



**The SOAR Initiative works to prevent overdoses and save lives through harm reduction. By building innovative technology that promotes connection and providing on-the-ground support throughout Ohio, we strive to empower people who use drugs to build strong, healthy communities.**

### **Organization History:**

The SOAR Initiative was founded nearly five years ago, in 2019, by a group of students at the Ohio State University. After spending time and building relationships with people who use drugs and harm reduction activists, the early SOAR leaders noticed several gaps in the harm reduction resources available in Ohio. Namely, they discovered a massive unmet need for people who use drugs to know what was in the drugs they used. SOAR worked over the following years to develop its two flagship programs. “Strip Club” is a service which anonymously mails free fentanyl test strips and other safe use supplies to users and lay distributors across the state, and the Deadly Batch Alert system utilizes user-submitted reports and overdose data from public health officials to send text alerts to subscribers when overdoses surge or particularly dangerous batches of drugs are found.

Over the course of these developments, SOAR grew organizationally from a student group to a fully-fledged nonprofit. With financial support from the OhioMHAS State Opioid and Stimulant Response, AIDS United, the Comer Family Foundation, private donors, and other funders, we brought on a team of harm reduction activists across Ohio that includes a network of part-time grassroots outreach workers and two full-time employees based in our Columbus headquarters. We continue to work to expand our services, already some of the most extensive independent harm reduction programming in the state, to serve more people who use drugs both in Ohio and in pilot locations elsewhere. We seek new board members who believe in our harm reduction mission and come with the experiences and skills to improve and expand SOAR’s work and ultimately fight for a safe drug supply.

## **Roles and Responsibilities:**

The board of directors plays a pivotal role in overseeing the organization's functions, upholding its mission, and steering its strategic direction.

Responsibilities encompass setting and maintaining the organization's mission and vision, ensuring alignment with harm reduction and community support goals, and providing support to the daily implementation of those principles

We are a governing board, meaning that we actively participate in strategic planning, developing and approving long-term objectives, and providing guidance on significant strategic decisions. The board establishes governance policies, oversees ethical and legal compliance, and maintains the nonprofit's financial health. They play a crucial role in fundraising and resource development to sustain operations. Additionally, they oversee the executive director, actively engage in advocacy and public relations, monitor performance metrics, manage risks, facilitate community involvement, address conflicts, conduct evaluations, promote transparency, and foster board development to ensure diversity and effectiveness.

In essence, the board of directors is instrumental in upholding the nonprofit's effectiveness, sustainability, and ethical conduct, dedicated to its mission of reducing harm and supporting individuals and communities affected by drug-related issues.

## **Expectations:**

- Executive Board Members must attend at least nine Executive Board Meetings each year to remain in good standing on the Executive Board
- Time commitment – 1 hour meeting a month in addition to assisting the Executive Director with planning, decision-making, networking, fundraising, grants, or other needs according to the member's skills
- \$250/a year or \$25 a month expectation for board members. This expected contribution may be adjusted for those with lived experience and financial hardships, or with additional capacity to support.
- Preferably an Ohio resident

## **Desired Characteristics:**

1. *Legal Expertise:* We are actively seeking candidates with a legal background, particularly in the context of harm reduction, to provide invaluable insights into the legal aspects of our initiatives.
2. *Policy Proficiency:* Individuals with a strong policy background will play a vital role in shaping our strategic direction, helping us navigate the intricate policy landscape surrounding diversity, inclusivity, and harm reduction.
3. *Finance, Development, or Fundraising:* Ensuring long-term financial sustainability is one of the key tasks of SOAR's Executive Board. Candidates with a proven track record of success in helping nonprofits fund their work or with strong networks in the nonprofit space are strongly encouraged.
4. *Community Lived Experience:* We highly value candidates who bring firsthand experience as community members, as it enriches our decision-making with real-world perspectives and fosters a deeper connection to the communities we serve.
5. *Community Leadership:* We welcome leaders within their communities, individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to advocacy and have a proven track record of driving positive change.
6. *Harm Reduction Advocates & Specialists:* If you're a passionate advocate for harm reduction, your expertise will be instrumental in furthering our mission, and we encourage your application.
7. *Nonprofit Leadership:* SOAR remains a young organization that, while it has experienced rapid growth, needs experienced leaders to navigate the challenges of the ever-changing harm reduction, nonprofit, and drug policy worlds.
8. *Additional Desired Qualities:* While the above characteristics are key, we also appreciate candidates with skills and qualities typically sought for governing board members, such as strategic vision, fundraising acumen, networking abilities, and a dedication to our mission of promoting diversity and inclusivity.

***We are wholeheartedly committed to fostering a welcoming environment that values all perspectives. We invite individuals from diverse backgrounds to bring their unique experiences and insights to our board, helping us create a more inclusive and equitable future for all. Individuals with lived experience are highly preferred, but not required. Join us in making a difference and be a catalyst for positive change in our community.***

### **Application Process:**

Interested candidates can apply for a board position by submitting a resume and a letter of interest to Dennis Pales at [dennis@thesoarinitiative.org](mailto:dennis@thesoarinitiative.org). The deadline for applications is Monday, December 18th at 5 pm. We encourage applicants to include relevant references in their materials to help us better evaluate their qualifications and suitability for the board position.



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