SOAR caseworkers often need information and records from prison systems to complete applications. Knowledge about previous incarcerations, infractions for behavior in prison, and treatment for medical and mental health issues are useful for SOAR caseworkers as they develop an application. Documentation from prisons can be used to highlight functioning difficulties, the duration of medical and mental health conditions, and the applicant’s functioning and symptoms while sober. Below, please find information on how to request records from both the North Carolina state prison system and the federal prison system.

As with all record requests, SOAR caseworkers need to utilize a Compound Authorization by submitting two signed releases per request. One release will be for the SOAR caseworker’s agency and the other release will be for the Social Security Administration. Caseworkers can find more information about Compound Authorizations on the NCCEH website.

North Carolina Prison System
Background Information:
The North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NC DPS) website has a useful offender search function. SOAR caseworkers are able to look up their applicant through the website to see previous periods of incarceration including length of time in prison, conviction history, and infractions that the applicant received in prison. This summary can assist SOAR caseworkers in developing an applicant’s personal history and provide information for interviews with the SOAR applicant.

Medical Records:
To request medical records from NC DPS, SOAR caseworkers submit the NC DPS Authorization for Release of Information form. Caseworkers need to be sure the entire form is completed and signed. The assigned inmate number for the applicant can be found using the offender search function on the NC DPS website.

Along with the release form, SOAR caseworkers should include a cover letter explaining what records they are requesting, how the records will be used, and the SOAR caseworker’s contact information. The records department normally sends records for the last two years the applicant was in the prison system, but if caseworkers need further documentation, an explanation needs to be included in the cover letter.

Both the cover letter and release should be faxed to:
   NC Department of Public Safety
   Medical Records Department- Prison Division
   Phone: (919) 715-1570
   Fax: (919) 715-1581
Federal Prison System
Information about the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) and policies concerning records requests can be found on the BOP website. In order to request records, a SOAR applicant must complete a Certification of Identity (FORM DOJ-361).

Once completed, Form DOJ-361 should be submitted by either:

1. Mailing the request to:
   FOIA/PA Section
   Office of General Counsel, Room 924
   Federal Bureau of Prisons
   320 First Street, N.W.
   Washington, DC 20534

2. Emailing the request to: OGC_EFOIA@BOP.GOV

Caseworkers will receive records that include information about the applicant’s time in prison and medical care received.

   If you have questions about accessing prison records, please email soar@ncceh.org.