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# Request for Applications

## Soft Skills Youth Training for Wisconsin Promise

To: Potential Service Providers

From: Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Services (SVRI) Soft Skills Team

Date: September 2, 2014

On behalf of the Wisconsin Promise project, the SVRI Soft Skills Team invites service providers, agencies, organizations, and other qualified parties to apply to provide Soft Skills training to Promise youth participants. Trainers are being recruited to provide Soft Skills training according to their ability to meet the required qualifications outlined in this RFA.

Please note that Soft Skills training is being developed for an adult-age population that will include family members of youth enrolled in the Wisconsin Promise project and DVR consumers. Applicants can indicate if they would like to train youth, adults, or both. The adult training will be based on the *Skills to Pay the Bills* curriculum and will include in-person, group training. More information about the adult training will be available later this year and will be sent to trainers approved through this RFA who have indicated that they would like to train adults.

### Recruitment Process:

#### ***Step 1: Please Review the Following Information***

- Overview of Promise, which can be found on the Promise website: <http://promisewi.com/about>. In addition to the overview information on that page, there is a section of “Materials to Share” that includes PowerPoint presentations and handouts.
- *Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success* curriculum, which can be found at the following website: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills>.
- Promise Soft Skills Trainers “Scope of Work” (Attachment A)
- Promise Soft Skills Trainers “Responsibilities and Qualifications” (Attachment B)
- Wisconsin Workforce Development Areas (WDA) map, which can be found on the following website: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/locations>.
- Training Agenda for Soft Skills Trainers provided by SVRI Soft Skills Team Member(s) (Attachment C)

## ***Step 2: Selection of Trainers***

Applicants will be approved to be Soft Skills Trainers based on their ability to meet the following criteria:

1. **Understanding of the Wisconsin Promise project and the *Skills to Pay the Bills* curriculum**
  - Understanding of and interest in the Wisconsin Promise project and in training project participants on soft skills using the *Skills to Pay the Bills* curriculum.
2. **Qualifications**
  - Qualifications of the individual(s) who will provide Soft Skills training.
3. **Experience**
  - Past experience with providing training, working with DVR, providing services to youth and their families, job development, and other related services.
4. **Capacity**
  - Ability to provide training in the WDA areas or specific geographical areas identified by applicant.
5. **Other**
  - Other qualifications that demonstrate why the applicant would be a good choice for providing Soft Skills training.

## ***Step 3: Apply***

To apply, please submit a narrative that addresses the following:

1. Administrative contact information, including name of organization, agency or business, and the contact person's name and contact information (address, telephone number and email address)
2. Statement that all potential trainers and the administrative contact person named in this application have reviewed the following:
  - Overview of the Promise project (see the 1<sup>st</sup> bullet point in Step 1.)
  - *Skills to Pay the Bills* curriculum (see the 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet point in Step 1.)
3. Statement that the applicant understands the Scope of Work (Attachment A). This statement should include an agreement to fulfill the four activities listed on page 7 and the six trainer responsibilities listed on page 9 if approved to be a Soft Skills Trainer.
4. Name(s) and contact information for the individual(s) who will provide Soft Skills training.
5. Description of the knowledge, skills, abilities, education, experience, and other relevant qualifications of the individual(s) who will provide Soft Skills training.
6. Statement that indicates which training applicant would provide: youth, adult, or both.
7. Statement that the provider certifies that it has conducted a Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) criminal background check on all staff that will be providing Soft Skills training to Promise participants and DVR consumers. Background checks completed for the 2014-15 DVR service

agreement do not need to be repeated. If a provider is a single person owner, a copy of the background check must be sent to DVR within 30 days of receiving approval.

8. Description of service delivery area, including WDA(s) and/or specific geographical areas and capacity to provide training in those areas.
9. Summary of any additional, relevant information that would further explain the applicant's ability to meet the criteria in this application. This should be information not included elsewhere in this application.

To be considered, applications **must be received by 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 24, 2014.**

### ***Send Application Materials***

Please send application materials to Samantha Ninnemann at [ninnemannsa@uwstout.edu](mailto:ninnemannsa@uwstout.edu) with the following subject line: Promise Soft Skills Trainer Application

Please note that only electronic applications will be accepted.

### ***Review Process***

A panel consisting of Promise partners will review the applications. None of the panel members are SVRI employees.

### ***Step 4: Getting Started***

Approved Soft Skills Trainers will participate in a train-the-trainer session conducted by member(s) of the SVRI Promise Soft Skills Team. Approved Soft Skills Trainers will also become part of an online learning community which will be facilitated by the SVRI Promise Soft Skills Team. Participation in the training and learning community is mandatory for each individual who will provide Soft Skills training.

### **Questions**

Questions about this RFA should be submitted via email to Samantha Ninnemann at [ninnemannsa@uwstout.edu](mailto:ninnemannsa@uwstout.edu). Please use "Soft Skills RFA Question" in the subject line.

**Questions will be accepted until 4:30 p.m. on Friday, September 5, 2014.**

An initial question and answer document will be posted to the Promise website on **Wednesday, September 10, 2014.**

A conference call will be held on **Wednesday, September 17, 2014 from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.** to address questions about this RFA, including those submitted in writing. To participate in the conference call, please send an email to Samantha Ninnemann at [ninnemannsa@uwstout.edu](mailto:ninnemannsa@uwstout.edu) with the subject "Promise Soft Skills RFA Conference Call" by **4:30 p.m. on Monday, September 15, 2014.**

Call-in information will be sent to the email address used to request the call-in information prior to the conference call. A final question and answer document will be posted to the Promise website on **Monday, September 22, 2014.**



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# Request for Applications

## Soft Skills Youth Training for Wisconsin Promise

### Timeline

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 9/2/14  | RFA released   |
| 9/5/14  | Deadline to submit questions   |
| 9/10/14 | Initial question and answer document posted to Promise website             |
| 9/15/14 | Deadline to express interest via email in participating in conference call |
| 9/17/14 | Conference call to answer questions  |
| 9/22/14 | Final question and answer document posted to Promise website               |
| 9/24/14 | Due date for application materials   |
| 10/3/14 | Approved trainers notified   |

# Request for Applications

## Soft Skills Youth Training for Wisconsin Promise

### Application Checklist

This checklist is provided for your use to help you track the contents of your application. Please retain for your reference; you do not need to submit this with your application.

- Administrative contact information:
  - name of organization, agency or business
  - contact person's name and contact information (address, telephone number and email address)
- Statement that all potential trainers and the administrative contact person named in this application have reviewed the following:
  - Overview of the Promise project
  - *Skills to Pay the Bills* curriculum
- Statement that the applicant understands the Scope of Work (Attachment A). This statement should include an agreement to fulfill the four activities listed on page 7 and the six trainer responsibilities listed on page 9 if approved to be a Soft Skills Trainer.
- Name(s) and contact information for the individual(s) who will provide Soft Skills training
- Description of the knowledge, skills, abilities, education, experience, and other relevant qualifications of the individual(s) who will provide Soft Skills training.
- Statement that indicates which training applicant would provide: youth, adult, or both.
- Statement that the provider certifies that it has conducted a Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) criminal background check on all staff that will be providing Soft Skills training to Promise participants and DVR consumers. Background checks completed for the 2014-15 DVR service agreement do not need to be repeated.  
  
If a provider is a single person owner, a copy of the background check must be sent to DVR within 30 days of receiving approval.
- Description of service delivery area, including WDA(s) and/or specific geographical areas and capacity to provide training in those areas.
- Summary of any additional, relevant information that would further explain your ability to meet the criteria in this application. This should be information not included elsewhere in this application.

# Attachment A: Scope of Work

## **Promise Soft Skills Training for Participants**

Period: November 1, 2014 – September 30, 2018

### ***Introduction***

The Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI) Soft Skills Team is seeking applications from service providers, agencies, organizations, and other qualified parties interested in providing training on soft skills to youth and their families. Successful applicants will receive the following from SVRI Promise Soft Skills Team members:

- Training on how to utilize the Department of Labor's *Skills to Pay the Bills* curriculum using a train-the-trainer approach and on using an adapted curriculum with adults (when applicable)
- Training on facilitation skills
- Ongoing technical assistance and support

The Soft Skills training portion of the Wisconsin Promise project is funded through the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). Promise participants and their families will receive a variety of services designed to support their employment goals, including work incentives benefits counseling, career exploration, financial literacy, and work experience. Providing participants and their families with training on the importance of soft skills such as communication and teamwork is an important part of helping them reach their goals.

SVRI is funded to manage the training of Soft Skills trainers for the Promise project and providing them with ongoing technical assistance and support. SVRI will also facilitate learning communities designed to support the concepts that participants and their families are learning through the Soft Skills training. A learning community will also be formed for Soft Skills trainers.

Please note that because PROMISE is a demonstration grant, approved Soft Skills Trainers will be involved in some research studies. Trainers will be invited to participate and may opt out of any or all of these studies.

Successful applicants will fulfill the following activities:

1. Provide Soft Skills training to youth participants using the *Skills to Pay the Bills* curriculum and to adults using an adapted curriculum (when applicable)
2. Participate in and complete required training and technical assistance
3. Participate in learning communities related to Soft Skills training as defined by SVRI
4. Complete web-based reporting and data collection requirements after each module

## ***Soft Skills Training Capacity and Funding Capacity***

Promise project participants will be enrolled statewide. Training needs will vary based on enrollment in the eleven Wisconsin Workforce Development Areas (WDAs). Please see the [WDA map](#) for more information on the WDAs. It is estimated that the Milwaukee area will have the largest number of enrollees followed by the Racine/Kenosha, Madison and South Central, Green Bay, and Fox Valley areas. Participants will be more spread out in Western, Central and Northern parts of Wisconsin.

### ***Service Provided:***

Authorized trainers who responded to SVRI and received the appropriate train-the-trainer training, will deliver the modules to groups of 6 to 15 individuals. The modules will be delivered separately. The trainers will be responsible for materials needed to deliver the training, finding locations suitable for the training, and adhering to the curriculum. Each module takes between 3-4 hours to deliver.

### ***Referral Process:***

1. The Promise participant, or DVR consumer, and/or their family meet with DVR staff and discuss how *Skills to Pay the Bills* will enhance the potential for workplace success. They may discuss if specific modules are required or if all six would be appropriate.
2. DVR staff will contact the service provider to discuss whether we have enough participants to hold a class and if referral is for specific modules or all six modules. The minimum is six individuals participating in each module.
3. DVR will issue authorizations for participants to the trainer.
4. Service is scheduled with the trainer and the Promise participant/DVR consumer/family.

### ***Reporting/Billing Requirements:***

The service should be billed as the modules are delivered or after a full set of all six modules are delivered. After each module, a brief report on the individual's attendance and observations of her/his participation should be provided to the DVR counselor.

### ***Fee:***

Guaranteed minimum of \$450 per module. Each additional participant would be \$75 per module completed.



## **Training**

All trainers will be required to participate in training provided by the SVRI Promise Soft Skills team member(s). Trainers will learn how to do the following:

- Utilize the *Skills to Pay the Bills* curriculum with youth and adapted curriculum for adults (when applicable)
- Administer the required pre- and post-tests for each module
- Complete web-based reporting and data collection requirements for each module
- Request technical assistance and support
- Participate in the learning communities

### **SVRI Responsibilities**

1. Provide training and technical assistance
2. Facilitate learning communities for trainers and for youth and their families to provide additional opportunities to explore soft skills

### **Trainer Responsibilities**

1. Designate a staff member to be the administrative contact person for Soft Skills training and maintain up-to-date contact information for that person
2. Designate a staff member(s) to provide Soft Skills training who meets the Promise Soft Skills Trainers Responsibilities and Qualifications (Attachment B)
3. Participate in training provided by SVRI Promise Soft Skills team member(s) and follow any requirements outlined in that training, including use of the *Skills to Pay the Bills* curriculum and adapted curriculum for adults (when applicable)
4. Participate in learning community for Soft Skills Trainers
5. Participate in learning community for youth and their families who are participating in Soft Skills training
6. Complete web-based reporting and data collection requirements after each module

# Attachment B: Responsibilities and Qualifications

## Soft Skills Trainer for Promise Grant

The Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI) will provide training on how to use the *Skills to Pay the Bills* curriculum and adapted curriculum for adults (when applicable). SVRI will also provide ongoing technical assistance and support to qualified trainers identified through this Request for Applications (RFA). Trainers will provide soft skills training to youth and their families enrolled in the Promise grant alongside other services including work incentive benefits counseling, career exploration, financial literacy, and work experience. Soft Skills Trainers will be helping youth and their families learn about the role that soft skills play in seeking and retaining employment. Youth and adult DVR consumers may also be referred to these Soft Skills training sessions.

## Responsibilities

- Participate in training provided by SVRI Soft Skills team member(s) on how to use the *Skills to Pay the Bills* curriculum and adapted curriculum for adults (when applicable)
- Provide Soft Skills Training to youth enrolled in Promise Participate in learning communities as defined by SVRI
- Complete web-based reporting and data collection requirements after each module

## General Knowledge and Skills Required

- Ability to engage youth and adults in the Soft Skills Training
- Ability to be enthusiastic and demonstrate a positive attitude
- Organizational skills
- Enthusiasm for working with youth and families
- Strong communication skills
- Ability to adapt communication style, materials, physical space, and other aspects of the training as needed to meet the needs of the group and individuals
- Experience working with youth and families preferred

## Travel

Soft Skills Trainers must be willing and able to perform travel that is necessary to carry out the responsibilities outlined in this RFA.

# Attachment C: Training Agenda for Approved Soft Skills Trainers

## Soft Skills Train-the-Trainer Agenda (Tentative)

### Day 1

9:00 – 9:45 a.m.	Introductions/Goals/Ground Rules Program Background Materials Overview
9:45 – 10:15	Trainer Characteristics: How do you rate yourself? What needs the most work?
10:15 – 10:45	Using Appreciative Inquiry
10:45 – 11:00	Break
11:00 – 11:30	What Works in Training.....How Will You Apply It?
11:30 – 12:00 p.m.	Listening & Other Important Training Tools
12:00 – 12:45	Lunch
12:45 – 1:15	Skills to Pay the Bills Review & Individual Module Training Tips
1:15 – 2:45	Small Group Work on Soft Skill Modules
2:45 – 3:00	Wrap up Day 1 of Training Questions/comments about day 1 Form training groups for Day 2 of training

### Day 2 (to be scheduled 2 weeks after Day 1)

8:30 – 9:00	Welcome & Prep for the Day
9:00 – 10:00	Practice training in groups
10:00 – 10:15	Break
10:15 – 11:15	Practice training in groups
11:15 – 12:00	Wrap up Day 2 of Training Learning Community Technical Assistance Complete Evaluation Forms & Adjourn