

## Who Is A SOAR Applicant?

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The SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) initiative is designed to serve adults who are homeless and who have mental illness and/or co-occurring disorders. Under the SOAR process, an applicant can be considered homeless using the PATH definition rather than the current HUD definition. This definition includes HUD's but extends "homelessness" to people who are also at risk of homelessness. This means that individuals who are moving from place to place, doubled-up, living in uninhabitable housing, not stably or permanently housed are included. People who are exiting jails or prisons and who have no stable place to live meet the SOAR definition of homeless. People who have no income but are not at risk of homelessness, i.e., have stable, permanent housing, are not considered to meet the definition under SOAR.

That said, the Social Security Administration (SSA) definition of homeless (or transient) on the SSI application may be slightly different. For example, suppose an individual spends the entire month of the month in which he/she applies (or establishes a protective filing date) staying in one location, but who has to move within the next month or two. That person **may** be considered homeless under SOAR but not under SSA.

In addition, SOAR has been designed to serve individuals who meet the adult criteria under SSA, i.e., are able to apply for benefits as an adult. This includes anyone 18 years of age or older as well as individuals who are within one month of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. (This definition will change in the next month or so as SSA is planning to allow 17-year-olds to file as adults within 90 days of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday).

Staff who are assisting applicants are to determine if that applicant meets the SOAR definition. This determination is expected to be made accurately using the above definitions. Anyone who has questions about whether or not an individual meets this definition should contact their local or state team lead. (The names of and contact information for these leads are located on the SOAR website: <http://www.prainc.com/soar>). Or they can contact members of the national SOAR team at [soar@prainc.com](mailto:soar@prainc.com).

Typically, many people who are eligible for SSI will likely be at risk of homelessness. However, this must be considered based on each individual's situation. The national SOAR team is working to extend SOAR to additional populations, e.g., people with other disabilities, people who are TANF recipients and are losing TANF benefits, etc. Currently, however, the above definition applies.