

SUGGESTIONS AND REACTIONS FROM PROMISE MEETINGS OF EXPERTS

Compiled by the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC)

Meeting held in conjunction with Capacity Building Institute

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Participants

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Families and Family Interventions

Should these family barriers be taken into account when crafting interventions? Consider how parents could be involved and how such barriers could be addressed. Are there **evidence-based practices or promising practices regarding family or multigenerational models** of achieving educational and employment outcomes for low-income participants?

- Consider a two-generation strategy—focus on family and individual student to sustain—Need to partner (not “paternalize”) if family needs career development services, too
- Meet families wherever they are in communities
- Must demonstrate to a family that life off SSI is better than life on SSI
- Consider mentors, guardian ad litem in some specific student situations (foster, mental health)
- Define family broadly
- Needs vary
- Identify what families need to know (for families, educators, others) at different stages—0-3, elementary, middle grades...
- May need to “relax” some of the eligibility requirements to serve youth and families in this grant and not be constrained by policies across different agencies
 - Students in academic “track” for diploma are not receiving work experiences in high school
 - Other there ways to meet core requirements other than “seat time” in classrooms?
 - Eligibility for services from one entity should not stymie participation—disability category, support needs...
- Look at other examples that have worked in multi-systems—wrap around services
- Evidence-based, effective programs to examine:
 - Family Cycle Education (SAMHSA)
 - North Carolina Families United (through National Family Network)
 - Healthy Transitions Initiative
 - Schools in California that are doing an excellent job with benefits counseling and developing Employment Networks

What **services and supports do we need to consider** for families who no longer have access to SSI?

- Option that economic self-sufficiency and improved situation is unrelated to SSI \$
- Health benefits need to remain intact—a safety net for families
- Need a “culture broker” to relay the information and address family’s concerns
- Need employers at the table (see model from Eric Carter)
- Relax eligibility requirements

How can **family participation be encouraged**? How should such expectations and potential disincentives to participate be addressed?

- Plan early, without considering SSI as the safety net
- Target the family as much as the youth (or more)
 - Child care
 - Education—job training
 - Financial training
 - Easily accessible services
 - Community organizations, non-profit agencies
- Parent to parent information
- Dual enrollment—earning diploma and learning a trade (high school, technical school...)
- Successful demonstration—evaluation, data important to show

Interventions Correlated with Success in Obtaining Employment and Leaving the SSA Benefit Rolls

- Need hard goal of employment outcome communicated to all stakeholders
- Messages are misaligned (e.g., don't work = SSI, goal is work)
- Starting at 14 with students or families is too late
- Get students to work—for pay—while still in school demonstrates that can be successful
- Need good career exploration and development in this project—integrated employment goals and integrated career development activities in schools
 - Range of experiences
 - Teach educators to interface with employers
 - Integrate assessment into the process of exposing to different careers (age 14, or so)
 - 21st Century Skills
 - Student-driven, student-engaged
- Stages (depending on ages)—social and behavioral skills, soft skill development,—then career exploration—then supported, customized, integrated competitive employment
- Use predictors of post-school success in grant applications
- Must identify key implementation points in application
- Will need flexibility of stakeholders in application, based on population, ages, may change over time with a student/family

How should **key stakeholders** around employment be selected and encouraged to participate? Should there be requirements regarding stakeholder involvement for Promise Grant applicants? If so, what should they be?

- Need requirements for stakeholder involvement
- Workforce Development
- Chambers of Commerce
- Department of Labor

- Families
- Involve employers early in the process of the project
- Look at model: Community Partnerships—GreenLeaf, Inc. —need to see if collected data (e.g., YMCA, Workforce Investment, Head Start, higher education)
- Need to have people that trust each other and have demonstrated leadership—determine players by community. Start with a core and then add—don't be too strict with stakeholder parties. Will vary by State and community context

Coordination of Services

What programs should be included in a coordinated effort to best facilitate increased employment and reduced dependency on SSI benefits?

- Untapped resource are Independent Living Centers
- Transportation systems and providers—including travel training
- Need to build expectation by families for employment very early (in the womb)
- May need to “relax” some of the eligibility requirements to serve youth and families in this grant and not be constrained by policies across different agencies
- Look at other examples that have worked in multi-systems—wrap-around services
- Policies are misaligned (e.g., don't work = SSI, goal is work)

What needs to happen for State and local partners **to provide services more seamlessly?**

- Some sort of website development that links and shares resources across agencies/entities—so that information at their fingertips
- Identify competencies for various providers across agencies
- Bring people back to shared goals
- Need to have people that trust each other and have demonstrated leadership—determine players by community. Start with a core and then add—don't be too strict with stakeholder parties. Will vary by State and community context

How should PROMISE proposals facilitate the **involvement of schools** and school systems?

- Schools are
 - Places of convening
 - Referral agencies
 - To prepare youth for work and culminating activity is work
 - Should “promise” employment if complete program
 - Not the payee (sensitive financial information for families)
 - Can demonstrate expertise in employment preparation, career exploration and development, but are not benefits advisement experts (highly technical)
- Need commitment from schools to partner with businesses with expectation of integrated employment
- Look for districts that are ready to break a mindset

Intermediate Objectives

- High school credential should be a required outcome—standards at each grade level—individual learning plans or career plans (student and family/person-centered) should be part of these requirements
- Measures of self-determination (self-efficacy, problem solving, goal setting)
- Consider both paid and unpaid employment as intermediate outcomes
- Process measures
- Flexibility needs to be built in to account for state and local contexts (consortium of districts?, regional, large local?)

Population

The PROMISE proposal focuses on minors, right now the 14-18 year old age range. Leaving out current recipients who are about to pass age 18 may leave out some important groups of individuals. On the other hand, the intervention time (five years) and funds are limited. One suggestion has been to intervene only with 14-15 year olds and continue that intervention to age 18.

- Be sure includes all disabilities, including severe and complex disabilities

Other Logistics

- Demonstrate success quickly or start with programs already working and then expand
- Need to have people that trust each other and have demonstrated leadership—determine players by community. Start with a core and then add—don't be too strict with stakeholder parties. Will vary by State and community context
- Flexibility needs to be built in to account for state and local contexts (consortium of districts?, regional, large local?)
- Sustainability needs to be clearly planned for by the funding source when identifying grantees