

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – SOAR RFP 2019-2020 Revised as of 8.24.18

Interested applicants can submit questions about the [SOAR Request For Proposal](#) to [DHS.SSAAdvocacy@state.mn.us](mailto:DHS.SSAAdvocacy@state.mn.us) by 3:00 PM CST September 21, 2018. The FAQ may be updated occasionally, please note date revised to ensure you have the most current version.

### Questions

1. My organization is small and I'm concerned about the insurance requirements. Will our ability to get sufficient coverage make our organization ineligible to apply? .....pg.2
2. My organization currently contracts with DHS to provide Social Security Advocacy and/or SOAR services. Are we eligible to apply? .....pg.2
3. This RFP has two funding options, do I have to pick between the Pay-for-Performance contract and the SOAR One-Time Service Funding? .....pg.2
4. If my organization applies for both funding options and is awarded a Pay-for-Performance contract but not the SOAR One-Time Service Funding, can I revise my proposed # of staff and individuals served prior to contracting. ....pg.2
5. Are projects held to the proposed number of applications expected to be completed during the grant year or percent of FTE dedicated? .....pg.2-3
6. Does the Continuum of Care or Minnesota Tribal Housing Collaborative need to select *one* application to 'endorse' through the Certification form/process? .....pg.3
7. What certification and statements am I required to submit? .....pg.3-4
8. Is it an expectation that the applicant organization hire a person whose full-time duties are dedicated to SOAR services for the One-Time Service Funding opportunity?.....pg.4
9. What are the training expectations and availability? .....pg.4
10. Can applicants complete SOAR training prior to the grant period or submission of the grant application? .....pg.5
11. What can a SOAR provider anticipate for number of visits to medical professionals, SSA, medical records? .....pg.5
12. Can SOAR One-Time Service funding be used for cases at the appeals level? .....pg.5
13. Will applicants receive confirmation that their application was received? .....pg.5
14. Is DHS seeking applications for vulnerable communities other than homeless? .....pg.5
15. Are the Pay-for-Performance grants limited to a certain dollar amount? .....pg.5
16. What is the mileage reimbursement rate? .....pg.5
17. What is included as allowable fringe benefits in the SOAR One-Time Service grant budget?.....pg.6

## Questions and Responses

1. My organization is small and I'm concerned about the insurance requirements. Will our ability to get sufficient coverage make our organization ineligible to apply?

If you feel the insurance requirements put a financial burden on the organization or if they make you hesitant to apply, please consult with the SOAR Co-Leads [Dawn](#) or [Erin](#). You may be able to request an exception through the submission of the [Exceptions to Terms and Conditions Form, DHS-7019-ENG](#) (PDF) along with your proposal. Based on the characteristics of the applicant and relevant circumstances, DHS will consider, on a case-by-case basis, all insurance exception requests during the contract negotiation process.

2. My organization currently contracts with DHS to provide Social Security Advocacy and/or SOAR services. Are we eligible to apply?

Yes! If you are a current DHS-contracted Social Security Advocacy provider, you can apply to expand your contract to include SOAR services at the [SOAR payment rates](#) (PDF). You are also eligible to apply for the SOAR One-Time Service funding.

If you are a current DHS-contracted SOAR provider or dual SOAR and Social Security Advocacy provider, you are eligible to apply for the SOAR One-Time Service funding. You do not need to apply to maintain your current SOAR contract.

3. This RFP has two funding options, do I have to pick between the Pay-for-Performance contract and the SOAR One-Time Service Funding?

All applicants must apply for the Pay-For-Performance contract. The SOAR One-Time Service Funding is a more competitive pool and requires the submission of the [Budget and Narrative, CoC/MTC Certification Form](#) along with additional reporting requirements.

4. If my organization applies for both funding options and is awarded a Pay-for-Performance contract but not the SOAR One-Time Service Funding, can I revise my proposed # of staff and individuals served prior to contracting?

Yes. The goal of this RFP is to expand the number of SOAR certified and dedicated providers across the state because we believe SOAR works! If you are not awarded the SOAR One-Time Service Funding, we hope that you would still consider serving individuals using the SOAR model through a Pay-For-Performance contract. We will work with you to negotiate the work plan and to ensure that staff are trained and supported.

5. Are projects held to the proposed number of applications expected to be completed during the grant year or percent of FTE dedicated?

The numbers of proposed applications completed and % of dedicated FTEs are scored as part of the available points in Section B.1. Proposed SOAR Dedicated Services will become the basis for the work plan, if awarded. Selected providers should work closely with DHS to negotiate their final work plan and to revise, as needed, throughout the grant period. We understand that there may be staff turnover or a change in available resources within your organization that could

affect SOAR service delivery and strongly encourage close communication with SOAR State Leads.

DHS reserves the right to terminate any contract with a 30-day written notice. The SOAR One-Time Service grant will have a more thorough and regular performance review while the Pay-for-Performance contracts are payment-motivated to reach or exceed their target number of completed applications.

6. Does the Continuum of Care or Minnesota Tribal Housing Collaborative need to select *one* application to ‘endorse’ through the Certification form/process?

We have limited grant dollars available for the SOAR One-time Service Funding grant opportunity that, ideally, will be distributed by Continuum of Care region and the Minnesota Tribal Housing Collaborative. The community feedback provided through the [Certification form](#) will inform the evaluation review and score (Section B.3. Community Planning & Collaboration). We do not expect these planning entities to have the program expertise to select one project in the case that there are multiple organizations applying.

We are interested in the organization engaging the community in the planning of the SOAR project in the context of the other services available within the region as well as the community’s feedback on the proposal. We encourage all interested organizations to apply; the pay-for-performance funding option is more broadly available and speaks to one of the goals of the RFP ‘to expand the number of contracted agencies providing SOAR services across Minnesota’.

7. What certification and statements am I required to submit?

It is ultimately the applicant’s responsibility to review each of the Statements and Certifications in Section D to determine what is required for the type and size of the organization. However, here is some helpful tips:

1. [Responder Information/Declarations Form- Grant RFP, DHS-7020](#) (PDF) – applicable to all. Check box and submit form
2. Proof of insurance (Select one) – applicable to all. If you do not accept all insurance requirements, you must submit the [Exceptions to Terms and Conditions Form, DHS-7019-ENG](#) (PDF)
3. Human rights compliance
  - Submit [STATE of Minnesota Affirmative Action Data Page - Grant RFP - DHS-7016-ENG](#) (PDF) if total contract is greater than \$100K (recommended)
  - Submit Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) documentation or check that you will comply if awarded a contract (for non-MN org - Box B) or marked exemption (Box C ) for organizations with less than 40 FTEs
  - Submit [STATE of Minnesota - Equal Pay Certificate - DHS-7075-ENG](#) (PDF) if total contract could exceed \$500K
4. Submit [Certificate Regarding Lobbying Form - DHS-7017-ENG](#) (PDF) if total contract is greater than \$100K (recommended to submit)
5. Documentation of fiscal responsibility – applicable to all.

6. Exceptions to the grant contract terms (Select one) – applicable to all. If you do **NOT** accept all of the State of Minnesota’s terms and conditions, you must submit an [Exceptions to Terms and Conditions Form, DHS-7019-ENG](#) (PDF)
  7. Submit [Trade Secret/Confidential Data Notice-Grant RFPDHS-7015-ENG](#) (PDF) – applicable to all and check one box
  8. Disclosure of federal funding (Select one) – if you receive federal funding, submit [Disclosure of Funding Form - Grant RFP - DHS-7018-ENG](#) (PDF)
  9. Disclosure of funding. I certify that – check all that apply
  10. Final certification– check all that apply
8. Is it an expectation that the applicant organization hire a person whose full-time duties are dedicated to SOAR services for the One-Time Service Funding opportunity?

Nationally and within Minnesota’s SOAR program, staff dedicated to the provision of SOAR services have shown great success and was the impetus for the focus of this RFP. We are looking to see that the *majority* of the duties of the individual(s) funded through the One-Time Service Funding opportunity are dedicated to SOAR.

We encourage applicants to look creatively at how the services your organization currently provides may compliment SOAR services and if reorganization of those resources could optimize SOAR services to clients. For example, staff who conduct outreach and assessment could assist with completing some of the SOAR documentation and facilitate a transition to the dedicated SOAR staff person or an administrative worker who could take on the gathering of medical documentation. Clearly indicate your plan in the project description and budget narrative.

The dedicated FTE(s) does not necessarily need to be a new hire. If you currently have staff who implement SOAR on a very limited basis, you may increase the % of their duties to SOAR and update their position description ([example SOAR position description](#)).

9. What are the training expectations and availability?

The successful completion of the [SOAR Online training](#) is required. Pay-for-Performance contracted providers must complete this prior to submitting invoices. The One-Time Service Funded providers are required to successfully complete the SOAR Online training by the end of the first Quarter (by March 31, 2019). DHS will offer a virtual SOAR Online Course – as a Training Cohort model for folks interested in meeting weekly for 4 weeks to check-in on the online material and practice case.

DHS offers 5 SOAR Fundamental 2-day Trainings per year across the State. This training is a companion to the SOAR Online training and highlights differences in the Minnesota process. This trainings is also required. The in-person SOAR Fundamental Training cannot be a replacement for the SOAR Online training.

Contracted SOAR providers are required to attend at least 4 SOAR events (trainings, webinars, etc.). DHS hosts bi-monthly Technical Assistance sessions with both in-person and remote participation options. The national [SOAR TA Center](#) offers regular webinars and provider phone calls.

10. Can applicants complete SOAR training prior to the grant period or submission of the grant application?

Yes! The [SOAR Online training](#) is a free, web-based course that is available anytime. It takes approximately 20 hours to complete. If you are awarded the SOAR One-Time Service grant, staff training time can only be an eligible expense after the start of the grant period.

11. What can a SOAR provider anticipate for number of visits to medical professionals, SSA, medical records?

This will vary greatly with each individual the SOAR provider supports. People experiencing homelessness often do not have recent or sufficient medical records to support their disability claim. In these cases, a SOAR provider may work with the individual over months to ensure that they have transportation and support to establish a medical history before they even apply for Social Security disability benefits.

12. Can SOAR One-Time Service funding be used for cases at the appeals level?

No. SOAR is geared towards assisting individuals at the initial application and reconsideration levels. Since it is unlikely a decision would be made at an appeal council level within the two year grant period, we do not believe this would be a good use of the limited SOAR One-Time Service funds. DHS contracted Social Security Advocacy providers, approvals at the appeal council may be invoiced to DHS (see [payment rates](#)).

13. Will applicants receive confirmation that their application was received?

Yes. If you are submitting the application and attachments via email or hand-delivered, an email confirmation will be sent confirming receipt. Please allow two business days for response.

14. Is DHS seeking applications for vulnerable communities other than homeless?

No. SOAR is specifically aimed to assist people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. The application does inquire how the organization will provide equitable and culturally sensitive services to diverse populations, especially those experiencing disparities, including racial and ethnic communities including American Indians, LGBTQI communities, Disability status and Veterans.

15. Are the Pay-for-Performance grants limited to a certain dollar amount?

No. Pending any shortage of funds, the amount paid out through Pay-for-Performance grants are not limited.

16. What is the mileage reimbursement rate?

DHS reimburses mileage at the IRS rate (NOTE: rates change annually. Current IRS rate is 54.5 cents/mi). Mileage is only reimbursed for application assistance, assessments and consultative exams between 60-100 miles roundtrip.

17. What is included as allowable fringe benefits in the SOAR One-Time Service grant budget?

Fringe is any employment benefit (such as a pension, health insurance or paid leave) granted by an employer that has a monetary value but does not affect basic wage rates.