

Summary Report

Information about the Applicant

The purpose of Families Matter Outreach Project (FMOP) is to offer unique programming to youth with disabilities ages 14 to 21 and their families to make a smoother transition from high school to the adult world, achieve great long-term employment success, have more confidence in themselves, be more active and included in their communities. Our programs help families through this complicated transition with resources, connections and working on goals together.

Experience with population: We have offered our transition programming for 16 years to youth with a variety of disabilities aged 14 to 21 years old and their families. We have seen amazing outcomes with youth going on to college, working and moving out – things their parents did not expect them to do. Over the years, we've adapted our program to meet youth's learning styles and have included topics families are struggling with like relationships and sexuality, financial planning and alternatives to guardianship.

Our history: FMOP is a young non-profit created to maintain and grow the Youth in Partnership with Parents for Empowerment (YiPPE) program in WI and other parent training programs. The FMOP leadership created the YiPPE program in 2006 and have been involved in the implementation and expansion of the program ever since. YiPPE is a program that works with a group of families over 5 sessions spread out throughout a school year. During those sessions, families learn the process of moving from high school to the adult world, create and work toward goals together, network and connect to services and community supports. We are working to ensure this program continues to help families for many years.

Statement of Need

Youth with disabilities have a significantly higher unemployment rate than their peers without disabilities. Nationally, only 32% of working age people with disabilities are employed compared to 73% of their peers. Many of these youth end up trapped in a cycle of poverty living on public benefits. This often occurs because families do not understand the resources available and how to make the most of the services they do receive. Additional barriers include low expectations and families working from a deficit-based vs. asset-based model.

Our target population is 40 youth with disabilities aged 14 to 21 years old and their families who primarily live within the Milwaukee Public School (MPS) district. Participants have a variety of disabilities such as Autism, anxiety disorders, learning disabilities and other intellectual and developmental disabilities. We have partnered with MPS for more than 6 years and they assist with recruitment, materials, staffing, and location costs.

Availability of Funding/Wispact Support. Since its inception, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has funded the YiPPE program. This year, DPI reallocated those funds to other programs. We have secured most of the funding through MPS and in-kind donations (see budget section) to maintain the Milwaukee YiPPE program. We are asking Wispact for assistance while we secure sustainable funding that includes billing the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and Children's Long Term Supports (CLTS) for our services. YiPPE has billed DVR in the past and do not foresee this changing. Billing CLTS would be a new funding source.

Project Goals and Expected Benefits

PROJECT GOALS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

Purpose and impact: Our purpose is to help youth with disabilities and their families transition successfully out of school, so they avoid the devastating cycle of poverty and unemployment faced by many people with disabilities in adulthood. Without funding for this program many youth with disabilities are at risk for dropping out and/or graduating to the couch. The impact for families who have graduated from our programs is seeing their youth accomplish things they never thought possible such as working in the community, moving out with supports, maintaining friendships and speaking to their doctors on their own. This happens because our program teaches families, in a safe and supported environment, how to do these things and gives them time between sessions to practice new skills. They also develop strong relationships with other youth and families that last long after the program ends.

Project goals and objectives:

Goal 1: Families raise their expectations. Objectives: Parents are pushed outside their comfort zones to show their children can achieve more than they think. For example, having youth speak in front of the large group or identifying chores they can do and reporting back the next session on how it went. **Goal 2:** Families strengthen their networks and supports. Objectives: Parents get connected directly to services and supports from their community through speakers and families stay overnight giving parents valuable time to build relationships and network with each other. **Goal 3:** Youth have more friendships (parents too). Objectives: Hands on activities, social skill activities, overnight experience to get to know new friends. **Goal 4:** Families gain knowledge and skills to set goals around education, employment, healthcare and community living. Objectives: Parents hear from speakers on these topics while the youth participate in hands on activities that help them think about their strengths, interests and goals. **Goal 5:** Youth gain practical skills around social issues and self-advocacy. Objectives: Provide education and practice on these skills at each session using role plays.

Project Implementation Plan

How the project will be carried out: We will accomplish our goals by holding a YIPPE program in Milwaukee for up to 40 youth with disabilities and their family members. Participants attend

5 overnight sessions spread out over a school year. Each session runs from 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm Friday night and 8 am to 3 pm on Saturday. Parents and youth learn about the transition process from a variety of speakers and take part in hands-on activities in parallel programs.

While parents and youth attend some activities together, parents attend their own sessions as their children learn similar information in a youth-friendly, hands-on format. During each session we cover topics in 5 distinct areas: employment, education, healthcare, community living, and skill development in self-advocacy, social and soft skills on the job.

The **responsible parties** are the Co-Directors of FMOP who will coordinate the logistics of the program, train on-site staff and one will be a youth facilitator on site. The co-directors will oversee the outreach and recruitment of families with MPS, secure speakers, process payments, and work with the hotel on logistics. There will be 2 trained facilitators working with parents and 4 facilitators working with youth to deliver program content.

Implementation timeline: The 5 sessions will take place in Nov '22, Dec '22, Jan '23, Feb '23 and March '23. Recruitment will begin in September and the program will be complete by June.

Evaluation Plan

Document progress: Transition outcomes are not evident overnight; therefore, we use a variety of methods to track progress over time. Participants complete evaluations at the end of each session and a final survey at the last session that asks them to compare their knowledge on a variety of areas from their first session to their last. We also follow up with families at least 6 months after the session as they continue to use the knowledge and skills learned at YiPPE. We collect stories and testimonials and track attendance.

Instruments/methods: Session evals, surveys, interviews, focus groups, and track attendance.

Person(s) responsible: The Co-Directors will provide the evaluations and survey questions. On site staff are responsible for ensuring the evaluation is done and for doing the interviews with families. The Co-Directors will analyze and summarize the data collected for the final report.

Budget

Line-item budget/narrative justification: We are requesting up to \$20,000 to cover the cost of meals for the participants. We are using the state rate for meals in Milwaukee, which is \$50 per person per session. That is \$10/person for breakfast, \$15/person for lunch and \$25/person for dinner. 80 participants per session @ \$50/person * 5 sessions is \$20,000.

Staff Recommendation

The grant application can be recommended for approval. The grant will provide meals that directly benefit the disabled individuals and is aligned with initiatives of the foundation. The requested amount will have to be adjusted to \$10,000.00 to meet the cap limits for grants.