Elliott, Angela Harper King, Kea Alexander

Interested Parties Present: Mollie Robinson, Peggy Hendrix, Alyce Knaflich, Denice Ariztia, Lori Watts, Kim Hemphill, Teena Willis, Kendra Martin, Amy Modlin, Jason Smith, Lola Rolley, Talaika Williams, Laurenn Singleton, Cory Bragg, Rachelle Ellis, Seth Horton, Sade Craine, Sarah Patterson, Tara Peele, Bonnie Harper, Kim Crawford, Tonya Rollins, Kecia Robinson, Monica Frizzell, Michele Welsh, Bre Griffin, Dr. Dia Thomas, Crystal Gwendo

NCCEH Staff Present: Laurel Benfield, Allie Card, Adrianna Coffee, Adriana Diaz, Jenny Simmons, Dashia Shanks, Ashley VonHatten

Approval of Consent Agenda

- The consent agenda was sent out for review prior to the meeting and is posted at: <https://www.ncceh.org/bos/steeringcommittee/>
- The consent agenda was voted on at the beginning of the meeting. Without changes or objection, the consent agenda was approved by common consent.

Scorecard Committee: FY2024 New & Renewal Scorecards

The Scorecard Committee has completed its work to update CoC Program scorecards and recommends both FY2024 new and renewal project scorecards for the CoC Program Competition for consideration today. The Scorecard Committee consists of representatives from each Regional Committee & any interested at-large Steering Committee members. The Project Review Committee uses the approved scorecards to score new and renewal CoC Program applications & creates a final prioritization ranking list. The recommended FY2024 new and renewal scorecards were posted to the website at: <https://www.ncceh.org/bos/steeringcommittee/>.

The Scorecard Committee focused on:

- Usability: Incorporated direct feedback from Project Review Committee members, staff, and applicants from last year's competition.
 - Revised the format using statements instead of questions
 - Created Reviewer Notes sections for each statement
 - Added N/A categories for statements that didn't pertain to all project types
 - Clarified documents that need to be submitted in each of the items
- Equity: Refined the Equity Section to gather intended information. Added the recommendation from LEAC.
 - General edits for clarity
 - Spelled out the pieces of the Anti-Discrimination Policy that need to be included in an agency's P&Ps
 - Clarified which agencies cite lived experience of homelessness as a preferred skill and what levels
 - Revised statement on having P&Ps to solicit feedback from clients instead of having to change a P&Ps as a result of feedback
 - Incorporated a new item recommended from LEAC regarding project staff at the manager/director level having experienced homelessness in their lifetime
- Performance: Incorporated the Funding & Performance Subcommittee recommendations for performance measures & benchmarks.
 - Reviewed current baseline data from HMIS
 - Determined usefulness of each performance measure
 - Adjusted benchmarks to reflect the level of performance the CoC wants agencies to meet per project type

Lynne James commented that it will be helpful for agencies to have immediate feedback now instead of having to contact NCCEH for feedback. Lynne James motioned to approve the FY24 new and renewal scorecards. Amber Story seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

- New CoC Project Applicant Webinar: Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 2 – 4 PM
 - Please register at: <https://www.ncceh.org/events/1670/>
- Renewal CoC Project Applicant Webinar: • Thursday, March 14, 2024, 10 AM – 12 PM
 - Please register at: <https://www.ncceh.org/events/1669/>

Funding & Performance Subcommittee CY2025 ESG Funding Priorities

Each year, the Funding and Performance Subcommittee reviews the prior year's ESG Program Funding Priorities document and approves an updated version for Steering Committee consideration. The CY2025 ESG Program Funding Priorities draft document was posted to the website in advance of today's meeting for your review at:

<https://www.ncceh.org/bos/steeringcommittee/>

Overview of Recommended Changes:

- General Edits for Clarity
- Added performance measures set by the FPS for each project type into this document. Previously only found in the scorecard.
- Clarified expectation that projects will adhere to written standards as expected in the NC ESG Office application
- Appendix 1: Charts of ESG Program-funded projects per region. Added names of agencies, the names of counties they serve, and the names of counties without ESG Program funding per project type.

Overview of ESG Program Funding Priorities Purpose & Goals:

- The funding priorities document has a clearly stated purpose & sets the following goals:
 - Coordinate goals and ESG Program funding across the whole CoC: these funding priorities aim to coordinate ESG Program funding to move the whole CoC toward common goals including implementing Housing First, improving racial equity, and decreasing disparities in outcomes for marginalized populations throughout the CoC.
 - Establish precedent to make funding decisions consistently & fairly across the CoC.
 - Help the CoC target ESG Program funding to specific local needs: these priorities provide guidance to help make decisions about how to use ESG Program funding to improve the homeless & housing system, helping grantees and communities take steps toward providing access to low-barrier emergency shelter and permanent housing using a Housing First approach, rather than simply continuing ESG Program funding for previous grantees.
 - Improve performance of ESG Program-funded projects: these priorities aim to ensure publicly funded agencies implement best practices by lowering barriers to entry, incorporate Housing First approaches, & follow the CoC's written standards.

Overview of ESG Program Funding Priorities:

1. Ensure people experiencing homelessness in the CoC have access to low-barrier, housing-focused shelter, rehousing assistance, & supportive services
2. Fund only applicants with the financial capacity to administer public dollars
3. Ensure the best results for people experiencing homelessness through coordination at the regional level
4. Prioritize timely, accurate data collection to measure and improve performance at the agency, regional, & CoC levels
5. Address disparities across marginalized communities
6. Make consistent & transparent decisions regarding funding for the ESG Program

Appendix 1 includes tables that chart the number of ESG Program-funded providers in each region, by name, project type, & the number and name of counties within the region covered by that project type. This helps identify regions with coverage needs & prioritizes applicants who can fill them. Example:

ESG Program Funded Emergency Shelter and DV Shelter Projects			
Region	# of ES providers	# of Counties covered by ES	# of Counties without access to ES
01	2 (HERE in Jackson County, REACH of Macon)	2 (HERE in Jackson County serves Jackson County; REACH of Macon County is a VSP serving Macon County)	6 without ESG-funded non-DV shelter (Cherokee, Clay, Swain, Haywood, Madison, Graham)

Rachelle Dugan motioned to approve the recommended CY2025 ESG Program Funding Priorities document for the NC BoS CoC. Erin Joy Crossfield seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Significant Change Requests Grants Transfers

The NC Balance of State CoC issued a Request for Proposals on February 6, 2024 for the transfer of Community Link’s currently operating CoC Program-funded Permanent Supportive Housing grant, Northern PSH Combo. No proposals were submitted by the deadline of 12 PM on Tuesday, February 27, 2024.

- Community Link, Northern PSH Combo, NC0221L4F032212
 - Project Type: Permanent Supportive Housing
 - Counties served: Alamance, Caswell, Chatham, Person, Franklin, Granville, Halifax, Warren, Vance, and Rockingham (Region 6 and part of 9)
 - Budget: \$1,338,019 (\$1,140,072 in Rental Assistance; \$127,836 in Supportive Services; \$70,111 in Administrative Costs)
 - Units: 119 units and 201 beds were proposed in the last grant application. There are currently 100 units with 215 beds being served.
 - Grant operating year: 06/01/2023 – 05/31/2024 (FY2022 Renewal)
 - FY2023 Renewal Awarded to start 06/01/2024
 - MATCH REQUIREMENT: \$334,505

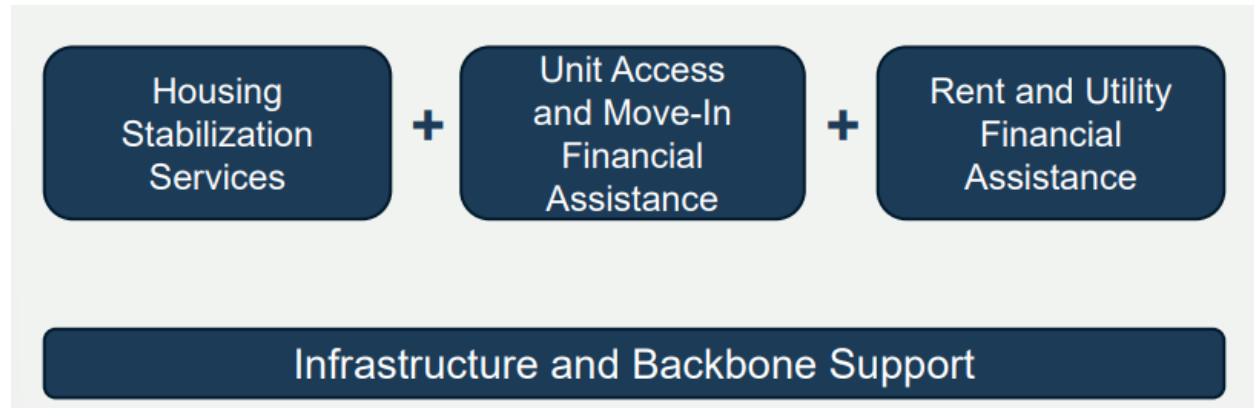
There is no additional RFP for this grant or any others at this time.

Back@Home – Balance of State Update

Catherine Kastleman, NCORR Planning and Policy Manager, provided an update on the launch of Back@Home – Balance of State. The Back@Home North Carolina Initiative provides an infrastructure utilized by multiple programs, designed around activities that stabilize people in housing. The infrastructure can be utilized for programs with distinct purposes and related funding sources.

The Back@Home-Balance of State (B@H BoS) program is the current iteration of the initiative, which aims to stabilize households with severe service needs who are experiencing homelessness within the 79 county NC-503 NC Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC), with a focus on reducing unsheltered and rural homelessness.

Program Model:



Partner Roles:

- North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency (NCORR)
 - Role: Program Oversight, Administration, Contracting, Reporting, Reimbursement, Ensuring Compliance and Match Requirements Met
- North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness (NCCEH)
 - Role: CoC Oversight, Training and TA Support for Service Providers
- North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS)
 - Role: Partnership/advising, Leveraged Funding, Program Advising and Connections. This includes contracted support from Redesign Collaborative, who are program design and subject matter experts.
- Housing Stabilization Services (HSS) Providers --> NCORR Subrecipients
 - Role: Provide housing stabilization services to program participants.
- Housing Collaborative --> NCORR Subrecipient
 - Role: Centralized Unit Recruitment, hybrid Housing Navigation services, Inspection Coordination, Landlord Engagement, and Financial Assistance Administrator

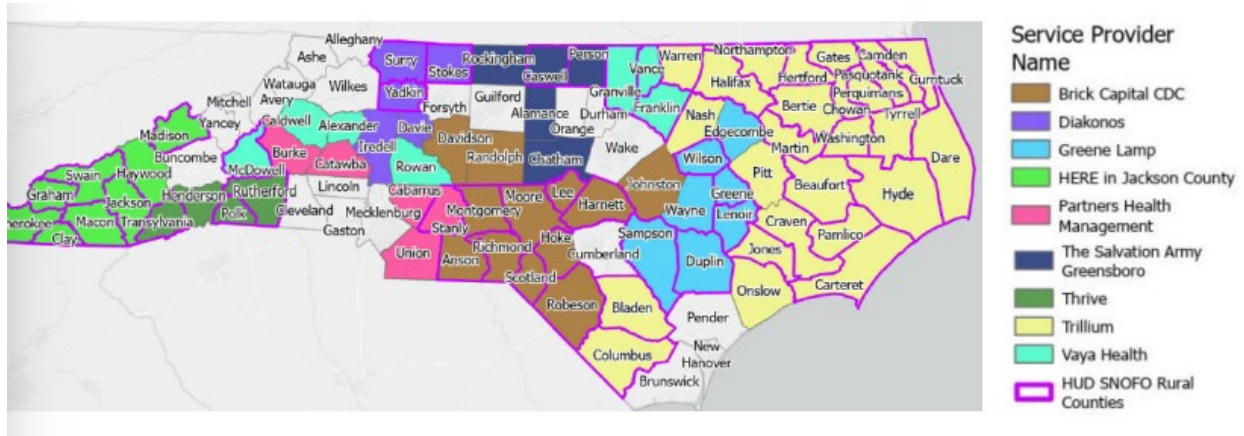
Current Funding Sources:

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) FY2022 Special Notice of Funding Opportunity CoC Program funds
- U.S. Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance funding (ERA 2)
- State Fiscal Recovery Funding (SFRF)

Housing Stabilization Services:

- Housing Stabilization Case Management services create a partnership with the household to assess, plan, implement, coordinate, monitor, and evaluate the needs of the household to get and keep housing.
- Outreach services assist by locating, engaging, and supporting households with life-saving resources as they experience homelessness and are connected to housing resources.
- System Navigation services assist households with accessing resources from the homeless system and partner systems to get and keep housing.
- Housing Navigation services

HSS Provider Coverage Map:



Types of financial assistance offered in the program will include:

1. Rent and utility assistance
2. Unit access and move-in financial assistance, including temporary stay costs

New to Back@Home: Improvements Based on Lessons Learned

- Centralized financial assistance (Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool Model)
- Hybrid housing navigation • Partnership between Housing Collaborative + Service Providers
- Changes to service provider (previously Rehousing Agency) role and payment structure
- Permanent supportive housing (PSH) funding available in addition to rapid rehousing (RRH)
- NCORR as new program administrator

By Fall/Winter 2026, as many as 1,400 households will be served through a combination of housing stabilization, financial assistance, and connection of other resources to stabilize individuals and families with severe service needs in housing. All services offered through the project will follow the three best practices outlined in the Continuum of Care’s plan: Housing First, Harm Reduction, Person-Centered, and Trauma-Informed Care.

Program Timeline & Accomplishments to Date:

Month	Topic
October 2023 – January 2024	Housing Stabilization Services Provider training and start up (including weekly calls, 1:1 meetings, and office hours)
January 16, 2024	- Opened enrollment in SSO projects - Published v1 Program Policies and Procedures - Launched new NCORR System of Record
January 29, 2024	Opened enrollment in Permanent Housing projects
February 5, 2024	Launch of Move-in Financial Assistance capability
March-April 2024 (expected)	Launch of Temporary Stay Assistance capability
September 30, 2026	Program period of performance ends

Key Program Data as of 3/4/24:

Participants enrolled in B@H-BoS	187
Households enrolled in B@H-BoS	101
Authorizations approved by NCORR to move program participant into a PH project and begin housing navigation process	29
Number of counties where program participants have been enrolled (out of 79)	24

Collaboration across the NC BoS CoC:

- Housing Collaborative has begun outreach to property providers across the 79-county area and will continue to work with service providers to build relationships with providers, recruit units, and place program participants in housing.
- The nine Housing Stabilization Services Providers remain the primary points of contact at a local level for outreach, housing stabilization case management, system navigation, and housing navigation.
- Please feel free to reach out to the program or any of our key partners if you have questions, ideas, or concerns about local operation of the program in your region.

For additional information, please contact backathome@ncdps.gov.

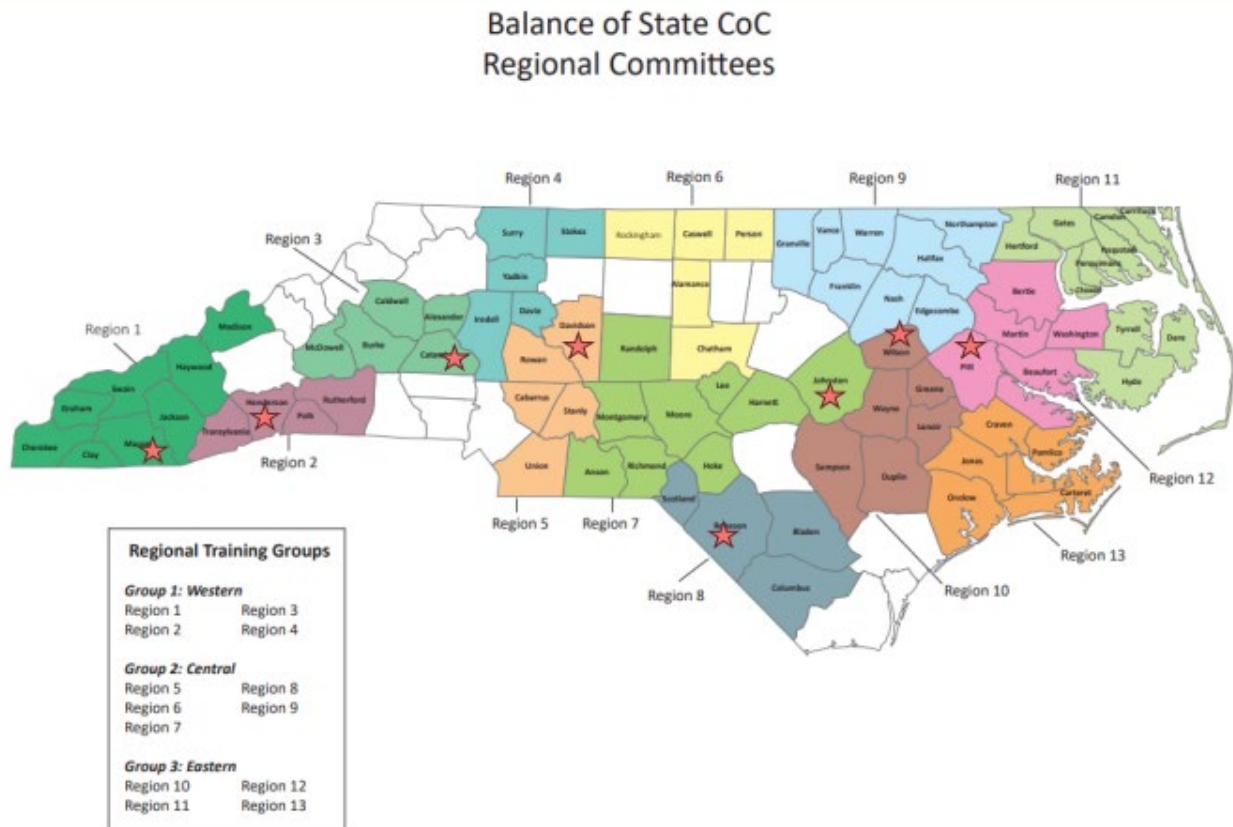
Safe at Home Update

Cassie Rowe, NCCADV Director of Health and Housing and at-large Steering Committee member, provided an update on Safe at Home, NCCADV's DV rapid rehousing program.

- Goal: Help unhoused survivors and their families get into and remain in safe, affordable, permanent housing as quickly and with as few barriers as possible
 - HUD Category 4 Homeless

- Voluntary supportive services
 - Case management, moving costs, utility deposits

Year 1 Safe at Home programs:

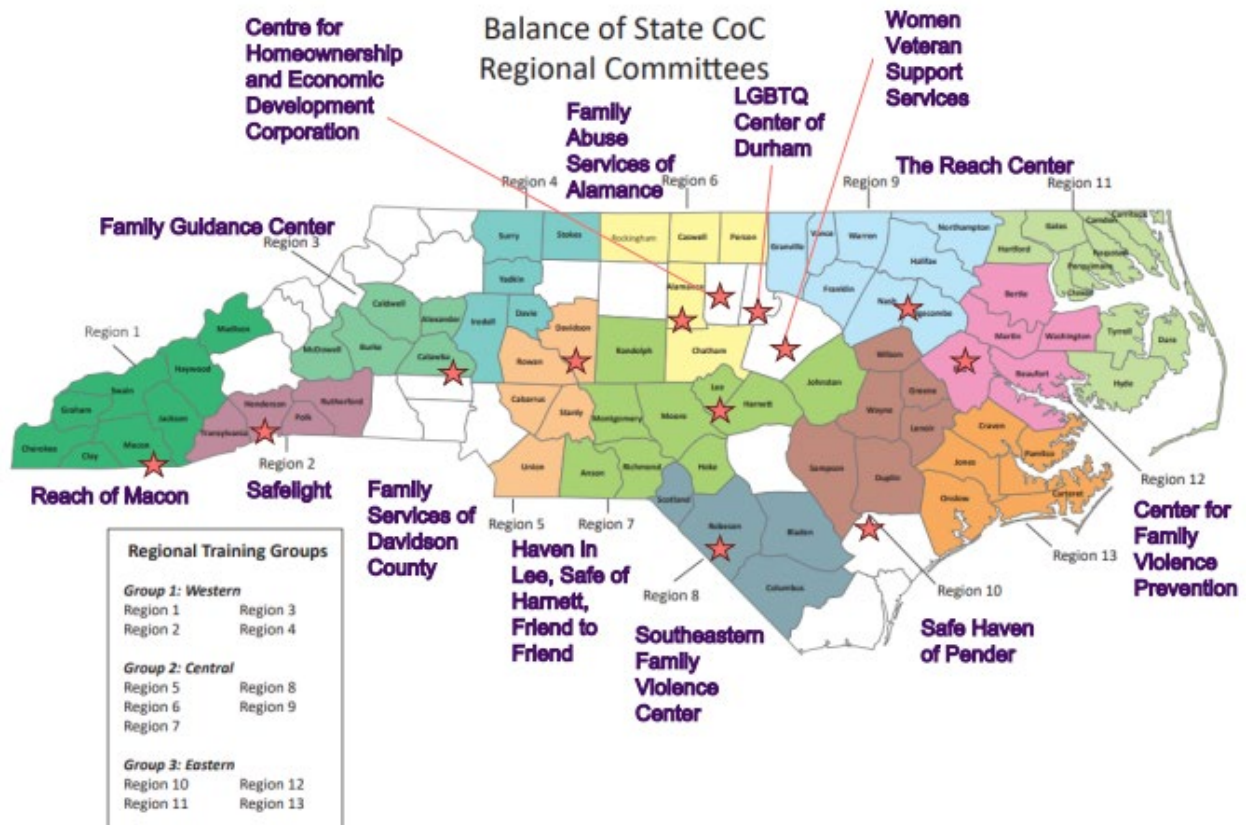


Households served October 2022 through December 2023:

- Served
 - 334 individuals
 - 236 households
- Housed
 - 131 individuals
 - 87 households

These numbers may change slightly as errors with APR are addressed.

Year 2 Safe at Home programs:



Compliance: Eligibility

- Safe at Home RRH can only assist households that meet the following (this is an updated definition):
 - Homeless Definition, Category 4: Any individual or family who:
 - i) is experiencing trauma or a lack of safety related to, or fleeing or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous, traumatic, or life-threatening conditions related to the violence against the individual or a family member in the individual's or family's current housing situation, including where the health and safety of children are jeopardized;
 - ii) has no other safe residence; and
 - iii) lacks the resources to obtain other safe permanent housing.

Compliance: Assistance Limits

- RRH is a short-to medium-term assistance program.
 - Assistance is limited to 24 months per household.
 - Programs can provide up to six months of case management as "after care services" once financial assistance has ended. These six months can go beyond the 24 months.
 - RRH should target Fair Market Rent (FMR) housing, but units are not limited to FMR.
 - Must document and meet Rent Reasonableness standards

- All units must meet a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection prior to payments or moving into the unit.
- RRH programs provide Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)
 - Leases must be in the household's name
 - Initial lease term should be 12 months, renewable , & only terminable for cause.

Safe at Home Coordinated Entry:

The NC BoS CoC wants to ensure Safe at Home (CoC-funded program) is meeting the requirements of coordinated entry while ensuring survivors are connected to safe housing as quickly as possible.

- Safe at Home agencies can begin serving eligible households immediately after assessment and will track their clients in an Excel document.
- The Excel document will be shared with the Regional Coordinated Entry Lead monthly.
- Safe at Home providers should attend regional coordinated entry meetings.
- Survivors may be referred to Safe at Home through other agencies in the region and during coordinated entry case conferencing.

SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access & Recovery) Orientation

- SSI/SSDI application and disability determination process is complex
- Difficult to get approval the traditional way
 - ~30% of all applicants successful first time through
 - ~10-15% of applicants at risk of or experiencing homelessness successful first time through
- Disconnect between the experience of homelessness and the disability application process

SOAR is a model for assisting eligible individuals to apply for Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits. Eligible individuals are those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, cooccurring substance use disorder, or other physical disabilities. The model is sponsored by SAMHSA in collaboration with the Social Security Administration (SSA) since 2005. All 50 states and Washington, DC currently participate.

SOAR focuses on the initial application, with 82% of NC SOAR cases being initial applications. The SOAR model includes critical components that make a disability application "SOAR":

- Case workers take on the role of SSA 1696 Representative.
- SOAR case workers gather medical records and interview applicants before submitting the application to SSA.
- SOAR case workers write a Medical Summary Report (MSR).

People with disabilities are disproportionately represented among all people experiencing homelessness. Roughly one in every three individuals experiencing homelessness had both a disability and experienced long-term or repeated incidents of homelessness (PIT 2023). Disability benefits, which include a monthly check and health insurance, can help individuals and families

access affordable housing, needed healthcare and mental health services, as well as provide some income to help pay for living expenses.

NCCEH serves as the state lead for the SOAR program in NC through sponsorship by the NC DHHS. The state lead's main responsibilities include:

- Providing training and technical assistance for SOAR caseworkers/communities/agencies
- Supporting communities and organizations to develop a SOAR strategy and dedicated SOAR caseworker positions
- Collecting and reporting outcome data for the state
- Maintaining partnerships with SSA and DDS

North Carolina has been a Top 10 SOAR state since at least 2019. Since SOAR was implemented in NC, over 4,000 SOAR applications have been completed. Of these, nearly 3,000 were approved, making North Carolina's cumulative approval rating for SSI/SSDI ~75%.

Since June 2010, SOAR has brought over \$7.5 million into the state of North Carolina and its local economies, including back pay awarded to applicants and the first year of annual benefits. NC SOAR currently has 29 full-time SOAR caseworkers and 31 part-time or volunteer SOAR caseworkers.

However, there are only 13 SOAR providers in the NC Balance of State CoC (Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13) and only 6 providers accept community referrals (Region 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13). There are currently no SOAR providers in Region 1, 11, 12. Staff will be emailing out a SOAR provider list for the NC Balance of State CoC. It will be updated monthly and can be found at:

<https://www.ncceh.org/files/13485/>.

The online course is free and takes about 20 hours to complete. 20 CEUs are awarded for passing the course. Each SOAR application takes about 20 to 40 hours to complete. For more information, visit <https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/article/getting-involved-with-soar>.

The SOAR state team lead will be joining Regional Committee meetings throughout the year to promote SOAR. For questions, please contact soar@ncceh.org. To learn more:

- <https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/>
- <https://www.ncceh.org/soar/>

Upcoming meetings & reminders

- **Emergency Shelter Innovation Series:Harm Reduction**, Wednesday, March 13, 9:30 – 11 A.M.
 - Register at: <https://www.ncceh.org/events/1672/>
- **New CoC Project Applicant Webinar**, Wednesday, March 13, 2 – 4 P.M.
 - Register at: <https://www.ncceh.org/events/1670/>
- **Renewal CoC Project Applicant Webinar**, Thursday, March 14, 10 A.M. – 12 P.M.
 - Register at: <https://www.ncceh.org/events/1669/>
- **Coordinated Entry Council**, Monday, March 18, 10 – 11:30 A.M.

- Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84840397905>
- Meeting ID: 848 4039 7905
- **Racial Equity Subcommittee**, *Wednesday, March 20, 11:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.*
 - Join Zoom Meeting:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83264838597?pwd=TzVCWtM4WXdvSVJqbDVIR1I0NnMrUT09>
 - Meeting ID: 832 6483 8597
- **Funding & Performance Subcommittee**, *Thursday, March 21, 2 – 3 P.M.*
 - Join Google Meeting: <https://meet.google.com/asv-fdov-kym>
 - Or dial: (US) +1 929-249-4814
 - PIN: 256 826 060#

Next Steering Committee meeting

Tuesday, April 2, 2024 at 10:30 A.M.