# B2. NARRATIVE PROPOSAL – METHOD OF APPROACH

## B2.A. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

**The offeror shall submit the Offeror's plan for implementation of the eligibility determination and Removal of Designation processes. The Offeror's response shall include at a minimum: goals, objectives, timeline with milestones, and resource allocations. The Offeror may include applicable workflows, charts, diagrams, and written descriptions.**

### Goals and Objectives

Solari's goal is to implement a comprehensive statewide eligibility determination system for individuals living with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) or Serious Mental Illness (SMI). This goal will be achieved by using a three-pronged approach of staffing, operations, and SED integration. The objectives are:

1. Maintain the existing staffing structure for SMI determinations and add new team members to carry out SED determinations.
2. Build upon current processes for evaluating SMI applicants and integrate SED applications into those operations.
3. Customize existing SMI processes and integrate SED determinations into those systems.

### Staffing

Solari's SMI and SED program will be comprised of four (4) teams working in concert to ensure service delivery is clinically sound, timely, and compliant with stakeholder expectations. The clinical, appeals, eligibility and resource teams will all work together to render SMI and SED eligibility determinations and ensure individuals are connected with the appropriate level of care.

**Clinical Team:** The clinical team is currently comprised of eight (8) licensed psychologists and a board-certified psychiatrist. The primary role of the clinical team is rendering clinically appropriate SMI determinations and ensuring adherence to clinical guidelines set forth by AHCCCS. In addition to making determinations, psychologists also conduct face-to-face evaluations of applicants and participate in informal conferences.

Solari plans to hire two (2) additional psychologists to accommodate the increase in packets with the inclusion of SED evaluations. Two (2) of Solari's current psychologists will be assigned to the SED team. Each of these psychologists has more than 15 years' experience working with children. The new SED team will be led by Dr. Stephanie Vitanza who has worked with children for more than 25 years and has worked for Solari since 2015. Solari has two (2) additional psychologists that can be utilized to address any unanticipated increases in SED packet volume.

**Eligibility Team:** The eligibility team's primary responsibility is to support the work of the clinical team. They are tasked with collecting all relevant applicant information and documenting it in Solari's EHR. Additionally, this team of seven (7) staff members serves as the single point of contact to the applicant during the determination process.

To accommodate the increase of packets received with the inclusion of the SED determination process, Solari will hire at least one (1) additional eligibility specialist. This staff member must have specialized experience working with children, youth, and their guardians/caregivers.

**Appeals Team:** The appeals team includes five (5) staff members tasked with guiding individuals through all phases of the appeal process, ensuring that each step of the process is facilitated in accordance with the parameters established by AHCCCS. Team members also oversee informal conferences, send out required correspondence, and arrange transportation, if necessary, for the individual to participate in conferences, hearings, and further evaluations.

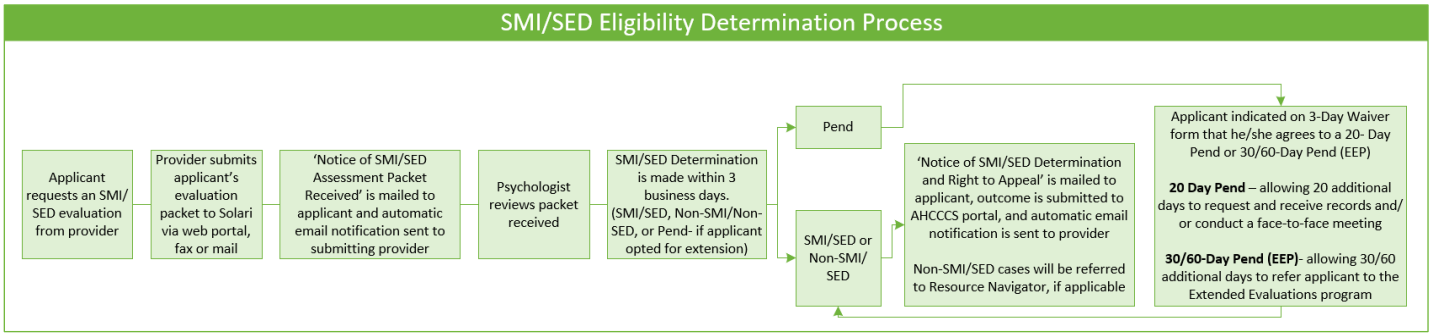
Solari will hire at least one (1) additional staff member to oversee appeals from SED applicants. Because children and their caregivers will be participating in informal conferences, Solari will hire staff with experience working with youth and families and will require additional training related to children's behavioral health issues.

**Resource Team:** The resource team is currently comprised of two (2) staff members: one (1) embedded in the eligibility team and the other in the appeals team. This is strategic, as individuals undergoing SMI evaluation often have Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) concerns that require the support of resource navigators to connect them to community services related to housing, food insecurity, employment, and substance use treatment, among others. Resource navigators connect with applicants when a non-SMI determination is rendered and through the appeals process to engage applicants at various entry points. Unmet SDOH needs often impact the SMI evaluation process and the resource team ensures individuals are supported as they transition between the general mental health and SMI/SED systems of care.

Solari will hire at least one (1) SED Resource Navigator. The issues facing children and their guardians/caregivers will be substantially different than those going through the SMI process. Accordingly, the SED Resource Navigator will be an individual with case management, and/or social work experience from Arizona's children's system of care.

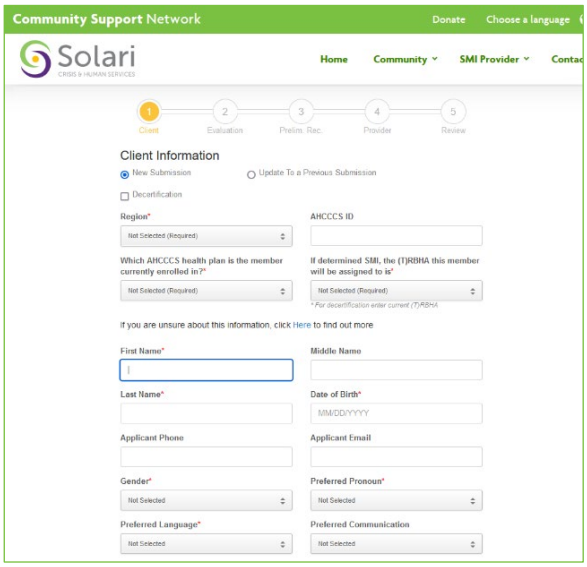
## SMI/SED Determination Process

Since 2014, Solari has partnered with AHCCCS to develop an effective and efficient SMI determination system. The following describes how the current best practice system will be expanded to incorporate SED determinations for children and youth.




## Assessment Submission

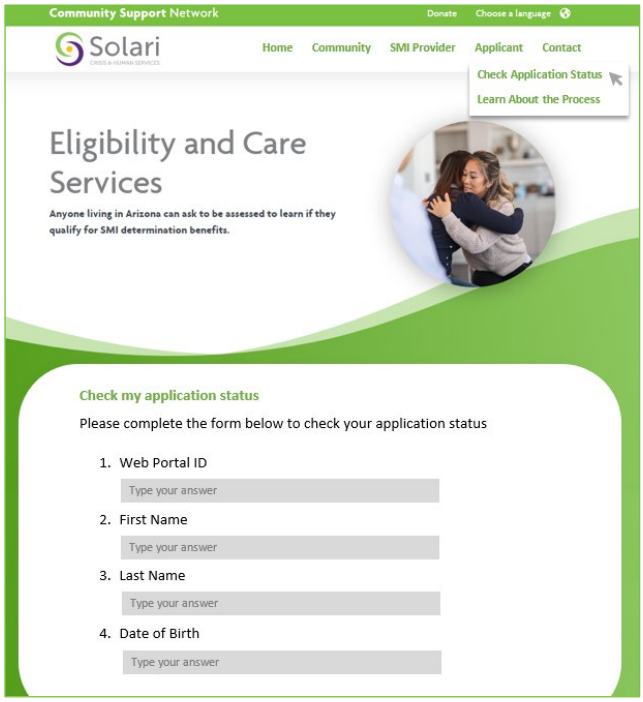
The SMI/SED determination processes begin when an individual or their guardian requests an assessment, or as part of a court order. The applicant will be examined by a qualified clinician as designated by AHCCCS. Once the assessment is completed, along with other documentation necessary to process the application, it is submitted to Solari for evaluation.




Solari will receive SMI and SED applications through a customized submission portal. The portal is a webpage where providers can submit application packets directly to Solari. Prior to go-live, the existing portal will be updated to collect LOCUS and CALOCUS scores and demographic data required by AHCCCS. When an application is submitted though the portal, the evaluator is automatically sent an email indicating that Solari has received the packet and they are provided a unique, seven-digit code to reference the application. Using the portal, Solari can record the exact moment the application is submitted, which provides accountability for timelines of submission. Further, the provider who completed the application has documentation that the packet was received.

Upon receipt of an evaluation packet, the information is uploaded into Solari's EHR and data warehouse. Solari is developing a custom Applicant Portal which will allow applicants to monitor the

status of their application as it proceeds through the determination process. The purpose of the portal is to provide a self-service method to empower applicants and their providers to easily check the application status. Additionally, the Applicant Portal will provide an explanation of the application timeline along with answers to frequently asked questions.

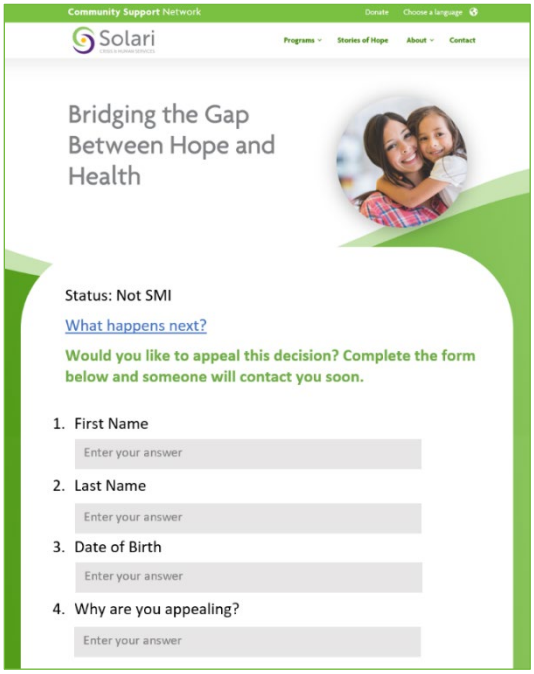



Once a packet is received, a staff member generates a letter notifying the applicant/health care decision maker (HCDM) that the evaluation packet was received and provides departmental contact information. Next, the packet goes into a queue to be assigned to a psychologist. The Solari psychologist will review and evaluate the entire assessment packet and make a determination within three (3) business days to determine if the applicant meets SMI or SED criteria. If an applicant allows, the psychologist may choose to utilize additional time to evaluate the case. Additional time may be 20, 30, or 60 days to obtain additional records, conduct clinical staffings, or enter into a substance use evaluation period.

If the Solari psychologist pends for an additional 20 days to obtain records, a Solari staff member will assist the applicant or their HDCMs in collecting their records. When Solari began administering the SMI evaluation process in 2014, it was discovered that the burden of obtaining mental health records was placed on applicants. Individuals being evaluated for SMI services may be functionally impaired, therefore it was determined that making applicants collect their records without any assistance created a barrier to receiving an appropriate determination.

After a Solari psychologist renders a determination, a Notice of Determination is sent to the applicant or guardian and an automated email is sent to the provider who prepared the assessment to notify them of the outcome.

## Appeals Process

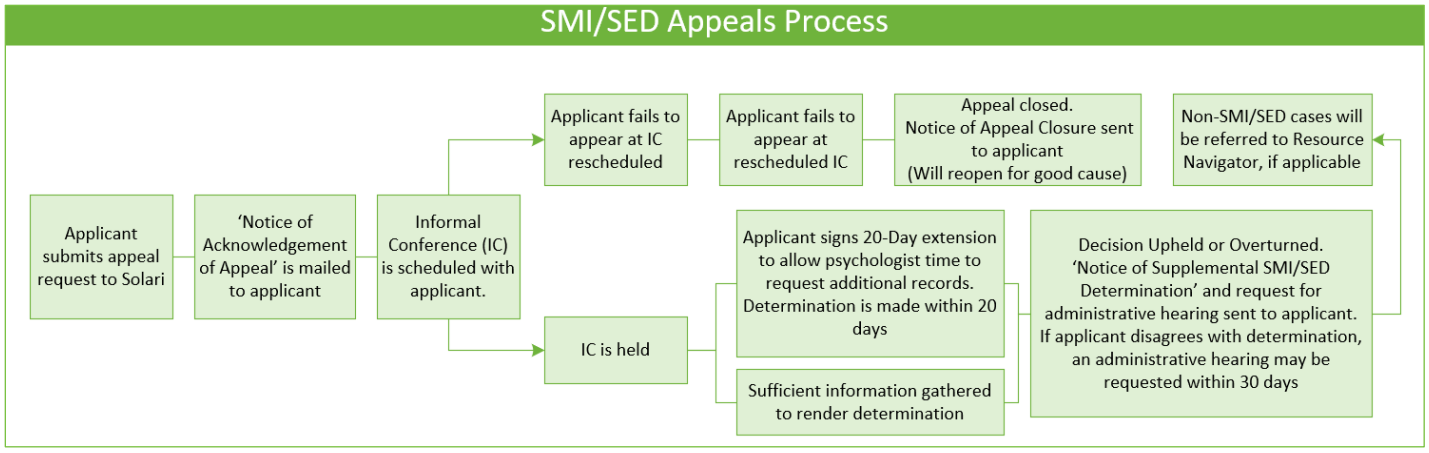



Once a non-SMI/SED decision has been rendered, the applicant or HCDM and the provider are notified of the applicant's right to appeal and given instructions on how to do so. Solari's new Applicant Portal will allow decisions to be appealed online. Further, the portal will provide applicants with real time updates and answers to frequently asked questions related to their appeal.

When an applicant or HCDM appeals a decision, Solari sends an applicant notice indicating that the appeal has been received. The same day the notice of appeal is sent by mail, the applicant or their HCDM is called by a Solari grievance and appeals specialist. The assigned grievance and appeals specialist will be the applicant's/HDCM's point of contact and will assist them through the appeals process. Within seven (7) days of receiving the applicant's/HCDM's request to open an appeal, an informal conference will be held.

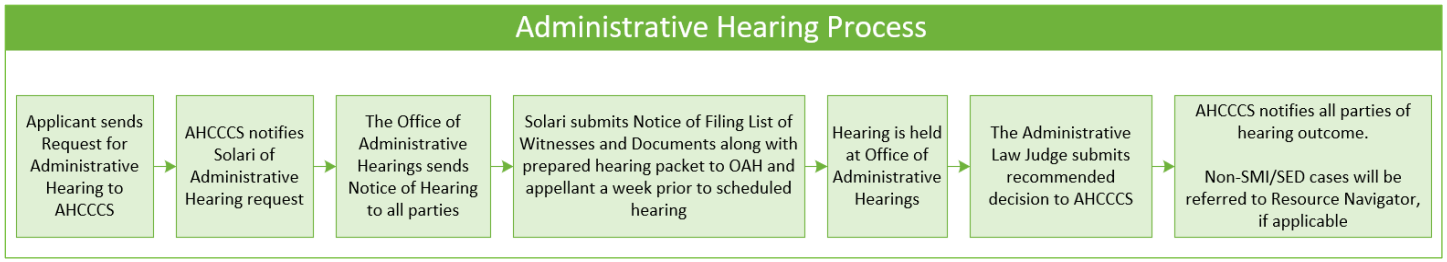
Solari has achieved applicant participation in informal conferences by increasing accessibility. Applicants can participate in an informal conference in person, by phone, or by video. If an applicant needs transportation to participate in the informal conference, Solari's appeal specialist will set up transportation on the applicant's behalf. Transportation will be extended to children and their HCDM's upon go-live. If an applicant is

uncomfortable using video conferencing and wishes to see a Solari psychologist or appeals specialist in person, Solari will utilize space from a local provider to conduct an informal conference.




## Hearings

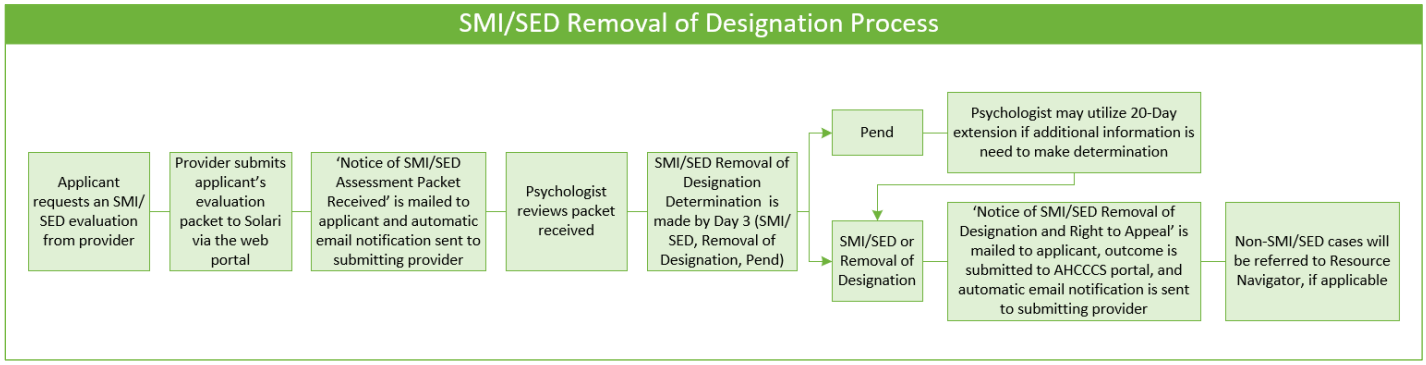
Applicants/HCDMs may request administrative hearings by contacting AHCCCS or Solari. The applicant's request for hearing is sent to the Arizona Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) where a hearing is scheduled before an administrative law judge. Because OAH only operates a single office in Maricopa County, applicants from greater Arizona generally participate by phone or video conference but may travel to OAH if they wish to participate in person. Solari offers applicants/HCDMs the option to participate by phone, from the Solari center in Tucson, or at a location convenient for the applicant. Solari has an attorney and psychologist present in person at the OAH offices for all administrative hearings unless the hearing is being held virtually.




## Removal of Designation Process

The removal of designation process follows the same formulation as an SMI or SED determination. The applicant, their HCDM, or their provider can request an evaluation for removal of designation. Once the evaluation is submitted to Solari, a comprehensive review of the individual's current medical records and other collateral material is conducted to render a determination of the individual's diagnostic and current level of functioning. Solari's determination can be appealed, and a fair hearing requested.

The removal of designation process is complex and may increase an individual's risk of decompensation, therefore significant clinical review of the individual's risk of deterioration, protective and risk factors are carefully evaluated. Every request for removal of designation is reviewed by the CMO. If it is determined that the individual no longer meets SMI/SED diagnostic and functional criteria, Solari staff clearly document the rationale for the removal of designation and notify AHCCCS and key stakeholders involved in providing care for the individual.




## SED Integration

While Solari has the existing system infrastructure in place to support SED determinations, there are steps that must be taken to integrate the SED process into the systems described above. They are as follows:

**Member Materials:** It will be necessary to develop forms and notices for the SED process and update the website and frequently asked questions. Solari will ensure all member materials adhere to ACOM 404, are family-centered, culturally competent, and approved by AHCCCS.

**SMI/SED Provider Portal:** The portal will need to be customized to include demographic fields and required assessment information. Solari will prepare a proposal for changes to be approved by AHCCCS, during readiness implementation.

**Internal Training:** Solari's CMO, Clinical Manager, and SED Lead will develop a SED training curriculum for clinicians that, at a minimum, includes professional training on LOCUS/CALOCUS. Solari will request AHCCCS review and approval of the training curriculum.

**Electronic Health Record:** The fields and forms used to document services provided, communications, and determinations will be updated to include the SED process, fields, and forms.

**Data Reports:** Solari utilizes internal and external reports, such as caseloads, control reports, and analytics summarizing determinations made. These reports will be updated to incorporate the SED program data.

**External Training:** Similar to prior system delivery changes (e.g., statewide SMI determinations and AHCCCS Acute Care Contract integration), Solari will develop a statewide training plan to prepare for SED expansion. The plan consists of three types of training for external audiences: clinical provider training, provider staff training, and community outreach.

**Provider Training:** Solari will train provider clinicians on how to complete an assessment on an individual seeking SED designation/removal of SED designation.

**Staff Training:** Solari will train provider support staff on documents that must be signed and submitted in the assessment portal.

**Community Outreach:** Solari will partner with AHCCCS Office of Individuals and Family Affairs (OIFA) to identify stakeholder groups and ensure understanding of the SED process and receive their feedback. These stakeholder groups will include but are not limited to: persons with lived experience, tribal community members, individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ+) community members.

Solari will offer each of these trainings virtually and in person across the state. Further, Solari will professionally record the trainings and publish them online.

**High Level Project Timeline:**

**Milestone and Resource Allocation:**

| Resource Allocation | Task Name | Start | Finish |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pre-Implementation Phase** | | **3/7/2023** | **9/20/2023** |
| **External** | Award notification | 3/7/2023 | 3/7/2023 |
| **Contracts** | Sign contracts | 3/8/2023 | 4/18/2023 |
| **Project Team** | Weekly planning meetings | 3/8/2023 | 10/1/2023 |
| **QM & Compliance** | | | |
| **Compliance** | Needs assessment | 3/8/2023 | 3/21/2023 |
| **EHR Admin** | Update compliance documentation system | 3/8/20232 | 4/18/2023 |
| **Finance** | | | |
| **Finance** | Finalize budget | 3/8/2023 | 4/25/2023 |
| **Finance** | Incorporate into invoicing | 3/8/2023 | 3/21/2023 |
| **Finance** | Budget oversight | 3/8/2023 | 7/25/2023 |
| **Finance** | Changes to finance system for new programs | 3/8/2023 | 3/21/2023 |
| **Human Resources** | | | |
| **HR** | Finalize hiring timeline/plan | 3/8/2023 | 3/28/2023 |
| **HR** | Hire new staff | 6/12/2023 | 9/1/2023 |
| **HR** | Onboarding new hires | 9/4/2023 | 9/29/2023 |
| **Operations** | | | |
| **Operations** | Build organizational chart | 3/8/2023 | 3/28/2023 |
| **Operations** | Build staffing model | 3/8/2023 | 3/28/2023 |
| **Operations** | UAT testing for systems | 3/8/2023 | 4/18/2023 |
| **Operations** | Create/edit policies/procedures for SED applicants | 3/29/2023 | 5/2/2023 |
| **Operations** | Differentiate training between new hires and existing staff for new/updated policies | 3/29/2023 | 3/29/2023 |
| **Operations** | Create a training plan | 5/3/2023 | 5/23/2023 |
| **Operations** | Train current staff in new processes | 9/4/2023 | 9/29/2023 |
| **Operations** | Train new hires | 9/4/2023 | 9/29/2023 |
| **Community Engagement** | | | |
| **Operations** | Meet with each MCO to develop a plan to stagger SED applications for 10/1/23-9/30/24 | 4/3/2023 | 4/28/2023 |

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| **Operations** | Present at children's provider meetings | 5/1/2023 | 5/26/2023 |
| **Operations** | Statewide roadshow. Events open to the community, providers, and stakeholders | 6/5/2023 | 7/31/2023 |
| **Operations** | Provide training to children's providers on the SED Evaluation & Packet Submission process | 8/7/2023 | 9/4/2023 |
| **IT** | | | |
| **IT** | Acquire and configure equipment for new hires | 4/12/2023 | 5/16/2023 |
| **IT** | Software license purchase | 5/18/2023 | 6/7/2023 |
| **IT** | Laptop configuration | 6/21/2023 | 7/18/2023 |
| **IT** | All employee equipment completed | 6/7/2023 | 6/7/2023 |
| **IT** | Create user accounts | 9/4/2023 | 9/28/2023 |
| **CCX** | | | |
| **EHR Admin** | Purchase CoCENTRIX (CCX) licenses for EHR | 3/8/2023 | 3/21/2023 |
| **EHR Admin** | 1st Round CCX changes to forms for SED program – build and roll out | 4/5/2023 | 5/16/2023 |
| **EHR Admin** | 2nd Round CCX changes to forms for SED program – build and roll out | 5/17/2023 | 6/27/2023 |
| **EHR Admin** | Sign off on CCX functionality | 6/27/2023 | 6/27/2023 |
| **EHR Admin** | Create guidance on new employee settings needed | 6/14/2023 | 6/28/2023 |
| **EHR Admin** | Solution push to production | 10/1/2023 | 10/1/2023 |
| **Marketing/Communications** | | | |
| **Comms** | Create website plan | 3/8/2023 | 4/4/2023 |
| **Comms** | Draft changes to the website | 3/8/2023 | 5/2/2023 |
| **Comms** | Publish changes to the website | 3/8/2023 | 3/21/2023 |
| **Business Intelligence - Data** | | | |
| **BI** | Create report draft and delivery timeline | 4/5/2023 | 4/18/2023 |
| **Operations** | Update report requirements documents | 4/5/2023 | 5/2/2023 |
| **Operations** | Gather PDF notices from AHCCCS for SED templates/form notices | 4/5/2023 | 4/25/2023 |
| **BI** | Update data schema | 4/26/2023 | 5/23/2023 |
| **Operations** | Create report requirements for templates for SED notifications | 4/26/2023 | 5/16/2023 |
| **BI** | Build, validate, and publish reports for SED reports | 5/24/2023 | 8/15/2023 |
| **BI** | Updates to dashboards/caseloads | 5/24/2023 | 8/15/2023 |
| **BI** | Update all print records to include SED updates to CCX forms | 5/24/2023 | 8/15/2023 |
| **BI** | Build, validate, and publish templates/notices for SED (PDF notices applicants) | 5/24/2023 | 8/15/2023 |
| **Compliance** | Report validation | 8/15/2023 | 10/1/2023 |
| **Business Intelligence - Software** | | | |
| **BI - Software** | PSP Updates to incorporate SED submissions | 4/26/2023 | 6/6/2023 |
| **BI - Software** | Toolkit updates for SED | 4/26/2023 | 6/6/2023 |
| **BI - Software** | Appeal form API integration (bridge) | 4/26/2023 | 6/6/2023 |
| **BI - Software** | Updates to other API mappings/imports | 4/26/2023 | 6/6/2023 |

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| **BI - Software** | UAT for PSP toolkit | 6/7/2023 | 6/20/2023 |
| **Compliance** | Finalize portal functionality, PHI sign-off | 3/8/2023 | 3/14/2023 |
| **BI - Software** | Website updates to check for SMI/SED status updates, submit additional information, appeal decision | 4/26/2023 | 5/30/2023 |
| **Operations** | UAT for portal functionality | 5/31/2023 | 6/13/2023 |
| **Go Live** | | **9/28/2023** | **10/1/2023** |
| **BI - Software** | Publish PSP/toolkit changes to the production site | 9/28/2023 | 9/28/2023 |
| **Comms** | Publish website changes | 9/28/2023 | 9/28/2023 |
| **ALL** | Go Live | 10/1/2023 | 10/1/2023 |
| **External** | External providers to begin submitting SED applications | 10/1/2023 | 10/1/2023 |
| **Post Go Live** | | **10/1/2023** | **11/27/2023** |
| **BI** | Monitor Issues | 10/1/2023 | 10/1/2023 |
| **BI** | Publish updated caseloads | 10/1/2023 | 10/1/2023 |
| **BI** | Caseload and dashboards are due | 10/1/2023 | 10/1/2023 |
| **BI** | Daily reports due | 10/2/2023 | 10/2/2023 |
| **BI** | Monthly reports due | 11/3/2023 | 11/3/2023 |

## B2.B COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

**How will the Offeror engage in innovative and effective community and stakeholder engagement initiatives and education efforts to provide information and resources related to the eligibility determination process and resulting effects?**

Solari brings hands-on experience leading community and stakeholder engagement initiatives throughout Arizona's diverse communities. To date, Solari has conducted **345 trainings with 4,583 individuals** statewide **with a 95% participant satisfaction rate**. Our approach is grounded in our lived experience that effective collaboration requires a system-wide approach.

**AHCCCS Health Plans:** Solari established ongoing quarterly meetings with all AHCCCS health plans to review provider packet quality data, determine provider training needs, and coordinate plans for community engagement. Solari will continue to partner with AHCCCS, OIFA and AHCCCS health plans on community stakeholder listening sessions, roadshows, and other community events.

**Providers:** An effective training program is integral to the clinical and operational integrity of the SMI/SED eligibility system. Solari offers specialized clinical trainings to provider clinicians on how to effectively conduct eligibility assessments, and operational trainings to provider support staff on submitting packets. Solari posts public performance dashboards and emails monthly audit results to provider agencies with helpful hints to improve packet submissions and reduce errors. Solari's website includes provider frequently asked questions, resources, and contact information. Solari will expand our program with the following innovations:

- **Training Concierge:** Implement one-on-one specialized trainings in-person and/or virtually to providers conducting SMI/SED determinations, directly requested via Solari's website. The Training Concierge will also provide directed training for providers that do not meet established packet-quality thresholds.

- **Group Training:** Conduct a minimum of four monthly group trainings. Each session will be open to any AHCCCS-contracted provider, held at varying times of the day/week, and include virtual and in-person options.

- **Training Library:** Member and provider trainings that detail the SMI/SED determination process will be recorded and made accessible via the website, along with training materials, SED-specific frequently asked questions, and other resources.

**Community Outreach:** Solari emphasizes the voice and experience of the member in our approach to community outreach. We ensure that individuals diagnosed with SMI, or those with lived experience of the SMI system, assist with the development of our training and outreach plan. In 2021, **our educational webinars engaged nearly 500 community members and system stakeholders**. To prepare for the expansion of SED determinations, Solari will:

- Facilitate quarterly educational live webinars, available to all Arizonans.
- Leverage Solari's social media presence and email marketing team to publicize education and community listening sessions.
- Partner with community events via our 211 Arizona program to provide information on the SMI/SED eligibility program.
- Expand our outreach strategies to include child-serving providers and organizations such as, children's hospitals, pediatricians, school psychologists/counselors, and group homes.
- Focus on outreach and engagement with traditionally hard-to-reach individuals and populations. For example, Solari recently trained community homeless outreach teams on the SMI designation process and how evaluations can be successfully completed in the field.

## B2.C ASSUMPTIONS (NOT SCORED)

**The Offeror shall identify any assumptions used when developing their proposals as it relates to scope, costs, schedule, resources, etc. If the Offeror's assumption takes exception to any part of the solicitation (including but not limited to requirements, scope of work or terms and conditions), these shall be explained as well in the Offeror's exceptions to terms submission. Refer to Uniform Instructions to Offerors.**

Solari's narrative response includes staffing assumptions that are based on SMI determination packet volume remaining unchanged and receiving up to 2,750 SED packets, as estimated for year one of program implementation. Solari's budget proposal will adjust staffing models to align with the number of packets received.

It is assumed that some psychologists' caseloads will include SMI and SED cases based on expertise and need.