

## Court Information Release



United States District Court  
Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division  
219 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60604

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**Contact:** Julie Hodek, Public Information Officer  
United States District Court for  
the Northern District of Illinois  
219 S. Dearborn St., #2548  
Chicago, IL 60604  
312-435-5693

### **Northern District of Illinois launches historic Sentencing Options that Achieve Results (SOAR) program**

*New collaborative initiative of U.S. District Court, U.S. Pretrial Services, Federal Defender Program and U.S. Attorney's Office provides alternative to incarceration for federal pretrial defendants*

Chicago, Ill. – Today the District Court for the Northern District of Illinois announces the launch of the Sentencing Options that Achieve Results (SOAR) program. Through treatment, sanction alternatives, and incentives to reinforce positive behavior, SOAR provides an alternative to incarceration for federal pretrial defendants.

“Our court is proud to lead the creation of this innovative program that keeps non-violent offenders out of prison but still holds them accountable while keeping our community safe and saving tax payer dollars,” said Chief Judge Rubén Castillo.

The initial class of ten participants will meet in bi-monthly court sessions with members of the SOAR Team to discuss participants' progress in his or her efforts to succeed: sobriety, constructive employment, education, crime-free and productive lifestyle. SOAR provides a higher level of supervision, programming, and judicial oversight for participants through a collaborative team approach, which involves judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, pretrial services officers and treatment providers. Participation in the SOAR program lasts from eighteen to twenty-four months. Successful completion of the program results in either the imposition of a non-custodial sentence, reduction to a misdemeanor conviction, or possible dismissal of the criminal charges.

SOAR was created through the collaborative partnership of the United States District Court, the United States Pretrial Services Office, the Federal Defender Program, and the United States Attorney's office. Members of the SOAR team include United States District Judge Amy St. Eve; United States Magistrate Judge Mary Rowland; Ann Marie Carey, Chief U.S. Pretrial Services; Vicki Kindred Meredith, Deputy Chief U.S. Pretrial Services; Carrie J. Holberg, Senior Officer U.S. Pretrial Services; Shoba Pillay, Assistant United States Attorney; Meghan Stack, Assistant United States Attorney; Robert Seeder, Chief Trial Attorney, Federal Defender Program; and Christina Farley Jackson, Staff Attorney, Federal Defender Program.

U.S. Pretrial Services identified the first class of participants who had no violent offense history and whose pending federal offense was not violent in nature.

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