

PROBLEMS, POLICIES & VOCATIONAL FAILURES

Near term objectives for building careers
While addressing
SSI's policy puzzles for low income families and
Youth receiving Supplemental Security Income

(SSI)

DISABILITY:

INHERENT PROBLEMS, PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS AND ACTION FOR REFORM

APRIL 12, 2013, , WASHINGTON, DC

Sponsored by **CENTER ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AT BROOKINGS, THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE
INSTITUTE**

and

THE SECRETARY'S INNOVATION GROUP

**Presenter
Disability**

Bryon MacDonald, World Institute on

Youth Setting the Goal

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*"The best form of
disability advocacy
is your career."*

Hamza Jaka, UC Berkeley Class of 2014

Objectives to Serve SSI Youth

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“Make Work a Part of the Plan”

- ▣ Educators, VR agencies, families and family groups:
 - Set expectations that young people with disabilities will work

Allow VR to begin working with SSI youth at age 16

Encourage and increase technical assistance so that:

- ▣ More SSI youth use SSI PASS plans to build a career
 - Plan for **Achieving Self-Support**

Objectives to Serve SSI Youth

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SSA and Federal programs:

Provide more support for online **employment and benefits planning Tools** such as Disability Benefits 101 (DB101), WorkWORLD, Pathways to Employment, and other *free, state centric tools in:*

- AZ, CA, HI, MI, MN, MO, NJ, VA, and the State of Washington (20% of U.S. states is a trend!)
 - “just in time” counseling tools assist SSI youth, families, and their service providers in assessing how paid work will affect SSI benefits
 - Online tools elevate the script and can reduce counselor bias

Objectives to Serve SSI Youth

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Increase support for internships, school and work experience, and peer mentoring programs, priorities in the recent Youth Transition Demonstration projects, and the emerging PROMISE initiative at the Department of Education and SSA.

SSI YOUTH BUILDING CAREERS

Outline of State Pilot Projects to
Test alternatives to the most
egregious Procedures Social Security
puts
SSI youth and their families through

Understand the SSI Application Rules

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Youth with disabilities at age 18 and older, in their prime career building years, undergo rigorous testing for award of SSI based on providing evidence from their medical history, and documented functioning levels, to prove the youth cannot work.

Understand the SSI Application Rules

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SSI applications for 18 year olds and above is the wrong and unforgettable test at the wrong time, affecting the youth, her peers, and the family for long periods of time after the application process.

Consider SSI youth at age 18 applying for SSI disability under current rules, and at the same time struggling to achieve success within a school and work program funded by I.D.E.A. The mixed federal messaging does not serve any one of these youth with career plans.

3 to 4 State Pilot Projects to Address SSI's Worst Policy Puzzles

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Goal: transform SSI carefully, and incrementally over a 12 year period

Use state boundaries to design and develop pilot projects that blend existing funds from programs that work with families and young people with disabilities with new pilot project funds

Be Bold and Be Balanced

Pilot Project Reform Strategy

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- ✓ A major, national reform is unlikely, and unwise given the complexities of current systems and the objectives sought.
- ✓ Random sample social science demonstrations can take decades historically. SSI youth don't have decades to wait for changes.
- ✓ **Viable Option: Career Building “Let Me Work” Pilot Projects**

Test new treatments in 3 to 4 statewide pilot projects with a sunset date and a limited set of new interventions

Use existing resources and a cross section of diverse states, as to current SSI employment rates, etc.

The 3 Key Pilot Project Elements

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- ❑ **Award enrollment** at or by age 18 into a default, alternate benefit program based on the high costs of impairments (Fremstad 2009) for youth who meet or equal the current SSA Listing of Impairments but without a test for work incapacity.
 - ❑ *Means tested low income eligibility criteria would not be linked to medical evidence or tests of work incapacity*
- ❑ **Require compliance** with an SSA approved **Individual's Career Plan (ICP)** to remain eligible for the benefit program
 - ❑ ICP is developed for SSA approval from a list of available vocational and employment support services

Pilot Project Elements for SSI Youth

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- ❑ **Test major simplification of enrollee paid work rules**
 - ❑ Test the SSI federal benefit rate (\$710 per month) remaining whole during enrollment in the pilot project no matter what the wages earned.

- ❑ **Integrated deployment** of online reporting, tracking, and consumer information services in the test states
 - ❑ Move away from monthly wage reporting

Pilot Project Elements for SSI Youth

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Evaluative Reports for Congressional scrutiny every 3 years

Sunset the program on or before 12 years depending on milestones

Sunset Model Precedent: Current SSI 1619(a) and (b) work incentives enacted in 1980; sunset clause was removed years later making the new policy permanent

Federal Agency partners to implement the pilot projects:

- ❑ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
- ❑ Department of Education
- ❑ Department of Labor (DOL)
- ❑ Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- ❑ Social Security Administration (SSA)

Presentation Background

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Pilot Project Highlights from:

~ DISCUSSION DRAFT MARCH 4, 2013 ~

Let Me Work

A Policy Framework of Americans with Disabilities on Employment, Economic Equity,
Social Insurance, and Public Benefits

Policy Option One

Test Replacing the SSI Program with the Career Building ACCESS Program for
Youth 18 to 30

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