

# 2014

**PRELIMINARY APPLICATION FOR  
SSI/SSDI OUTREACH AND RECOVERY (SOAR) PROGRAM**

**A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT  
SPECIAL PROJECT PILOT PROGRAM**

**DIVISION OF HOUSING**



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF  
ADMINISTRATION**

## SECTION I

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## SECTION II

### INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin Department of Administration, Division of Housing (DOH) has been providing funding for five SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) programs for several years and is now pleased to announce the initiation of a special project that will fund 3-4 new or expanding SOAR programs in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) non-entitlement areas.

This publication describes the CDBG-SOAR Special Project funding process. It includes the instructions and form required of units of general local government (UGLGs) interested in submitting a Letter of Intent to Apply for CDBG-SOAR funds.

Funding for the CDBG program is provided to the State of Wisconsin by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). CDBG funds are under the general oversight of the Wisconsin Department of Administration's Division of Housing (DOH), in compliance with Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 as amended.

The Letter of Intent to Apply for CDBG-SOAR funds (see Section XVI of this publication) must be **received** by the Division of Housing no later than 4:00PM, Friday, December 19, 2014.

For more information, please contact:

Donna Wrenn, Grant Specialist- Advanced  
[Donna.Wrenn@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Donna.Wrenn@wisconsin.gov)

Tel. 608.264-7625

Wisconsin Department of Administration  
Division of Housing  
PO Box 7970  
Madison, WI 53707-7970

## SECTION III

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) program serves people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and have a mental illness or a co-occurring substance use disorder. SOAR clients may include people who are homeless or who are returning to the community from institutions (e.g. jails, prisons or hospitals).

The SOAR program helps increase access to mainstream government benefits by expediting the entire SSI/SSDI application process. Case managers that work with the eligible population are trained in the **Stepping Stones to Recovery** course in which they learn the SOAR technique for writing and submitting effective applications in an expeditious manner.

DOH has set aside a minimum of \$225,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to support the development of new SOAR programs or the expansion of current SOAR programs into new service areas. Only units of general local government (UGLGs) (towns, cities, counties, villages and CDBG regions) [see page 6 for a definition of CDBG Regions] that are CDBG non-entitlement areas are eligible to apply to DOH for this funding. See page 6 for a list of CDBG Entitlement areas that **are NOT** eligible for SOAR funds.

SOAR services may be provided by a sub-recipient (non-for-profit organization) with whom the UGLG has a contract or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The applicant must document that current staff members of the sub-recipient agency have completed the **Stepping Stones to Recovery** training. Applications covering multiple counties or regions are encouraged.

All CDBG programs must meet a programmatic National Objective. The National Objective to be met by the CDBG-SOAR program is “low-and moderate-income benefit.” Clients served must be at or below 30% of County Median Income (CMI) as established by annually by HUD. Many beneficiaries will have no income.

#### NEED FOR THE PROGRAM

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) are disability income benefits administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA), which also provides Medicaid and/or Medicare health insurance to individuals who are eligible. The process to apply for SSI/SSDI is complicated and extremely difficult to navigate. Nationally, only about 29 percent of individuals who apply for these benefits are approved on initial application, and appeals take an average of *one year* to complete. For those who have a mental illness, substance use issues, or co-occurring substance use disorders that impair cognition, the application process is even more difficult. Approval on initial application for people who are homeless and who have no one to assist them is only about *10-15 percent* – yet accessing these benefits is often a critical first step in recovery and ending homelessness.

Securing SSI/SSDI benefits for Wisconsin’s people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness and have a mental illness or a co-occurring substance use disorder, not only confers an added quality of life for the client, but reduces the overall program cost associated with serving this population (e.g., shelter stays, incarceration, emergency department visits, and hospitalizations).

The SOAR approach to providing services helps to increase access to mainstream benefits, especially SSI/SSDI for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have a mental illness or a co-occurring substance use disorder, expediting the entire application process. Case managers are trained in the **Stepping Stones to**

**Recovery** course in which they learn the SOAR technique for writing and submitting effective SSI/SSDI applications in an expeditious manner. The current DOH-funded agencies have an average success rate of about 72% upon initial submission of an SSI/SSDI application.

## SECTION IV

### DEFINITIONS

#### A. **Division of Housing (DOH)**

The Division of Housing is the Wisconsin agency responsible for the direct administration of the CDBG-SOAR program.

#### B. **UGLG**

Units of general local government including cities, counties, towns, villages and CDBG regions as defined below.

#### C. **Entitlement City/County**

A city or urban county which receives CDBG funds directly from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Entitlement cities and counties are not eligible to receive CDBG funds from DOH. Below is list of entitlement cities which are **not eligible** to apply for CDBG-SOAR funds.

#### **HUD CDBG Entitlement Areas** (not eligible to apply for CDBG SOAR funds.)

Appleton  
Beloit  
Dane County\*  
Eau Claire  
Fond du Lac  
Green Bay  
Janesville  
Kenosha  
La Crosse  
Madison  
Milwaukee  
Milwaukee County\*\*  
Neenah  
Oshkosh  
Racine  
Sheboygan  
Superior  
Waukesha County\*\*\*  
Wausau  
Wauwatosa  
West Allis

\* Cottage Grove, Dane, Edgerton, Maple Bluff, Mazomanie, Rockdale are non-entitlement areas

\*\* River Hills in a non-entitlement area

\*\*\*Chenequa, Oconomowoc Lake are non-entitlement areas.

**E. Homeless**

For purposes of the CDBG-SOAR program, “homeless” is defined as:

- (a) an individual or family that lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; or
- (b) an individual or family that has a primary nighttime residence that is:
  - (1) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations including welfare hotels, congregate shelters and transitional housing for persons with mental illness;
  - (2) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
  - (3) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

The term does not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an Act of Congress or a State law.

**F. Imminent Risk of Homelessness** is defined in Wisconsin Statute 49.13(1m) (am).  
It reads:

For purposes of this section, the individual is considered to be homeless, or to be facing impending homelessness, if any of the following applies:

- (a) The individual must leave his/her current housing because it is uninhabitable as determined by a local building inspector, a local health department or another appropriate local authority.
- (b) The individual is experiencing a financial crisis that makes it very difficult for the family to make a rent payment, a mortgage payment, or property tax payment and the family has been notified it will be required to leave its current housing if it does not make a payment immediately. The individual has a current residence that is a shelter designed for temporary accommodation such as a motel, hotel, shelter facility or transitional shelter facility.
- (c) A member of the family was a victim of domestic abuse.
- (d) The individual is without a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence
- (e) The individual is living in a place that it is not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation.

Imminent risk of homelessness also includes doubled-up living arrangements where the individual’s name is not on the lease, arrears in rent/utility payments, living in temporary or transitional housing that carries a time limit, or being discharged from a healthcare or criminal justice institution without a place to live.

G. **Low Income (LI)**

LI means less than 30% of the county median income, or 30% of the state median income, whichever is greater, by family size, as annually determined by HUD. The 2014 income limits by percentage are listed [here](#).

H. **Serious and Persistent Mental Illness** is defined in Wisconsin Chapter 51 as

“...a mental illness which is severe in degree and persistent in duration, which causes a substantially diminished level of functioning in the aspects of daily living and an inability to cope with ordinary demands of life, which may lead to an inability to maintain stable adjustment and independent functioning without long-term treatment and support and may be of lifelong duration.”

I. **Co-Occurring Serious Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders** is defined as

“ a disorder that meets the definition of serious and persistent mental illness and meets the diagnostic criteria found in the current *American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* for a psychoactive substance use disorder, not including nicotine.

## SECTION V

### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- A. To be eligible to request funding under this CDBG-SOAR program, the applicant must be an UGLG (city, counties, towns, villages or CDBG regions) not participating in the CDBG Entitlement Program and be willing to contract with an agency that can document that current staff members of the sub-recipient agency have completed the **Stepping Stones to Recovery** training.
- B. An applicant may submit only one application for CDBG-SOAR funds per funding cycle, unless the application is for geographic expansion of a current project.

## SECTION VI

### ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

CDBG-SOAR funds may be used for:

- Outreach to, and engagement of, those who are homeless (or at risk of being homeless), have a diagnosed mental illness, and would benefit from having an SSI/SSDI application completed.
- Case management services as they are related to homelessness, mental illness and SSI/SSDI application and submission using the Stepping Stones to Recovery method. Case management may continue only until the SSI/SSDI application process is complete (including the appeals process).
- Referrals for primary health services, job training, educational services, relevant housing services and other mainstream services.
- **Stepping Stones to Recovery** training for appropriate staff. Applicant must show proof that current staff members, or those of the subcontracted agency, have completed the **Stepping Stones to Recovery** training.

## SECTION VII

### INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Any activities not listed in Section VI (above) are ineligible.

## SECTION VIII

### ESTIMATED FUNDING LEVEL

Approximately \$225,000 will be available to CDBG-SOAR applicants. It is expected that 3-4 awards will be made.

## **SECTION IX**

### **GRANT AWARD MODIFICATION**

The Division of Housing reserves the right to adjust the award amount from the amount requested in the application based on the following criteria:

- \* CAPACITY to complete the proposed activities.
- \* LMI BENEFIT of the proposed activities.
- \* FUNDING AVAILABILITY.
- \* PERFORMANCE and PROGRESS in any and all other DOH programs.
- \* FINANCIAL AUDIT results from any and all other DOH programs.

## **SECTION X**

### **CDBG CONTRACT**

The CDBG-SOAR contract performance period will be approximately 18 months.

## **SECTION XI**

### **FUNDING CYCLE**

The Letter of Intent to Apply for the 2014 CDBG-SOAR Special Project program must be received no later than 4:00PM, Friday, December 19, 2014. Final applications will be due in early 2015.

## **SECTION XII**

### **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

DOH reserves the right to amend, modify, or withdraw this application package and any of the grant program instructions, procedures, or rules contained herein and may exercise such right at any time and without notice and without liability to any applicant or other parties for their expenses in the preparation of an application or otherwise.

## **SECTION XIII**

### **FUND DISBURSAL**

Grant funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis.

## **SECTION XIV**

### **2014 CDBG-SOAR TIMELINE**

Preliminary Application Release and Publication

Preliminary Application (Letter of Intent) Deadline

Final Application Deadline

Final Award Letter

Implementation Training for Program Administrators

CDBG-SOAR Contracts

The preliminary application will be sent to interested parties. It can also be found on the DOA website.

## SECTION XV

### INITIAL APPLICATION PROCESS

1. All CDBG non-entitlement municipalities, currently in good standing with DOH-administered programs, are eligible to apply for CDBG-SOAR funds.
2. The Division of Housing's CDBG-SOAR program has approximately \$225,000 available for funding eligible applicants.
3. Chief Elected Officials may inform DOH of their community's interest in administering a CDBG-SOAR program by submitting a "Letter of Intent to Apply for CDBG-SOAR" funds.
4. After the Letters of Intent to Apply are reviewed, DOH will send an "Invitation to Apply" letter to interested applicants. This letter will invite applicants to submit the Final Application for CDBG-SOAR funds.
5. The Final Application document will include the instructions and forms needed to receive funding. Be prepared to submit: a complete administration plan and narrative, a budget, an adopted citizen participation plan (including documentation of the required public hearing), a fair housing ordinance, a completed Statement of Assurances, an anti-displacement plan, a lobbying certification form, and documentation of required training (**Stepping Stones to Recovery**). The Final Application for CDBG-SOAR funds will be due in early 2015.
6. Final applications will be reviewed to ensure that all required documentation is satisfactory and complies with CDBG requirements.
7. Following the signing of a contract, you will be responsible for developing an environmental review record for the activities proposed in the Final Application.
8. Local units of government submitting a Final Application will be awarded funds based, in part, on available funding.

**SECTION XVI**

**FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS**

Complete the Letter of Intent to Apply found at the end of this packet, and mail it to:

Donna Wrenn, SOAR Grant Administrator  
Division of Housing  
Department of Administration  
P.O. Box 7970  
Madison, WI 53707-7970

The Letter of Intent to Apply **must have the original signature** of the Chief Elected Official, and must be received by DOH **no later 4:00PM, Friday, December 19, 2014.**

Any questions regarding this application should be directed to:

Donna Wrenn  
608/ 264-7625  
[Donna.Wrenn@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Donna.Wrenn@wisconsin.gov)

**LETTER OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR CDBG-SOAR FUNDS**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chief Elected Official's name) (UGLG name),  
located in \_\_\_\_\_ County, Wisconsin, hereby express our interest in participating in the  
Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant - SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery  
(CDBG-SOAR) program. I understand that federal monies are available to administer a CDBG-  
SOAR program in Wisconsin CDBG non-entitlement municipalities.

Check one:

\_\_\_\_\_ We have staff who have passed **Stepping Stones to Recovery** training, and will  
administer the CDBG-SOAR program, should we receive funding.

\_\_\_\_\_ We will contract with a **Stepping Stones to Recovery** certified non-profit agency to  
administer the CDBG-SOAR program should we receive funding.

The non-profit agency with whom we will subcontract for the provision of SOAR services is  
\_\_\_\_\_. They have at least one staff member who has  
attended the **Stepping Stones to Recovery** two-day training session.

The county/counties (not including Entitlement municipalities) to be covered by the proposed  
program include:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

By means of this letter, I am requesting that the Division of Housing, Department of Administration,  
include the \_\_\_\_\_ (UGLG name) in the 2014 CDBG-SOAR  
application selection process.

I understand that if the \_\_\_\_\_ (UGLG name) receives a 2014 CDBG-  
SOAR grant award, CDBG requirements must be met.

I hereby attest that the \_\_\_\_\_ (UGLG name) will comply with all of the  
provisions of the Community Development Block Grant program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Elected Official's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date