

**Promoting Readiness of Minors in  
SSI (PROMISE) National Evaluation  
Data Collection Plan**

January 13, 2014

Thomas Fraker  
Gina Livermore  
Jacqueline Kauff  
Todd Honeycutt

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Social Security Administration  
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6401 Security Blvd, 3-C-25D Operations  
Baltimore, MD 21235  
Project Officer: Jeffrey Hemmeter

Submitted by:  
Mathematica Policy Research  
1100 1st Street NE, 12th Floor  
Washington, DC 20002-4221  
Telephone: (202) 484-9220  
Facsimile: (202) 863-1763  
Project Director: Thomas Fraker

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## CONTENTS

I	INTRODUCTION .....	1
II	STATE ADMINISTRATIVE DATA.....	3
	A. PROMISE MIS Data .....	3
	1. Description of the Data to Be Collected.....	3
	2. Timing of Data Extracts.....	5
	3. Monitoring and Quality Control.....	6
	4. Issues and Next Steps .....	6
	B. State Vocational Rehabilitation and Medicaid Data.....	7
	1. Description of the Data to Be Collected.....	7
	2. Timing of VR and Medicaid Data Extracts .....	9
	3. Monitoring and Quality Control.....	10
	4. Issues and Next Steps .....	11
III	IMPLEMENTATION DATA.....	13
	A. Data Collection from Program Staff.....	13
	1. Description of the Data to Be Collected.....	13
	2. Monitoring and Quality Control.....	16
	3. Next Steps .....	17
	B. Focus Groups with Youth and Parents or Guardians .....	17
	1. Description of the Data to Be Collected.....	17
	2. Monitoring and Quality Control.....	19
	3. Next Steps .....	19
IV	FEDERAL ADMINISTRATIVE DATA.....	21
	A. SSA Administrative Data.....	21
	1. Description of the Data to Be Collected.....	21
	2. Monitoring and Quality Control.....	23
	3. Next Steps .....	23
	B. IRS Earnings Data .....	24
	1. Description of the Data to Be Collected.....	24
	2. Monitoring and Quality Control.....	25
	3. Next Steps .....	26
V	SUMMARY SCHEDULE OF NONSURVEY DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES .....	27
	REFERENCES .....	29

APPENDIX A: PROTOCOLS FOR EARLY PHONE INTERVIEWS WITH PROMISE PROGRAM DIRECTORS ..... A.1

APPENDIX B: SITE VISIT PROTOCOLS..... B.1

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOLS ..... C.1

## TABLES

II.1	Planned PROMISE MIS Data Elements, by Program .....	4
II.2	VR Data of Interest for the PROMISE Evaluation .....	8
II.3	Medicaid Data of Interest for the PROMISE Evaluation .....	10
III.1	Illustrative Site Visit Agenda.....	15
IV.1	SSA Administrative Variables for PROMISE Impact Analysis .....	22
IV.2	Number of Years of Follow-up MEF Earnings Data, by PROMISE Enrollment Year .....	25
V.1	Schedule of Nonsurvey Data Collection Activities .....	27

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Youth with disabilities who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) face substantial barriers to economic independence in making the transition to adult life. These barriers include low expectations and limited support from family members, weak transition service environments, and issues related to their impairment and ongoing eligibility for publicly provided supports. As a result, the education and employment outcomes for youth SSI recipients are frequently less favorable than those for their peers without disabilities, leading to greater dependence on public cash and in-kind support programs and poorer overall economic well-being as adults.

PROMISE—Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income—is a joint initiative of the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the U.S. Departments of Education (ED), Health and Human Services, and Labor. It is designed to address many of the barriers to economic independence faced by SSI youth and their families. As the lead agency for the demonstration, ED is funding six demonstration programs designed to promote positive changes in education and employment outcomes for youth with disabilities who receive SSI and their families. To achieve these outcomes, the PROMISE programs will provide innovative educational, vocational, and other services to youth and their families. The programs will also make better use of existing resources by improving service coordination among multiple state and local agencies. Youth ages fourteen to sixteen who are receiving SSI are eligible to enroll in PROMISE.

ED has provided funding to the following six states or groups of states to implement PROMISE programs:

- Arkansas
- California
- Maryland
- New York
- Wisconsin
- A consortium of six states: Arizona, Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Utah<sup>1</sup>

SSA, the lead agency for the national PROMISE evaluation, has contracted with Mathematica Policy Research to conduct a nine-year evaluation of the six PROMISE programs. The evaluation will address whether the provision of services and supports to children ages fourteen to sixteen and their families results in better education and employment outcomes. More specifically, the evaluation will assess how PROMISE programs affect child and family service receipt, self-determination, educational attainment, employment, earnings, and disability benefit receipt in the short and long term. It will also assess the effectiveness of each of the programs in implementing the services it plans to deliver, and evaluate whether the benefits generated by the programs exceed the cost of providing PROMISE services.

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<sup>1</sup> The six-state consortium project goes by the name Achieving Success by Promoting Readiness for Education and Employment (ASPIRE) rather than by PROMISE.

The PROMISE evaluation will use an experimental research design under which youth and their family members will be randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. Treatment group members will be eligible to participate in PROMISE services as well as in other services and supports that would usually be available to them in the absence of PROMISE. Control group members will be eligible to receive only the usual services and supports that are available to them. The evaluation will include the following components:

- A process evaluation to understand the services delivered by each program and how those services relate to impacts
- An impact evaluation to assess the outcomes of youth and families in areas such as service receipt, employment and earnings, educational attainment, self-determination, risky behavior, and benefit receipt
- An analysis of the benefits and costs of the PROMISE programs to determine whether, across varied perspectives, the outcomes that result from the programs exceed their costs

In this report, we present our plan for conducting the nonsurvey data collection activities for the PROMISE evaluation. The PROMISE survey data collection plan is described in a separate report (CyBulski et al. 2014). The nonsurvey data will consist of administrative data from the PROMISE programs, administrative data from selected state and federal programs, and qualitative implementation data collected via program staff interviews and focus groups conducted with youth and their parents/guardians participating in PROMISE.

The remainder of the report is organized as follows:

- In Chapter II, we describe our plan for collecting state-level administrative data from the PROMISE programs, state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies, and state Medicaid programs.
- In Chapter III, we describe our plan for collecting data from the PROMISE programs via staff interviews and participant focus groups.
- In Chapter IV, we describe our plan for collecting federal administrative data from the Social Security Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Disability Insurance (SSDI) programs, and our plan for accessing aggregated earnings information from Internal Revenue Service (IRS) administrative data on earnings in SSA's Master Earnings File (MEF).

In each of these chapters, we describe the nature of the data to be collected, the plan for monitoring the quality of the data, and any next steps required to develop a better understanding of the data source and/or obtain access to it. We conclude in Chapter V with a summary schedule of the nonsurvey data collection activities and their timing.

## **II. STATE ADMINISTRATIVE DATA**

We will use administrative data collected and maintained by selected state programs in a variety of ways in the PROMISE evaluation process, impact, and benefit-cost analyses. In this chapter, we describe these data sources, which include data collected by the PROMISE programs and data from the state VR and Medicaid programs, and describe how they will be used in the PROMISE national evaluation.

### **A. PROMISE MIS Data**

#### **1. Description of the Data to Be Collected**

The PROMISE programs will collect limited baseline information on all study applicants via state consent and enrollment forms and enter it into the national evaluation's random assignment system (RAS). Such information includes the name, contact information, date of birth, gender, and Social Security number of each youth applicant and one parent. Each of the six PROMISE programs will also collect information about the services that they provide to treatment group youth and their families and will maintain these data in a PROMISE management information system (MIS) that is separate from the RAS. In this section, we describe the collection of data contained in each program's PROMISE MIS. We describe the use of RAS data linked with federal SSI administrative data in Chapter IV.

The programs are currently developing specifications for their PROMISE MISs, but all have indicated that they plan to use them to track PROMISE services provided to treatment group youth and family members. During a series of data conference calls with SSA and Mathematica, none of the programs anticipated any problems in establishing data use agreements with SSA and providing these data to Mathematica for purposes of the national evaluation.

We have encouraged the programs to record their efforts to recruit and enroll specific individual youth in either their MISs or in supplemental data files. During the data conference calls, only Arkansas and ASPIRE indicated that they planned to include such data in their PROMISE MISs. We expect that the other programs will maintain such data in one form or another to aid their recruitment efforts and to facilitate any recruitment-related technical assistance that Mathematica might provide. To the extent that these data are collected, they will contribute to the process analysis in helping us to understand the programs' implementation experiences. The enrollment information contained in the RAS, along with SSI administrative data on eligible youth in the PROMISE service delivery areas, will be used to assess PROMISE take-up rates for each of the programs.

Many of the PROMISE programs also plan to collect information on selected non-PROMISE services received by treatment group members, and on their education and employment outcomes, including secondary school completion, pursuit of post-secondary education or training, participation in paid employment, wages, and job types. Selected service use information will also be collected on control group members by two of the programs (New York and Wisconsin) through systems that will integrate PROMISE MIS data with state interagency data warehouses. New York plans to use the New York Employment Service System (NYESS) to track selected services and outcomes of PROMISE treatment and control group members. Wisconsin plans to develop an interagency data warehouse in which it will store PROMISE data as well as data from other partner agencies. These data will be passed to the Wisconsin State Management, Accounting, and Reporting Tool, Accounting and Reporting Data Warehouse (WiSARD), which will contain data on both

treatment and control group members from the state departments of Health Services, Public Instruction, Children and Families, and Workforce Development.

At least four of the PROMISE programs (ASPIRE, California, New York, and Wisconsin) plan to collect information on the characteristics of treatment and control group members through expanded enrollment forms or baseline surveys. These data will supplement the limited information that will be entered in the RAS. Examples of such characteristics include disability type(s), the extent to which a disability interferes with education and other activities, living arrangement, marital status, race, and participation in education/vocational programs. To the extent that these data are included in the PROMISE MIS, they will be collected for use in the PROMISE evaluation.

Finally, two programs (ASPIRE and New York) have proposed to conduct follow-up surveys with both treatment and control group members to track and compare PROMISE services and outcomes between treatment and control group members for purposes of their formative evaluations. We do not expect these data to be input into the PROMISE MISs, so we do not plan to collect and analyze them in the national evaluation. We also expect that much of the information collected in the program surveys will be duplicative of information collected in the national evaluation surveys; therefore, we do not see a need to incorporate the data from the program surveys into the national evaluation.

Table II.1 provides a summary of the types of data that will be included in the PROMISE MISs as described by PROMISE program staff during the data conference calls. Further information about the specific data elements to be included in the MISs will be forthcoming as the programs continue to develop their systems.

**Table II.1. Planned PROMISE MIS Data Elements, by Program**

PROMISE Program	Recruitment/ Enrollment Efforts	Additional Baseline Characteristics	PROMISE Services	Education Outcomes	Employment Outcomes	Other Information
Arkansas	√		√			Program timeline and milestones
ASPIRE	√	√ <sup>a</sup>	√	√ <sup>b</sup>	√ <sup>b</sup>	Staff training, SSI participation, self-determination, <sup>b</sup> family financial stability <sup>b</sup>
California		√ <sup>a</sup>	√	√	√	
Maryland			√			
New York		√ <sup>a</sup>	√	√ <sup>b, c</sup>	√ <sup>b, c</sup>	Non-PROMISE services to the extent that they are captured in NYESS <sup>c</sup>
Wisconsin		√ <sup>a</sup>	√	√ <sup>c</sup>	√ <sup>c</sup>	Non-PROMISE services to the extent that they are captured in WISARD <sup>c</sup>

Note: Except where indicated, data will be collected only for PROMISE treatment group members.

<sup>a</sup> Data will be collected for both treatment and control group members via an expanded enrollment form or baseline survey.

<sup>b</sup> Data will be collected for both treatment and control group members via one or more follow-up surveys administered by the PROMISE program. The extent to which the survey data will be maintained in the PROMISE MIS is unknown at this time.

<sup>c</sup> Selected information for both treatment and control group members will be available through state administrative data linkages with the PROMISE MIS.

The national evaluation will use the PROMISE MIS data described above for three primary purposes: (1) for the process analysis, we will use the data to document the PROMISE services received by treatment group members and assess fidelity to the service delivery models; (2) for the services impact report, we will analyze PROMISE and selected non-PROMISE service use data for treatment and control group members to assess the impact of PROMISE on service receipt (these data will only be available for the New York and Wisconsin programs); (3) for the services impact report and final evaluation report, to the extent that baseline characteristics are available for both treatment and control group members in the PROMISE MIS, we may use these data in regression models as additional control variables (beyond those that will be available from the state consent form and SSA administrative records) to estimate the impacts of PROMISE. This may improve the precision of the estimates.

## 2. Timing of Data Extracts

We plan to obtain three extracts of the PROMISE MIS data from the two programs for which information on service use will be available for both treatment and control group members (New York and Wisconsin), and two extracts from the programs for which information on service use will be available only for treatment group members (Arkansas, ASPIRE, California, and Maryland).<sup>2</sup> The extracts will be timed to facilitate their use for the above purposes, as follows:

- We will request delivery of the first data extract in August 2014. The data will cover the period from the month of program start (January 2014) through approximately June 30, 2014. We will use this extract to assess the nature and quality of the data collected in the PROMISE MISs, and to test the data extract and transfer methods to be used by the programs. These data will not be analyzed, other than to assess their quality and completeness for purposes of the early assessment reports due to SSA in winter 2015.
- We will request delivery of the second data extract in March 2016. These data will cover the period from the month of program start (January 2014) through January 31, 2016. They will be used in the process analysis reports due to SSA in fall 2016. We will also use baseline characteristics available on this file in the services impact report and final evaluation report.
- We will request delivery of the third data extract in March 2018. We will request these data only from New York and Wisconsin; they will cover the period from the month of program start (January 2014) through January 31, 2018. We will use these data in the services impact report due to SSA in summer 2018.<sup>3</sup>

To the extent feasible, we will obtain extracts of raw MIS data with records for each treatment youth (and, in some cases, control youth). If this proves to be problematic for some of the programs for technical or data security reasons, we will work with the programs to obtain aggregate statistics that they will generate from their MIS data.

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<sup>2</sup> If one or more of these four programs has not completed enrollment by the end date of the second data extract (January 31, 2016) and the program has collected baseline characteristics or other information useful for the services impact report or final evaluation report, then we would request a third extract that would capture information about individuals who enrolled in PROMISE after the end date of the second extract.

<sup>3</sup> We propose that the third extract for these two programs cover the full period of program operations, as opposed to only the additional months since the second extract, because we expect that some data updating may occur over the course of serving participants.

### 3. Monitoring and Quality Control

Our efforts to monitor and ensure the quality of the PROMISE MIS data will occur via several mechanisms:

- Initially, we will review the programs' plans for their PROMISE MISs and will provide them with feedback intended to improve the quality and usefulness of the MIS data for the national evaluation.
- After the systems are developed, we will request that the programs provide us with monthly or quarterly reports generated from their MISs. We expect that they will routinely generate such reports for purposes of program management. Ideally, such reports would contain information about the programs' service delivery activities during the reporting period, including the incidence and nature of service provision. In consultation with the programs, we will determine their plans for such reports and agree on a schedule for sending them to us. We will review the reports as they are received and provide feedback to the programs if we identify any issues. If a program is unable or unwilling to provide us with reports on its service delivery activities, then we will monitor the quality of the PROMISE MIS data through reviews of data extracts—in particular, through review of the first extract, which we will obtain in August 2014.
- We will conduct an assessment of the completeness and quality of the MIS data through analysis of the first data extract obtained in August 2014. Our planned telephone interviews with program directors in winter 2014 (described in Chapter III) will include a discussion of the MISs and any issues the programs are experiencing in building those systems and collecting the data. We will provide feedback and technical assistance to the programs on any issues identified through our analyses and discussions. We will document these issues in the early assessment reports, scheduled for submission to SSA in winter 2015.
- Interviews with program staff that will occur during the two process evaluation site visits to occur in summer 2014 and winter 2016 (described in Chapter III) will address issues concerning the collection and maintenance of data in the PROMISE MIS, any problems that staff might be experiencing with respect to that system, and technical assistance that might be useful in resolving the problems identified.
- We will assess the quality and completeness of the final two data extracts as they are obtained and, insofar as possible, address any issues that are identified for the current and/or future data extract.

### 4. Issues and Next Steps

An issue that could arise regarding the PROMISE MIS data is that the quality of those data and the consistency with which they are collected might vary across PROMISE programs and across sites within programs. The ASPIRE program plans to develop a uniform data collection system for use across its six component states, which should facilitate consistent data collection. However, in monitoring the ASPIRE MIS data, we will need to be particularly aware of the extent to which data are actually entered into that system consistently and similarly across the participating states.

The key next steps with respect to accessing the PROMISE MIS data for the national evaluation include (1) establishing data use agreements between the PROMISE programs and SSA

that will allow Mathematica to obtain and use the data for the national evaluation and (2) learning more about the data systems as they are developed, to gain a better understanding of the specific data elements that will be collected and determine how they will be used in the national evaluation.

## **B. State Vocational Rehabilitation and Medicaid Data**

### **1. Description of the Data to Be Collected**

#### **a. State VR Data**

State VR data will provide important information on VR service use for both treatment and control group youth and their family members. VR services are a key component of several of the PROMISE programs; even in the absence of PROMISE, they typically are an important source of education and employment-related services for youth with significant disabilities. Analysis of the state VR administrative data will provide an understanding of the services that treatment group youth and families receive relative to control group youth and their families.

State VR agencies maintain multiple kinds of data on individuals who apply for services. The agencies provide the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) with annual extracts of these data on individuals who exit from services; RSA then compiles them as the RSA-911 data files. The RSA-911 files are not suitable for use in the PROMISE evaluation, however, because they only contain information about cases that have been closed (with no information on currently active/open cases) and because they are only available after a considerable time lag. In addition to containing information on open cases, the state VR administrative files contain more detailed information than is available in the RSA-911 files, such as the frequency and amount of services received and the staff providing services. For these reasons, the national PROMISE evaluation is requesting VR data extracts directly from the states, rather than relying on the RSA-911 files.

In Table II.2, we show the types of data elements in the VR administrative files that are of interest for the PROMISE evaluation, described in terms of how they appear in the RSA-911 files. These data include information on application characteristics (such as the timing and outcome of the application), service characteristics (such as service type and timing of services), and outcome characteristics (such as when the individual exited VR services and whether he or she was employed at case closure). As we learn more about each participating state's VR administrative files, we will be able to refine the list and be more specific about the data elements of interest for the PROMISE evaluation. We may also add data elements to the list that have no counterparts in the RSA-911 files.

The VR data will provide a detailed perspective on how enrollees in the PROMISE evaluation (both treatment cases and control cases) and their families interact with the state VR programs. With this information, we will be able to examine whether the enrollees applied for VR services, at what point in time they did so, the extent to which individuals received services, the types and costs of services, the reasons they did not receive or complete services, and whether they were employed when their cases were closed. From an implementation perspective, we will be able to measure the extent to which the experiences of treatment youth and families were congruent with the program's service model. From an impact perspective, we will be able to compare data on treatment and control group members to assess whether treatment group youth and families were more likely to apply for VR services, had longer duration of services, had different kinds of services, and had better VR outcomes than control group youth and families.

**Table II.2. VR Data of Interest for the PROMISE Evaluation**

RSA-911 Data Element	Description
Date of application	Date that the individual applied for VR services; individuals can have multiple dates
Date of individualized plan for employment (IPE)	Date that the first IPE became effective
Services provided	Services furnished over the course of an individual's involvement with VR, including provider and funding source. RSA-911 data contain an aggregate summary of whether a broad service was received, along with the primary provider and funding source. VR agencies should be able to provide more detailed, disaggregated information on services, including service dates, provider type, and staff time spent.
Cost of purchased services	Total spent by the VR agency to purchase services for an individual. These data are aggregated across all purchased services in the RSA-911 data. Agencies should be able to provide service-specific purchased costs, as well as agency costs for nonpurchased services.
Date of closure	Date that the individual exited from the agency
Type of closure	Indicator of when in the VR process an individual exited from the agency (e.g., at application or with employment after services were received)
Reason for closure	Reason for closing the individual's record, such as employment achieved or unable to locate

## b. State Medicaid Data

We will use state Medicaid data primarily in the evaluation's benefit-cost analysis. State and federal Medicaid costs for working-age people with disabilities are large (Livermore et al. 2011). We suspect that this is also true for transition-age youth with disabilities. We hypothesize that Medicaid costs will be lower in the long term for treatment group youth relative to control group youth if the PROMISE interventions are successful. This is because, in promoting employment, the PROMISE interventions might improve the health and functioning of participating youth and thereby reduce their need for health care. PROMISE might also increase the likelihood that participants will obtain private insurance coverage through employment, resulting in reduced Medicaid expenditures. To assess whether PROMISE has an impact on Medicaid expenditures, we will collect Medicaid data in a manner that will facilitate the estimation of total Medicaid expenditures for PROMISE treatment and control group members. The benefit-cost analysis framework will be described and tentatively populated in the services impact report (summer 2018), and fully implemented in the final evaluation report (winter 2022). We will time our requests for Medicaid data extracts to meet the schedule for these reports.

In addition to data on Medicaid costs, data on specific Medicaid services may be of interest for the purpose of assessing impacts on service receipt for the services impact report. Examples include long-term care and other Medicaid waiver services to support employment and independent living. At this time, we do not know which, if any, specific Medicaid services might be of particular relevance to the PROMISE evaluation. As we learn more about the nature of the individual PROMISE programs, we will be better able to assess which Medicaid services will be important to include in the analysis of PROMISE impacts on service receipt.

In Table II.3, we present a preliminary list of Medicaid data elements that we would like to collect from the PROMISE states. The variable names are shown based on their names in the federal Medicaid Statistical Information System (MSIS),<sup>4</sup> which may differ from the names of the corresponding data elements in the states' own Medicaid administrative files. We will update this list as our discussions with the PROMISE programs and states proceed and our evaluation plan is refined.

## 2. Timing of VR and Medicaid Data Extracts

For the national evaluation, we will collect data from the state VR and Medicaid programs on PROMISE treatment and control group members three times. The schedule and periods covered by these extracts will differ from those noted above for the PROMISE MIS data because the data will be used for different purposes. We anticipate that the schedule for obtaining state VR and Medicaid program data extracts will be as follows:

- We will request delivery of the first data extracts in August 2014. These data will cover the period from the month of program start (January 2014) through approximately June 30, 2014. We will use this extract to test the data extract and transfer methods, assess the completeness of the data provided, and develop a better understanding of the data and file contents. We will not analyze these data other than to assess their nature and completeness for purposes of the early assessment reports due to SSA in winter 2015.
- We will request delivery of the second data extracts in March 2018. These data will cover the period from the month of program start (January 2014) through January 31, 2018.<sup>5</sup> We will use these data in the services impact report due to SSA in summer 2018.
- We will request delivery of the third data extracts in August 2021. These data will cover the period from the month of program start (January 2014) through June 30, 2021. We will use these data in the final evaluation report due to SSA in winter 2022.

The second and third extracts will cover long periods of time. It is possible that the data may become less accessible (because of the manner in which they are archived by the state programs) after some period of time. If this is the case, then more frequent extracts covering shorter sequential time periods may be necessary for some states. This issue will be addressed in further discussions with the PROMISE programs and their respective state VR and Medicaid agencies on how to access these data for the national evaluation.

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<sup>4</sup> The MSIS is used by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to collect key eligibility, enrollment, program, utilization, and expenditure data for the Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). These data provide CMS with a large database of all those eligible for and receiving services under Medicaid and CHIP programs for every state and territory. States provide CMS with quarterly files containing specified data elements for persons covered by Medicaid (eligibility files) and adjudicated claims (paid claims files) for services reimbursed with Title XIX funds.

<sup>5</sup> For New York and Wisconsin, the VR data extracts noted here may be duplicative of information to be gathered in the second and third PROMISE MIS data extracts described in the previous section. It is anticipated that NYESS and WiSARD (to which PROMISE MIS data will be appended for the New York and Wisconsin programs, respectively) will contain VR data for both treatment and control group members. We will work with these programs to develop data extraction plans that will minimize duplication.

**Table II.3. Medicaid Data of Interest for the PROMISE Evaluation**

Data Element	Periodicity	MSIS Source
Enrollment indicator	Monthly	MAINTENANCE-ASSISTANCE-STATUS (MAS) in position 1, BASIS-OF-ELIGIBILITY (BOE)
Basis for eligibility	Monthly	BOE
Eligible for full Medicaid benefits/restricted benefits flag	Monthly	RESTRICTED-BENEFITS-FLAG
Eligible for Medicare benefits (dual status)	Monthly	DUAL-ELIGIBLE-CODE
Indicator of enrollment in comprehensive managed care (provider at risk for acute care)	Monthly, up to four plan types per month	PLAN-TYPE-1, PLAN-TYPE-2, PLAN-TYPE-3, and PLAN-TYPE-4
Indicator of enrollment in capitated behavioral health services	Monthly, up to four plan types per month	PLAN-TYPE-1, PLAN-TYPE-2, PLAN-TYPE-3, and PLAN-TYPE-4
Indicator of enrollment in 1915c waiver program	Monthly, up to three waivers per month	WAIVER-TYPE-1, WAIVER-TYPE-2 and WAIVER-TYPE-3
Claims costs for all services received during 12-month periods of study interest	Annual	<p>Sum of payment amounts for the recipient during CY in MEDICAID-AMOUNT-PAID across all claims files, all TYPE-OF-SERVICE (TOS) and TYPE-OF-CLAIM (TOC) = 1 (Fee-for-Service), TOC = 2 (Capitated Payment) or TOC = 5 (Supplemental Payment)</p> <p>Sum of payment amounts during CY in MEDICAID-AMOUNT-PAID across all claims files for TYPE-OF-SERVICE (TOS) = 1-19, 23-54 and 99 and TOC=1 or TOC=5.</p> <p>Sum of payment amounts during CY in MEDICAID-AMOUNT-PAID from the Other Services (OT) file for TOS= 20-23 and TOC = 2 or TOC= 5.</p> <p>Sum of payment amounts during CY in MEDICAID-AMOUNT-PAID across all claims files for each respective TOS, excluding TOS = 20-23, and TOC = 1 or TOC = 5.</p> <p>Sum of payment amounts during CY in MEDICAID-AMOUNT-PAID from the Other Services (OT) file for TOS = 20 (HMO, HIO or PACE) and TOC = 2 or TOC = 5</p> <p>Sum of payment amounts during CY in MEDICAID-AMOUNT-PAID from the Other Services (OT) file for TOS = 21 (PHP) and TOC= 2 or TOC= 5</p> <p>Sum of payment amounts for the recipient during CY in MEDICAID-AMOUNT-PAID from the Other Services (OT) file for TOS = 22 (PCCM) and TOC = 2 or TOC = 5.</p> <p>Sum of payment amounts for the recipient during the calendar year in MEDICAID-AMOUNT-PAID from the Other Services (OT) file for TOS = 23 (PHI) and TOC = 2 or TOC = 5</p>
Selected service use information (use of specific types of services)	Annual	To be determined based on the nature of specific Medicaid service referrals occurring under PROMISE

Note: CY = calendar year.

During our data conference calls with the PROMISE programs, most indicated that providing the national evaluation with access to state Medicaid data would not be a problem. However, all noted that they would need to engage in discussions with their state Medicaid agencies and, in some cases, develop Memoranda of Understanding before they could commit to providing these data for the national evaluation.

### **3. Monitoring and Quality Control**

We do not expect to uncover significant quality issues with the state VR and Medicaid program data because we plan to request extracts from their established record keeping systems. Our review of these data will focus on ensuring that they include the data elements of interest in the expected formats and that they appear to be complete for PROMISE treatment and control group members for the time periods of interest. We will use the first extract of each of these two types of administrative data for a PROMISE state as an opportunity to test and refine the matching, extracting, and transmission procedures, and to develop a better understanding of the data elements and their formats. Based on our experiences obtaining the first extracts, and if changes are warranted, we will work with the appropriate state staff to refine the methods to improve upon the efficiency of the extract and transfer process and the quality of the data received.

### **4. Issues and Next Steps**

A potential issue with respect to the VR and Medicaid data is that these data may differ across states. If so, this could be problematic for evaluating ASPIRE, because it might be difficult to develop consistent measures of service use and expenditure across its six component states. While it is likely that there will be differences across the states in how they maintain information on services and expenditures in their VR and Medicaid administrative systems, we believe that, because these data must be reported to the federal government by all states in a uniform manner, we will be able to construct relatively uniform measures for analysis across the six ASPIRE states, as well as for the other states participating in PROMISE.

The next steps with respect to accessing state VR and Medicaid program data for the national evaluation include (1) providing the PROMISE programs with more complete descriptions of how the data will be used in the national evaluation and the data elements and time periods needed; (2) gaining a better understanding of the specific data elements that are available in these administrative data systems, any obstacles there might be to accessing them, and ways to address the obstacles; and (3) establishing data use agreements between the relevant agencies in the PROMISE states and SSA that will allow Mathematica to obtain and use the data for the national evaluation.

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### **III. IMPLEMENTATION DATA**

Capturing the details of PROMISE program implementation will require systematic data collection from both program staff and participants. We will collect qualitative data on the program environment, program structure and partnerships, and service delivery through early telephone interviews with program directors, two rounds of visits to the PROMISE programs, and two rounds of focus groups with participating youth and their parents or guardians. We will also collect quantitative data on program costs during the site visits. Data from the PROMISE program MISs, described in Chapter II, will supplement the qualitative data on service delivery. The sections that follow detail our plans for collecting data from program staff and participants.

#### **A. Data Collection from Program Staff**

##### **1. Description of the Data to Be Collected**

We will collect data from program staff through telephone interviews with each PROMISE program director in winter 2014 and through two rounds of site visits, one during the first year of program operations in summer or fall 2014 and one midway through program operations in winter 2016. Mathematica staff members who have been assigned as evaluation liaisons to the six PROMISE programs will collect the data for their respective program. The information collected will help us address the following questions about each program:

- What factors contributed to the program's design?
- What was the program's implementation experience and what was the program like as implemented?
- Given what was learned about the program's impacts, what are the implications of the program's implementation experience for future such interventions? What could be done better? What successes could be enhanced and what problems could be avoided?
- What costs are associated with the program?

We will design the telephone interviews with PROMISE program directors to last approximately one hour; they will be guided by the protocol in Appendix A. The evaluation liaisons will work with the program directors to schedule the interviews at mutually convenient times. The evaluation liaisons will record the interviews and take notes. They will summarize key points in the narrative template in Appendix A.

The evaluation liaison will conduct each site visit over a period of 3.5 days. In addition to speaking with program leaders, the evaluation liaison will visit two local areas of program operations in the state.<sup>6</sup> We will select these local areas based on factors such as evaluation sample size, pace of program implementation, and geographic location (to facilitate efficient use of evaluation resources). We will assess these factors during monthly grantee conference calls and in initial calls with the PROMISE program directors to plan the site visits.

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<sup>6</sup> For the ASPIRE program, we may visit more than two local program areas on each site visit and the visits may last more than 3.5 days. We will determine the structure of the ASPIRE site visits when Mathematica revises its evaluation budget to reflect the expansion in the number of funded PROMISE programs from four (as originally planned) to six.

We will conduct four types of activities during each round of site visits, as described below.

**Individual or small group interviews with PROMISE and partner organization directors, managers, and staff.** Examples of directors and managers include the PROMISE program director and principal investigators, administrators of state government agencies that participate in PROMISE, and executive directors of nongovernmental or community-based organizations that provide services to PROMISE participants and other youth or adults with disabilities. Examples of PROMISE program and partner staff include recruiters, case managers, employment specialists, benefits counselors, vocational rehabilitation counselors, and educational instructors and coordinators. For the five single-state programs, we will interview an average of 10 directors and managers and 20 staff members during each site visit. For ASPIRE, we will interview a total of about 25 directors and managers and 45 staff members during each round of data collection; some of these interviews will occur during site visits and some by telephone. These interviews will focus on issues related to recruitment and enrollment, satisfaction of evaluation data requirements, service delivery, fidelity to planned service delivery model, partner relationships, and program context. During the first round of visits, we will also explore the preexisting service environment to gain an understanding of the counterfactual services (the services available to control group youth and their families). During the second round of visits, we will also explore issues related to program costs, focusing on costs that may not be recorded in program accounting systems (such as volunteer labor and in-kind costs). Interview protocols based on the topic guide in Appendix B will steer the discussions. We will tailor the protocols to different respondent types and programs, and design them to be administered in less than one hour. We will share the interview topics and other data collection protocols described below with interviewees before the site visits, so that they are able to organize the data and prepare to provide the information requested.

**Social network survey of PROMISE and partner directors, managers, and staff.** During the last 10 minutes of the interviews described above, we will ask interviewees to complete a brief social network questionnaire. We will administer separate versions of the questionnaire to program directors and managers and to staff, tailored to their specific perspectives (Appendix B). We have designed this questionnaire to assess the strength and capacity of organizational collaborations associated with PROMISE. The evaluation team will pre-fill the questionnaire with the names of organizations collaborating with each PROMISE program that are known to them prior to the site visit. Respondents can add organization names to the form as needed. We will use the data obtained to conduct a network analysis assessing whether and to what extent stakeholders interacted with one another before the implementation of PROMISE, and whether and how their interactions changed with the implementation of PROMISE. The network analysis will also assess which stakeholders are relatively more active participants in the PROMISE collaborative.

**Case-file reviews with program staff.** We will meet with two line staff members to review three PROMISE cases for each program. During this meeting, we will explore the process of enrolling the youth and their families in the program, the services identified for them, and their participation in those services. We will ask the staff to present cases that represent different but fairly common pathways for how PROMISE youth and their families progress through the available services. Each staff member participating in this meeting will be the lead staff person for at least one of the presented cases, allowing us to explore differences in services across line staff. We will base the protocol for the case reviews on the topic guide in Appendix B.

**Program observations.** Observing PROMISE program activities will help us evaluate the quality and types of program services. In addition, we will use the observations to assess the fidelity of recruitment, enrollment, and random assignment procedures, as well as of services within and

across a program's local sites. Based on each program's logic model, we will develop fidelity instruments that will include both participant- and program-level indicators to ensure that the evaluation liaisons assess fidelity according to standardized concepts and benchmarks. Among the activities that we might observe are enrollment interviews, RAS data entry, education and training activities, soft-skills workshops, and employment services. The evaluation liaisons will record program observations on the form presented in Appendix B.

Through careful pre-visit planning and preparation, we will work with each program and local site to identify the individuals who are best able to address the various interview topics. In Table III.1, we present an illustrative agenda for a site visit that conveys the types of activities and respondents anticipated. In collaboration with the PROMISE program director and partner contacts, we will develop a schedule for the interviews that meets the needs of both the respondents and the evaluation liaison. Approximately two weeks before the interviews are scheduled to take place, we will mail an information packet to the PROMISE program director containing the final interview schedule and the topics to be discussed. The packet will also contain contact information for the evaluation liaison so that the scheduled respondents can reach him or her in the event of a necessary schedule change or other issues that may arise before the interviews.

**Table III.1. Illustrative Site Visit Agenda**

Time	Day 1: Location of PROMISE Grantee	Day 2: Local Site #1	Day 3: Local Sites #1 and #2	Day 4: Local Site #2
9am–10am	Interview and survey: PROMISE program director and principal investigators	Interview and survey: recruitment staff	Case file review: case managers	Observation: activity 1
10am–11am	Interview and survey: director or manager—key partner 1	Interview and survey: case managers	Interview: other program staff	Interview and survey: VR counselors
11am–12pm	Interview and survey: director or manager—key partner 2	Interview and survey: employment specialists	Observation: activity 2	Interview: and survey benefits counselors
12pm–1pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1pm–2pm	Interview and survey: director or manager—key partner 3	Interview and survey: VR counselors	Travel to local site #2	Interview and survey: educational instructors and coordinators
2pm–3pm	Interview and survey: director or manager—key partner 4	Interview: and survey benefits counselors	Interview and survey: recruitment staff	Case file review: case managers
3pm–4pm	Interview and survey: director or manager—2–3 other partners	Interview and survey: educational instructors and coordinators	Interview and survey: case managers	Travel home
4pm–5pm	Interview and survey: formative evaluation researchers	Observation: activity 1	Interview and survey: employment specialists	
Evening	Travel to local site #1	Focus groups*		

\* See Section III.B for a description of the focus groups.

While on site, we will request copies of program documents for later review. We will inform the program directors in advance of our need for such documents and encourage them to provide them to us prior to the visits, but anticipate that we will become aware of additional useful documents during the visits. Program documents can be useful in helping to understand program structure and partner agreements, recruitment efforts, and service delivery processes. Examples include:

- Organizational charts
- Memoranda of Understanding
- Recruitment and other marketing material
- Consent and enrollment forms
- Training materials
- Curricula or other service model documents
- MIS documentation
- Formative evaluation reports and documents

In addition to the data on program costs collected through staff interviews during the second round of site visits, we will collect data on PROMISE program costs from grantee accounting systems to inform the benefit-cost analysis. During the cost-focused discussions, we will describe to program directors and managers the types of cost data required for the evaluation and the time period for which it is required, and ask them to confer with other administrative and accounting staff to gather the data. We will also provide standardized forms (based on the topic list in Appendix B) for their use in reporting the data and source information to the evaluation liaison. Given the timing of the second site visits and our plan to assess program costs for a specific steady-state period (one with few start-up or close-out activities), we will likely request costs for a one-year period, either a calendar year or fiscal year, depending on the grantee's accounting system. The evaluation liaison will request that the PROMISE program director compile the data and provide them within one month of the site visit. The evaluation liaison will then conduct follow-up telephone discussions with the program director and managers to ensure his or her understanding of the cost data and to obtain answers to outstanding questions.

## **2. Monitoring and Quality Control**

We will take several steps before data collection begins to optimize the quality of the data to be collected from program staff. First, we will develop a set of site visit interview guides tailored to different types of respondents and programs based on the interview topic lists provided in Appendix B. The guides will be flexible enough to stimulate free-flowing conversation with program staff but structured enough to capture consistent information across respondents and sites. We will provide the guides to interviewees prior to the visit to help them prepare for our questions and other information collection needs. The first site visit in each round of data collection will serve as a pilot to test the data collection instruments and approach. To collect high-quality data, we will make corrections when needed to improve the data collection tools and procedures. Second, prior to each round of data collection, we will train the evaluation liaisons to ensure they have a common understanding of the data collection objectives, tools, and methods, and will fully capture the required data. Third, we will develop a template for the evaluation liaisons to use in summarizing the resultant information from each data collection. The template will guide them in highlighting

themes, providing examples and illustrative quotes, and identifying discrepancies and areas of agreement in data from different respondents or other sources.

To monitor quality throughout the data collection period, the process analysis lead (Jacqueline Kauff) will moderate a debriefing session with all of the evaluation liaisons after the completion of data collection for each PROMISE program. The evaluation liaisons will share their impressions, key take-away points, and outstanding questions. Together Ms. Kauff and the liaisons will identify issues for follow-up and clarification. In addition, Ms. Kauff will review all interview and site visit summaries for clarity and completeness. Finally, to confirm the accuracy of the data, we will request that the programs review and comment on the site visit summary memos that we will prepare following our visits.

To assess quality of cost data collected, the benefit-cost analysis lead (Todd Honeycutt) will compare actual program costs with budgeted costs and use data collected across programs to assess similarities and differences in the costs of specific program components. Relying on the site visit summary memos and other program documentation, he will assess whether all program activities have been accounted for in the cost data and whether substantial differences across programs are justified based on differences in levels of effort, staffing structure, service provision, partner agency involvement, or other program factors.

### **3. Next Steps**

The telephone interviews with PROMISE directors will not require OMB clearance as they will be conducted with fewer than nine respondents. In early 2014, the process analysis lead will conduct training for the evaluation site liaisons on the data collection protocol and procedures for these interviews; the liaisons will then schedule, conduct, and document the interviews.

The site visit protocols require OMB clearance. We have submitted to SSA draft and revised versions of an OMB clearance package that encompasses the site visit data collection. While awaiting OMB approval, we will support SSA by responding to any questions or comments from OMB or other interested parties and participating in any briefings for OMB. Should OMB request modifications, we will prepare the revised documents. We also will use the topic guides in Appendix B to develop interview protocols tailored to different respondent types and programs, a case file review protocol, a site visit summary template, and a structured form for collecting cost data.

After receiving OMB approval, the process analysis lead will develop and conduct training for the 2014 site visits. The evaluation liaisons will then begin working with the PROMISE program directors to establish dates for the visits, identify potential respondents, and schedule interviews with individual managers and staff.

## **B. Focus Groups with Youth and Parents or Guardians**

### **1. Description of the Data to Be Collected**

Data on PROMISE youth and their parents or guardians will be collected through focus groups that will take place during each of the two rounds of site visits described in Section III.A, above. The focus group data will complement other sources of data for the process analysis by fleshing out the experiences of program participants and their satisfaction with PROMISE services. Information collected in the focus groups will support analyses related to two key questions:

- How are the PROMISE programs being implemented and operated?
- What are the short-term benefits of the programs from the perspectives of the youth and their parents or guardians participating in PROMISE?

The youth and parent or guardian focus groups will be conducted separately but concurrently. For the five single-state programs, we will conduct one focus group with youth and one with parents or guardians during each site visit. For ASPIRE, we will conduct three focus groups of each type during each site visit. The discussions will be conducted in English only. We will make accommodations to facilitate the full inclusion of people with disabilities. The evaluation liaisons will facilitate the focus groups with youth; Tonya Woodland from Mathematica's subcontractor, BCT Partners, will facilitate the focus groups with parents or guardians. The site liaisons will work with the PROMISE program directors to secure locations for the focus groups that will be convenient for both participants and facilitators.

We expect the focus group discussions to last approximately 90 minutes, guided by the protocols included in Appendix C. For youth, the discussion topics will include (1) program enrollment, (2) case management, (3) education services, (4) employment preparation and support, and (5) other program services. For the parents or guardians, topic areas will include (1) program enrollment, (2) services for youth, (3) services to promote parent or guardian involvement, (4) staff and peer support for parents or guardians, and (5) services for parents or guardians. Before each discussion begins, participants will be asked to read and sign a participation consent form and complete a one-page background questionnaire (Appendix C).

We anticipate that approximately ten individuals will participate in each focus group. Staff in Mathematica's Survey Operations Center (SOC) will conduct the recruitment for the focus groups. We will request that the PROMISE program director assist us in identifying potential participants. The selection and recruitment effort will be designed to ensure diverse participants in each focus group according to criteria such as type of disability and stage of participation in the PROMISE program. The evaluation liaison will request that the PROMISE program director recommend and provide contact information for fifty youth and their parents or guardians who might be interested in joining the groups and who live within a reasonable distance of the facility where the discussions will occur. The director will also provide brief information about each recommended individual's participation in the program. SOC staff will contact the individuals until twelve youth and twelve parents or guardians have agreed to participate, with the expectation that about ten will actually participate. We expect that the parents and youth who participate in the focus groups will be from the same families.

The SOC staff will use several methods to recruit focus group participants. Two to four weeks before the discussions are scheduled to occur, an invitation letter (or email) will be sent to the parent or guardian of each youth identified by the PROMISE program director (Appendix C). Using a recruitment script (Appendix C), SOC staff will follow up with the youth and their parents or guardians by telephone to explain the format and purpose of the focus groups, answer questions and respond to any concerns, and invite them to participate in the focus group discussions. All of the individuals contacted will be assured that participation is voluntary and will not affect their eligibility for SSI or any other benefits. One week before the discussions, SOC staff will send a reminder to each individual who has agreed to participate (Appendix C) along with directions to the facility where the discussion will occur. One day before the discussions, SOC staff will call the individuals to remind them of the focus group date, time, and location.

We will provide the focus group participants with a \$10 incentive in the form of gift cards. In addition, we will offer light refreshments during the discussions; this may increase the appeal of participation for those whose work or school days will have ended shortly before the starting time for the discussions.

## **2. Monitoring and Quality Control**

To maximize the likelihood that consistent and high-quality data will be collected from the focus groups, we will use the protocols in Appendix C to guide the discussions. We will use the first youth and parent or guardian groups as pilots to test the protocols. We will revise them as necessary to improve the flow of the discussions and the resultant data. We will train the discussion facilitators to ensure that they have a common understanding of the protocols and methods and will fully capture the required data. One method worth noting here is to call upon participants using only their first names and to refrain from using or requesting identifying information during the discussions.

To ensure that all information generated by the focus groups is captured, the facilitators will record the discussions for later transcription. They will inform participants about the recording and let them know that they may request that we temporarily suspend recording at any time. The facilitators will also take notes during the discussions. Following the discussions, the facilitators will refer to the recordings, transcripts, and notes to summarize key themes that emerged, using a template. The template will include a structure for providing examples and illustrative quotations to support the key themes. The process analysis lead will review each summary for completeness and clarity, referring to the transcript as necessary.

## **3. Next Steps**

The focus group protocols and procedures require OMB clearance. We have submitted to SSA draft and revised versions of an OMB clearance package that encompasses data collection through focus groups. During the time that OMB is reviewing the package, we will support SSA by responding to any questions or comments from OMB or other interested parties and participating in any briefings for OMB. Should OMB request modifications, we will prepare the revised documents.

After receiving OMB clearance, the process analysis lead will develop and conduct training for the focus group facilitators. The evaluation liaisons will then begin working with PROMISE program directors to identify potential focus group participants as well as dates and locations for the groups.

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## IV. FEDERAL ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

We will use federal administrative data, including SSA administrative data and IRS earnings data maintained in SSA data files, in the PROMISE evaluation impact and benefit-cost analyses. In this chapter, we describe these data sources and how they will be used in the PROMISE national evaluation.

### A. SSA Administrative Data

#### 1. Description of the Data to Be Collected

To support the PROMISE impact analysis, we will collect disability program data generated by SSA in the course of administering the SSI and SSDI programs on both treatment and control group members. These data are stored in a number of SSA automated files, some of which are very large, complex, and not designed to support research activities. Fortunately, key data elements from these files are captured by an ongoing research data development project, the Disability Analysis File (DAF).

Under a series of contracts with SSA, Mathematica has been producing updated replicates of the DAF (formerly known as the Ticket Research File, or TRF) on a yearly basis. Annual replicates currently exist for 2004–2011, a 2012 replicate is nearing completion, and replicates for 2013 and 2014 are planned. If SSA sustains funding for the DAF through the 2022, then we could potentially access those files to obtain disability program data for the impact analysis. However, Mathematica’s experience on the Youth Transition Demonstration (YTD) evaluation has been that the annual periodicity of the DAF and time lags in its production make it an unlikely source of SSA administrative data for the PROMISE evaluation. Instead, we expect to use DAF procedures to generate timely, customized extracts of SSA administrative data for the evaluation.

The key outcome variables based on SSA administrative data are monthly measures of the disability benefit amount (SSI and SSDI) and whether benefits have been suspended or terminated due to earnings. Although all of the PROMISE evaluation sample members will be SSI recipients at baseline, we will need to obtain the SSDI benefit amount, because some of the sample members could subsequently become eligible for SSDI if they were to obtain jobs and accumulate sufficient quarters of Social Security-covered earnings. In the top panel of Table IV.1, we identify all outcome variables based on the SSA administrative records we will obtain, their SSA source files, and their DAF names. The latter will facilitate the use of DAF procedures to generate the variables. The measure of suspension or termination of benefits due to work is a highly processed DAF variable based on data from multiple SSA administrative files, including the SSDI Master Beneficiary Record and the SSI Longitudinal File.

The population for which we will obtain the outcome variables in the top panel of Table IV.1 consists of all youth in the research samples for the PROMISE evaluation. These will be youth who were eligible for the study,<sup>7</sup> applied to be in the study, and were randomly assigned to treatment or control groups. Each such youth will have a record in the evaluation’s random assignment system.

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<sup>7</sup> Youth will be eligible to participate in the PROMISE evaluation if they are on the lists of current SSI beneficiaries that SSA and Mathematica will provide to the PROMISE programs and are ages fourteen through sixteen at the time of application.

Drawing from the data in those records, programmers on the PROMISE evaluation will construct a finder file containing the matching variables identified in the second panel of Table IV.1. They will pass the finder file to DAF programmers at Mathematica, who will then generate the required outcome variables from SSA source files, append those variables to the finder file, and return the augmented file to the PROMISE evaluation programmers.

To assess the comparability of treatment and control group members and the fidelity of the random assignment process, we will use selected SSI administrative data on the baseline characteristics of eligible SSI recipients in the PROMISE service areas, extracted by SSA, along with the variables that will be provided to the PROMISE programs for purposes of recruitment and enrollment. Such variables include age, gender, primary disabling condition, representative payee type, spoken language, age at earliest SSI eligibility, and duration on the SSI rolls at enrollment in PROMISE, based on date of current SSI eligibility. With the exception of age at earliest SSI eligibility, these data are contained in the files SSA plans to provide to Mathematica for purposes of developing the SSI lists for PROMISE program recruitment. Because we do not expect age at earliest date of SSI eligibility to change or be updated in the SSA administrative data, we will collect that variable later, when we develop the SSA data extract in winter 2018 for purposes of the services impact report (described below).<sup>8</sup>

**Table IV.1. SSA Administrative Variables for PROMISE Impact Analysis**

Variable Description	SSA Source Files	DAF Variable Name
<b>Panel 1: SSA Administrative Baseline and Outcome Variables</b>		
SSDI benefit amount due	Master Beneficiary Record (MBR)	DUEDyymm
Ledger account file status (needed to determine SSDI payment eligibility)	MBR	LAFyymm
SSI benefit amount due	SSI Longitudinal File (SSI-LF) is proximal source; Supplemental Security Record is underlying source	DUESyymm
SSI payment status (needed to determine SSI payment eligibility)	SSI-LF	PSTAyymm
Suspension or termination of benefits due to work	MBR, SSI-LF, other SSA files	STWCMyymm
Date of earliest SSI eligibility	SSI-LF	MINELGRD
<b>Panel 2: Matching Variables for Finder File</b>		
Social Security number		SSN (PAN)
Date of birth		DOBBEST
Gender		SEX

<sup>8</sup> Ideally, the baseline characteristics would be measured as of the month of enrollment. But because these data will be drawn from the data used to develop the lists of SSI-eligible youth provided to the states for recruitment, the data may be up to six months old at the time of enrollment for some youth. This is because we plan to update the lists at six-month intervals throughout the two-year recruitment and enrollment period. SSA has indicated that it may be possible to obtain these data for the month of enrollment directly from SSA administrative files rather than from the recruitment lists. We will work with SSA to determine if this is feasible.

We will construct outcome variables based on SSA administrative data at two points in time over the course of the PROMISE evaluation: (1) approximately six months before the draft services impact report is delivered to SSA and (2) approximately six months before the draft long-term evaluation report is delivered to SSA. For the analyses to be conducted for these reports, we will access the administrative data initially in winter 2018 and then again in summer 2021. The winter 2018 extract will cover the period January 2013 through December 2017. The summer 2021 extract will cover the period January 2013 through June 2021.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. Monitoring and Quality Control

The quality control procedures for constructing the SSA administrative outcome variables will mirror those used in the construction of the annual DAF replicates. Hildebrand et al. (2013a) fully describe them in their Chapter II, “Testing and Validation.” Here we provide key elements of those descriptions:

- **Internal verification checks during file construction.** At critical points during file construction, Mathematica programmers will examine record counts, frequencies, and summary statistics drawn from interim files and compare them against the most recent DAF construction effort. If they find a significant discrepancy, the programmers will first examine the program code, output listings, and record dumps for a possible explanation. If that does not resolve the problem, they will contact SSA staff for help in determining the source of the discrepancy.
- **Frequencies and summary statistics reviewed after file construction.** Once construction is completed, programmers will run frequencies and summary statistics for key variables from the completed database. These reviews will identify any unusual patterns or values that differ significantly from what would be expected based on detailed knowledge of prior versions of the DAF and SSA administrative data sources.
- **Comparison of tables produced using the DAF with similar tables published by SSA.** Mathematica will select tables produced by SSA that present data similar to selected DAF variables. We will reproduce these tables using the DAF data and compare the results with the original SSA tables. We will investigate any significant discrepancy, as it may indicate anomalies in the DAF.

## 3. Next Steps

Our DAF programmers have all necessary clearances from SSA, the required variables are fully identified in Table IV.1, the procedures for generating the variables are well established and documented (Hildebrand et al. 2013b), and the PROMISE evaluation researchers who will analyze those variables have previously analyzed them on the YTD evaluation. Consequently, no intermediate steps are necessary before generating the finder files from the RAS and applying DAF procedures to SSA source files to generate administrative outcome variables for PROMISE research sample members.

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<sup>9</sup> January 2013 was selected as the starting month to capture SSI/SSDI annual benefit amounts during the year prior to enrollment in PROMISE.

## B. IRS Earnings Data

### 1. Description of the Data to Be Collected

Another important source of administrative data for the impact analysis will be SSA's Master Earning File (MEF), which contains annual data on earnings by workers in Social Security-covered employment, compiled from IRS records. It will be the basis for measures of employment and earnings for formal jobs (that is, jobs where earnings are reported to a government agency). In contrast, the evaluation's follow-up surveys will collect data on employment and earnings in either formal or informal jobs, as well as information on fringe benefits and other characteristics of those jobs. Estimates of PROMISE impacts on employment and earnings on formal jobs will be critical input into the analysis of the benefits and costs of PROMISE from the perspectives of state and federal governments and the Social Security trust funds. Because taxes are paid on earnings from formal jobs but rarely on those from informal jobs, the benefit-cost analysis will require estimates of PROMISE impacts on employment and earnings on formal jobs.

The MEF contains two types of earnings records: detailed earnings records (DER) and summary earnings records. We plan to use the DER for the PROMISE evaluation. The DER provide data on earnings reported by all employers of a worker during a year. We will use the DER to estimate the impacts of PROMISE on any formal employment and on total earnings from such employment. Note that we will use PROMISE survey data to analyze other employment outcomes that are not available in the DER, including the number of jobs held and the characteristics of those jobs.

We will use the MEF/DER data to construct annual employment status indicators and earnings measures for all treatment and control group members. We define annual earnings as the greater of (1) Social Security taxable wages and self-employment earnings (minus payments from third-party payers, such as insurance companies, recorded in IRS tax records) or (2) Medicare taxable wages and self-employment earnings (minus third-party payments).<sup>10</sup>

Issues surrounding the timing of the availability of MEF data must be considered in planning for the impact analysis. Data in the MEF are formally considered complete in February of the second year following the reporting year. For example, MEF data for 2014 will be considered complete in February 2016. However, these data are 99 percent complete by September of the first year after the reporting year. In our example, the 2014 data will be considered 99 percent complete in September 2015. This time lag of either 9 or 14 months means that for some sample members—those few who may enroll in the evaluation in 2016—we will have no follow-up earnings data for the analysis underlying the services impact report and just four years of follow-up data for the analysis underlying the final evaluation report. Table IV.2 presents additional details regarding the availability of MEF data by enrollment year.

While acknowledging the uncertainty regarding when youth will enroll in the PROMISE evaluation, let us assume for illustrative purposes that 40 percent of enrollments occur in calendar 2014, 50 percent in 2015, and 10 percent in 2016. Under this scenario, Table IV.2 shows that at least one year of follow-up MEF data for 90 percent of evaluation enrollees would be available for

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<sup>10</sup> Individuals with Social Security covered earnings that are not also Medicare taxable have their recorded earnings in the MEF capped at the Social Security maximum (\$113,700 in 2013). Earnings not covered by either Social Security or Medicare are not included in the MEF/DER.

estimating impacts on earnings for the services impact report. This assumes that we would access those data in winter 2018 in order to have result in time for inclusion in a summer 2018 draft report.<sup>11</sup> The table also shows that at least five years of MEF data for 90 percent of the enrollees would be available for estimating impacts on earnings for the long-term evaluation report. For the latter report, we could estimate four-year impacts for all sample members. We would access the MEF data for the long-term report no later than fall 2021 in order to have results in time for inclusion in a winter 2022 draft report. At that time, the data for 2020 would not be quite complete, so there would be a small amount of missing earnings data for the final analysis year for enrollees in 2015 and 2016.

**Table IV.2. Number of Years of Follow-Up MEF Earnings Data, by PROMISE Enrollment Year**

Calendar Year of Enrollment in the PROMISE Evaluation	<u>Services Impact Report</u>	<u>Final Evaluation Report</u>
	Draft report: Summer 2018 MEF extract: Winter 2018 MEF coverage: 2015–16	Draft report: Winter 2022 MEF extract: Fall 2021 MEF coverage: 2015–20
2014	2 years	6 years (1 with 99% coverage)
2015	1 year	5 years (1 with 99% coverage)
2016	0 years	4 years (1 with 99% coverage)

The data sharing agreement between SSA and IRS underlying the MEF does not permit SSA to provide direct access to the data by third parties such as contactors. This means that SSA staff must conduct all analyses of the MEF data for the PROMISE evaluation. We do not expect this requirement to present a significant challenge for the evaluation because SSA and Mathematica have previously collaborated to analyze MEF data on other projects, such as the YTD evaluation. We will follow the procedures that were established on those projects:

- Mathematica will provide SSA with a data file for the target population containing the same matching variables as identified in Table IV.1. The file will also include control variables (that is, baseline variables) for estimation of regression-adjusted impacts.
- Mathematica will provide SSA with a program file containing the statistical analysis code to be used to estimate regression-adjusted impacts on earnings and other outcome measures from the MEF.
- SSA will generate the MEF-based outcome measures and link them to the regression control variables in a Mathematica-provided data file.
- SSA will run the statistical analysis program on the linked data file and forward the results, the regression-adjusted impact estimates, to Mathematica.

## 2. Monitoring and Quality Control

SSA will apply its internal quality control procedures to the variables that it will extract and analyze from the MEF. Mathematica researchers will examine descriptive statistics on those variables (mean, standard deviation, quartile values, and lower/upper-end extreme values) to identify

<sup>11</sup> In principle, extraction of the MEF data could be delayed until spring 2018, but doing so would not result in any additional data for the earnings analysis for the final services impact report.

anomalies. We will discuss any such anomalies with SSA and collaborate to further investigate and resolve them.

### **3. Next Steps**

Given that SSA and Mathematica have collaborated several times on analyses of MEF data, no further steps are required at this time. The next step, in winter 2018, will be for Mathematica to prepare the initial analysis request for SSA and the accompanying data file (matching variables and control variables) and statistical analysis program file.

## V. SUMMARY SCHEDULE OF NONSURVEY DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

In Table V.1 below, we list the nonsurvey data collection activities that are planned for the PROMISE national evaluation, along with their proposed timing.

**Table V.1. Schedule of Nonsurvey Data Collection Activities**

Data Source	Time Periods Covered by Data Extracts	Date of Extract Delivery or Data Collection Activity
PROMISE MIS Data	Extract 1: Jan 2014 – June 2014	August 2014
	Extract 2: Jan 2014 – Jan 2016	March 2016
	Extract 3: TBD – Jan 2018 <sup>a</sup>	March 2018
State VR and Medicaid Data	Extract 1: Jan 2014 – June 2014	August 2014
	Extract 2: Jan 2014 – Jan 2018	March 2018
	Extract 3: Jan 2017 – June 2021	August 2021
Staff Interviews	NA	Director Interviews: Winter 2014
	NA	Site Visit 1: Summer 2014
	NA	Site Visit 2: Winter 2016
Participant Focus Groups	NA	Site Visit 1: Summer 2014
	NA	Site Visit 2: Winter 2016
SSA Administrative Data	Extract 1: Jan 2013 – Dec 2017	Winter 2018
	Extract 2: Jan 2013 – June 2021	Summer 2021
IRS Earnings Data	Extract 1: Jan 2015 – Dec 2016	Winter 2018
	Extract 2: Jan 2015 – Dec 2020	Fall 2021

Notes: NA = not applicable; TBD = to be determined depending on individual program circumstances.

<sup>a</sup> These data will only be requested from New York, Wisconsin, and any of the other PROMISE states that collected baseline information useful to the impact analysis but that did not complete enrollment by January 31, 2016.

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**APPENDIX A**

**PROTOCOLS FOR EARLY PHONE INTERVIEWS WITH  
PROMISE PROGRAM DIRECTORS**

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## **PROTOCOL FOR PROMISE PROGRAM DIRECTOR TELEPHONE INTERVIEW— WINTER 2014**

*Intro: Thank you for taking time to talk with me today. Each of Mathematica's site leads is holding a call with the PROMISE program director from his or her respective state to gain a better understanding of the PROMISE program structure and approach, the roles of key partners, and early recruitment efforts. Collecting this information at this very early stage of program start-up will help us document the evolution of the program over time, identify potential areas for evaluation-related technical assistance, and identify potential respondents for subsequent evaluation-related site visits. To gain an in-depth understanding of program implementation and service delivery, we will be conducting two site visits—the first will take place this summer or fall and the second in early 2016. I anticipate that our call today will last about an hour. Do you have any questions before we begin? [site leads: answer questions] Let's start by talking about the roles and responsibilities of the various organizations involved in PROMISE.*

### **I. Partner Roles and Responsibilities**

1. What is the role of [lead agency] as the lead coordinating agency for PROMISE?
2. How does PROMISE fit into the [lead agency] organizational structure?
3. Your state's grant application identified # key partner organizations. As we go through them one-by-one I'd like you to tell me what their role is in PROMISE and whether their role has changed since you developed the grant application. I'd also like you to give me a sense of the number and types of staff at each organization that will work on PROMISE. Let's start with [organization 1]...
4. Are there any other organizations we haven't talked about that will participate in PROMISE? If so, please describe their roles and staffing plans and how and why they came to be involved in PROMISE.

### **II. Program Management**

1. To what extent have you developed memoranda of understanding, or MOUs, with each of the organizations involved in PROMISE to guide the provision of services? What steps do you plan to take in the coming months to develop or finalize MOUs? [site leads: request copies of completed MOUs]
2. To what extent have you developed MOUs with each of the organizations involved in PROMISE to guide data sharing for the evaluation? What steps do you plan to take in the coming months to develop or finalize MOUs? [site leads: request copies of completed MOUs]
3. What challenges, if any, have you encountered in developing MOUs? How have you addressed these challenges? Do you need assistance addressing these challenges or other technical assistance around MOU issues?
4. According to the data call we had back in November, [agency] was going to be responsible for developing your PROMISE management information system, or MIS. What is the status of the MIS? What steps do you plan to take to finalize the MIS in the coming months? [site leads: request list of variables in or planned for the PROMISE MIS]

5. What challenges, if any, have you encountered in developing the MIS? How have you addressed these challenges? Do you need assistance addressing these challenges or other technical assistance around MIS issues?
6. What is the status of the IRB review of the PROMISE data collection materials? When did you or do you plan to submit materials to your IRB? When was the review complete or do you anticipate the review will be complete? What steps do you plan to take regarding the IRB process in the coming months? *[site leads: request the IRB submission]*
7. What challenges, if any, have you encountered in the IRB review process? How have you addressed these challenges? Do you need assistance addressing these challenges or other technical assistance around IRB issues?

### III. Program Approach

1. Please describe your overall approach to case management for youth in PROMISE. Have any aspects of your approach changed since your grant application—and if so, what and why?
2. Please describe your overall approach to educational services for youth in PROMISE. Have any aspects of your approach changed since your grant application—and if so, what and why?
3. Please describe your overall approach to career and work-based services for youth in PROMISE. Have any aspects of your approach changed since your grant application—and if so, what and why?
4. Please describe your overall approach to benefits counseling for youth in PROMISE. Have any aspects of your approach changed since your grant application—and if so, what and why?
5. Please describe your overall approach to providing services for family members of youth in PROMISE. Have any aspects of your approach changed since your grant application—and if so, what and why?
6. What other key aspects of your service approach have we not yet addressed? Have any aspects changed since your grant application—and if so, what and why?
7. What aspects of your approach do you think will be most challenging to implement? Why?
8. How do you anticipate youth in the treatment group will flow through the program once they are enrolled? Where and when do/will they begin to receive services? Is there/will there be a typical sequence of activities?

### IV. Recruitment

1. What is your overall assessment of how recruitment is going so far?

2. What progress have you made in hiring and training recruitment staff? What challenges, if any, have you encountered in hiring and training recruitment staff and how have you addressed these?
3. Please describe the recruitment activity that has occurred to date.
  - a. Have you received the list of eligible youth based on SSA administrative data? In what ways have you used the list to date? Have you sent mailing or made calls to anyone on the list? If so, what has been the response? What challenges, if any, have you encountered in using the list?
  - b. What progress have you made in developing and disseminating printed recruitment materials?
  - c. Have you conducted any networking or outreach events (like presentations in the community or at schools)? Please describe these events and the response.
  - d. Have you used media in your efforts (like public service announcements or social media)?
  - e. Do you have incentives for youth to enroll? If so, please describe the incentives and your sense of the role they have been playing in encouraging youth to enroll.
4. What recruitment activities are planned for the coming months?
5. How have you been/do you plan to track your recruitment efforts and progress toward your goals?
6. What type of technical assistance around recruitment would be useful?

## **V. Program Implementation**

1. To the extent you and your partners need to recruit and hire program staff, has this process begun? What steps have been taken? What steps will be taken in the coming months? What challenges, if any, have been encountered in recruiting and hiring staff and how have these been addressed?
2. To what extent have staff working on PROMISE been trained to deliver services? What training will occur in the coming months? What challenges, if any, have been encountered in training staff and how have these been addressed?
3. Has any service delivery begun? Please describe how that process is going. What challenges have you encountered and how have these been addressed?

## **VI. Wrap-Up**

1. Overall, what is your assessment of early program implementation efforts?
2. What have been your biggest hurdles? Your biggest accomplishments?
3. Is there anything we haven't talked about that has been key to facilitating or impeding your efforts to date?

**PROMISE: Template for Notes from Program Director Telephone Interview**

(Interview Date: XX/XX/XX)

**I. Partner Roles and Responsibilities**

Partner	Describe Changes in Roles and Responsibilities Since Grant Application
Partner 1	
Partner 2	
Etc.	

**II. Program Management**

	Describe Actions Already Taken	Describe Immediate Next Steps Planned	Describe Challenges/Additional TA Needs
Development of MIS			
Development of MOUs for Service Coordination			
Development of MOUs for Data Sharing			
IRB Process			
Other			

**III. Program Approach**

Service	Describe Changes in Program Approach Since Grant Application
Case Management	
School/education-related services	
Career and work-based learning experiences in integrated settings	
Benefits counseling and financial capability services	

Service	Describe Changes in Program Approach Since Grant Application
Services addressing parents' role in supporting youth	
Resources for improving education and employment outcomes for parents	
Other	

**IV. Recruitment**

Strategy	Describe Actions Already Taken	Describe Immediate Next Steps Planned	Describe Challenges/Additional TA Needs
Staffing (recruitment, hiring, etc.)			
Training			
Development and Dissemination of Print Materials			
Mailings and Calls to SSA List			
Outreach Events (e.g., presentations in schools, at community forums, etc.)			
Use of Media (Public Service Announcements) and Social Media			
Enrollment Incentives			
Recruitment Tracking			
Other			

### V. Program Implementation

	<b>Describe Actions Already Taken</b>	<b>Describe Immediate Next Steps Planned</b>
Staffing (recruitment, hiring, etc.)		
Training		
Service Delivery		
Other		
Other		

**APPENDIX B**  
**SITE VISIT PROTOCOLS**

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## **STAFF INTERVIEW TOPICS**

The topic areas for the staff interviews are divided into program domains and provide a checklist of general topics to be covered during the site visit and phone interviews. Not all are applicable to all PROMISE programs or respondents. Depending on the nature and time allotment for each discussion, the evaluator likely will not cover all topics with a single interviewee. For example, program administration and management practices will be the focus of the discussions with program managers, and client engagement and service delivery will be the focus of discussions with service provider staff. The interview guide will be adapted for particular PROMISE programs and respondent types, and build on information obtained during early program implementation.

### **A. Background and Experience**

- History and mission of the organization
- Respondent's tenure and role in organization
- Organization's role in [PROMISE/ASPIRE]
- Respondent's role in and time spent on [PROMISE/ASPIRE]
- Prior experience (of organization and respondent) serving youth and adults with and without disabilities
- Other staff within organization working on [PROMISE/ASPIRE] (number, roles, and qualifications)
- How [PROMISE/ASPIRE] fits within organization's overall structure

### **B. Local Environment (community context and the counterfactual)**

- Pre-existing services for youth with disabilities and their families (before [PROMISE/ASPIRE])
- Gaps in pre-existing services (before [PROMISE/ASPIRE])
- Implications of economy on service environment over past year
- Implications of political climate on service environment over past year
- State/local policies that assist or hinder youth with disabilities in making the transition to adulthood

### **C. Program Administration, Structure, and Partnerships**

- Roles of partner organizations in [PROMISE/ASPIRE]
- Overall organization and management structure of [PROMISE/ASPIRE]
- Formal and informal agreements between organizations in [PROMISE/ASPIRE]
- Nature of communication and collaboration between organization and other organizations involved in [PROMISE/ASPIRE], and how relationships have changed over time

- Gaps/weaknesses in program partnerships

#### **D. Program Outreach and Recruitment**

- Strategies/methods used to recruit [PROMISE/ASPIRE] participants, and level of effort required
- Training and technical assistance received and still needed
- Recruitment challenges and successes
- Reasons why youth or their parents/guardians refuse to participate in [PROMISE/ASPIRE]
- Biggest barriers participants face and typical goals of youth and families upon entering [PROMISE/ASPIRE]

#### **E. Program Operations and Services**

- Typical flow of youth and families through [PROMISE/ASPIRE] (from enrollment through services receipt to case closure)
- Nature and timing of [PROMISE/ASPIRE] case management services provided to youth and families, and size and composition of caseloads
- Nature and timing of school/education related services provided to youth and families
- Nature and timing of career and work-based services provided to youth and families
- Nature and timing of benefits counseling and other financial literacy services provided to youth and families
- Nature and timing of empowerment and other services provided to youth and families
- Current service delivery compared to intended services as originally conceptualized
- Training received and still needed

#### **F. Performance Measurement**

- Functions and utility of [PROMISE/ASPIRE] MIS, and data entry processes
- Collection and analysis of additional data (outside of the MIS) for formative evaluation (surveys, focus groups, etc.)
- Program adjustments made in response to formative evaluation findings

#### **G. Program Costs**

- Program budget and funding
- Additional revenue sources for [PROMISE/ASPIRE] aside from PROMISE grant
- Financial reporting processes
- Participant payments or incentives

- Staff and volunteer time dedicated to [PROMISE/ASPIRE] and specific program components (and nature of time collection systems)
- Overhead and capital costs allocated to [PROMISE/ASPIRE] (and nature of accounting systems)
- Subcontract or vendor payments

## **H. Lessons Learned**

- Major challenges and successes of [PROMISE/ASPIRE]
- Recommendations for improving and replicating [PROMISE/ASPIRE]

## **I. Evaluation Implementation**

- Receptivity and responsiveness to technical assistance
- Effectiveness of recruitment efforts and progress toward enrollment goals
- Quality of data entry into the random assignment system
- Integrity of random assignment
- Appropriateness and quality of the [PROMISE/ASPIRE] management information system (MIS)
- Appropriateness of arrangements for transferring administrative data, including MIS data

OMB No. XXX

Expiration Date xx/xx/XXXX

## **PROMISE Evaluation**

### **Social Network Survey—Program Directors/Managers**

Public Burden Statement: An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this project is XXX. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 minutes per respondent including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to XXX.

## PROMISE EVALUATION SOCIAL NETWORK SURVEY

This brief survey is designed to help us understand the nature of your relationships with people in other organizations that also may play a role in PROMISE.

These organizations have been prefilled in the survey. However, if there are other organizations that you believe play a role in PROMISE that are not included, please add them in the boxes marked, "Other [please specify]."

Completion of the survey should take no more than 10 minutes. Your name and responses will be kept private to the extent of the law. Findings from the survey will be reported in aggregate form only so that no person can be identified.

**Name:**

**Job Title:**

**Agency:**

**State:**

For each row, please place an "X" in the column that best answers the question. For each question, please leave blank the rating for your own organization. If there are other organizations that you believe play a role in PROMISE that are not included, please add them in the boxes marked, "Other [please specify]." Continue on additional sheets if necessary.

**QUESTION 1**

**QUESTION 2**

**QUESTION 3**

**One year ago**, how frequently did administrative staff from your organization communicate with administrative staff in the following organizations about issues pertaining to youth with disabilities and their families?

**Now**, how frequently does administrative staff in your organization communicate with administrative staff in the following organizations about issues pertaining to youth with disabilities and their families? (Do not count the bi-annual state [PROMISE/ASPIRE] meetings.)

**One year ago**, to what extent did your organization have an effective working relationship with each of the following organizations on issues related to youth with disabilities and their families?

a	b	c	d	e
Never	Once or twice a year	Every month or two	Every week or two	More than once a week

a	b	c	d	E
Never	Once or twice a year	Every month or two	Every week or two	More than once a week

a	b	c
Not at all	To some extent	To a considerable extent

Agency 1
Agency 2
Agency 3
Agency 4
Agency 5
Agency 6
Agency 7
Agency 8
Other [please specify]: _____
Other [please specify]: _____

B.8



OMB NO. XXX

Expiration Date XX/XX/XXXX

## **PROMISE Evaluation**

### **Social Network Survey – Service Provider Staff**

Public Burden Statement: An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this project is XXX. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 minutes per respondent including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to XXX.

## PROMISE EVALUATION SOCIAL NETWORK SURVEY

This brief survey is designed to help us understand the nature of your relationships with people in other organizations that also may also serve youth or adults with disabilities (through PROMISE or through any other program or funding stream).

These organizations have been prefilled in the survey. However, if there are other organizations that you work with in your efforts to serve youth or adults with disabilities that are not included on the survey form, please add them in the boxes marked, "Other [please specify]."

Completion of the survey should take no more than 10 minutes. Your name and responses will be kept private to the extent of the law. Findings from the survey will be reported in aggregate form only so that no person can be identified.

**Name:**

**Job Title:**

**Agency:**

**State:**



### QUESTION 3

For each row, please place an "X" in the column that best answers the question. For each question, please leave blank the rating for your own organization. If there are other organizations that you work with in your efforts to serve youth with disabilities that are not on the list, please add them in the boxes marked, "Other [please specify]." Continue on additional sheets if necessary.

**One year ago**, and related to your work with youth or adults with disabilities, how often did you do the following with each organization? If you were not in this position one year ago, please leave all of Question 3 blank.

N = Never  
S = Sometimes  
F = Frequently

	a			b			c			d			e			f		
	Engage in joint training?			Share intake or assessment data on clients?			Refer clients to?			Receive referrals from?			Discuss a specific client's needs, goals, and/or services (over the phone, in person, or via email)?			Meet with specifically on transition planning for a client?		
	N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F
Agency 1																		
Agency 2																		
Agency 3																		
Agency 4																		
Agency 5																		
Agency 6																		
Agency 7																		
Agency 8																		
Agency 9																		
Agency 10																		
Other [please specify]: _____																		
Other [please specify]: _____																		

## QUESTION 4

For each row, please place an "X" in the column that best answers the question. For each question, please leave blank the rating for your own organization. If there are other organizations that you work with in your efforts to serve youth with disabilities that are not on the list, please add them in the boxes marked, "Other [please specify]." Continue on additional sheets if necessary.

Now, and related to your work with youth or adults with disabilities, how often do you do the following with each organization? N = Never S = Sometimes F = Frequently																		
a			b			c			d			e			f			
Engage in joint training?			Share intake or assessment data on clients?			Refer clients to?			Receive referrals from?			Discuss a specific client's needs, goals, and/or services (over the phone, in person, or via email)?			Meet with specifically on transition planning for a client?			
N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F	
Agency 1																		
Agency 2																		
Agency 3																		
Agency 4																		
Agency 5																		
Agency 6																		
Agency 7																		
Agency 8																		
Agency 9																		
Agency 10																		
Other [please specify]: _____																		
Other [please specify]: _____																		

## **PROMISE CASE FILE REVIEW TOPICS**

### **A. Youth Background**

- Demographic characteristics
- Nature of disability and history of SSI receipt
- Skills, interests, hobbies
- Household/family structure

### **B. Engagement and Case Management**

- Nature of initial contact with youth (timing, mode, content, quality)
- Youth's employment and education goals, how they were assessed and documented, and development of plans to work toward goals
- Youth's personal challenges, how they were assessed and documented, and development of plans to address challenges (e.g., mental health, physical health, family issues, housing, transportation, legal issues)
- Other assessments conducted with youth
- Nature of ongoing communication with youth
- Quality of relationship with youth

### **C. Service Receipt**

- Description of each PROMISE service youth has received, start and end dates, and youth's progress if relevant (education, employment, vocational rehabilitation, benefits counseling, and other services)
- Description of any work experience jobs youth has had (job description, wage, hours, start and end dates, and successes and challenges youth has experienced on the job)
- Description of each PROMISE service youth's parents/guardians have received and start and end dates (education, employment, vocational rehabilitation, benefits counseling, and other services)

### **D. Future Outlook**

- Anticipated services for youth in the near future
- Current or anticipated plans for case closure

**PROMISE PROGRAM ACTIVITY OBSERVATION FORM**

State_____	Date of Observation_____
Site Location_____	Site Lead_____
Activity Observed_____	Time/Duration of Activity_____

**A. Description of Activity**

	Observations
Activity structure (e.g., group workshop, individual meeting, class, etc.)	
Goals or objectives articulated at start of activity	
Content Covered	
Curriculum or materials used during activity	
Next steps articulated at end of activity	

**B. Description of PROMISE Staff and Participants**

	Observations
Description of PROMISE staff leading activity	
Number and description of participants	
Level of engagement among participants	
Notable interactions among participants	
Notable interactions between participants and staff	

**C. Assessments of Activity**

	Assessments
Ways in which activity contributes toward PROMISE goals/objectives	
Ways in which activity as implemented complies with or deviates from the model as intended (fidelity)	
Overall quality and value of activity	
Other	

**PROMISE COST DATA COLLECTION FORM TOPIC LIST**

Program Component	Labor Costs		Other Direct Costs		Indirect Costs		Unbudgeted Costs	
	Amount	Source	Amount	Source	Amount	Source	Amount	Source
Component A Organization 1 Organization 2 Organization 3 Etc Subtotal								
Component B Organization 1 Organization 2 Organization 3 Etc Subtotal								
Component C Organization 1 Organization 2 Organization 3 Etc Subtotal								
All Components Organization 1 Organization 2 Organization 3 Etc Total								

Labor costs: wages/salaries and fringe benefits

Other direct costs: direct services and payments to participants, other purchases and expenditures

Indirect costs: program overhead, general administrative costs

Unbudgeted costs: unpaid labor, unpaid goods, other unbudgeted or in-kind staff

**APPENDIX C**  
**FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOLS**

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### YOUTH FOCUS GROUP CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

The Social Security Administration is sponsoring a study of the [PROMISE/ASPIRE] program to learn how it is working and how it can be improved. The study is being conducted by a team of researchers at Mathematica Policy Research and BCT Partners. Thank you for your interest in this very important study. By signing this form, you are agreeing to take part in the study. As a participant in this study, the following will happen:

- 1) You will complete a short form to provide a description of your background.
- 2) You will participate in a group discussion with researchers and other Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients to talk about your experiences with [PROMISE/ASPIRE] and the services you have received.

The decision to participate in the study is up to you. All information that is collected about you through today's discussion or agency records will be kept private to the extent allowed by federal law. The information we collect will be used for research purposes only. Your name will never be used in any reports and no information will be reported in any way that can identify you. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions on the background information form or during the group discussion.

***I have read this form (or it has been read to me). I understand the information in these materials and voluntarily agree to participate. If I have any questions, I can call a member of the study team at the toll-free number 1-8xx-XXX-XXXX.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARTICIPANT'S NAME (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 90 minutes per respondent. Send comments concerning this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information to [agency and address]. According to the United States federal government Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The OMB control number for this information collection is XXXX-XXXX. Expiration Date [date].

**YOUTH BACKGROUND INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

*Before we begin the discussion group, please take a few moments to answer some questions about yourself. Your answers will help us learn more about you and your background, which we can use to better understand the comments and experiences you share with us today. We will not identify you or share your specific answers—we will only report your answers combined with everyone else's. Thank you!*

1. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your gender?  Male  Female

3. How old were you when you began receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI)?  
If you do not know, please write in "don't know." \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please describe the disability for which you are receiving SSI:

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5. Are you currently enrolled in school (please check all that apply)?:

- Yes, enrolled in high school
- Yes, enrolled in GED program
- Yes, enrolled in vocational training program
- No, not enrolled in school

Thanks again for completing this questionnaire!

## YOUTH FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

### Introduction

My name is [name] and I am from [Mathematica /BCT Partners]. We are doing a study on the [PROMISE/ASPIRE] program. My understanding is that you are signed up to be in [PROMISE/ASPIRE]. We are holding discussion groups with people in [PROMISE/ASPIRE] to learn more about their experiences with the program.

What we learn from you today will help [state] do a better job of helping youth who are receiving SSI with school and work.

As you have been told, at the end of today's discussion group, you will receive a \$10 gift card for talking with us today.

Your participation in this discussion group is voluntary. There is no risk to you for participating. Whether or not you participate in the discussion will have no effect on your SSI benefits. At any time before or during the discussion, you can choose to not participate. Also, you do not have to answer any question you don't feel comfortable answering.

Everything you say today will be kept private to the fullest extent allowed by law; however, we may need to tell someone if keeping that information private could harm you or someone else. Otherwise, the information will be shared only with our study team. Nothing you say will be linked to your name and our reports will not identify you in any way.

I also want to let you know that I am not an expert on SSI, so I cannot answer questions or give advice about your SSI benefits or your personal circumstances.

The discussion should last about 90 minutes. I hope you will share your experiences and opinions freely in our discussion. To respect the privacy of other people in the group, please don't talk about or share anything you hear today. In order to have a great conversation, please speak clearly and one at a time. It is okay to disagree with one another, but please do not argue.

I will be jotting down notes during our conversation. Also, with your permission, I will record the discussion to make certain I have accurately heard everything you said. The recording will only be available to the [Mathematica/BCT] study team and will be destroyed at the end of the study. Please raise your hand if I do not have your permission to record the conversation. *[Facilitator: do not record conversation if there is any objection.]*

Before we begin, I am going to check to make certain the recorder is working properly. *[Facilitator: hit the record button, say a few words, stop the recording, and play back what you've recorded to ensure that the equipment is not only functional, but that the volume is good.]*

Does anyone have any questions before we begin? Ok, if there are no more questions, let's get started. *[HIT THE RECORD BUTTON]*.

I have hit the record button. Everyone in the room has agreed to being recorded and to participating in the discussion. We'll begin by doing introductions—we will go around the room.

Please tell us your first name and how long you have been participating in the [PROMISE/ASPIRE] program.

### A. Enrolling in [PROMISE/ASPIRE]

Let's start by talking about how you first heard about [PROMISE/ASPIRE] and signed up.

1. How did you first learn about [PROMISE/ASPIRE]?
  - a. Did you receive a call or a letter about [PROMISE/ASPIRE]?
  - b. Who told you about the program?
  - c. Did you see information about the program somewhere, like on a flyer?
2. Why did you decide to sign up?
  - a. What about the program interested you?
  - b. What did you hope to get out of [PROMISE/ASPIRE]?
3. Did you have any concerns about the program, any worries that it might not be right for you? Please tell me about your concerns/worries.
4. Did you have to do anything to sign up for [PROMISE/ASPIRE] or did your parent/guardian sign you up for the program?
  - a. What did you have to do? Did you fill out paper work? Go to a meeting?
  - b. Was it easy to sign up for the program? Difficult (and why)?

### B. Case Management

1. I would like to hear about your experiences with your [PROMISE/ASPIRE] [case manager/program job title for case manager]. A [case manager/program job title for case manager] is the person who ... By a show of hands, how many of you have a [PROMISE/ASPIRE] [case manager/program job title for case manager]? *[Facilitator: state the number of hands raised so the number becomes part of the recording]* Tell us about your [PROMISE/ASPIRE] [case manager/program job title for case manager].
  - a. How often do you talk to each other? How do you typically talk to each other (e.g., telephone, in-person, texting)? Would you like to talk with him/her more, less, or is this about right?
  - b. What kinds of things do you talk about?

*PROBE*: education and employment goals/service needs (i.e., assessment), individualized education program (IEP)/transition plan issues

2. How helpful has your [case manager/program job title for case manager] been?
  - a. What has been most helpful? What has been least helpful?
  - b. Is there anything you would change about your [case manager/program job title for case manager] or the services he/she provides? Are there additional things you would like your case manager to help you with that he/she is not doing?

### C. Education Services

Now, let's talk about [PROMISE/ASPIRE] activities related to school and education.

1. By a show of hands, how many of you are currently in school? [*Facilitator: state the number of hands raised so the number becomes part of the recording*]
  - a. What are your education goals/plans?
2. Have you taken any classes in school to help you learn how to live on your own when you are done with school? What did you think of those classes? Were they helpful? Why or why not?
3. What services related to your education have you used through [PROMISE/ASPIRE]?

*PROBES*: vocational education/training classes, GED classes, peer support workshops, support at IEP meetings.

- a. For those who used these services, what services were most helpful to you? Why? What services were least helpful? Why?
- b. For those who have not used any education-related services, why not? What might have encouraged you or made it easier for you to use them (e.g., knowing about them, flexible hours, more accessible location, different types of services, shorter wait times)?
4. Are there education-related services you want but haven't gotten? What services? Why haven't you gotten them??

## D. Employment and Employment Preparation/Support

Now, let's talk about your work experiences and activities you have done in [PROMISE/ASPIRE] to help you get or keep a job.

1. By a show of hands, how many of you are currently working at a job? *[Facilitator:] state the number of hands raised so the number becomes part of the recording*

For those who are working:

- a. Tell us about your job. What do you do there? How long have you been working there? How many hours per week do you work there? Do you get paid? How much do you earn?
- b. How did you find this job? Did your [PROMISE/ASPIRE] case manager/program job title for case manager] help you? How?
- c. Do [PROMISE/ASPIRE] staff ever visit you at this job—like your [case manager/program job title for case manager] or a [job coach/program job title for job coach]? How often and what happens during those visits?
- d. Overall, what do you think about this job? What do you like best? What do you like least? What have you learned at this job?

For those who are not working:

- a. Have you ever had a job before?
- b. Did anyone from [PROMISE/ASPIRE] help you find that job? How?
- c. When did your last job end?
- d. Why did you stop working there?

The next questions are for everyone, whether you are working right now or not:

- a. What are your employment goals for the future?
  - b. What type of job would you like to have when you get older?
  - c. How do you think [PROMISE/ASPIRE] can help you reach those goals?
2. What things have you done through [PROMISE/ASPIRE] to help you find a job?

*PROBES:* job site tours, resume preparation, career counseling, mock interviewing, job search workshops

- a. For those who used these services, what services were most helpful to you? Why? What services were least helpful? Why?
  - b. For those who haven't used these services, why not? What might have encouraged you or made it easier for you to use them (e.g., knowing about them, flexible hours, more accessible location, different types of services, shorter wait times)?
3. Are there work-related services you want but haven't gotten? What services? Why haven't you gotten them?

## E. Other Program Services

1. What other [PROMISE/ASPIRE] services or activities have you used?

*PROBES:* benefits counseling, money management workshops, life skills classes, work accommodations training and assistive technology support, peer support groups, adult mentors

- a. For those who used these services, what services were most helpful to you? Why? What services were least helpful? Why?
  - b. For those who didn't use these services, why not? What might have encouraged you or made it easier for you to use them (e.g., knowing about them, flexible hours, more accessible location, different types of services, shorter wait times)?
2. Are there services you want or need but haven't gotten? What services? Why haven't you gotten them?
  3. Have you done any [PROMISE/ASPIRE] activities together with your parents/guardians?
    - a. What activities?
    - b. Was it helpful to have your parents/guardians there? Why or why not?
  4. (*Facilitator: only ask questions specific to your state*)

*IN AR and MD ONLY:*

Has PROMISE helped you pay for anything you or your family has needed, like gas or other transportation costs or equipment to help you work? What kinds of things has PROMISE helped pay for?

*IN WI ONLY:*

By a show of hands, how many of you have received a tablet with a data plan from PROMISE? [*facilitator: state the number of hands raised so the number becomes part of the recording*] What have you used this for? Has it been helpful? Why or why not?

**IN WI ONLY:**

By a show of hands, how many of you have opened a savings account with help from PROMISE? *[facilitator: state the number of hands raised so the number becomes part of the recording]* Has it been easy or difficult to have a savings account? Why?

**F. Wrap Up**

To finish up, I would like everyone to think about all of the things they have done in [PROMISE/ASPIRE] and tell me:

1. What has been your overall experience with [PROMISE/ASPIRE]?
  - a. What have you liked best? What have you liked least?
  - b. Would you recommend [PROMISE/ASPIRE] to others your age? Why or why not?
2. What comments or advice about [PROMISE/ASPIRE] would you give to the people who designed the program? Is there anything you think they should have done differently?

Those are all the questions I have. Thank you so much for participating in this important discussion. Please don't leave before I give you your gift card for your participation. I will be asking you to sign this form so that I have a record that you received a gift card. Thank you again.

**PARENT/GUARDIAN FOCUS GROUP CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE**

The Social Security Administration is sponsoring a study of the [PROMISE/ASPIRE] program to find out how it is working and how it can be improved. The study is being conducted by researchers at Mathematica and BCT Partners. We thank you for your interest in participating in this important study. By signing this form, you are agreeing to take part in the study. As a participant in this study, the following will happen:

- 1) You will complete a short form to provide a description of your background.
- 2) You will participate in a group discussion with researchers and parents or guardians of other Supplemental Security Income (SSI) youth to talk about your experiences with [PROMISE/ASPIRE] and the services you have received.

It is your decision whether or not to participate in the study. All information we collect about you through the discussion group or agency records will be kept private to the extent allowed by federal law and the information will be used for research purposes only. Your name will never be used in any reports and no information will be reported in any way that can identify you. You may decline to answer any questions on the background information questionnaire or during the group discussion.

***I have read this form (or it has been read to me). I understand the information provided in this form and voluntarily agree to participate. If I have questions I can call a member of the study team at toll-free number 1-8xx-XXX-XXXX.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARTICIPANT’S NAME (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARTICIPANT’S SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 90 minutes per respondent. Send comments concerning this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information to [agency and address]. According to the federal government’s Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The OMB control number for this information collection is XXXX-XXXX. Expiration Date [date].

**PARENT/GUARDIAN BACKGROUND INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please take a few moments to answer some questions before we begin the discussion group. This will help us learn more about you so we can better understand the comments you share with us today. We will not identify you or share your specific answers; we will only report your answers combined with the responses of the other discussion group participants. Thank you!

1. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your gender?  Male  Female
3. Are you (please check one box):
  - Married, living with your spouse
  - Married, living apart from your spouse
  - Unmarried, living with a partner
  - Unmarried, not living with a partner
4. How long has your child been receiving SSI? \_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months
5. Please describe the disability for which your child is receiving SSI:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you yourself have a disability for which you are receiving SSI or SSDI?  No  Yes  
(If yes, please describe your disability below)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the highest level of education you have completed (please check one box)?
  - Less than high school
  - High school diploma or GED
  - Some college, no degree
  - Associate's degree
  - Bachelor's degree or higher
8. Are you currently enrolled in a training or education program?  No  Yes
9. Are you currently employed (check one box)?
  - No
  - Yes, full time (35 or more hours per week)
  - Yes, part time (less than 35 hours per week)

## PARENT/GUARDIAN FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

### Introduction

My name is [name] and I am from [Mathematica /BCT Partners]. I will facilitate our discussion today. We are doing a study on the [PROMISE/ASPIRE] program. My understanding is that you have a child who is signed up to be in [PROMISE/ASPIRE]. We are holding discussion groups with children in [PROMISE/ASPIRE] and separate groups with their parents or guardians to learn more about their experiences with the program.

What we learn from you today will help [state] do a better job of helping youth who are receiving SSI benefits with school and work.

As you have been told, at the end of the discussion, you will each receive a \$10 gift card for talking with us today.

Your participation in this discussion group is voluntary. There is no risk to you participating. Whether or not you choose to participate in this discussion, there will be no effect on your child's SSI benefits or on the SSI benefits of anyone in your family. Before we begin or at any time during the discussion, you can choose to not participate. You also do not have to answer any question you don't feel comfortable answering.

Anything you say today will be kept confidential to the fullest extent possible by law. This means that we will keep everything you say here today private, unless that information could cause harm to you or to someone else. Otherwise, the information will be shared only with our study team--not with anyone who handles SSI benefits or earnings. Nothing you say will be linked to your name and our reports will not identify you in any way.

I also want to let you know that I am not an expert on SSI, so I cannot answer questions or give advice about benefits or your personal circumstances.

Today's discussion should last about 90 minutes. I hope you will share your experiences and opinions freely in our discussion. To respect the privacy of other people in the group, once today's discussion group ends, please don't share or talk about anything you've heard anyone else say. As part of the discussion, you can disagree with each other, but please do not argue.

During our discussion, you might see me jotting down notes. Please do not be alarmed, I am listening; the notes will help me keep track of ideas that come up that I want to follow up on. In addition, with your permission, to make sure I hear everything you have to say, I will record the discussion. The recording is for research purposes only, will only be available to the [Mathematica/BCT] study team, and will be destroyed at the end of the study. Do I have your permission? Please raise your hand if I do not. *[Facilitator: do not record conversation if there is any objection.]*

So we get a good recording, please speak clearly and one at a time. Before we get started, I'm going to test the recorder. *[HIT THE RECORD BUTTON. SAY A FEW WORDS. PLAY IT BACK].*

Does anyone have any questions before we begin our discussion?

Okay, let's get started. [*HIT THE RECORD BUTTON*].

I have hit the record button. Everyone in the room has agreed to being recorded and to participating in the discussion. Let's begin by going around the room and having each person introduce him or herself by first name and telling us a little bit about the child that brought you to this group today.

## **A. Enrolling in [PROMISE/ASPIRE]**

Let's start by talking about how you first heard about the [PROMISE/ASPIRE] program and how you signed up for it.

1. How did you first learn about [PROMISE/ASPIRE]?
  - a. Did you receive a call or a letter about [PROMISE/ASPIRE]?
  - b. Who told you about the program?
  - c. Did you see information about the program somewhere, like on a flyer?
2. What did you have to do to sign up for [PROMISE/ASPIRE]?
  - a. Did you fill out paper work? Go to a meeting?
  - b. Was it easy to enroll in the program? Difficult (and why)?
3. Did you have any concerns about the program? Any worries that it might not be right for you or your child?

## **B. Services for Youth**

Let's talk next about what you think of the services your child has received so far from [PROMISE/ASPIRE].

1. What services has your child received so far?
 

*PROBES:* vocational education or GED classes, career counseling, job search and job skills classes, paid work opportunities, work accommodations, benefits counseling, life skills classes, case management
2. What services have been helpful? Why? What services have not been so helpful? Why?
3. Do you think [PROMISE/ASPIRE] is doing enough for your child? What else could it be doing?

### C. Services to Promote Parent/Guardian Involvement

1. Before hearing about and enrolling your child in [PROMISE/ASPIRE], by a show of hands, how many of you thought your child would be able to support him/herself and live independently someday? *[Facilitator: state the number of hands raised so the number becomes part of the recording]*
2. Before enrolling in [PROMISE/ASPIRE], what were your hopes and expectations for your child's future?
3. By a show of hands, how many of you currently think your child will be able to support him/herself and live independently someday? *[Facilitator: state the number of hands raised so the number becomes part of the recording]*
4. Has [PROMISE/ASPIRE] changed your hopes and expectations for your child's future? How?
5. What kinds of things has [PROMISE/ASPIRE] done to encourage you to help your children do well in the program and at school or work?

*PROBES:* encourage you to attend individualized education program (IEP) meetings, help you set expectations for your child?

### D. Staff and Peer Support for Parents/Guardians

1. Do you ever communicate with any [PROMISE/ASPIRE] staff one-on-one? (What staff?/Title?)

If so:

- a. How often do you talk to each other? How do you typically talk to each other (e.g., telephone, in-person, texting)? Would you like to talk with [PROMISE/ASPIRE] staff one-on-one more, less, or is this about right?
- b. What kinds of things do you talk about?

If not:

- c. Is there someone at [PROMISE/ASPIRE] you could reach out to with any questions you may have or to raise concerns?
  - d. How comfortable do you feel reaching out to [PROMISE/ASPIRE] staff to ask questions or raise concerns?
2. Have you ever been in any support groups with other parents or guardians in [PROMISE/ASPIRE]?

- a. How helpful were these groups?
- b. What kinds of things did you talk about?

## E. Services for Parents/Guardians

Now, let's talk about [PROMISE/ASPIRE] activities **you yourself** have received.

1. First, by a show of hands, how many of you are currently in school or a training program?  
*[Facilitator: state the number of hands raised so the number becomes part of the recording]*

Have you used services through [PROMISE/ASPIRE] to help you stay in school, do better in school, or go back to school? [PROMISE/ASPIRE] staff may have provided these services or referred you to services provided by other organizations.

*PROBES:* vocational education classes, GED classes, peer support workshops

- a. For those who used these services, what services were most helpful to you? Why? What services were least helpful? Why?
  - b. For those who have not used any education-related services, why didn't you use them? What might have encouraged you or made it easier for you to use them (e.g., knowing about them, flexible hours, more accessible location, different types of services, shorter wait times)?
  - c. Are there education-related services that you would like to receive through [PROMISE/ASPIRE] but haven't gotten? What services? Why haven't you gotten them??
2. By a show of hands, how many of you are working? *[Facilitator: record response]*

Have you used services through [PROMISE/ASPIRE] to help you find or keep a job or to get a better job? [PROMISE/ASPIRE] staff may have provided these services or referred you to services provided by other organizations.

*PROBES:* resume preparation, career counseling, mock interviewing, job search workshops, job site tours

- a. For those who used these services, what services were most helpful to you? Why? What services were least helpful? Why?
- b. For those who haven't used these services, why didn't you use them? What might have encouraged you or made it easier for you to use them (e.g., knowing about them, flexible hours, more accessible location, different types of services, shorter wait times)?

- c. Are there work-related services that you would like to receive through [PROMISE/ASPIRE] but haven't gotten? What services? Why haven't you gotten them?
3. Have you used services through [PROMISE/ASPIRE] to help you manage your money? [PROMISE/ASPIRE] staff may have provided these services or referred you to services provided by other organizations.

*PROBES:* individual benefits counseling, money management workshops

- a. For those who used these services, what services were most helpful to you? Why? What services were least helpful? Why?
- b. For those who didn't use these services, why didn't you use them? What might have encouraged you or made it easier for you to use them (e.g., knowing about them, flexible hours, more accessible location, different types of services, shorter wait times)?
- c. Are there money-management services that you would like to receive through [PROMISE/ASPIRE] but haven't gotten? What services? Why haven't you gotten them?
- d. Do you think about what will happen to your household income if your child begins to work and becomes more independent? Has [PROMISE/ASPIRE] changed your thinking about this at all? How?
4. Have you yourself participated in any other [PROMISE/ASPIRE] activities? What activities? What did you think of them? Were they helpful? Why or why not?
5. (*Facilitator: only ask questions specific to your state*)

*IN AR and MD ONLY:*

Has PROMISE helped you pay for anything your family has needed, like food, gas or other transportation costs, or work clothes? What kinds of things has PROMISE helped pay for?

*IN WI ONLY:*

By a show of hands, how many of you have received a tablet with a data plan from PROMISE? [*Facilitator: state the number of hands raised so the number becomes part of the recording*] What have you used this for? Has it been helpful? Why or why not?

*IN WI ONLY:*

By a show of hands, how many of you have opened a savings account with help from PROMISE? [*Facilitator: state the number of hands raised so the number becomes part of the recording*] Has it been easy or difficult to have a savings account? Why?

6. Have other members of your family participated in any [PROMISE/ASPIRE] activities? If yes:
  - a. Which family members and which activities?
  - b. What did they think of these activities?

- c. Were they helpful? Why or why not?

## **F. Wrap Up**

To finish up, I would like everyone to think about all of the things you and your child have done in [PROMISE/ASPIRE] and tell me:

1. What has been your overall experience with [PROMISE/ASPIRE]?
  - a. Would you recommend [PROMISE/ASPIRE] to other families like yours? Why or why not?
2. What comments or advice about [PROMISE/ASPIRE] would you give to the people who designed the program?

Those are all the questions I have. Thank you so much for participating in this important discussion. Please don't leave before I give you your gift card for your participation. I will be asking you to sign this form [*Facilitator: hold up form*] so that I have a record that you received a gift card. Thank you again.

## **YOUTH FOCUS GROUP INVITATION LETTER**

DATE

### **An Invitation to Youth in [PROMISE/ASPIRE]:**

Thank you for enrolling in the [PROMISE/ASPIRE] program! The goal of [PROMISE/ASPIRE] is to help teens reach your goals for life after high school – including graduation and work experience.

Staff from Mathematica Policy Research will be coming to your area in [FILL MONTH] to learn more about how [PROMISE/ASPIRE] is working. We'll be talking to program staff, parents/guardians of teens, and with teens themselves.

### **Your Input Matters. Make Your Voice Heard!**

We're looking for a group of 8-10 teens in this area to come together and talk with us as a group. We'll ask for your thoughts about how the [PROMISE/ASPIRE] program has impacted your family. We'll meet at {FILL SITE}'s office in [FILL CITY NAME OF OFFICE] from [time] to [time].

For taking part in this discussion you'll receive:

- A \$10 gift card for to thank you for your time.
- The satisfaction of knowing your voice was heard. The knowledge that you helped others know how this program has impacted you and your family and what can be improved.

Everything you share will be kept private. Your feedback will be combined together with everyone else who takes part when we create our reports. The results will be shared with researchers and policy makers who want to know more about these programs. As someone who is receiving these services, your feedback is unique and important. Interested?

**Interested?**

**Please call us, toll-free, at 8xx-xxx-xxxx  
by [FILL DATE WITHIN 1.5 WEEKS] to reserve your spot.**

**MATHEMATICA**  
**Policy Research**

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN FOCUS GROUP INVITATION LETTER**

DATE

Dear Parent / Guardian:

**Thank you for enrolling your child in [PROMISE/ASPIRE].**

This program will help provide services to young adults with disabilities and their families. The goal? To help the youth who are now receiving SSI benefits reach their goals for life after high school. This includes supports to help them graduate from high school and gain work experience and job skills.

Staff from a research firm called Mathematica Policy Research will be coming to your area in [FILL MONTH] to learn more about how the [PROMISE/ASPIRE] program is being carried out.

**As a parent or guardian of a young adult being served by this program, we'd like to hear from you!**

The input of parents and guardians is really important. It will help [state] learn what [PROMISE/ASPIRE] does well and what it can do better. There will be a meeting with a small group of about 8-10 other parents and guardians. At the meeting, we'll ask for your thoughts about how the [PROMISE/ASPIRE] program has impacted your family. The meeting will be held at {FILL SITE}'s office in [FILL CITY NAME OF OFFICE] from [time] to [time].

**For taking part in this discussion you'll receive:**

- A \$10 gift card to thank you for your time.
- The satisfaction of providing direct feedback on how this program has impacted your family!

This feedback will be kept private. What is shared will be combined together with the input from everyone else who takes part. Through our reports, we'll share what we learn with researchers and policy makers nationwide.

**Interested?**

**Please call us, toll-free, at 8xx-xxx-xxxx  
by [FILL DATE WITHIN 1.5 WEEKS] to reserve your spot.**

**MATHEMATICA**  
**Policy Research**

## FOCUS GROUP PHONE RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

### IF OUTBOUND CALL:

Hello! I'm calling to follow-up on a letter we recently sent from the [PROMISE/ASPIRE] program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and Social Security Administration. [PROMISE/ASPIRE] is providing services to young people and their families in your area. We are looking to speak with parents and youth involved in [PROMISE/ASPIRE]. Only you can tell us about your personal experience with these services. This feedback plays an important role in helping us better understand how things are working – what is going well and what can be improved. Would you be willing to share your feedback with us at an upcoming listening session, which will include other (parents / youth)?

- YES – CONTINUE BELOW
- NO – EITHER PROBE FOR REASON AND ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS CONCERNS, OR TERMINATE

**IF INBOUND CALL:** Thanks for calling! We appreciate your interest in our upcoming groups for parents and youth in [PROMISE/ASPIRE]!

**ALL, CONTINUE:** I have a few quick questions to ask you so we make sure we connect you with the right group and that you have all the information you need about the session.

**Q1. First, are you calling to take part in the group for parents or for youth?**

- Parents
- Youth

**Q2. May I have your first and last name?**

<b>First Name:</b>	
<b>Last Name</b>	

**Q3. The group will be held at the [FILL LOCATION] on [FILL DATE] at [fill time] and will end about an hour and a half later at [FILL END TIME]. May I confirm that works for your schedule?**

- YES - CONTINUE
- NO – TERMINATE, THANK, ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN SURVEY

**Q4. Do you need directions to this location?**

- YES – PROVIDE DIRECTIONS (DRIVING, WALKING, PUBLIC TRANSIT, AS NEEDED)
- NO – CONTINUE

**Q5. Finally, may I have an email address and telephone number where we can reach you, to send confirmation the day before the meeting?**

Email address:	
Phone Number:	
Phone Type: (circle)	Home / Cell / Work

**Thank you again for calling. If you have any questions, or if anything comes up and you are not able to come, please call us at 8xx-xxx-xxxx. We'll look forward to seeing you on [FILL DATE] at [fill time]. Thanks and have a nice day.**

**FOCUS GROUP REMINDER EMAIL**

SUBJECT: Thanks for Signing Up! [PROMISE/ASPIRE] Group Discussion Reminder - \$10!

Hello [FILL VOLUNTEER FIRST NAME],

Thanks again for volunteering to attend a group discussion with parents and youth in your area.

**This email is a reminder that your group will be held on: [FILL DATE] at [FILL LOCATION ADDRESS].**

**It will run from [FILL START TIME] to [FILL END TIME].**

Dress is casual and some light refreshments will be provided. Staff from Mathematica will greet you when you arrive. They will conduct the session. After the session is over, you'll get a \$10 gift card to thank you for your time.

If you have any questions, or if something comes up and you are not able to come, please call us at 8xx-xxx-xxxx or reply to this e-mail.

We look forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,

The [PROMISE/ASPIRE] Study Team

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