

Center for Studying Disability Policy

Pursuing a Secure Economic Future for Youth with Disabilities

Lessons from PROMISE

January 25, 2023



Webinar logistics



Closed captioning



Requests for assistance



Questions to presenters



Welcome



Agenda

/ **Welcome**

- Gina Livermore, Mathematica

/ **A Brief Context for PROMISE**

- Jeff Hemmeter, SSA

/ **About PROMISE**

- David Emenheiser, Department of Education

/ **The PROMISE Evaluation**

- Ankita Patnaik and Karen Katz, Mathematica

/ **Wisconsin PROMISE Lessons Learned**

- Ellie Hartman, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

/ **Implications of PROMISE Findings for Transition Practice**

- Catherine Fowler, National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative

/ **Questions & Answers**





Speakers



Gina Livermore
Mathematica



Jeffrey Hemmeter
Social Security
Administration



David Emenheiser
Department of Education



Ankita Patnaik
Mathematica



Karen Katz
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Ellie Hartman
Wisconsin Department of
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Catherine Fowler
National Technical Assistance
Center on Transition: The
Collaborative



A Brief Context for PROMISE

Jeffrey Hemmeter
Social Security Administration



The SSI Program

- / Means-tested cash payments to low-income/low-resource individuals with disabilities and the elderly**
- / Parental income and resources are partially counted as available to the child through a process referred to as “deeming”**
- / In 2023:**
 - Maximum monthly federal benefit payment: \$914/individual; \$1,371/couple
 - Resource limit: \$2,000/individual; \$3,000/couple
- / In most states, also automatically eligible for Medicaid**
- / Multiple work incentives to encourage work**
- / Children undergo a redetermination at age 18 to determine if they are eligible to receive benefits as an adult**



The SSI Program and Youth

- / In December 2021, there were about 387,000 children receiving SSI**
 - Child recipient counts peaked in 2013 (about the time PROMISE started)
 - Majority have mental impairments
 - 18.1% ASD; 14.3% Developmental Disorders; 13.8% ID; 36.6% all other mental disorders
- / Most child recipients (73.1%) have no other income deemed to them**
- / Over two thirds (68.8%) live in a one-parent household**
 - 12.8% don't live with parents—foster care, other institutions, other family, etc.
- / Large variations by state**



SSI Youth Outcomes

- / **About 84,000 age-18 redetermination/year (pre-pandemic)**
 - Cessation rate ~46%--many will return (up to 20%)
 - Lose Medicaid
- / **General low human capital investment among 17/18-year-old SSI recipients (2001/2002)**
 - 11.2% earned over \$2,000 before 18
 - 1/3 received vocational training
 - 43% suspended/expelled
- / **Incomplete earnings response to SSI loss at age 18**
- / **Relatively few youth SSI recipients work**



PROMISE INITIATIVE

DAVID E. EMENHEISER, ED.D.

RURAL LEAD

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

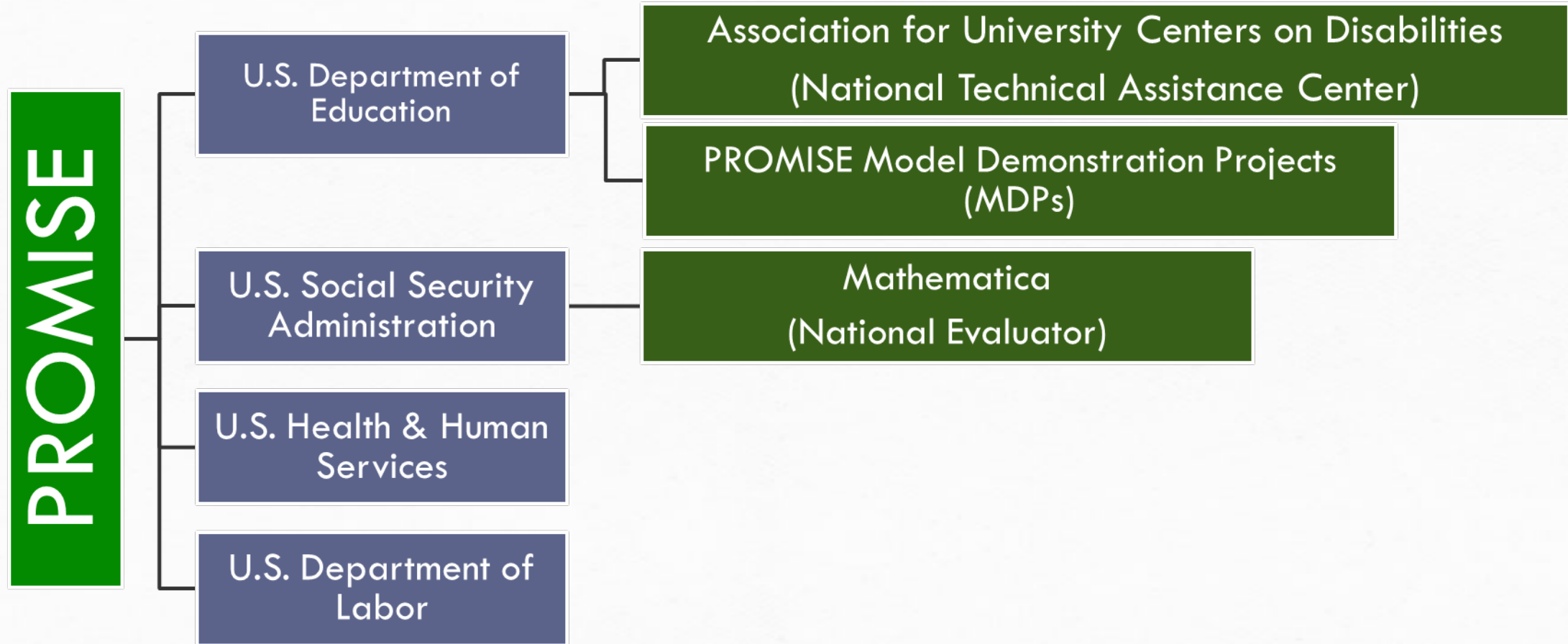
FEDERAL AUTHORITY

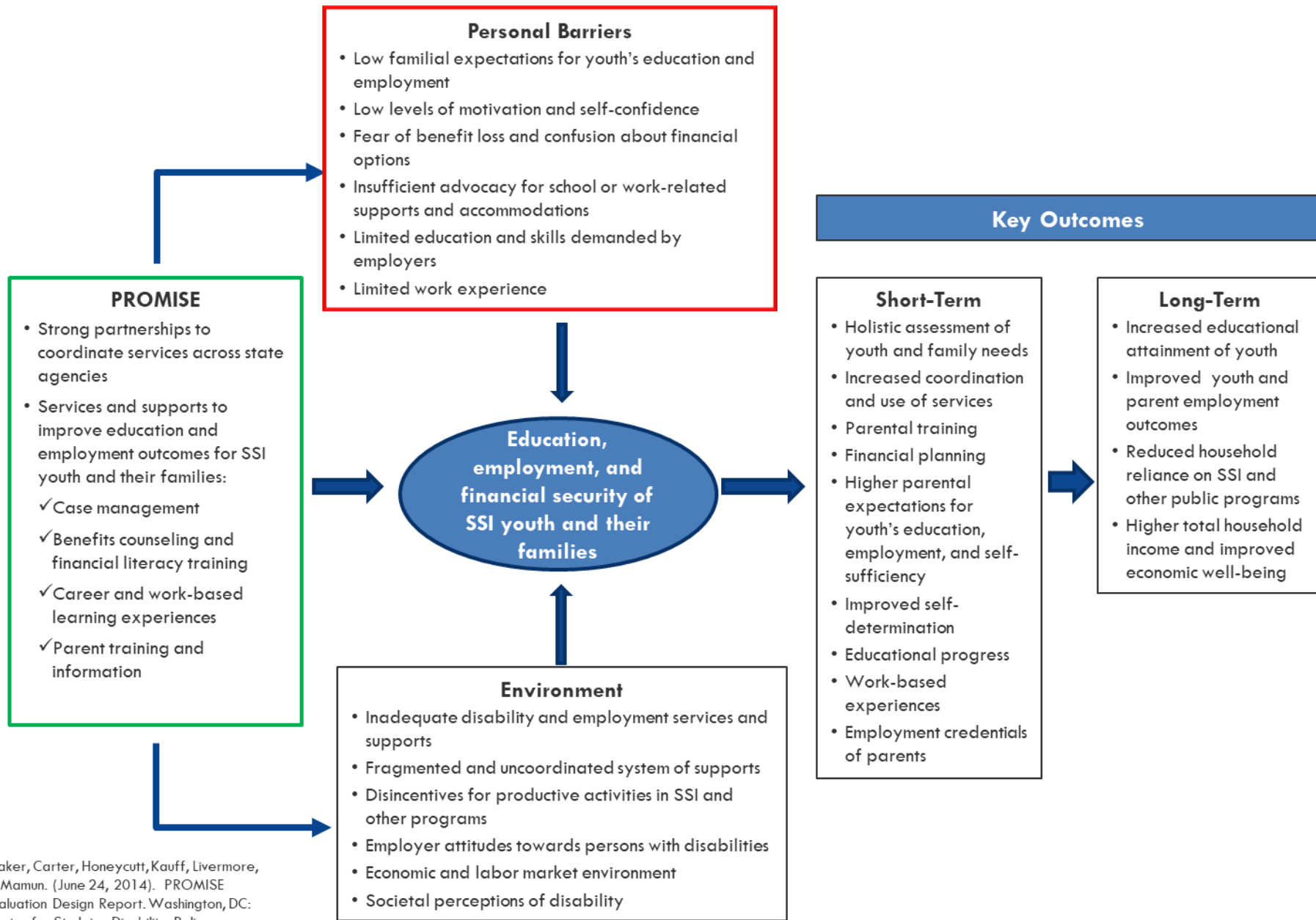
APPROPRIATIONS

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-74) provided funds for activities to improve the outcomes of child SSI recipients and their families.
2. The 6 Model Demonstration Projects received a total of approximately \$229 million for 5 years.

FEDERAL PARTNERS

INTERAGENCY





Fraker, Carter, Honeycutt, Kauff, Livermore, & Mamun. (June 24, 2014). PROMISE Evaluation Design Report. Washington, DC: Center for Studying Disability Policy, Mathematica Policy Research.

RESEARCH DESIGN

POPULATION

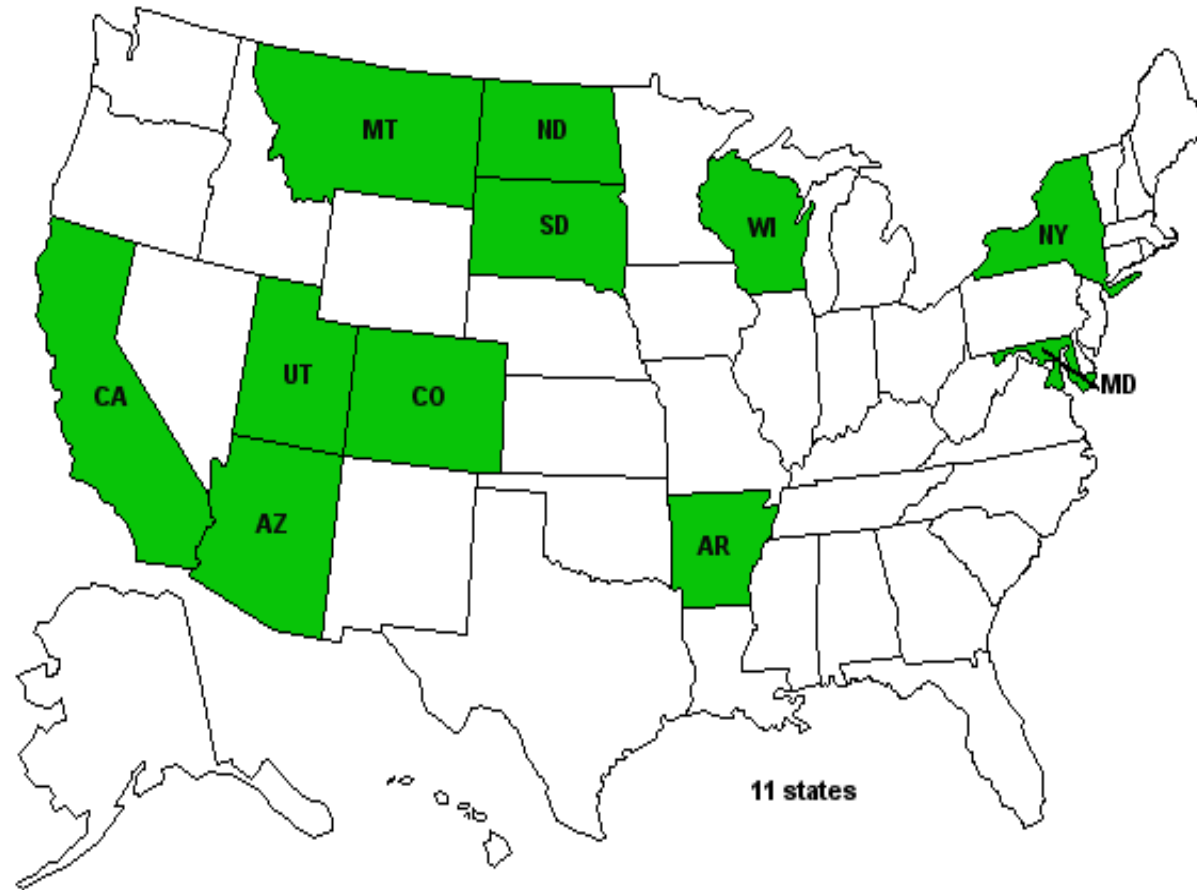
1. Target Population: Youth, 14-16 years of age, enrolled in the SSI program through the Social Security Administration and their families
2. Six grant awardees were required to recruit 13,172 participants for the study (all MDPs were required to recruit 2,000 participants , except CA – 3,172 participants); recruitment ended on 4.30.16 and all MDPs met or exceeded their enrollment targets (total enrollment- 13,444/102%)
3. Experimental Research Design: RCT used to test interventions to predict positive outcomes for SSI eligible youth. The control group continues to receive typical services available to them in their state.

PURPOSE

COMPETITIVE GRANT AWARDS

1. Six grants were awarded in FY2013 for 5 years to implement Model Demonstration Projects (MDPs) to promote positive outcomes for children who receive SSI and their families.
2. PROMISE aims to encourage new ways of providing support and to build an evidence base on the effectiveness of promising interventions related to the transition from school to postsecondary education and employment.
3. The AUCD PROMISE TA Center was awarded in FY2014.

www.promisetacenter.org



PROMISE MDP CORE FEATURES

REQUIREMENTS

- **Develop partnerships** with multiple state agencies and organizations
- **Provide services and supports** which include:
 - Case management
 - Benefits counseling and financial capability services
 - Career and work-based learning experiences, to include paid employment in integrated settings
 - Parent training and information
- **Participant outreach and recruitment**
- **Provide technical assistance and training** to include professional development for stakeholders



The PROMISE Evaluation

Ankita Patnaik and Karen Katz
Mathematica



The PROMISE Evaluation

- / Evaluation design: Random assignment (RA) study**
 - In each program, half the enrollees were placed in a treatment group (and could receive PROMISE services), and the remainder were placed in a control group
- / Enrolled over 12,500 youth and their families across the six programs**



The PROMISE Evaluation

/ **Evaluation components:**

- In-depth implementation studies
- 18-month and five-year impact studies
- Assessment of benefits and costs during the five years after enrollment
- Additional special topic analyses

/ **Follow-up data collection included:**

- 18-month and five-year surveys of parents and youth
- Administrative data on participation in SSA programs, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Medicaid/Medicare and on income reported to the Internal Revenue Service

/ **Reports available at [Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income \(PROMISE\) \(mathematica.org\)](https://mathematica.org)**



Key findings from the implementation studies

- / Programs varied considerably in their implementation**
- / Key youth transition services were intensive case management and work-based experiences**
- / Family support services were less intensive and targeted than youth transition services**



Distinctive features of the PROMISE programs

- / **Arkansas PROMISE:** Offered summer camp and paid summer work experiences, provided most extensive wage subsidies
- / **ASPIRE:** Implemented across six sparsely-populated states, relied heavily on existing resources in the community
- / **CaPROMISE:** Implemented within local education agencies, required case managers to earn benefit counselor certification
- / **MD PROMISE:** Assigned each youth to a team comprising a case manager and a family employment specialist
- / **NYS PROMISE:** Implemented within local education agencies, brought in specialists from Bridges from School to Work to support employment services
- / **WI PROMISE:** Implemented within Vocational Rehabilitation agency



18-month impact study

/ **All programs had some positive impacts during the first 18 months after enrollment**

- All programs increased youth's receipt of transition services
- All programs increased youth's paid employment, and some increased earnings
 - All programs increased youth's paid work experiences—but mainly in short-term jobs
- All programs increased receipt of support services by youth's family



Programs' Impacts Five Years After Random Assignment





The five-year impact study

- / **Outcomes:** Education, employment, benefit receipt, economic well-being, and other outcomes
- / **Method:** Compare average outcomes for the treatment and control groups using a regression-based adjustment to control for baseline characteristics

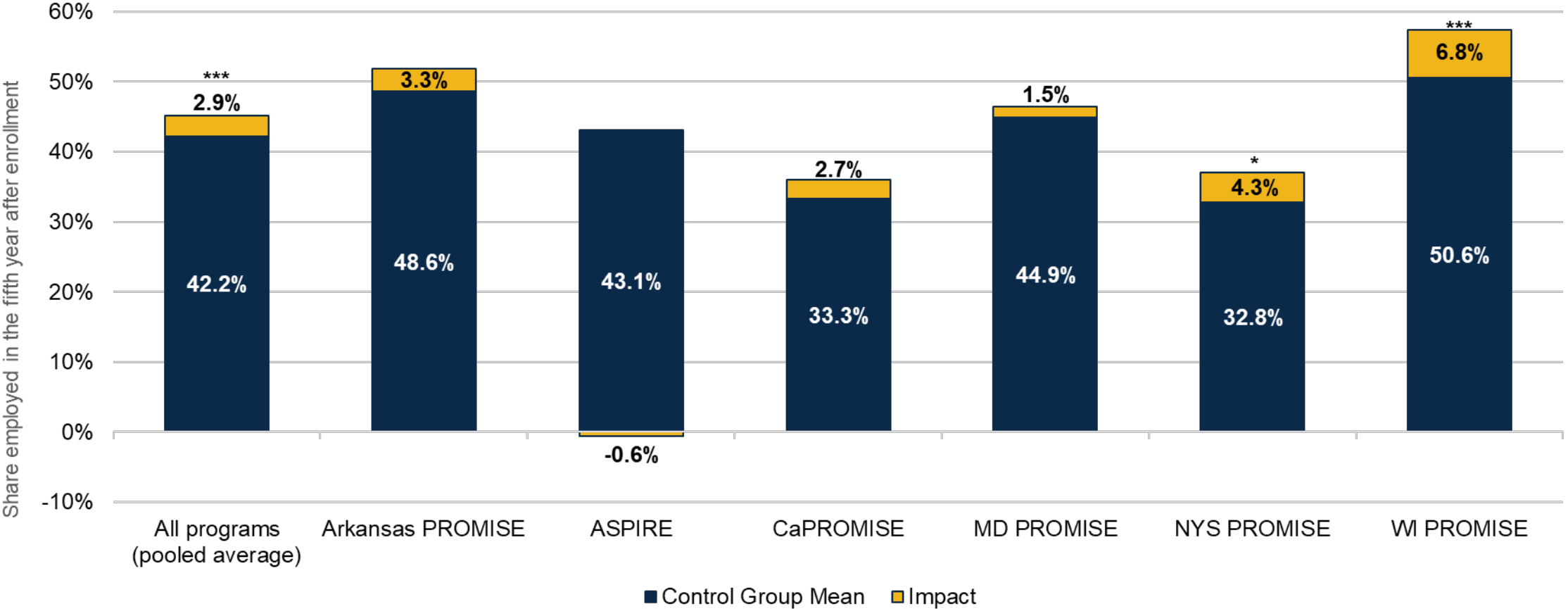


PROMISE improved some youth outcomes, but the impacts varied by program

- / Each program increased employment and earnings in the first few years, but only two programs had persistent impacts on youth employment rates**
- / On average, the programs increased youth earnings over the five-year follow-up period, but none of the program-specific impact estimates were statistically significant**
- / Three programs increased youth's total income over the five-year period**

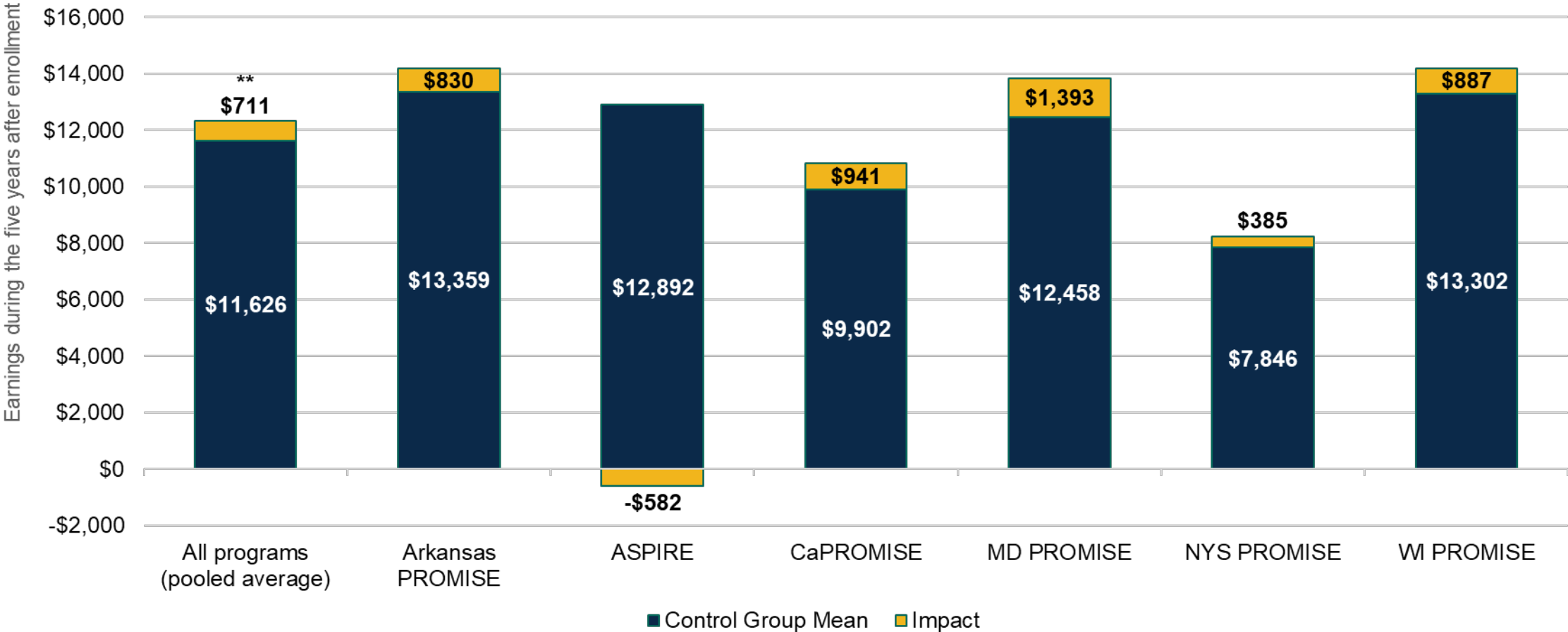


On average, the PROMISE programs increased youth employment in the fifth year; two programs had statistically significant impacts



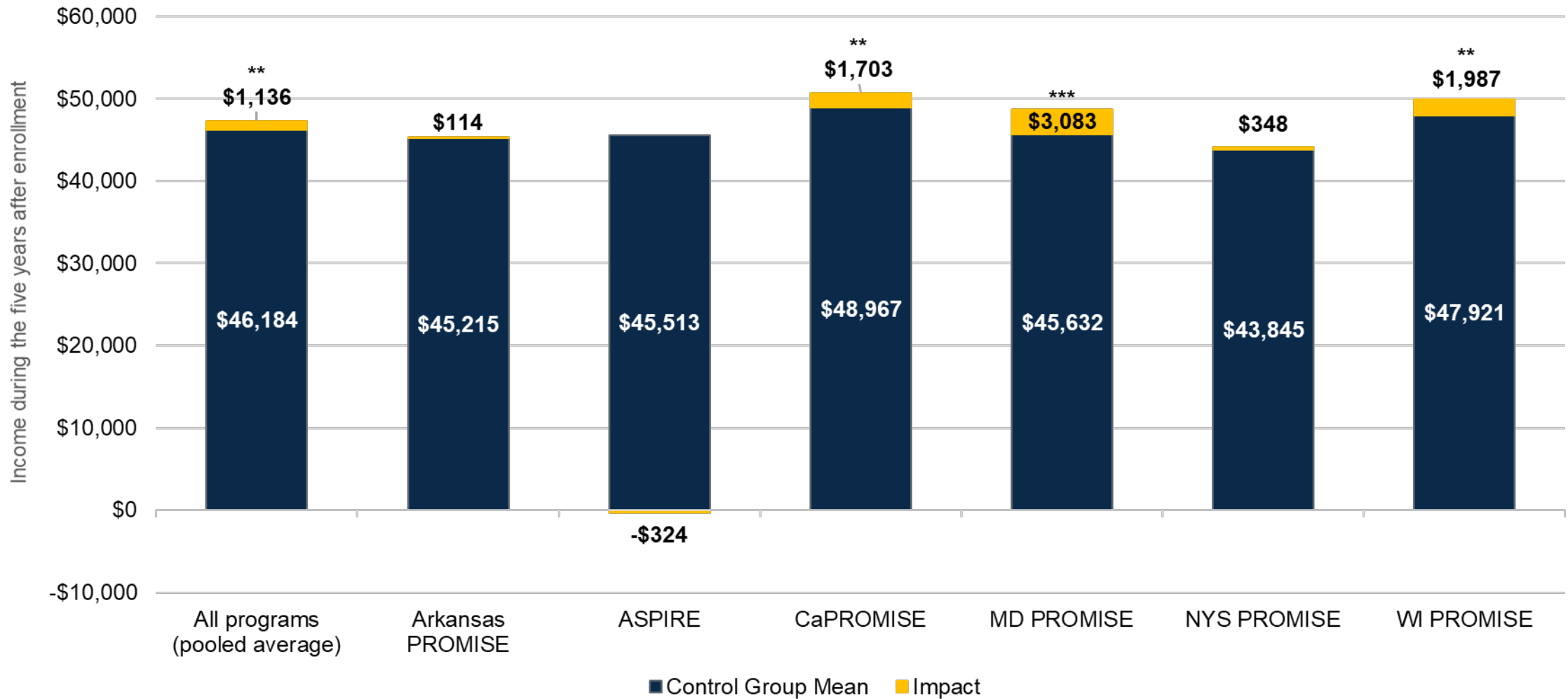


On average, the PROMISE programs increased youth earnings during the five-year period, but no program had a statistically significant impact





On average, the PROMISE programs increased youth income during the five-year period; three programs had statistically significant impacts





Various reasons might explain why only two programs had persistent impacts on employment

- / **The benefits of early work experiences might dissipate in the longer term once services end and as control group youth catch up and gain work experience**
- / **Staff who provided employment services at NYS PROMISE and WI PROMISE might have been particularly effective**
- / **For other programs, we found impacts on related outcomes**
 - Labor force participation and employment in a job with coaching (MD PROMISE)
 - Employment at the time of the survey (Arkansas PROMISE)
 - Use of supports or services to get or keep a job (Arkansas PROMISE and CaPROMISE).



For other outcomes, PROMISE had limited success

- / No program increased youth's educational attainment**
- / No program reduced youth's participation in SSA programs or the amount of SSA payments that they received**
 - Youth were still young (19-21 years old) and could use SSI program incentives that allowed them to work without losing or reducing benefits
- / No consistent impacts on youth's self-determination, expectations of the future, health insurance coverage, and Medicaid/Medicare participation, or on parents' outcomes**



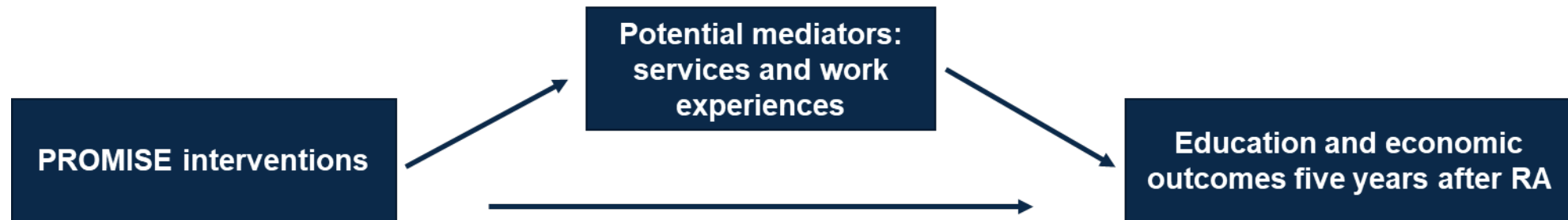
What factors might have supported the programs' five-year impacts?





Identifying key services and experiences

- / **To what extent can early impacts on use of transition services and early work experiences explain the five-year impacts on youth outcomes?**
- / **To explore this, we estimated two types of program effects:**
 - Indirect effects: The effects through one or more “mediator”
 - Unattributed effect: The effect of a program through all channels except the “mediators examined”





Significant mediators

/ **Among the required transition services, employment-promoting services stood out in importance**

- At least some of the programs' average five-year impacts on youth's employment, earnings, and income operated through increasing the use of employment services in the 18 months after RA.

/ **Paid work experience was the most important mediator of impacts on education and economic outcomes**

- All programs increased the share of youth who had a paid work experience during the 18 months after RA, and this was a crucial driver of impacts on labor market outcomes.



What factors might have limited the programs' five-year impacts?





Youth perceived challenges in furthering their education

- / 60 percent of youth cited physical or mental health issues that would make it difficult to continue their schooling.**
- / Many also cited a lack of knowledge of options after high school as reasons:**
 - 53 percent did not know how to get financial aid or help paying for school.
 - 43 percent did not have enough information about education or training options after high school.
- / Findings suggest a need for tailored education services**



Youth perceived challenges with finding a good job match

/ Among the 32 percent of youth who were looking for work, common reasons for not currently working were:

- Could not find a job they want (48 percent)
- Could not find a job for which they were qualified (47 percent)
- Did not have reliable transportation to and from work (31 percent)

/ Highlights the importance of employment services that help connect youth to appropriate work

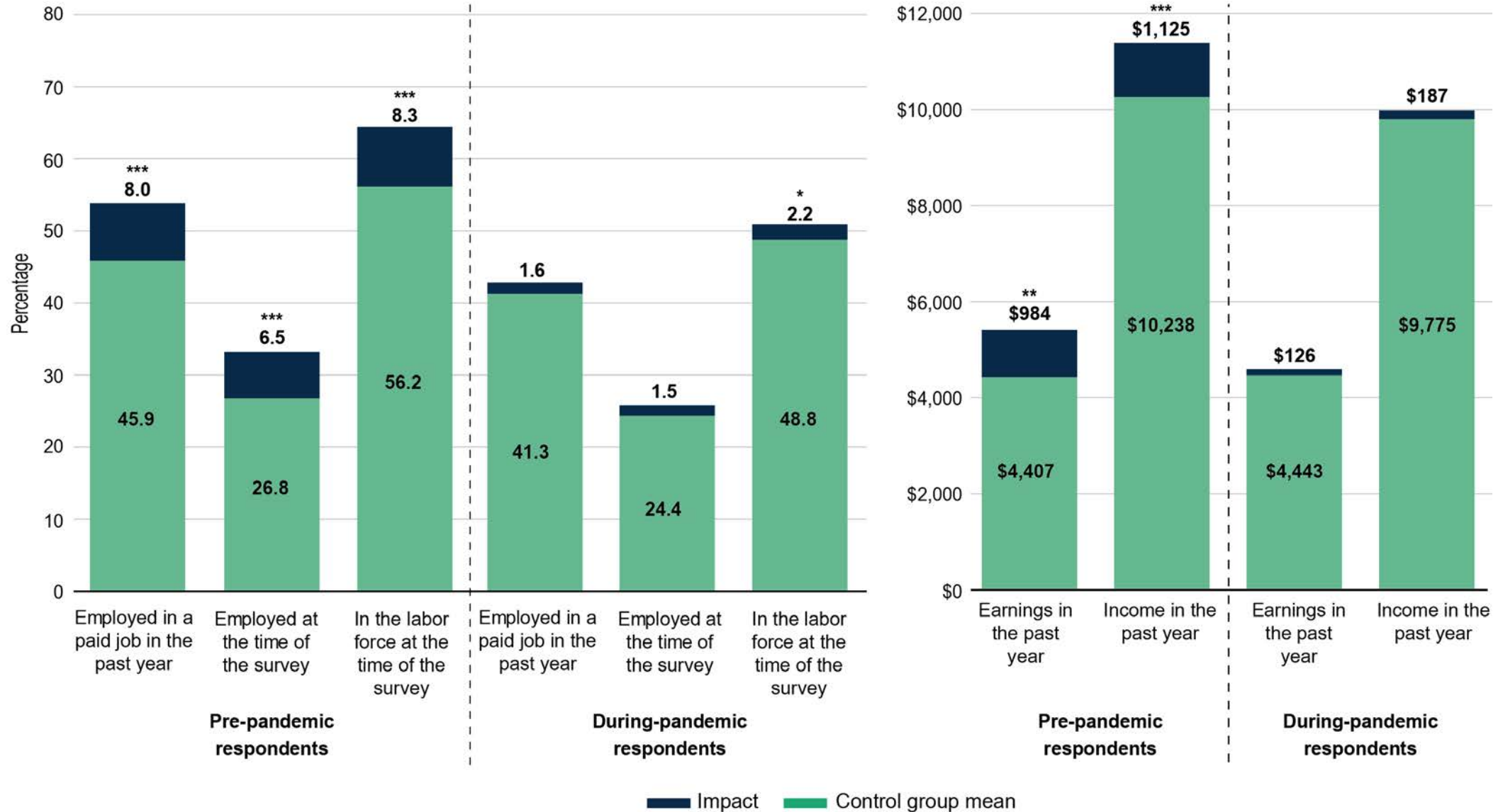


The COVID-19 pandemic occurred during the evaluation period

- / Youth with and without disabilities experienced worse labor market outcomes during the pandemic**
- / The pandemic likely dampened the programs' impacts on youth's labor market outcomes**
 - To test this, we compared outcomes among youth surveyed during the pandemic and youth surveyed before the pandemic.



Impacts on labor market outcomes were larger among pre-pandemic respondents than during-pandemic respondents





How do the programs' benefits compare to their costs?





How do the programs' benefits compare to their costs?

- / We documented average program costs per family**
- / We estimated benefits and non-program costs based on the point estimates of impacts on youth and parent outcomes**



The costs of each program substantially exceeded its benefits over the five-year period

/ All programs had negative net benefits per family during five-year evaluation period

- Arkansas PROMISE: -\$37,882
- ASPIRE: -\$26,839
- CaPROMISE: -\$27,140
- MD PROMISE: -\$19,850
- NYS PROMISE: -\$26,666
- WI PROMISE: -\$16,269

/ Key drivers were the programs' costs of delivering services



PROMISE was a longer-term investment in the youth's future

- / Benefits can continue to accumulate while program costs will stay constant**
- / Impacts on key outcomes might change in the future:**
 - Impacts on employment and earnings might increase as the labor market recovers after the pandemic
 - Impacts on SSA and Medicaid program participation might manifest as youth grow older
- / Future analyses of administrative data could track impacts beyond the five-year follow-up period**



Lessons Learned from PROMISE



Overarching lessons

/ **Confirming what we know**

- Widespread availability of transition services
- Implementing transition programs is challenging

/ **New information about services**

- Family service use had minimal impacts on parents' outcomes
- PROMISE programs used a variety of methods to encourage engagement
- Service use did not vary by youth's age

/ **New information about outcomes and program costs**

- Large investments in youth may be difficult to offset with immediate benefits



Overarching lessons (cont.)

/ **Future directions to fill knowledge gaps**

- Appropriate length of service access
- Identifying which youth and families could benefit most from transition services and supports
- Limitations of the evidence on what works for youth with disabilities to successfully transition to adulthood
- Youth and families' knowledge about SSA policies and work incentives



Wisconsin PROMISE Lessons Learned

Ellie Hartman, Ph.D.

Wisconsin PROMISE Project Manager

Workforce Data Integration System Chief Evaluation Officer

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

01/25/23

Promisewi.com/success

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Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

- PROMISE Youth – 100% received VR services
 - Compared to 33% of youth in the control group
- Connecting teenagers receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to VR services
 - Partnership with Social Security Administration (SSA)
 - Partnership with state Medicaid
- **Youth SSI Solutions**
 - Targeted outreach
 - Service and support navigation
 - Integrated resource teams
- **Worker Connection**



Demographics of Wisconsin PROMISE Youth

- Race/Ethnicity:
 - African American - 49%
 - White - 36%
 - Hispanic - 10%
 - Other/Not Reported - 5%
- Gender:
 - Male - 67%
- Annual household income at or below \$25,000 - 70%
- Primary Disability
 - Mental Health/Behavioral - 34%
 - Intellectual/Developmental - 30%
 - Other (e.g., learning, speech, ADHD, etc.) - 25%
 - Long-term illness, physical/mobility, sensory, head injury, not report - 11%
- Single parent/guardian household - 66%



Interagency Services

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
 - Partnerships with schools
 - Transition Improvement Grant (TIG)
 - Career and Technical Education (CTE)
 - Career Pathways Advancement Initiative
 - Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 07-22
- Service providers
 - Promising practice
 - Customized employment
- Foster care and other youth services



Resources

- Wisconsin PROMISE Lessons Learned - promisewi.com/success/
- Wisconsin PROMISE Video Stories - promisewi.com/videos/
- Online Service Provider Tools and Tips - promising-practices.com/
- Transition Guide: Get Where You Want to Go - beforeage18.org/transition-guide/
- Online Self-Advocacy Modules - beforeage18.org/self-advocacy-training/
- Online Family Advocacy Modules - beforeage18.org/family-advocacy-training/
- Online work incentive benefits counseling youth and family tools - beforeage18.org/benefits-and-working/
- Online health and wellness youth and family tools - [beforeage18.org/resources/#Topic Health](https://beforeage18.org/resources/#Topic_Health)
- Online soft skills tool - www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/individuals/youth/transition/soft-skills





Thank you!

Ellie Hartman, Ph.D.

Wisconsin PROMISE Project Manager

Workforce Data Integration System Chief Evaluation Officer

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development





Implications of PROMISE Findings for Transition Practice

Catherine Fowler

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative



Extending the Research

- / **Guideposts for Success**
- / **Predictors of Post-School Success**
- / **Effective Practices in Transition**
- / **PROMISE Findings**



Predictors of Success

- / **Career Awareness**
- / **Career and Technical Education**
- / **Community Experiences**
- / **Goal Setting**
- / **Inclusion in General Education**
- / **Interagency Collaboration**
- / **Occupational Courses**
- / **Paid Employment/ Work Experience**
- / **Parent Expectations**
- / **Parent Involvement**
- / **Program of Study**
- / **Psychological Empowerment**
- / **Independent Living Skills**
- / **Self-Determination**
- / **Self-Realization**
- / **Social Skills**
- / **Student Support**
- / **Technology Skills**
- / **Transition Program**
- / **Travel Skills**
- / **Work Study**
- / **Youth Autonomy**





Collaboration

/ Consider multiple levels: State, Local, Youth

/ Intention at Each Stage:

- Organize
- Assess
- Plan
- Implement
- Sustain



Work Experiences

- / Job Shadowing**
- / Internships**
- / Paid and Non-Paid Work Experiences**

- / Service Learning and Volunteering**

- / Career and Technical Education**
- / Apprenticeships**



Other Take-Aways

- / Family Expectations**
- / Family Involvement**
- / Independent Living (including financial literacy)**
- / Student Support**
- / Self-Determination/ Self-Advocacy**



Continue to Do What Works

- / Address the limitations or research gaps**
- / Attend to research participants**
- / Engage with stakeholders**
- / Dissemination and use of research**



What Do We Need to Consider?

- / Knowledge/ expertise of personnel**
- / Support for personnel**
- / Dosage**
- / Authenticity of experiences**
- / Wraparound services**
- / Coordination of services**
- / Individualization**
- / Professional expectations/ values**



Potential Resources

- / [NTACT:C Pre-Employment Transition Services](#)
- / [Side by Side View: Transition Services](#)
- / [Sequencing of Services Example \(Colorado\)](#)
- / [ABLE National Resource Center](#)
- / [Rehabilitation Services Administration Parent Centers](#)
- / [Center for Parent Information and Resources “hub”](#)



Be in touch!

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Questions?

