

# Promise Newsletter February 2018

## **Action Creates Change**

If you haven't taken advantage of Promise Services yet, ACT NOW... Promise ends September 2018!

Wisconsin Promise is designed to give you and your family the ongoing supports and resources needed to change for the better. Find out what we can do for you and how we've already changed some lives of youth in Wisconsin! [Click Here](#)

## **Destination Independence: What Families Can Do**

Did you know that young people who have paid work experiences while still in high school have a better chance of being employed as an adult? [Find out how you can help your child's success on the job.](#)

## **Share the Power**

Sometimes the most challenging aspect of parenting is knowing when to step back and share the power. Kids need to have experiences and opportunities to face tough choices and push through difficult circumstances. How can you help them have these experiences and guide them in making choices? [Here are some strategies!](#)

## **Promise Services Guide**

Over the course of the project, we've all worked together to uncover and gather resources that will help youth and families to succeed when it comes to training for, finding, and keeping a job. Recently, we've compiled all that information into a single resource, so you have everything you need right at your fingertips. You can download your free copy [here](#).

## **Ellie's Updates**

### **Promise Services Summary**

Do you have a Promise Story? Tell us how [Promise has impacted you!](#)

Check out the [Promise Services Summary](#) and find out how Promise is impacting Wisconsin Promise Youth and Families. The more impact we can have with more youth and their family members, the more we will be able to demonstrate how Wisconsin Promise Services and Supports can help to increase participants' education, employment, and financial self-sufficiency.

## **A Community Forum: Rhinelander, WI**

### **Promise Services Summary**

#### **Employing Young Adults with Barriers:**

#### **Finding Workforce Solutions**

Business's have workforce needs and young adults with disabilities and other barriers have the skills and the desire to work. Join the discussion to help identify how to make these connections.

When: March 8, 2018

Time: 11AM - 1PM (lunch included)

Where: Hodag Lanes Banquet Center

Cost: FREE

[Click here for more information.](#)

### **Lessons Learned:**

#### **Wisconsin Promise's Response to SSA's Request:**

##### **Were there waivers that could have been requested or would have been helpful?**

**Better Implementation of Existing Work Incentives.** Existing work incentives are helpful, but can be difficult to navigate, so more consumer-friendly implementation of existing available work incentives is needed. Changes in youth or parent income, assets, working, moving, and child support can have an incredible impact on benefits. SSA has limited time to attend to these changes, and these changes do not always make sense to the families. SSA sends letters, but youth and family members sometimes do not understand or may miss the many letters from SSA, so they ignore the letters, which leads to problems. It would be helpful if there was more funding for local SSA staff, so they would have more time to assist people with benefits and work incentives and to refer beneficiaries to vocational rehabilitation. It would improve relations, and beneficiaries would be more willing to report and communicate changes.

**Online.** It would be helpful if people could do more online. This will take time and funding to build.

**Benefits Panning Query (BPQY).** BPQY's do not have enough detail for this age group. Child support and deemed (parent) income would be great additions to the BPQY. This would reduce the number of calls work incentive benefit specialists must make to SSA.

**Area Work Incentives Coordinator (AWIC).** Wisconsin has a wonderful and very helpful AWIC. That can make all the difference. In talking with other states this is not always the case. Every state/area needs a go-to person like the Wisconsin AWIC to assist with cases. Without this resource, people may miss out on getting the appropriate exclusions, benefits, etc.

**Section 301.** Promise has increased the number of youth using Section 301. Before Wisconsin Promise, very few, if any, Wisconsin youth utilized this work incentive. Currently, 16 Wisconsin Promise youth have continued SSI benefits through Section 301. One issue with Section 301 is it is a multi-step process. The process for applying for and remaining eligible for Section 301 involves the coordination with at least 5 separate entities: the youth (parent/guardian) to acknowledge employment related services, the employment agency (e.g., vocational rehabilitation) to acknowledge the youth is engaged in employment supports, the local SSA office to flag the case and then process the 301 involvement, the Disability Determination Bureau (DDB) to identify it as a Section 301 case, and finally the SSA Office of Disability Operations (ODO) to make the final decision. If any piece is not in place, the youth will not be determined eligible for Section 301. For example, in Wisconsin, SSA or DDB has called the youth's DVR Counselor to verify participation in Promise and DVR, and the DVR Counselor did not respond because they no longer work for DVR. Due to the lack of response, verification was not made, and the youth was not found eligible for Section 301, and it was up to the youth, family, benefits specialist or AWIC to figure out what happened and take corrective action. It would be helpful if this process was better streamlined.

**Driver's Education.** Driver's education is expensive. When youth can obtain their driver's license, this increases their independence and the distance they can travel to a job. Reducing the cost of driver's education would help promote independence.

## **Contact Us**

Contact Your DVR Counselor

Family Advocates

Promise Financial Coaches

Benefits Counseling Providers

Promise Research Team

## **Steering Committee Profile Members and Emails**

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