

# Tribal Participation and Outcomes

## Introduction

### The PROMISE Initiative and ASPIRE Project

The U.S Department of Education (ED), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Department of Labor (DoL) and Social Security Administration (SSA) jointly funded a large research study called PROMISE. The goal of PROMISE was to improve the educational and employment outcomes of youth with disabilities who received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and their families (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Six demonstration projects were funded through PROMISE. One of these demonstration projects, called ASPIRE, was conducted across six rural states including Arizona, Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Utah, to better understand rural service delivery and outcomes.

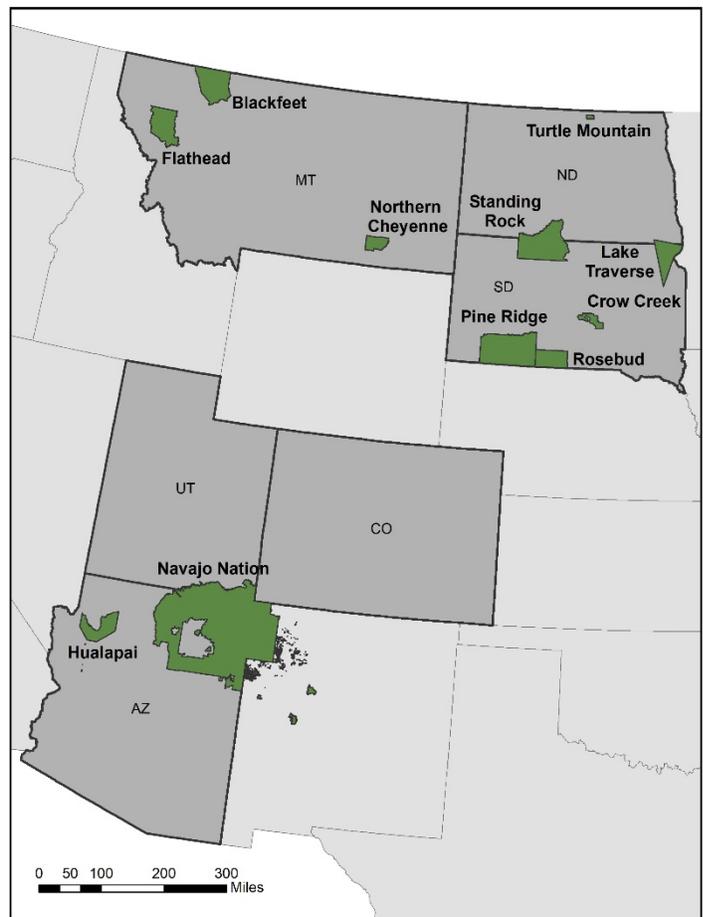
### ASPIRE Participants

ASPIRE staff recruited adolescents with disabilities aged 14 to 16 who were receiving SSI benefits (n=2,051). Youth were randomly assigned to one of two groups. The Usual services group received services as typically delivered within their states. The ASPIRE services group had the option of engaging in additional services including ongoing case management, self-determination training, transition training for parents or guardians, financial capability training, benefits counseling, and pre-employment services to prepare youth for employment.

### Tribal Representation

ASPIRE staff worked with eleven tribal governments to gain tribal council or Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals to include American Indian (AI) youth in the study. Figure 1 shows tribal lands represented in the ASPIRE study. Of the total 2,051 youth recruited, 129 youth self-reported as enrolled members of 26 different tribes. These youth came from both on and off-reservation locations. Of those completing at least one follow-up survey (n=84), 45 were assigned to the Usual services group and 39 were assigned to the ASPIRE services group. This brief factsheet compares these two groups of AI youth on key variables.

Figure1: Reservations in ASPIRE study



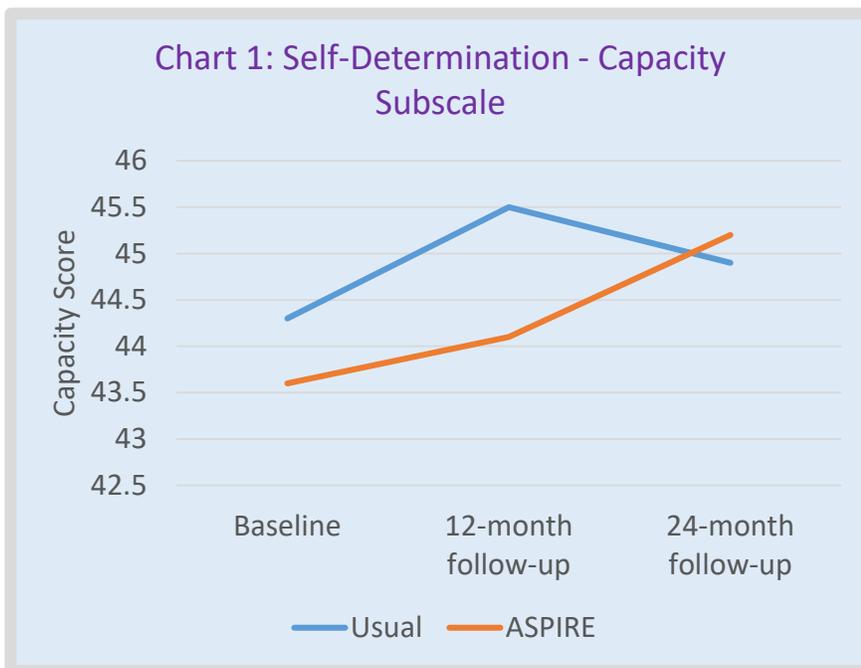
### Procedures

Both the Usual and ASPIRE services groups were asked to complete a survey when they entered the study (baseline), and follow-up surveys at 12-months, 24-months, and 36-months after enrollment. To date, we have completed 24-month data collection activities. Preliminary comparisons between the Usual and ASPIRE services groups shed light on the value of ASPIRE services. Like all PROMISE projects, the ultimate goal of ASPIRE was to improve future education and employment outcomes of transition-age youth receiving SSI. Intermediary predictors of these outcomes include more self-determined behaviors, increased expectations about future outcomes, and more exposure to employment and pre-employment activities to prepare for work. While the verdict is still out regarding long-term outcomes, comparing baseline and follow-up data from Usual and ASPIRE services groups shows the effectiveness of ASPIRE services in meeting intermediary steps.

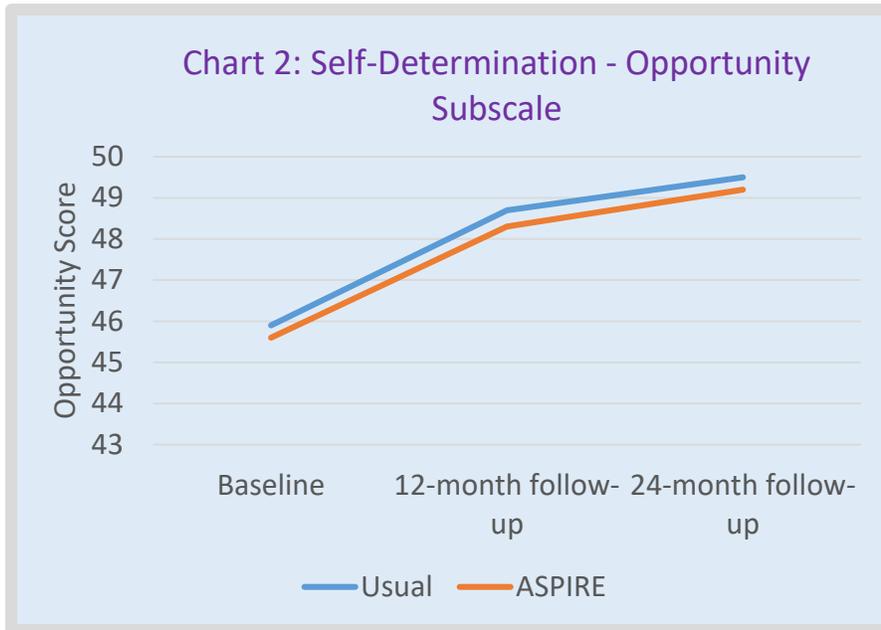
## Results

### Self-Determination Outcomes for American Indian Youth

Past research about adolescents with disabilities indicates that youth with higher self-determination scores are more likely to become employed and attend post-secondary education in the future (Powers et al., 2007). For this reason, ASPIRE services included self-determination training. We hypothesized that ASPIRE youth would have higher self-determination scores over time, relative to the Usual services group. The following charts show changes on two subscales of the AIR Self-determination scale (Wolman et al., 1994) for the ASPIRE and Usual services youth who were AI. Chart 1 reflects an internal capacity subscale that measures things you do and how you feel. Chart 2 reflects an opportunity subscale that measures what happens at school and what happens at home.



In general, study participants became more self-determined over time, which was expected given natural maturation. For the smaller subset of AI youth who completed baseline, 12-month, and 24-month data (n = 38), there was a trend showing more consistent increases in self-determination scores for ASPIRE services youth relative to Usual services youth.



### Expectation Outcomes for American Indian Youth

Studies have shown that students whose parents expected them to become employed were significantly more likely to become employed two years after high school graduation, relative to those students whose parents did not have these expectations (Papay & Bambara, 2014). We hypothesized that ASPIRE services, including case management with the family and parent training, might increase parent or guardian expectations about their youth. Using a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree, we measured parent and school expectations with the question “I have been encouraged by my family (or school) to have a job or career as an adult.” Table 1 shows differences were not significant between AI Usual and ASPIRE services groups, except at the 24-month time period where

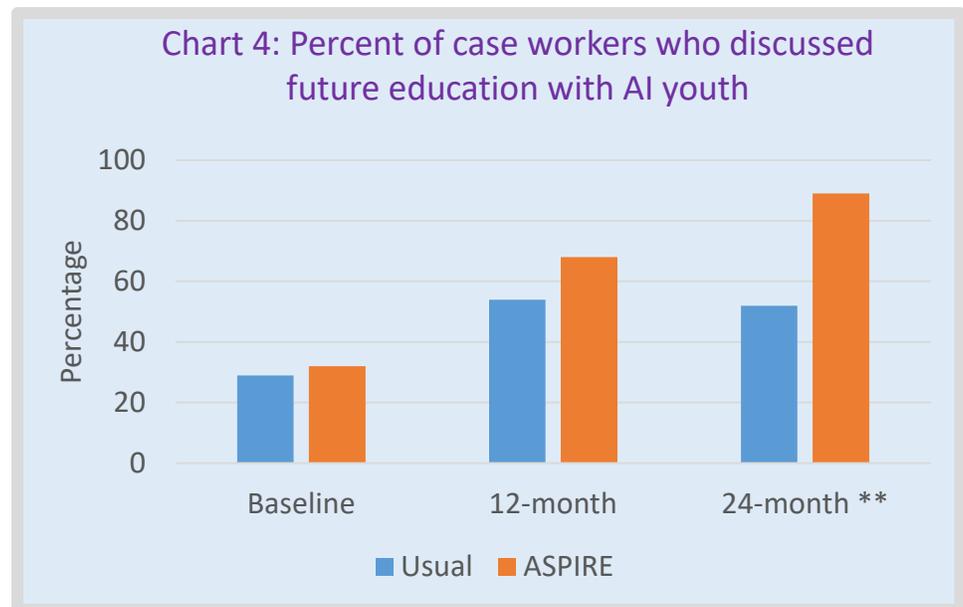
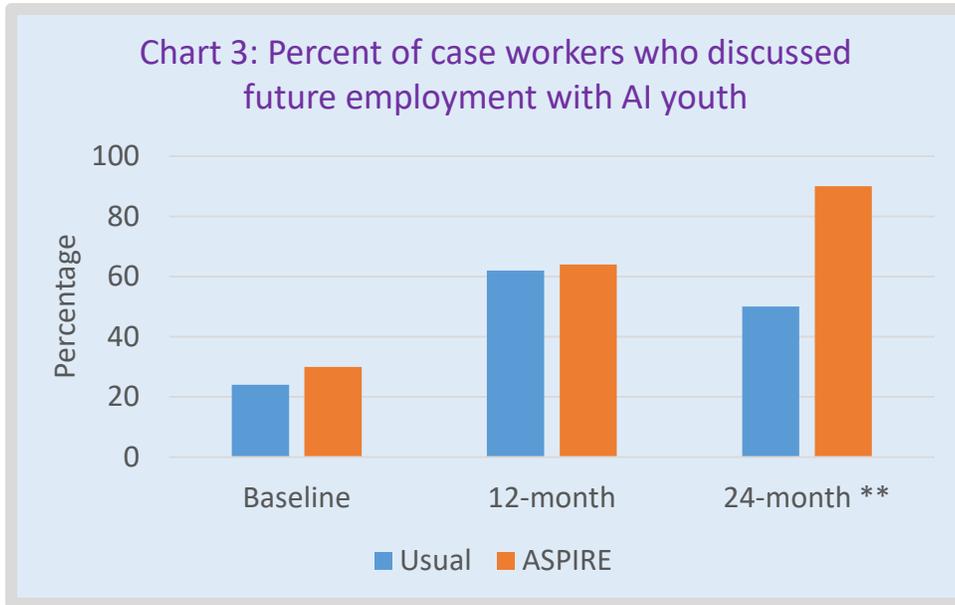
Usual services group participants reported higher levels of school encouragement relative to the ASPIRE services group ( $p \leq .05$ ).

**Table 1: Parent-School Encouragement for Future Employment**

	Parent Encouraged Job		School Encouraged Job	
	Usual	ASPIRE	Usual	ASPIRE
Baseline	3.98	3.97	3.82	3.92
12-month	3.38	3.29	2.84	3.08
24 - month	4.25	4.35	4.50 *	3.95 *

We also asked youth to tell us if they had discussions with their (1) family members, (2) teachers or counselors at school, and (3) case workers or case managers about having a job or additional education after high school. There were not significant differences between groups for discussions with family or school, but differences were strongly significant for discussions with case workers at 24-months ( $p \leq .01$ ). This makes sense given the thrust of ASPIRE services.

Charts 3 and 4 show these comparisons about case management discussions at each data collection point for AI youth in the Usual and ASPIRE services groups.



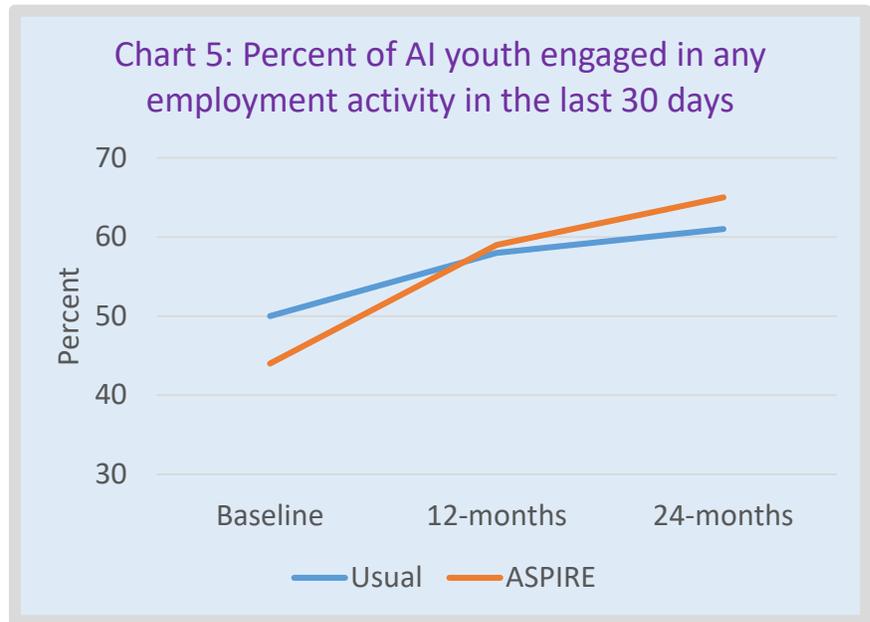
### Employment Outcomes for American Indian Youth

Paid and unpaid employment experiences in high school are strong predictors of future employment for youth with disabilities (Landmark, Ju, & Zhang, 2010; Joshi, Bouck, & Maeda, 2012). ASPIRE case management included assistance and encouragement to engage in work

experiences while in high school, which included career exploration activities, building linkages with Vocational Rehabilitation programs, and goal setting around employment.

Youth indicated if they were working part- or full-time, seeking work, or volunteering in the last 30 days at each data collection point. These activities were combined to see what percentage of youth were engaged in at least one employment-related activity at each survey.

There were not significant differences between AI Usual and ASPIRE group participants, but the data show improved employment outcome trends for the ASPIRE group.



### Limitations

This factsheet focused on youth who self-identified as belonging to a AI tribe. The sample included both AI youth residing on and off reservations. Recruitment on reservation lands was conducted only where we secured tribal approvals. More detailed data for specific reservations or tribes cannot be released due to confidentiality concerns. The information presented reflect preliminary outcomes for small subset of ASPIRE study participants. For a report on the full ASPIRE sample see the article “Exploring the PROMISE of transition services for youth with disabilities receiving SSI” in the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation (Ipsen, et al., in press).

### Conclusion

Compared to AI youth in Usual Services, AI youth in ASPIRE Services were more self-determined, experienced higher rates of discussions with case managers regarding future education and employment outcomes, and more employment experiences. While some of these outcomes were not statistically significant, trends were similar to statistically significant results for the larger study sample (Ipsen, et al., in press). Overall, youth benefitted from ASPIRE services and case management efforts to engage them with high expectations and employment experiences should be included in future transition services.

## References

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## Disclaimers

This factsheet was created for limited distribution to tribal governments who provided Tribal Council or Institutional Review Board approvals for ASPIRE study recruitment on reservation lands. We appreciate their willingness to engage with ASPIRE staff and to help us better understand service delivery and outcomes among AI youth receiving SSI.

Data for these analyses were collected under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs associated with PR #H418P140002. David Emenheiser serves as the project officer. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Department of Education or its federal partners. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service or enterprise mentioned in this publication is intended or should be inferred.

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