Center for STUDYING DISABILITY POLICY

Supporting Statement for the Promoting Readiness of Minors in SSI (PROMISE) Evaluation

December 10, 2013

Gina Livermore
Holly Matulewicz
Jacqueline Kauff

MATHEMATICA Policy Research

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

Center for STUDYING DISABILITY POLICY

Contract Number:
SS00-13-60044

Mathematica Reference Number:
40304.04A

Submitted to:
Social Security Administration
Office of Retirement and Disability Policy
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

Supporting Statement for the Promoting Readiness of Minors in SSI (PROMISE) Evaluation

December 10, 2013

Gina Livermore
Holly Matulewicz
Jacqueline Kauff

MATHEMATICA Policy Research

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

CONTENTS

SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR THE PROMISE EVALUATION

The Promoting Readiness of Minors in SSI (PROMISE) demonstration pursues positive outcomes for children with disabilities who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and their families by reducing dependency on SSI. The Department of Education (ED) awarded six cooperative agreements to states to improve the provision and coordination of services and support for children with disabilities who receive SSI and their families to achieve improved education and employment outcomes. Five single-state projects were awarded PROMISE funds, and one six-state consortium was awarded funds.[1] With support from the Department of Labor (DOL) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Social Security Administration (SSA) will evaluate the six PROMISE projects. SSA has contracted with Mathematica Policy Research to conduct the evaluation.

Under PROMISE, targeted outcomes for youth include an enhanced sense of self-determination, achievement of secondary and post-secondary educational credentials, and attainment of early work experiences culminating with competitive employment in an integrated setting, and long-term reduction in reliance on SSI. Outcomes of interest for families include heightened expectations for and support of the long-term self-sufficiency of their youth, parent/guardian attainment of education and training credentials, and increases in earnings and total income. To achieve these outcomes, the PROMISE projects are expected to make better use of existing resources by improving service coordination among multiple state and local agencies and programs.

SSA is requesting clearance for the collection of data needed to implement and evaluate PROMISE. The evaluation will provide empirical evidence on the impact of the intervention for youth and their families in several critical areas, including: improved educational attainment; increased employment skills, experience, and earnings; and long-term reduction in use of public benefits. The PROMISE evaluation will be based on a rigorous design that will entail the random assignment of approximately 2,000 youth in each of the six projects to treatment or control groups (12,000 total). Youth in the treatment groups will be eligible for enhanced services from the demonstration programs, whereas youth in the control groups will be eligible only for those services already available in their communities independent of the interventions.

The evaluation will assess the effect of PROMISE services on educational attainment, employment, earnings, and reduced receipt of disability payments. The three components of this evaluation include:

1) **The process analysis**, which will document program models, assess the relationships among the partner organizations, document whether the programs are implemented as planned, identify features of the programs that may account for their impacts on youth and families, and identify lessons for future programs with similar objectives.
2) **The impact analysis,** which will determine whether youth and families in the treatment groups receive more services than their counterparts in the control groups. It will also determine whether treatment group members have better results than control group members with respect to the targeted outcomes noted above.

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

3) **The cost-benefit analysis** will assess whether the benefits of PROMISE, including increases in employment and reductions in benefit receipt are large enough to justify its costs. This assessment will be conducted from a range of perspectives, including those of the participants, state and federal governments, SSA, and society as a whole.

Several data collection efforts are planned for the evaluation. These include: 1) follow-up interviews with youth and their parent or guardian 18 months and five years after enrollment; 2) phone and in-person interviews with local program administrators, program supervisors, and service delivery staff at two points in time over the course of the demonstration; 3) two rounds of focus groups with participating youth in the treatment group; 4) two rounds of focus groups with parents/guardians of participating youth; and 5) collection of administrative data.

In this package, **SSA requests clearance only for the interviews to be conducted with program staff and the focus group discussions to be conducted with youth and parents/guardians.** SSA will request clearance for the 18-month and five-year survey interviews in a future submission.

PART A. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

A1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

Since 1980, Congress required SSA to conduct demonstration and research projects to test the effectiveness of possible program changes that could encourage individuals to work and decrease their dependence on disability benefits. In fostering work efforts, SSA intends for this research and the program changes evaluated to produce federal program savings and improve program administration. Section 1110 of the Social Security Act (Attachment A) authorizes SSA to conduct research and evaluation projects.

Youth who receive SSI face substantial barriers in making the transition to adult life. In addition to the issues facing all transition-age youth, SSI recipients and their families must consider issues related to their impairment and eligibility for continuing supports, especially cash assistance and medical insurance, as they move into young adulthood. SSI recipients who work and earn income above a certain threshold generally lose $1 of benefits for every $2 of earnings. Upon reaching age 18, child SSI recipients must undergo a redetermination of eligibility based on the adult definition of disability to continue receiving cash assistance. Uncertainty surrounding the outcome of that process may influence the decisions by youth to seek education, training, and work skills prior to age 18, as well as the support of families for their investment in human capital (Loprest and Wittenburg 2007). The poor outcomes of child SSI recipients prior to and after age 18 are indicative of the challenges they face moving into adulthood. Nearly one-third of them drop out of high school prior to age 18, and 43 percent have had problems in school that have resulted in their suspension or expulsion (Hemmeter et al. 2009). Relative to other young adults, former child SSI recipients after age 18 are more likely to be inactive in employment, school, and service programs; have higher rates of arrest; and have higher school dropout rates after age 18 (Wittenburg 2011; Hemmeter et al. 2009; Loprest and Wittenburg 2007). Approximately two-thirds continue to receive SSI as adults and only 22 percent work between the ages of 19 and 23 (Loprest and Wittenburg 2007). These poor outcomes may reflect the unique characteristics of these youth, particularly their severe impairments; however, they may also reflect factors associated with their families, such as low incomes, and other characteristics of the service environment.

A growing body of research suggests the importance of families in the employment outcomes of transition-age youth with disabilities. Positive associations have been demonstrated between the employment outcomes of these youth and the resources of their families, such as income, education, and family structure (Chiang et al. 2012; Emerson 2007; Loprest and Wittenburg 2007; Shattuck et al. 2012). Further evidence suggests that youth with disabilities rely primarily on family networks to find jobs (Hasazi et al. 1985) and they report family involvement as more important than other transition factors to their success (Powers et al. 2007). Family expectations about employment may be a particularly important determinant of the employment outcomes of transition-aged youth with disabilities (Blacher et al. 2010; Carter et al. 2012; Lee and Carter 2012; Lindstrom et al. 2011; Lindstrom et al. 2007; Simonsen and Neubert 2013)—potentially more important than income (Carter et al. 2012) or family structure (Lindstrom et al. 2007). Carter et al. (2012) suggest that family expectations are associated with youths' paid employment experiences during school, and so may improve youths' post-school employment outcomes. The importance of families in youth transitions may be amplified by the weakness of the transition service environment. High school students with disabilities may experience significant gaps in services and lack linkages to adult services. Many do not get information from their schools on how to access needed services. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) (2006) reports that youth with disabilities and their families often have difficulties identifying and learning how to ask for the accommodations they need to succeed in school and the workplace. Outside systems do not consistently provide these youth with the supports they need to achieve positive adult outcomes, especially in the critical areas of continuing education and employment. For example, only about one-quarter of secondary special education students ages 17 or 18 have vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors involved in their transition planning (Cameto et al. 2004). The problem of accessing supports is compounded by a lack of coordination between school- and adult-based services as youth leave secondary school (Luecking and Certo 2003; U.S. GAO 2006; Wittenburg et al. 2002).

The PROMISE projects are intended to address key limitations in the existing service system for youth with disabilities. By intervening early in the lives of these young people, at ages 14–16, the projects will engage the youth and their families well before critical decisions regarding the age 18 redetermination are upon them. Required partnerships among the various state and federal agencies that serve youth with disabilities are expected to result in improved integration of services and fewer dropped handoffs as youth move from one agency to another. And by requiring the programs to engage and serve families and provide youth with paid work experiences, the initiative is mandating the adoption of critical best practices in promoting the independence of youth with disabilities.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) proposed PROMISE as an interagency project between HHS, DOL, ED, and SSA. OMB requested that SSA conduct a rigorous evaluation of the PROMISE projects, focusing on key outcomes of interest, including reductions in SSI payments. The information collected by the evaluation contractor will be used to assess the effectiveness of the interventions that the individual PROMISE projects implement.

A2. Purposes and Uses of the Information

Project staff interviews and focus groups with youth participating in PROMISE and their parents/guardians will be conducted separately at each of the six PROMISE projects. Information from these activities will be used to conduct a process analysis of PROMISE implementation, addressing the following questions:

- What were the PROMISE interventions like in practice, from the perspective of the PROMISE grantees, partner and project staff, and participants?
- What factors contributed to the PROMISE project design and the implementation experience observed across the PROMISE projects? What did it take to implement the program?
- Given what was learned about program impacts, what are the implications of the program implementation experience? What can be done better? What successes should be enhanced, and what problems can be avoided?

The sections below provide a description of the specific nature, purposes, and uses of the information that will be collected via staff interviews and participant focus groups.

1. Staff Interviews

Information from the PROMISE project staff interviews will be used to document the projects, the environments in which they are implemented and the nature of existing services to youth and their families, describe the interagency and other partnerships developed to implement PROMISE, and to assess the extent to which the projects adhered to their intended service delivery models. Specific issues to be addressed under each of these topics include:

- **Documenting the program.** What is the basic structure and logic model for each program? What is the service environment for program operations? How did grantees conduct participant outreach and enrollment? What are each program's staffing structure and services? How were services implemented? How do grantees track participation? What do treatment families, program staff, and partners think of program services? What are the grantee's plans and objectives for their evaluations?
- **Partnership development, maintenance, and roles.** How were potential partners identified and approached to participate in PROMISE? Who are the major and secondary partners? What are their roles? What is the nature of the relationships among the partner organizations? How do the partners communicate and collaborate and how has this changed over time? What are the contractual or other form of agreements between the grantee and its partners; between the partners and service providers? To what extent do agreements and other arrangements encourage the partners to work toward demonstration goals? To what extent do they discourage them from doing so?
- **Fidelity of activities to program model.** How closely do the programs adhere to their plans and logic models? In what ways do they use their logic models to guide services and track and manage inputs, outputs, and outcomes? How consistently are the models implemented at local sites? How do programs collect operations and service information and use it for management and evaluation purposes?

The evaluator will conduct two rounds of site visits for purposes of conducting in-person interviews with PROMISE project and partner agency staff. These visits will occur in summer 2014 and winter 2016. The interviews will be conducted with directors/administrators of the PROMISE project and of the state agencies and other community partners participating in PROMISE, and with PROMISE project staff responsible for arranging and delivering PROMISE services to participants. For the five single-state projects, the evaluator will interview an average of 10 program directors/managers and 20 service provider staff members at each project during the site visits. For the six-state consortium project, the evaluator will interview a total of 25 administrators and 45 service provider staff members during the 2014 and 2016 data collections. Some of these interviews will occur during site visits and some by phone. Examples of program directors/managers include the PROMISE project director and principal investigators, administrators of state government agencies that participate in PROMISE, and executive directors of non-governmental or community-based organizations that provide services to PROMISE participants and other youth or adults with disabilities. Examples of PROMISE project staff include recruiters, case managers, employment specialists, benefits counselors, vocational rehabilitation counselors, and educational instructors and coordinators. The topics to be addressed during these semi-structured interviews are shown in Attachment B.

During the staff interviews, the evaluator will ask interviewees to complete a brief social network questionnaire. Separate versions of the questionnaire will be administered to program managers/directors and project staff, tailored to their specific perspectives (Attachment C). This brief questionnaire is designed to assess the strength and capacity of organizational collaborations associated with PROMISE. The questionnaire will be pre-filled with the names of organizations collaborating with each PROMISE project and which are known to the evaluation team prior to the site visit. Additional organizations will be added to the form by respondents, as needed. The results will be used to conduct a network analysis to examine whether and to what extent stakeholders interacted with one another before the implementation of PROMISE and whether and how their interactions change with the implementation of PROMISE. The analysis will also provide a means of examining which stakeholders are relatively more active participants in the PROMISE collaborative. The data may also be used to create independent variables for use in multivariate analyses that will investigate the extent to which communication and collaboration between PROMISE stakeholders is associated with program effects.

2. Participant Focus Groups

The focus group data will be used by the evaluator to describe the experiences of parents/guardians and youth enrolled in PROMISE and to supplement other data collected and used in the process analysis. Information collected in the focus groups will support analyses related to two key questions:

- How are the PROMISE projects being implemented and operated?
- What are the short-term impacts of the projects on youth and their parents/guardians?

To address these questions, evaluators will convene focus group discussions that concentrate on key areas of interest for each group (youth and parents/guardians). For youth, these 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/guardians, key topic areas include: 1) program enrollment; 2) services for youth; 3) services to promote parent/guardian involvement; 4) staff and peer support for parents/guardians; and 5) services for parents/guardians. The findings will be used to assess client satisfaction with the demonstration, identify which aspects of the demonstration may be more or less associated with participation outcomes, identify potential improvements to the demonstration approaches, and to provide feedback to the PROMISE projects.

During the site visits to be conducted in summer 2014 and the winter 2016, a pair of focus groups will be conducted at each of the five single-state projects. This includes one group with youth who are enrolled in PROMISE and one with their parents/guardians. For the six-state consortium project, three pairs of focus groups will be conducted during each round. The youth and parent/guardian focus groups will be conducted separately, but concurrently. This will ensure that the perspectives of both groups, which are the focus of PROMISE services, are represented. The groups will be conducted in English only, and accommodations will be made to facilitate the full inclusion of people with disabilities.

The evaluator will conduct the recruitment efforts and moderate the group discussions using standard protocols (Attachment D) to structure the 90-minute discussion and encourage participation. The evaluator will work with local PROMISE project staff to identify 50 youth (and their parents/guardians) at each project who would be interested in taking part in the groups. Up to 50 treatment group families will be contacted to recruit approximately 12 individuals to participate in each 90-minute focus group (expecting that approximately 10 will participate on the day of the group). Two to four weeks before the focus group, an invitation letter (or email) will be sent to the parent/guardian for each household identified by the project staff (Attachment E). It is anticipated that telephone follow-up will be needed to secure participation of the target number of participants. Trained evaluator staff will follow-up with these family members, explain the purpose of the session, answer any questions and respond to any concerns, and invite them to participate in the focus group discussions. Solicitation calls for each focus group will continue until 12 youth and 12 parents/guardians agree to participate. Staff will use a recruitment script (Attachment F) to describe the purpose of the focus group and ask the parent/guardian/youth to participate. All of the parents/guardians and youth contacted will be assured that participation is voluntary and will not affect their eligibility for SSI or any other benefits they receive, either now or in the future. One week before the focus group, evaluators will send a reminder to each individual who agreed to participate (Attachment G) along with directions to and a map of the focus group location. The day before the focus group, evaluators will call participants to remind them of the focus group date, time, and location.

A3. Use of Technology to Reduce Burden

To the extent possible, invitations to and reminders about the focus groups will be send via e-mail. Staff interviews and focus group sessions will be recorded digitally. Because the social network survey consists of only six or fewer questions, and because the respondents will be the same individuals who participate in the in-person interviews during site visits, it is most practical and least burdensome to collect the data on hard copy immediately during the in-person interview. The questionnaire is designed to be self-administered. Members of the evaluation team will be present to answer questions respondents might have about it. Transmission of the social network questionnaire to and from phone interviewees will occur electronically via fax or email.

A4. Efforts to Avoid Duplication

The staff interviews, social network survey, and focus group discussions will provide information that cannot be obtained through SSA's administrative records. The discussions will be about the PROMISE-related experiences of staff and participants, the nature of partnerships and coordination with other agencies and programs, and the ways in which participation in PROMISE has affected participant educational and employment goals and experiences.

A5. Methods to Minimize Burden on Small Entities

Some of the service providers that will be interviewed may be staff of small entities. Our protocol will impose minimal burden on all organizations involved and discussions will be kept to one hour or less. The information being requested has been held to the absolute minimum required for the intended use. Interviews will be scheduled at times that are convenient to the respondents.

A6. Consequences of Not Collecting Data

Interviews and group discussions with local program administrators, program supervisors, and service delivery staff to support the process analysis will take place two times. The first visit will be soon after demonstration startup (summer 2014), and the second visit will occur after the programs have matured and gained experience providing services to participants (winter 2016). Two visits are necessary to develop an understanding of the intervention and steps taken to implement project services. The first visit will focus on start-up activities, the projects' outstanding features, and key challenges. The second visit will assess how the projects evolved over time in response to their early experiences and the lessons learned about service delivery to SSI youth and their families. Fewer visits would not allow SSA to assess how the projects evolve over time to address significant challenges and leverage successes.

Focus groups with parents/guardians and youth will take place during the site visits conducted in summer 2014 and winter 2016. Independent groups of participants will be recruited at each round to minimize burden and provide an opportunity to gather information from more PROMISE enrollees. Two rounds of focus groups are necessary to develop an understanding of the intervention and steps taken to implement project services as the projects evolve over time, and to capture changes in the experiences and outcomes of participants as they are served by the projects for a longer period. Not collecting this information would result in a loss of qualitative data that could provide greater insights into the impact findings generated with the quantitative data collected via the surveys and administrative data. Conducting the groups at two points in time allows more time to have elapsed between the groups, more time for services to be provided, and more time for the lives of participants to be affected by PROMISE. Further, by revisiting the same sites at two points in time, evaluation staff may be able to follow up on challenges observed early in the implementation period that may have since been resolved or improved by implementation staff. Finally, by speaking with youth and parents/guardians, as well as program implementation staff at each site, the evaluation will obtain a more balanced approach to understanding the implementation efforts than could be gained from interviewing implementation staff alone.

A7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances that would cause this information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with 5 CFR 1320.5.

A8. Federal Register Announcement and Consultation

1. Federal Register Notice

The Federal Register Notice for this information collection has not yet been posted. As such, no public comments have been received.

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT] The 60-day advance Federal Register Notice was published on [DATE AND VOLUME INFORMATION], and SSA has received no public comments (Attachment H). The second Notice was published on [DATE AND VOLUME INFORMATION]. There have been no outside consultations with members of the public.]

2. Consultation with Outside Agencies

As a first step in the PROMISE evaluation, SSA convened a technical advisory panel. The panel provided input on the evaluation criteria and research design. It consisted of researchers and advocates who reflected expertise in youth transition, disability, and evaluation design. The external experts were:

Burt Barnow, PhD, George Washington University

Hugh Berry, US Department of Education

Mark Donovan, Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities

David Johnson, PhD, University of Minnesota

Jamie Kendall, US Dept. of Health and Human Services

Jeffrey Liebman PhD, Harvard University

Pamela Loprest, PhD , The Urban Institute

An interdisciplinary team of economists, disability policy researchers, survey researchers, and information systems professionals on the staff of the evaluation contractor (Mathematica Policy Research and its subcontractor, BCT Partners) contributed to the design of the overall evaluation. These individuals include:

Karen CyBulski, Mathematica

Thomas Fraker, PhD, Mathematica

Jacqueline Kauff, Mathematica

Gina Livermore, PhD, Mathematica

Holly Matulewicz, Mathematica

Tonya Woodland, BCT Partners

3. Consultation with Beneficiaries

Youth receiving SSI, and their parents/guardians, are the target audience for the participant focus groups. Through their involvement in these sessions, they will be able to provide first-hand feedback on their experiences with PROMISE. Findings from early groups will be used, where applicable, to the refine procedures and discussion topics for subsequent groups held at other sites, for the later round of focus groups, and for the 18- and 60-month questionnaires for which we will seek OMB approval in a separated submission.

A9. Payments or Gifts

Program administrators/directors and PROMISE service provider staff will not be offered remuneration for completing interviews.

Each focus group participant will receive a $10 incentive in the form of a gift card, to express the study's appreciation for their time. In addition to the gift card, evaluators will provide light refreshments and snacks during the focus group sessions. Such additional incentives are likely to increase the appeal of participation because they offset the burden for those who may attend the focus groups soon after their work or school day ends.

A10. Assurances of Confidentiality

The information provided during the staff interviews and focus groups is protected and held in confidential accordance with 42 U.S.C. 1306, 20 CFR 401 and 422, 5 U.S.C. 552 (Freedom of Information Act) 5 U.S.C. 552a (Privacy Act of 1974) and OMB Circular No. A-130. The data will be treated in a confidential manner unless otherwise compelled by law.

The study team takes seriously the ethical and legal obligations associated with the collection of confidential data. Ensuring the secure handling of confidential data is accomplished via several mechanisms, including obtaining suitability determinations for designated staff, training staff to recognize and handle sensitive data, protecting computer systems from access by staff without favorable suitability determinations, limiting the use of personally identifiable information in data, limiting access to secure data on a "need to know" basis and only for staff with favorable suitability determinations, and creating data extract files from which identifying information has been removed. The assurances and limits of confidentiality will be made clear in all advance materials sent to recruit potential participants and restated at the beginning of each focus group session. The Paperwork Reduction and Privacy Act statements appear on the advance letter.

The PROMISE enrollment database will contain contact information that the evaluator will use to invite participants to the focus groups. Advance letters will provide assurance that information being gathered is for research purposes only. The same message will be reiterated at the start of each focus group session and participants will be asked to keep the focus group conversations confidential. The identity of the group participants will not be disclosed to anyone outside of the evaluation team, and the information provided by participants presented in public documents will not be attributable to specific individuals. The focus group facilitator will digitally record each focus group discussion beginning after all introductions have been made. Participants will be informed about the recording and instructed that they may request that the recording be suspending at any time. If there are any objections to the recording, the facilitator will not record the session. No identifying information will be asked during the focus group and moderators will only refer to group participants by their first names; thus no identifying information will be included in the digital recording.

Subcontractors, consultants, and vendors will be required to establish confidential information safeguards that meet prime contract security requirements. The evaluation project director will take action to ensure that any confidential information provided to or generated by a subcontractor, consultant, or vendor is properly disposed of at the completion of the agreement between the parties.

All data collected during the interviews and focus groups will be destroyed in a secure manner at the completion of the evaluation.

A11. Justification of Sensitive Information

This information collection does not contain any questions of a sensitive nature.

A12. Estimates of Hours Burden

Table A.1 shows the expected number of participants in the qualitative data collections, number of interviews, hours per response, and the total response burden overall and by year.

Over the course of the evaluation, a total of 440 staff interviews will be conducted. Per staff member burden estimates for these interviews include time for setting up the interview appointment by phone or email (0.1 hours) and participating in the interview (1.0 hours).

For the focus groups, the estimated time per response varies from .083 hours (5 minutes to review the advance letter and complete the telephone screening) for focus group nonparticipants to 1.667 hours (100 minutes) for those who participate in the focus group (5 minutes for screening, 5 minutes for reminders by phone and mail, and 90 minutes for the group discussion). The bulk of the annual burden time will be spent participating in the focus groups, which will last approximately 90 minutes. The estimated total annual burden for the focus groups is 320 hours per round. This includes contacting and screening up to 50 enrollees (to obtain 10 focus group participants and 40 nonparticipants) per round at each of the five single-state projects, and 150 enrollees (to obtain 30 focus group participants and 120 nonparticipants) per round at the six-state consortium project.

Table A.1. Estimated Total Annual Burden by Respondent Type

Respondent	Number of Respondents	Responses Annually per Respondent	Total Annual Responses	Number of Hours Per Response	Total Hours
2014					
Staff Interviews					
Administrators/Directors	75	1	75	1.1	82.5
PROMISE project staff	145	1	145	1.1	159.5
Youth Focus Groups					
Nonparticipants	320	1	320	0.083	26.6
Participants	80	1	80	1.667	133.4
Parent/Guardian Focus Groups					
Nonparticipants	320	1	320	0.083	26.6
Participants	80	1	80	1.667	133.4
Total	1,020		1,020		562.0
2016					
Staff Interviews					
Administrators/Directors	75	1	75	1.1	82.5
PROMISE project staff	145	1	145	1.1	159.5
Youth Focus Groups					
Nonparticipants	320	1	320	0.083	26. 6
Participants	80	1	80	1.667	133.4
Parent/Guardian Focus Groups					
Nonparticipants	320	1	320	0.083	26. 6
Participants	80	1	80	1.667	133.4
Total	1,020		1,020		562.0
Grand Total					
Staff Interviews					
Administrators/Directors	150	1	150	1.1	165.0
PROMISE project staff	290	1	290	1.1	319.0
Youth Focus Groups					
Nonparticipants	640	1	640	0.083	53.1
Participants	160	1	160	1.667	266.7
Parent/Guardian Focus Groups					
Nonparticipants	640	1	640	0.083	53.1
Participants	160	1	160	1.667	266.7
Grand Total	**2,040**		**2,040**		**1,123.6**

A13. Estimates of Cost Burden to Respondents

There is no cost to PROMISE administrators or to service providers because they will be participating in the interviews as part of their paid work. There is no cost to youth; they are still engaged in the pursuit of secondary education and are assumed not to be wage earners. For parents/guardians, the cost burden is estimated using the average 2013 minimum wage rate across the states included in the evaluation (obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor website on state-by-state minimum wage data).[2] The total cost to parents/guardians for their time in this collection is

[2] Data accessed from website on November 6, 2013. [http://www.dol.gov/whd/minwage/america.htm]

shown in Table A.2. Costs for data collection, storage, processing, and other functions related to these data are born solely by the evaluation contractor.

Table A.2 Annual Cost to Respondents

Respondent	Average Burden per Response (Hours)	Number of Respondents	Frequency of Response	Median Hourly Wage Rate	Respondent Cost
2014					
Parent/Guardian Focus Groups					
Nonparticipants	0.083	320	1	$7.38	$196.01
Participants	1.667	80	1	$7.38	$984.20
Total		400			$1,180.21
2016					
Parent/Guardian Focus Groups					
Nonparticipants	0.083	320	1	$7.38	$196.01
Participants	1.667	80	1	$7.38	$984.20
Total		400			$1,180.21
Grand Total					
Parent/Guardian Focus Groups					
Nonparticipants		640	1		$392.02
Participants		160	1		$1,968.40
Grand Total		**800**			**$2,360.42**

A14. Annualized Cost to the Federal Government

The cost to SSA of conducting the PROMISE staff interviews and participant focus groups is $2,950,717. The costs by year are shown in Table A.3.

Labor costs were budgeted by estimating the number of hours of required staff at the various wage levels, multiplying by the applicable wage rates, and multiplying the resulting subtotals by factors to cover fringe benefits and burden expense. The basis for estimating other direct costs varies with the type of cost being estimated. The total of labor costs and other direct costs are summed and multiplied by a factor to cover general and administrative expenses, and the fee is included.

Table A.3. Annual Costs to the Federal Government

Fiscal Year	Cost
2014	$30,753
2015	$1,279,610
2016	$892,318
2017	$748,035
Total	$2,950,717

A15. Reasons for Program Changes or Adjustments

This is a new information collection, thus there are no changes or adjustments for this collection.

A16. Plans for Tabulation and Publication of Results

With the PROMISE evaluation findings, SSA and ED will be able to advise federal policymakers and state administrators on the supports, services, and policy and program changes that could encourage individuals to work and decrease their dependence on disability and other public benefits. In fostering work efforts, the goal is to implement program changes which produce savings to the federal government and improve program administration.

The evaluator will analyze the information collected in the staff interviews and focus groups to prepare reports that contain the findings and their program and policy implications. No complex quantitative analytical techniques will be used with data from these collections. Four major reports will present the findings from the staff interviews and participant focus groups, as well as other information collected for the evaluation. The reports will include a stand-alone summary of the purpose, methodology, key findings, and policy implications, as well as a short executive summary. Products resulting from information obtained in this data collection will provide SSA with information about the experiences of PROMISE staff, staff of partner agencies, and participants. The evaluator will integrate the information obtained from the staff interviews and participant focus groups with information collected from the other components of the evaluation to draw comparisons across and within sites and describe factors that might explain any observed variation.

Table A.3 presents the planned timeline for the data collection, and the completion dates for the public reports that will include the interview and focus group findings.

Table A.3 Data Collection and Reporting Schedule

Activity/Report	Approximate Dates
Data Collection	
Staff interviews	Summer 2014 and Winter 2016
Youth and parent/guardian focus groups	Summer 2014 and Winter 2016
Reports	
Early Assessment Reports	Spring 2015
Process Analysis Reports	Winter 2017
Final Services Impact Report	Summer 2018
Final Long-Term Evaluation Report	Winter 2022

A17. Approval Not to Display of Expiration Date for OMB Approval

SSA is not seeking an exemption with this submission. The OMB expiration date will be displayed on all focus group materials.

A18. Explanation of Exceptions

SSA is not requesting an exemption to certification requirements.

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

PART B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

The staff interview and participant focus group data collection for which SSA is seeking approval in this submission will not employ any statistical methods. Additional information about the interview and focus group data collection methods is provided below.

B1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

A set of staff interviews and participant focus groups will be conducted with all six PROMISE projects.

1. Staff Interviews

PROMISE project and partnership organization staff to be interviewed will be determined in consultation with each PROMISE project director. In consultation with the PROMISE project director, Mathematica will identify key administrators/directors of partnering agencies and the appropriate project staff who can provide a range of perspectives on the implementation experiences of the PROMISE project. Examples of program directors/managers include the PROMISE project director and principal investigators, administrators of state government agencies that participate in PROMISE, and executive directors of non-governmental or community-based organizations that provide services to PROMISE participants and other youth with disabilities. Examples of PROMISE project staff include recruiters, case managers, employment specialists, benefits counselors, vocational rehabilitation counselors, and educational instructors and coordinators. Although a precise estimate of the number of administrative and service provider staff who will be involved in the PROMISE projects is unavailable, SSA anticipates that the evaluator will interview approximately 80 percent of the administrator/managers and about 50 percent of the service provider staff over the course of the two rounds of site visits and interviews.

2. Focus Groups

The universe for the focus group data collection consists of youth, and parents/guardians of these youth, who are recipients of SSI benefits, enrolled in the PROMISE demonstration, and who have been randomly assigned to the treatment group. The convenience sample approach that will be used to identify focus group participants precludes SSA from using any findings from the focus group discussions to generalize to the entire population of youth enrolled in PROMISE, or to youth receiving SSI benefits nationwide. That is, the focus groups will not contain, and are not intended to contain, a representative sample of any larger population.

The evaluator will conduct all of the recruitment for the focus groups and will consult with local program staff to identify enrollees who might be interested in participating in the focus group discussions. A goal of the selection and recruitment effort will be to ensure that a diverse set of PROMISE youth and families participate in each focus group. The evaluator will use criteria such as age, type of disability, and length of time receiving child SSI payments, to select a diverse pool of youth and families. The evaluators will request a list of up to 50 youth (and parents/guardians) from which they will send the advance notification letter and follow-up by telephone to invite them to participate. The goal will be to have 10 attendees and 2 alternates (in case of attrition) for each session. Table B.1 shows the total number of persons contributing to the focus groups by project and group type.

Table B.1 Treatment Group and Focus Group Sample Sizes, by PROMISE Project

	Families in Treatment Group	Youth Focus Groups		Parent/Guardian Focus Groups		Total N Selected	Percentage of Treatment Group Families Selected
		Summer 2014	Winter 2016	Summer 2014	Winter 2016		
Arkansas	1,000	10	10	10	10	40	0.04
California	1,539	10	10	10	10	40	0.03
Maryland	1,000	10	10	10	10	40	0.04
New York	1,000	10	10	10	10	40	0.04
Wisconsin	1,000	10	10	10	10	40	0.04
Six-State Consortium	1,000	30	30	30	30	120	0.12
Total	6,539	80	80	80	80	320	0.05

B2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

1. Staff Interviews

The first step in the data collection will be to send a letter to each PROMISE site project director explaining the evaluation and seeking their cooperation with it. The letter will come from Jeffrey Hemmeter, the SSA Project Officer, to lend credibility to the study and further encourage cooperation. The evaluator will follow up with the PROMISE project director in a telephone call to describe further the information to be gathered from PROMISE stakeholders during in-person interviews and a brief self-administered social network survey that will be completed at the end of each interview. Project directors will be asked to identify individuals who will be able to provide the required information and for information about their general schedule constraints. A schedule for the interviews that meets participants' needs will be developed collaboratively with the PROMISE project and partner contacts. Approximately two weeks before the interviews are scheduled to take place, the evaluator will mail an information packet to the PROMISE project director containing the final interview schedule. The packet will also contain contact information for the evaluation team member who will be conducting the interviews so that respondents can reach them in the event of a schedule change or other issues that may arise before the interviews. Providing the sites with adequate information ahead of time in a professional manner will help build rapport and ensure that the interviews go smoothly and that interviewees are available and responsive.

The evaluator will use an interview guide, based on the interview topic list provided in Attachment B, to conduct the staff interviews. The interviewer will be responsible for taking notes during each interview. Upon completion of all interviews conducted for a particular PROMISE project, the evaluator will develop a summary of the information collected during the site visit and phone interviews.

During the staff interviews, the evaluator will ask interviewees to complete a brief social network survey. Separate versions of survey will be administered to program managers/directors and project staff, tailored to their specific perspectives (Attachment C). The survey will be self-administered with pen and paper. The evaluator will enter the survey data into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis after completion of the site visit.

2. Focus Groups

After youth and their families have been confirmed as eligible, PROMISE project staff will obtain their informed consent and enroll them into the study. The consent process will address the program benefits, random assignment process, expectation to complete follow-up surveys, and the voluntary nature of participation in all study activities. Any potential risks of participation and the use of personal information also will be disclosed. Once consent is received, the youth will be entered into the PROMISE random assignment database and will be enrolled in the demonstration, assigned to either the treatment or control group.

The focus groups will be conducted with a convenience sample of youth and their parents/guardians who are PROMISE treatment group members. The focus groups will be conducted during site visits conducted in summer 2014 and winter 2016. Separate but concurrent discussions will occur with 10 youth and 10 parents/guardians in each group. The evaluator will work closely with the PROMISE project staff to arrange the focus groups. Where possible, the groups will be convened in a facility of a PROMISE service provider familiar to participants.

The evaluator will use a recruitment script to introduce the evaluation, describe the purpose of the focus group and confirm the willingness to participate. One week before the focus groups, the evaluator will send a reminder letter to each individual who agreed to participate along with directions to and a map of the focus group location. A reminder or confirmation mailing will be sent prior to the session, with a telephone reminder placed the day before the session.

A professional researcher on the staff of the evaluation contractor will conduct the focus groups using a semi-structured protocol to facilitate an informal group discussion. To ensure that all information is captured, the facilitator will record the discussion for later transcription. Participants will be informed about the recording and instructed that they may request that the recording be suspended at any time. No identifying information will be asked during the focus group and the facilitator will only call group participants by their first names; thus no identifying information will be included in the tape recording. Each focus group participant will receive a $10 incentive in the form of a gift card, following completion of the session.

SSA recognizes that the small number of participants and small number of groups and sampling approach means that the focus group data collected will be anecdotal, and thus, cannot be used to extrapolate to the larger population of youth and parents/guardians enrolled in PROMISE, or families in the broader population of those receiving SSI payments. Resource constraints and the study design prevent SSA from conducting additional focus groups.

B3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Nonresponse

In arranging the interviews to be conducted with PROMISE staff and the staff of partner organizations, the evaluator will work with the PROMISE project leadership to determine the most convenient times and formats (group versus individual; phone versus in-person) to convene the interviews. The evaluator will also limit the interviews to approximately one hour to ensure that the data collection imposes only a modest burden on respondents. The evaluator will use separate discussion guides for each potential respondent type so that respondents are not asked about activities or issues that are not applicable to them. In addition, data collectors will meet with in-person interview respondents in their own offices or at a location of their choice.

Because the focus group sample is a convenience sample, target response rates to ensure a representative population are not at issue. To address non-response by ensuring the groups contain approximately 10 parents/guardians and 10 youth each, the evaluator will recruit more participants than needed, based on prior experience that a portion of those initially recruited will not attend the group when it meets. Further, the evaluator will provide telephone and mail reminders to all recruited participants as the focus group date approaches. Finally, incentive payments will be provided to focus group participants (as noted in section B.2) to alleviate some barriers to focus group participation.

B4. Tests of Procedures or Methods to Be Undertaken

No pre-tests of the interview or focus group protocols will be conducted. The evaluator will make minor modifications to the data collection procedures and protocols, if necessary, based on the experiences of the early interviews and focus groups conducted.

B5. Individuals consulted on Statistical Aspects of the Design and on Collection and/or Analyzing Data

SSA convened a technical advisory panel for the PROMISE evaluation. The panel provided input on the evaluation criteria and research design. It consisted of researchers and advocates who reflected expertise in youth transition, disability, and evaluation design. The external experts were:

Burt Barnow, PhD, George Washington University

Hugh Berry, US Department of Education

Mark Donovan, Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities

David Johnson, PhD, University of Minnesota

Jamie Kendall, US Dept. of Health and Human Services

Jeffrey Liebman PhD, Harvard University

Pamela Loprest, PhD , The Urban Institute

An interdisciplinary team of economists, disability policy researchers, and survey researchers, and information systems professionals on the staff of the evaluation contractor (Mathematica Policy Research and its subcontractor, BCT Partners) contributed to the design of the overall evaluation. These individuals include:

Karen CyBulski, Mathematica

Thomas Fraker, PhD, Mathematica

Jacqueline Kauff, Mathematica

Gina Livermore, PhD, Mathematica

Holly Matulewicz, Mathematica

Tonya Woodland, BCT Partners

REFERENCES

Blacher, Jan, Bonnie Kraemer, and Erica Howell. "Family Expectations and Transition Experiences for Young Adults with Severe Disabilities: Does Syndrome Matter?" *Advances in Mental Health and Learning Disabilities*, vol. 4, no.1, 2010, pp. 3–16.

Cameto, R., P. Levine, and M. Wagner. *Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities. A Special Topic Report of Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2).* Menlo Park, CA: SRI International, November 2004. Available at [http://www.nlts2.org/reports/2004_11/nlts2_report_2004_11_execsum.pdf]. Accessed July 22, 2013.

Carter, E., D. Austin, and A. Trainor. "Predictors of Postschool Employment Outcomes for Young Adults with Severe Disabilities. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2012, pp. 1–14.

Chiang, Hsu-Min, Ying Kuen Cheung, Huacheng Li, and Luke Y. Tsai. "Factors Associated with Participation in Employment for High School Leavers Autism." *Journal of Autism Developmental Disorders*, vol. 42, no. 5, 2012, pp. 685–696.

Emerson, Eric. "Poverty and People with Intellectual Disabilities." *Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2007, pp. 107–113.

Hasazi, S.B., L.R. Gordon, and C. A. Roe. "Factors Associated with the Employment Status of Handicapped Youth Exiting High School from 1979 to 1983." *Exceptional Children*, vol. 51, 1985, pp. 455–469.

Hemmeter, Jeffrey, Jacqueline Kauff, and David Wittenburg. "Changing Circumstances: Experiences of Child SSI Beneficiaries Before and After Their Age-18 Redetermination for Adult Benefits." *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation,* vol. 30, no. 3, 2009, pp. 201–221.

Lee, Gloria, and Erik Carter. "Preparing Transition-Age Students with High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders for Meaningful Work." *Psychology in the Schools*, vol. 49, no. 10, 2012, pp. 988–1000.

Lindstrom, Lauren, Bonnie Doren, and Jennifer Miesch. Waging a Living: Career Development and Long-Term Employment Outcomes for Young Adults with Disabilities, *Council for Exceptional Children,* vol. 77, no. 4, 2011, pp. 423–434.

Lindstrom, Lauren, Bonnie Doren, Jennifer Metheny, Pam Johnson, and Claire Zane. "Transition to Employment: Role of the Family in Career Development." *Council for Exceptional Children*, vol. 73, no. 3, 2007, pp. 348–366.

Loprest, Pamela J., and David C. Wittenburg. "Post-Transition Experiences of Former Child SSI Beneficiaries." *Social Service Review,* vol. 81, no. 4, 2007, pp. 583-608.

Luecking, R. and N. Certo. "Service Integration at the Point of Transition for Youth with Significant Disabilities: A Model that Works." *American Rehabilitation*, vol. 27, 2003, pp. 2–9.

Powers, L., T. Garner, B. Valnes, P. Squire, A. Turner, T. Couture, and R. Dertinger. "Building a Successful Adult Life: Findings from Youth-Directed Research." *Exceptionality*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2007, pp. 45–56.

Shattuck, Paul, Sarah Carter Narendorf, Benjamin Cooper, Paul Sterzing, Mary Wagner, and Julie Lounds Taylor. "Postsecondary Education and Employment Among Youth with an Autism Spectrum Disorder." *Pediatrics*, vol. 129, no. 6, 2012, pp. 1042–1049.

Simonsen, M., and D. Neubert. "Transitioning Youth with Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities: Predicting Community Employment Outcomes." *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals,* 2013. doi: 1177/216543412469399.

U.S. Government Accountability Office. "Summary of a GAO Conference: Helping California Youths with Disabilities Transition to Work or Postsecondary Education." GAO-06-759SP. Washington, DC: United States Government Accountability Office, 2006.

Wittenburg, D., T. Golden, and M. Fishman. "Transition Options for Youth with Disabilities: An Overview of the Programs and Policies That Affect the Transition from School." *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation,* vol. 17, 2002, pp. 195–206.

Wittenburg, David. Testimony for Hearing on Supplemental Security Income Benefits for Children." Presented at the Subcommittee on Human Resources Committee on Ways and Means U.S. House of Representatives. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research, 2011.

ATTACHMENT A

SECTION 1110 [42 U.S.C. 1310] LEGISLATION

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

SEC. 1110. [42 U.S.C. 1310]

(a)(1) There are hereby authorized to be appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1957, $5,000,000 and for each fiscal year thereafter such sums as the Congress may determine for (A) making grants to States and public and other organizations and agencies for paying part of the cost of research or demonstration projects such as those relating to the prevention and reduction of dependency, or which will aid in effecting coordination of planning between private and public welfare agencies or which will help improve the administration and effectiveness of programs carried on or assisted under the Social Security Act and programs related thereto, and (B) making contracts or jointly financed cooperative arrangements with States and public and other organizations and agencies for the conduct of research or demonstration projects relating to such matters.

(2) No contract or jointly financed cooperative arrangement shall be entered into, and no grant shall be made, under paragraph (1), until the Secretary (or the Commissioner, with respect to any jointly financed cooperative agreement or grant concerning titles II or XVI) obtains the advice and recommendations of specialists who are competent to evaluate the proposed projects as to soundness of their design, the possibilities of securing productive results, the adequacy of resources to conduct the proposed research or demonstrations, and their relationship to other similar research or demonstrations already completed or in process.

(3) Grants and payments under contracts or cooperative arrangements under paragraph (1) may be made either in advance or by way of reimbursement, as may be determined by the Secretary (or the Commissioner, with respect to any jointly financed cooperative agreement or grant concerning title II or XVI); and shall be made in such installments and on such conditions as the Secretary (or the Commissioner, as applicable) finds necessary to carry out the purposes of this subsection.

(b)(1) The Commissioner is authorized to waive any of the requirements, conditions, or limitations of title XVI (or to waive them only for specified purposes, or to impose additional requirements, conditions, or limitations) to such extent and for such period as the Commissioner finds necessary to carry out one or more experimental, pilot, or demonstration projects which, in the Commissioner's judgment, are likely to assist in promoting the objectives or facilitate the administration of such title. Any costs for benefits under or administration of any such project (including planning for the project and the review and evaluation of the project and its results), in excess of those that would have been incurred without regard to the project, shall be met by the Commissioner from amounts available to the Commissioner for this purpose from appropriations made to carry out such title. The costs of any such project which is carried out in coordination with one or more related projects under other titles of this Act shall be allocated among the appropriations available for such projects and any Trust Funds involved, in a manner determined by the Commissioner with respect to the old-age, survivors, and disability insurance programs under title II and the supplemental security income program under title XVI, and by the Secretary with respect to other titles of this Act, taking into consideration the programs (or types of benefit) to which the project (or part of a project) is most closely related or which the project (or part of a project) is intended to benefit. If, in order to carry out a project under this subsection, the Commissioner requests a State to make supplementary payments (or the Commissioner makes them pursuant to an agreement under section 1616) to individuals who are not eligible therefor, or in amounts or under circumstances in which the State does not make such payments, the

Commissioner shall reimburse such State for the non-Federal share of such payments from amounts appropriated to carry out title XVI. If, in order to carry out a project under this subsection, the Secretary requests a State to provide medical assistance under its plan approved under title XIX to individuals who are not eligible therefor, or in amounts or under circumstances in which the State does not provide such medical assistance, the Secretary shall reimburse such State for the non-Federal share of such assistance from amounts appropriated to carry out title XVI, which shall be provided by the Commissioner to the Secretary for this purpose.

(2) With respect to the participation of recipients of supplemental security income benefits in experimental, pilot, or demonstration projects under this subsection—

(A) the Commissioner is not authorized to carry out any project that would result in a substantial reduction in any individual's total income and resources as a result of his or her participation in the project;

(B) the Commissioner may not require any individual to participate in a project; and the Commissioner shall assure (i) that the voluntary participation of individuals in any project is obtained through informed written consent which satisfies the requirements for informed consent established by the Commissioner for use in any experimental, pilot, or demonstration project in which human subjects are at risk, and (ii) that any individual's voluntary agreement to participate in any project may be revoked by such individual at any time;

(C) the Commissioner shall, to the extent feasible and appropriate, include recipients who are under age 18 as well as adult recipients; and

(D) the Commissioner shall include in the projects carried out under this section such experimental, pilot, or demonstration projects as may be necessary to ascertain the feasibility of treating alcoholics and drug addicts to prevent the onset of irreversible medical conditions which may result in permanent disability, including programs in residential care treatment centers.

(c)(1) In addition to the amount otherwise appropriated in any other law to carry out subsection (a) for fiscal year 2004, up to $8,500,000 is authorized and appropriated and shall be used by the Commissioner of Social Security under this subsection for purposes of conducting a statistically valid survey to determine how payments made to individuals, organizations, and State or local government agencies that are representative payees for benefits paid under title II or XVI are being managed and used on behalf of the beneficiaries for whom such benefits are paid.

(2) Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Commissioner of Social Security shall submit a report on the survey conducted in accordance with paragraph (1) to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate.

ATTACHMENT B

STAFF INTERVIEW TOPICS

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

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 projects 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 projects 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

- Project 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

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

ATTACHMENT C

SOCIAL NETWORK SURVEYS

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

OMB NO. XXX

Expiration Date XX/XX/XXXX

PROMISE Evaluation

Social Network Survey—Program Directors/Managers

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

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: **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?					QUESTION 2: **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.)					QUESTION 3: **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	a	b	c	d	e	a	b	c
	Never	Once or twice a year	Every month or two	Every week or two	More than once a week	Never	Once or twice a year	Every month or two	Every week or two	More than once a week	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]: ____________													

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 4			QUESTION 5				QUESTION 6			
	Now, to what extent does your organization have an effective working relationship with each of the following organizations on issues related to youth with disabilities and their families?			**In the past year**, and **related to** your work on [PROMISE/ASPIRE], with which of the following organizations has your organization…				**In the past year**, and **outside of** your work on [PROMISE/ASPIRE], with which of the following organizations has your organization…			
	a	b	c	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d
	Not at all	To some extent	To a considerable extent	Shared resources (such as staff, facilities, or funding)?	Developed or improved data sharing capacities?	Developed or improved client referral processes?	Worked to improve service delivery to clients?	Shared resources (such as staff, facilities, or funding)?	Developed or improved data sharing capacities?	Developed or improved client referral processes?	Worked to improve service delivery to clients?
Agency 1											
Agency 2											
Agency 3											
Agency 4											
Agency 5											
Agency 6											
Agency 7											
Agency 8											
Other [please specify]: ______________________											
Other [please specify]: ______________________											

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

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.

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

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:

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.

QUESTION 1

One year ago, how frequently did you communicate with front-line staff (who work directly with clients) in the following organizations about client issues? If you were not in this position one year ago, please leave all of Question 1 blank.

QUESTION 2

Now, how frequently do you communicate with front-line staff (who work directly with clients) in the following organizations about client issues?

	Q1 a	Q1 b	Q1 c	Q1 d	Q1 e	Q2 A	Q2 B	Q2 c	Q2 d	Q2 e
	Never	Once or twice a year	Every month or two	Every week or two	More than once a week	Never	Once or twice a year	Every month or two	Every week or two	More than once a week
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]: ______________________										

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.

QUESTION 3

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?**		
Agency 1	N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F
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 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?**		
Agency 1	N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F	N	S	F
Agency 2																		
Agency 3																		
Agency 4																		
Agency 5																		
Agency 6																		
Agency 7																		
Agency 8																		
Agency 9																		
Agency 10																		
Other [please specify]: ________________																		
Other [please specify]: ________________																		

ATTACHMENT D

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOLS

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

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:

____

____

____

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?

    PROBES: go back to school, get your GED, graduate from high school, go to college or a trade/vocational school

    b. How do you think [PROMISE/ASPIRE] can help you reach those goals?

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

   c. For those who used these services, what services were most helpful to you? Why? What services were least helpful? Why?

   d. 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)?

   e. 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.

ATTACHMENT E

FOCUS GROUP INVITATION LETTERS

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

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 project 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] project 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] project 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 project 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

ATTACHMENT F

FOCUS GROUP PHONE RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

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] project 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 <u>you</u> 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?

First Name:	
Last Name	

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.

ATTACHMENT G

FOCUS GROUP REMINDER LETTER

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

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

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

ATTACHMENT H

FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICES

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying

[INSERT FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICES WHEN AVAILABLE]

Page is intentionally left blank to allow for double-sided copying