

PROMISE AND FOUNDATIONS MEETINGS

MEETING NOTES

JUNE 2012

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Panelists include representatives from The Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, The HSC Foundation, The Kennedy Center, The Disability Funders Network, The Smithsonian Institution Accessibility Program, and The Kessler Foundation.

Jennifer Sheehy, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) provides an introduction and overview of the PROMISE grants: PROMISE grants address the significant need of improving outcomes for youth on SSI. They are designed to facilitate transition of young people on SSI who are within the ages 14-18. Goal is to follow the young people through the age 18 redetermination. Grants go for five years and have a 7-10 year follow up. ED will fund and administer the grants along with additional federal agencies (HHS, etc.). PROMISE focuses heavily on the family. The grants will be designed so that States can address the needs of the youth and family.

DISCUSSION

Are there other promising practices and strategies that should also be considered (i.e. what elements of projects have shown success for young people with disabilities)? A federal government employee presents what ED has done. ED has identified themes in models that are successful. Elements include:

- Early intervention is key and that young people at the age of 14 and 15;
- Need to embark on career exploration activities and work-based experiences in high school that is close to “real” work in a competitive business or labor market scenario;
- High school graduation with a regular diploma is key and that the actual diploma is related to their goals;
- It is very difficult to coordinate services at the local level and it takes one engaged partner to bring entities together; and
- Family engagement is key and the engagement must incorporate high expectations.

A panelist states that from his experience, his organization’s focus has been on employing young people and how they can be employed. Now focus on transition-aged youth and how to support them within the employment realm. Provides the example of PROJECT SEARCH, which helps students develop employment soft skills. Family engagement is important to the process. This organization’s grantees manage family and parent engagement. Community collaboration is also key (engaging community organizations such as the Boys and Girls Clubs and others). His organization approached the community organizations through an open grant process, so community organizations apply. Engaging the organizations to provide training to the staff promotes an inclusive mentality, also.

A panelist states that mentoring was important for families and young people. The foundation has found that mentoring is an important piece in the types of activities and programs that promote collaboration. Collaboration with schools is also important, so that the school can act as the “middle man” in providing information to the parents so that the parents stay involved.

A federal government employee states that families count on the income from SSI and health care that can be lost. How can families be introduced to available benefit options?

A panelist states that this is not part of the programs that he/she has information on.

A federal government employee asks if anyone has projects that target poor households who have a child with a disability (where parent may rely heavily on SSI or public assistance).

A panelist states that his organization does not have any projects that specifically target that population, but students within that socio-economic realm are involved in the programs.

A panelist states that his/her organization does not specifically target programs that support that population, but the population is included in the different programs that it supports.

A federal government employee asks what kind of evidence do the organizations look for in their initial grantmaking?

A panelist states that his/her organization looks for evidence of research and sustainability during the grant award process.

A panelist states that his/her organization meets with the grantee and develops a relationship with the organizations that they fund. The typical model is to do a 1 to 3 year grant, with a chance for a renewal. His/Her organization also looks for projects that do not rely on their funding to succeed.

A federal government employee states that there needs to be a model that is financially sustainable. States that there has to be evidence so that a viable product emerges.

A federal government employee discussed Pay-for-Success and outcome-based payments, (and how it can be applied). Pay-for-Success emerged in the UK (Peterborough) to reduce recidivism—launched the first social impact bond. Key elements that emerged from this include:

- need interventions that have evidence of success;
- need to be able to identify tangible outcomes;
- need to be able to place a value on the outcome, that is, translate reductions in recidivism into savings for the government (direct relationship between outcomes and savings).

Pay-for-Success is worth exploring further because it focuses on outcomes. It also looks at the return on investment, where savings are generated, and which intervention can produce the outcome. Approach is that pay for success is looking to work with projects in which outcomes can be identified, and that there are savings for those outcomes (such as SSI savings for PROMISE). A path towards scalability and self-sustaining needs to be a goal.

A federal government employee states that this is a component of socialization (how to find old ways to solve new problems). Therefore, we must explore how best practices and high-potential approaches

can be examined using social impact bonds, which could fit with the PROMISE initiative. With social impact bonds, it is also important to focus on evidence-based practices, and to encourage the utilization of evidence. Pay for success approach can attract, and leverage, private capital. The White House supports the conversation on PROMISE in ED, and notes that Budget includes funding for pay-for-success.

A federal government employee asks **panelists** whether any of the projects that their organizations have funded have provided incentives for the student participant, the families, or any of the organizations to participate.

Only stipends for students in internship programs to cover living expenses—have not done success-based incentives.

A federal government employee asks whether we allow the programs to design their own pay-for-success model.

A federal government employee states that there are several models—1) to allow flexibility as long as there are appropriate outcomes, 2) to provide more guidance on the types of interventions that are implemented and to ensure that evidence-based interventions are implemented.

A federal government employee asks whether we can provide data to organizations to improve outcomes (e.g. zip code maps that describe the SSI population).

A federal government employee states that OMB is interested in how to use administrative data to facilitate outcomes. He/She also mentions data on existing programs (e.g. ED's What Works Clearinghouse) could be a great way to begin to use evidence-based interventions.

A federal government employee closes the meeting by stating that ED will share the proposal with the organizations so that they can comment.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSIONS

Jennifer Sheehy, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) introduces the purpose of the meeting—for the foundations in attendance to give their perspectives to inform the PROMISE initiative. Sheehy also provides background information on the initiative (see notes from June 15th meeting), and notes that the planning process is designed to be transparent, with a wide range of stakeholders contributing input.

Sheehy states that OSERS is interested in:

- 1) whether the foundations/organizations are finding good practices to support the transition of young people on SSI in their programs/ grants/ partnerships;
- 2) how partnerships at the local level should be engaged and what these organizations do in this area; and
- 3) opportunities for pay-for-success financing.

A panelist: (in response to improving outcomes for transition-age youth) Opportunities are needed for families and the individuals themselves to experiment with, in a safe environment, what it means to transition. This is the time in which individuals learn soft skills, so therefore internship opportunities are vital. Internships are important because they are an exploration period for the individual and a learning experience.

A panelist: Believes that the hard thing about internships is that there must be the opportunity for a job afterwards. They receive training (hard and soft skill)—but when it's over, there needs to be a place for these individuals to go. Considers a successful transition one in which an individual can transition into a job.

A panelist: In listening to presentations at the National Transition Conference, he/she found that the programs that did work had more long-term success. The individual can move from the internship into the position. There might need to be an outside service agency to work for the employee and supervisor to work out behavior modifications.

A panelist: There are job coach programs that seem to help build relationships between the supervisor and the job coach, i.e., an external support person who is a liaison between the youth and the employer.

A panelist: Youth with all types of disabilities need support (not just one type of disability).

A panelist: Intensive on-going supports mainly do apply to individuals with cognitive disabilities. States that providing a job at the end of the internship is not always a fundamental part of the internship opportunity (especially in the arts community).

A panelist: Need to have a variety of ways for people to gain experience through internships—good to have employment through internship—but standard internships are also necessary. Not able to do a “PROJECT SEARCH” model for each individual—would limit the number of individuals who would be able to participate. Internships are important for networking.

Bridges through Marriott is a good model to look at for providing employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities.

A federal government employee: The stronger the connection with the employer community is important. What other employers other than Bridges/ Marriott are models?

A panelist: States that Walgreens is another company that is successfully hiring people with disabilities. Look at PROJECT SEARCH and their work with 3M and Cargill. Lowe’s is another company that is focusing on hiring students with disabilities. There are many programs, but many of the programs are pilots. It is important to investigate this further (i.e., PROJECT SEARCH). More emphasis on collaborative research across PROJECT SEARCH sites would be helpful—for example, examining the value of PROJECT SEARCH vs. typical transition activities in high school. If this could be explored across sites, this would be valuable. We need a mechanism like JAN (Job Accommodation Network) to share best practices.

A panelist: Many successes are rooted in larger corporations and companies that have large scale hiring ability. For instance, at his/her organization, it is small enough that it cannot always accommodate both interns and employees for certain positions. Larger employers have greater flexibility and can offer more opportunities. Another fear for getting off of SSI is not “will I have a job?” necessarily, but will have the other supports? For instance, transportation. Parents may also be worried about their children once they are moved off of SSI—will they have skills to be independent?

A federal government employee: from a funding perspective, how do you engage organizations in in-kind and financial supports? What do you look for in committing?

A panelist: Looking for internal sustainability of an organization—do they have the financial/ structural supports?

Funders look for a pilot program and a program that is successful and replicable. An apparent infrastructure is also important. Funders also look for social entrepreneurship programs, and opportunities to use their money and to leverage it.

It is important for a school provider to provide support to an organization for the type of program that they are running. This can be especially important for programs that include individuals with disabilities.

Addressing the whole person is also important—i.e., ensuring that they have support in other areas of their lives (family support, school support).

A federal government employee asks a **panelist** whether he/she has had any involvement in organizations that have used a pay-for-success approach.

A panelist: Yes, but only two out of over one hundred funders. They involved pilot projects where organizations felt there was a deficit in youth in transition projects. The funding organization put money in the first year and possibly the next year, but the employer agreed to pick up the costs ongoing if the project was successful since the pilots were successful (i.e., employers/organizations were able to sustain the model based on a successful pilot model). These were corporate organizations that did not have significant knowledge of employing individuals with disabilities. Public-private collaborations are a trend for the future—there is a desire for something like the pay-for-success model. Panelist will send more information on the actual models.

A federal government employee mentions that there are examples of pay-for-success that are a little bit different—for example, private entities which provide funding up front for issues such as recidivism.

A panelist voiced concern that providers will focus on selecting individuals who are easiest to place and possibly steer away from harder individuals to place.

A federal government employee: Any additional questions from other individuals on the phone?

A panelist: Added that they have not had a lot of trouble reaching into the community to find collaborators because there is a general desire to help this population. There should be a coordinating agency to provide a leadership and direction to bring the right people together. Suggested pulling in the National Youth Transition Center. Initiatives such as these require individuals at all levels (state, federal, local) to break through and make a difference. A national strategy and coordination is necessary instead of small-scale efforts.