



City of Atlanta
Office of the Public
Defender

Advocacy • Outreach • Access

Our staff is committed to sharing our time, expertise, and resources to engage the communities and constituents we serve.



SOAR  WORKS
GEORGIA



What is SOAR?

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) is an approach that helps states increase access to mainstream benefits for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness through strategic planning, training and technical assistance.

Using five SOAR critical components, case managers gather information for SSA and DDS.

1. Serving as the Applicant's Representative
2. Collecting and Submitting Medical Record
3. Writing and Submitting a Medical Summary Report (MSR)
4. Obtaining a Co-Signature on the MSR by an Acceptable Medical Source
5. Completing a Quality Review of Applications Prior to Submission

Key Eligibility Criteria

The following 4 characteristics represent key eligibility criteria for SSA disability benefits

- Applicant has a serious mental illness or exhibits symptoms and/or has serious physical illnesses that affect their ability to work at a [substantial gainful level](#)
- The illness(es) or condition(s) have lasted or are expected to last for at least 12 months or are expected to result in death
- Individual is currently exhibiting symptoms of mental illness or has periods with worsening of symptoms that prevent sustainable employment
- For applicants with mental illness, they have marked restrictions in at least 2 of these functional areas, or extreme limitations in one area

Recommended Questions for Assessors

1. Have you ever received a monthly check for Social Security disability or SSI? If so, are you still receiving checks? If not, when did they stop?
2. Tell us about any mental or physical health problems that make it difficult for you to work. Have you been able to earn SGA* []*?
3. Do you have difficulties in any of the following areas?
 - Understand, remember or apply information (ability to learn, understand instructions, provide explanation, problem solve, use reason and judgment in work related decisions)
 - Interact with others (ability to relate to and work with supervisors, co-workers and the public)
 - Concentrate, persist or maintain pace (ability to maintain focus, complete tasks, attend appointments, remain on task at a sustained pace)
 - Adapt or manage oneself (regulate emotions, control behavior, maintain well-being in the work setting, respond to demands, adapt to changes)
 - Physical activities (walking, standing, sitting, lifting, etc.)
4. Have you received any treatment for these conditions in the past (in the past year)? If so, where?
5. Are you already working with someone to apply for benefits? Do you want to speak to someone about applying for benefits?
6. Are you interested in talking with someone about employment supports?



CITY OF ATLANTA OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER
THE HOLISTIC EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

“GETTING THE JOB IS JUST THE FIRST STEP...”





City of Atlanta, Office of the Public Defender

“A Holistic Practice”

The mission of the Public Defender's Office is to provide a zealous legal defense to persons charged with offenses before the Atlanta Municipal Court. Legal representation includes expert analysis of the charges, development of effective defense strategies, and holistic attention to collateral issues that can influence unlawful conduct. **They seek partnerships with community-based providers to ensure that accountability in the criminal justice system includes restorative measures that can improve the quality of life for the client and public safety in the community.**

Holistic Defense Goals:

- Seamless access to services that meet legal and **social supports needs**
- **Dynamic, interdisciplinary communication**
- Social workers & Advocates with an inter-disciplinary skillset
- **A robust understanding of, and a connection to, the community served**



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➤ **HEP** is a Community Based Employment Services Program that assists individuals in pursuing competitive employment in the community.

- ✚ Full Time
- ✚ Health Care Benefits
- ✚ Dental
- ✚ Vision
- ✚ Basic Life & AD&D Insurance
- ✚ Short Term Disability
- ✚ Long Term Disability
- ✚ 401(K) Employee Savings Plan
- ✚ Employee Stock Purchase Plan
- ✚ Paid Vacation
- ✚ Employee Assistance Program

- **HEP** aims to bolster confidence and self-esteem by assisting with psychosocial and vocational assessments, job searches, interview skills, and job development.
- Individuals are provided with support services before and after job placement, referrals to community supplementary services.
- **HEP** serves individuals with a variety of barriers to employment, including legal history, medical, substance use and/or mental health disorders, homelessness, and other obstacles.
- Individuals may be referred to the **HEP** through a number of community-based programs.



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➤ **Your Money - Your Goals
(Income Management)**

- ❖ **Bank account(s)**
- ❖ **No longer cashing checks at the liquor store**
- ❖ **Checking**
- ❖ **Savings (with a purpose in mind)**
- ❖ **Second Chance Banking**
- ❖ **Pulling Credit Reports**
- ❖ **Eliminating Negative Credit**
- ❖ **Market Rate Housing**
- ❖ **Rental Mortgage**
- ❖ **Automobile Ownership**

➤ **Follow-up and Support**

- ❖ **Monthly contact.**
- ❖ **Self-Care Plan**
- ❖ **Maintaining employment**
- ❖ **Work/life Balance**

➤ **No Recidivism**



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CLIENT MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA PRIOR TO REFERRAL



← State Driver's License or ID



← Social Security Card



← Stable Housing



← Pass a Drug Test



← HEP Referral Form

L.I.F.T.S

Lawyers Initiative for Transforming Society



What is L.I.F.T.S.?

L.I.F.T.S. warrant program is a program designed to assist homeless/unhoused individuals working with agencies like yours as they face the legal obstacles preventing them from obtaining shelter or housing or employment, and specifically to help non-legal industry individuals begin to understand how to get those warrants lifted.

How does L.I.F.T.S Work?

- We will attempt to track down the origin of the warrant and help the participant understand what steps they need to take to resolve the warrant to the best of our ability.
- We cannot provide direct representation or legal advice on the warrants, but if needed we will work to locate people who can do this using our public defender and legal aid legal networks throughout the U.S. Where the warrant is out of the City of Atlanta, we can arrange to provide direct representation on the warrant and the underlying case if the participant will complete and return the application for appointment of counsel.





**Questions
&
Answers**

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