



*Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income*

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## **CaPROMISE Research Brief: The Status of CaPROMISE Students based on the available DOR AWARE Data Elements<sup>1</sup>**

**August 13, 2019**

### **Executive Summary**

The enrollment of CaPROMISE students in the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) was one of the targeted outcomes for the CaPROMISE program. While CaPROMISE services ended in June 2019, students enrolled in DOR will continue to receive services (i.e., Pre-Employment Transition Services and/or vocational rehabilitation services). This report compares the 1,275 CaPROMISE Services students with the 288 Usual Services students who had a case record in DOR's Accessible Web-Based Activity Reporting Environment (AWARE) system as of July 2019. Statistically significant differences ( $p<.001$ )<sup>2</sup> were observed between the CaPROMISE and Usual Services cohorts as well as between CaPROMISE Qualified Rehabilitation Professionals (QRPs) and Non-CaPROMISE QRPs. The following are summary findings.

- When comparing the CaPROMISE students to the Usual Services students:
  - CaPROMISE students were **determined eligible for DOR services** at a higher rate than Usual Services students.
  - **Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) approval** for CaPROMISE students occurred at a higher rate than Usual Services students.
  - A higher percentage of **case closures, without employment**, were recorded for Usual Service students compared to CaPROMISE students.
- Similar results significant differences ( $p<.001$ ) were discovered when comparing CaPROMISE QRPs to Non-CaPROMISE QRPs:
  - CaPROMISE QRPs **determined eligibility for DOR services** at a higher rate than Non-CaPROMISE QRPs.

<sup>1</sup> This research brief was prepared by Drs. Mari Guillermo, Fred McFarlane, Ron Jacobs, Mark Tucker and Ms. Vanessa Corona, Interwork Institute, San Diego State University.

<sup>2</sup> The typical conventional standard for significance is .05 or less. The data in these comparisons were .001 (i.e., the equivalent of 1/1,000) or less that these findings would occur by chance.

- **IPEs** developed by CaPROMISE QRPs were approved at a higher rate than Non-CaPROMISE QRPs.
- **Case closure, without employment**, by Non-CaPROMISE QRPs occurred at a higher percentage than by CaPROMISE QRPs.
- When examining the length of time from application to these three milestones (eligibility, IPE and closure) in the rehabilitation process, students who were in the CaPROMISE cohort and served by CaPROMISE QRPs fared better than the Usual Services cohort or the Non-CaPROMISE QRPs.
  - The time from application to eligibility and application to IPE approval was 2 – 3 weeks shorter for the CaPROMISE cohort and CaPROMISE QRPs.
  - The time from application to closure, without employment, was 5+ months sooner for the Usual Services cohort and students with a Non-CaPROMISE QRP.

The implications of these findings are immense and provide evidence-based information using DOR's AWARE data management system to guide changes in serving youth with disabilities and the systems and programs for these youth. The following are implications and recommendations based on this evidence.

- DOR's engagement of transition students and their families must begin when students are 14 years of age or earlier.
- As long as the student is in school, DOR should work in coordination with the Local Education Agency (LEA) staff in all phases of service delivery, from referral to closure, to increase the engagement with the student and family.
- Maintaining contact with students and their families requires not giving up (i.e., closing the case) when the QRP encounters problems contacting or locating the student.
- Person-driven and individualized plans that contain objectives reflective of the students' dreams and goals provide a strong foundation for the IPE and help to expedite the process from application through service delivery.
- Ongoing staff development is essential to develop and maintain a program model that is person-driven, family-centered, and integrated into the standard operating procedures (i.e., AWARE).
- DOR QRP staff must be afforded opportunities to learn in partnership with LEA staff via joint student staffings, trainings and meetings.
- Staff must be flexible and meet with students and families where and when it is convenient/accessible for the students and families (i.e., school, home, community, etc.).
- The presumption of benefit means the expectation that **all** students with disabilities can achieve an employment outcome no matter their age, disability, gender, personal circumstances, etc. This message must be reinforced at all levels of the organizations and reflected in the support and guidance provided to staff (i.e., hiring, orientation, staff development, individual case conferencing, performance evaluation, etc.).

# **CaPROMISE Research Brief: The Status of CaPROMISE Students based on the available DOR AWARE Data Elements**

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One of the main objectives of CaPROMISE was the enrollment of the CaPROMISE students in the DOR Service program. At this point in the life of CaPROMISE, with a majority of the students having exited the five-year program, it is possible to take a preliminary look at the 1,275 CaPROMISE students and examine their current DOR enrollment and service delivery status. It is possible to compare these 1,275 CaPROMISE DOR students with a cohort of 288 Usual Services students enrolled in DOR who represent a valid cohort for comparison.

At the beginning of CaPROMISE in 2013, two groups were created through a process of random assignment from a pool of California students between the ages of 14 to 16 receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The process of random assignment created a cohort of 1,646 CaPROMISE students<sup>3</sup> (i.e., the experimental group) and a cohort of 1,627 Usual Services students (i.e., the control group). At this point in time, it can be seen that of the original 1,646 CaPROMISE students, 1,275 (77.46%) have been enrolled in DOR while 288 of the original 1,627 Usual Service students (17.7%) have been enrolled in DOR. This is a very large and noteworthy difference. Given the assumption that participation in the DOR service program increases the probable outcome of meaningful competitive integrated employment, responsible and productive participation in one's community and enhanced self-esteem, this large percentage difference in DOR participation is a powerful metric.

A second area of interest is associated with the DOR Qualified Rehabilitation Professionals (QRP) to whom these CaPROMISE and Usual Services students have been assigned by DOR. Some students have been assigned to a designated CaPROMISE QRP while others have been assigned to a Generalist QRP.

DOR has made available to the San Diego State University (SDSU) Interwork staff selected data elements that are a part of the overall DOR AWARE data management system. The following is an examination of those available AWARE data elements. SDSU staff conducted a series of statistical comparisons of the CaPROMISE and Usual Services student cohorts. The following narrative includes a set of statistical comparisons of the 1,174 students who have been assigned to a CaPROMISE designated QRP and the 389 who have been assigned to a non-CaPROMISE QRP.

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<sup>3</sup> To maintain consistency, the CaPROMISE students are in the experimental group while the Usual Services students are in the control group.

## Eligibility Determination for CaPROMISE students greater than Usual Services students

Regarding *eligibility determination status*, there was a significant difference between the CaPROMISE and Usual Services students [Chi-Square ( $n=1,563$ ,  $df=2$ )=320.458,  $p<.001$ ]<sup>4</sup>. As shown in Table 1 below, the percentage of CaPROMISE students who were determined eligible at this point in time was much greater, while the Usual Services cohort showed much higher percentages of individuals whose cases were closed prior to eligibility determination and whose eligibility was pending at the same point in time.

**Table 1: Eligibility Determination Status: CaPROMISE and Usual Services**

Eligibility Determination Status	Student Cohort			
		CaPROMISE	Usual Services	Total
Closed Prior to Eligibility Determination	n	14	27	41
	%	1.1%	9.4%	2.6%
Eligibility Determined - Accepted	n	1241	186	1427
	%	97.3%	64.6%	91.3%
Pending Eligibility Determination	n	20	75	95
	%	1.6%	26.0%	6.1%
Total	n	1275	288	1563
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Implications of this finding:** The CaPROMISE and Usual Services students are all SSI recipients and therefore, should be presumed eligible when referred to DOR. The difference between the two groups may be linked to the concerted effort to expedite eligibility determination for the CaPROMISE students based on their receipt of SSI benefits and special education services. The expedited process included the development of a one-page referral form and partnering with the LEA staff to directly connect with the CaPROMISE students and their families. The differences between the two groups indicates that there is a positive relationship between the CaPROMISE students and the “speed” of eligibility determination.

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<sup>4</sup> The typical conventional standard for significance is .05 or less. The data in these comparisons were .001 (i.e., the equivalent of 1/1,000) or less that these findings would occur by chance.

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## IPE Approval for CaPROMISE students greater than Usual Services students

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Regarding the *Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) approval status*, there were again significant differences between the two cohorts [Chi-square ( $n=1,563$ ,  $df=3$ )=390.995,  $p<.001$ ]. The CaPROMISE cohort had a much higher percentage of approved IPEs while the Usual Services cohort had higher percentages of closures without IPEs, IPEs not determined, and IPE determinations pending. Specific details regarding this analysis are shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: IPE Approval Status: CaPROMISE and Usual Services**

IPE Approval Status	Student cohort			Total
		CaPROMISE	Usual Services	
Closed Without IPE Approval	n	23	42	65
	%	1.8%	14.6%	4.2%
IPE Not Determined	n	20	75	95
	%	1.6%	26.0%	6.1%
Eligible – IPE Determination Pending	n	0	6	6
	%	0.0%	2.1%	0.4%
IPE Approved	n	1232	165	1397
	%	96.6%	57.3%	89.4%
Total	n	1275	288	1563
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Implications of this finding:** This is a key finding. Without an approved eligibility determination (Table 1) and an approved IPE (Table 2), students are unable to receive any continued services to increase their employment opportunities. The services provided by the LEAs, the person-driven plan and the Individual Career Action Plan provided a strong framework for the eligibility and IPE development. The Usual Services students did not have the benefit of these supports and the actual numbers and the statistical analysis support this finding.

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## Case Closure, without employment, for Usual Services students greater than CaPROMISE students

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Regarding case *closure status, without employment*, there was a much higher percentage of CaPROMISE students who were deemed eligible and are currently receiving services, while the Usual Services group showed higher percentages of cases that were either closed or whose eligibility status were pending [Chi-Square(n=1,563, df=2)=399.108,p<.001]. Specific details regarding this analysis are shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Case Closure Status: CaPROMISE and Usual Services**

Case Closure Status	Student Cohort			
		CaPROMISE	Usual Services	Total
Closed – Not Employed	n	184	118	302
	%	14.4%	41.0%	19.3%
Eligibility Pending	n	20	75	95
	%	1.6%	26.0%	6.1%
Determined Eligible and Receiving DOR Services	n	1071	95	1166
	%	84.0%	33.0%	74.6%
Total	n	1275	288	1563
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Implications of this finding:** During the implementation of CaPROMISE, the engagement of CaPROMISE students and their families posed numerous challenges. As an example, these challenges included housing instability, disconnected phones, and family crises. The complexity of these challenges often made it difficult to contact and locate families. In a traditional DOR model, the individual has limited chances to respond to the QRPs' calls/meetings before their case is closed for non-engagement. Of the cases closed for the Usual Services students, the highest percentage was classified under "unable to locate or contact". On the other hand, the low case closure for the CaPROMISE students may be due to the partnership between the DOR QRPs and LEAs' Career Service Coordinators (CSC) and the team's commitment to the student and family no matter how often they did not show for a meeting or return a phone call. In some instances, if a student/family did not respond, it's likely that the presumption by QRPs familiar with these families was that there was a valid reason for non-engagement. In most cases, patience and persistence on the part of the CaPROMISE QRPs and in partnership with the CSCs resulted in the engagement of students and families.

The previous three analyses explored differences between the CaPROMISE and Usual Services cohorts, examining three DOR statuses: eligibility determination, IPE approval, and case closure. The next series of analyses examine the same three statuses by comparing the cohort of students assigned to CaPROMISE QRPs and Non-CaPROMISE QRPs. The distinction is that the CaPROMISE QRPs worked with the CaPROMISE LEA staff and in many instances had worked collaboratively with the LEA staff, the student and often family members. They also participated in specialized training and staff development provided by CaPROMISE alongside CaPROMISE LEA staff. The Non-CaPROMISE QRPs typically did not have any specialized training working with youth.

### Eligibility Determination by CaPROMISE QRPs greater than Non-CaPROMISE QRPs

Regarding the *eligibility determination status*, the CaPROMISE QRPs showed a much higher percentage of students who were determined eligible, while the Non-CaPROMISE QRPs showed higher percentages of students whose cases were closed prior to eligibility determination or pending eligibility determination [Chi-Square(n=1,563, df=2)=335.374, p<.001]. Specific details regarding this analysis are shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Eligibility Determination Status: CaPROMISE and Non-CaPROMISE QRP Assignments**

Eligibility Determination Status	QRP Assignment			
		CaPROMISE QRP	Non-CaPROMISE QRP	Total
Closed Before Eligibility Determination	n	6	35	41
	%	0.5%	9.0%	2.6%
Eligibility Determined	n	1160	267	1427
	%	98.8%	68.6%	91.3%
Pending Eligibility Determination	n	8	87	95
	%	0.7%	22.4%	6.1%
Total	n	1174	389	1563
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Implications of this finding:** Because of the prior experience with the student and the LEA staff, there is a significant difference in the positive determination of eligibility. As noted there is an 8.5% difference between the two groups regarding closure before

eligibility and 30.2% difference in eligibility determination. In most instances (98.8%), the CaPROMISE QRPs determined a positive eligibility decision for the students. This finding underscores the importance of the partnership between the QRP and LEA staff.

### IPE Approval by CaPROMISE QRP greater than Non-CaPROMISE QRP

Regarding *IPE approval status*, a much higher percentage of students assigned to a CaPROMISE QRP received IPE approvals, while the non-CaPROMISE QRP assignment group showed higher percentages of closures without an IPE approval, or IPEs not determined [Chi-Square(n=1,563, df=3)=397.686, p<.001]. Specific details regarding this analysis are shown in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: IPE Approval Status: CaPROMISE and Non-CaPROMISE QRP Assignments**

IPE Approval Status	QRP Assignment			Total
	CaPROMISE QRP	Non-CaPROMISE QRP		
Closed Without IPE Approval	n	12	53	65
	%	1.0%	13.6%	4.2%
IPE Not Determined	n	8	87	95
	%	0.7%	22.4%	6.1%
Eligible – IPE Determination Pending	n	0	6	6
	%	0.0%	1.5%	0.4%
IPE Approved	n	1154	243	1397
	%	98.3%	62.5%	89.4%
Total	n	1174	389	1563
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Implications of this finding:** The results are virtually identical between Tables 4 and 5. The CaPROMISE QRPs developed and obtained approval for the students' IPE. It is highly significant that 98.3% of the CaPROMISE QRPs developed an approved IPE while only 62.5% of the Non-CaPROMISE QRPs had an approved IPE. Several factors may have contributed to the high rate of IPE approval for students with the CaPROMISE QRPs including a person-driven approach, staff flexibility, and the QRP-LEA staff partnership. Both the CaPROMISE QRPs and LEA staff received ongoing training and technical assistance on person-driven planning. Furthermore, the CaPROMISE QRPs had the freedom to meet with students and families at school, in their homes, and in the

community. Developing the IPEs with the students and families and obtaining signatures required the concerted effort and coordination of both the QRPs and the LEA staff.

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### Case Closure by Non-CaPROMISE QRPs greater than CaPROMISE QRPs

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Regarding case *closure status*, there was again a very large difference between the two groups with a high percentage of the CaPROMISE QRP students being determined eligible and enrolled in DOR services [Chi-Square(n=1563,df=2)=397.527, p<.001]. In contrast, of the closed cases, a much higher proportion of students assigned to the Non-CaPROMISE QRPs (37.5%) were closed compared to students assigned to the CaPROMISE QRPs (13.3%). Specific details regarding this analysis are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Case Closure Status: CaPROMISE and Non-CaPROMISE QRP Assignments**

Case Closure Status	QRP Assignment			
		CaPROMISE QRP	Non-CaPROMISE QRP	Total
Closed	n	156	146	302
	%	13.3%	37.5%	19.3%
Eligibility Pending	n	8	87	95
	%	0.7%	22.4%	6.1%
Eligible and Receiving DOR Services	n	1010	156	1166
	%	86.0%	40.1%	74.6%
Total	n	1174	389	1563
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Implications of this finding:** The statistical significance is very high. Note that 86% of the CaPROMISE youth who are served by CaPROMISE QRPs are receiving services after eligibility and IPE approvals. Only 40.1% of the students served by the Non-CaPROMISE QRPs are receiving services. The data strongly support the engagement of the DOR staff with the LEA staff, developing an understanding of the youth, having a relationship with the youth before they apply for DOR services and understanding the uniqueness of each youth. Moreover, the CaPROMISE QRPs had the additional support from the CaPROMISE DOR Supervisors who reviewed cases, met with LEA managers and staff, participated in CaPROMISE Leadership discussions, and

reinforced the expectation that all CaPROMISE students will be DOR consumers and have an employment outcome.

The following series of analyses examine the lapse in time in days between the date of application for DOR services and three milestones in the rehabilitation process: eligibility determination, IPE approval and closure. Comparisons are made between the CaPROMISE and Usual Services students as well as comparisons between students assigned to CaPROMISE QRPs and Non-CaPROMISE QRPs.

### **Time between Application, Eligibility and IPE approval is shorter for CaPROMISE students than Usual Services students**

Regarding differences between the CaPROMISE and Usual Services cohorts, CaPROMISE students progressed significantly more quickly from application to eligibility determination and from application to IPE approval. The Usual Services students progressed significantly more quickly from application to unsuccessful case closure. This appears to be attributable to the large number of Usual Services students whose cases were closed at earlier milestones. Specific details regarding this series of three analyses are shown in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: Average Days Between Statuses: CaPROMISE and Usual Services**

Cohorts		Application to Eligibility	Application to IPE Approval	Application to Case Closure	Statistical Significance
CaPROMISE	Mean	24.47	75.83	609.41	p<.001
	n	1241	1232	184	
	s.d.	22.633	52.167	286.870	
Usual Services	Mean	36.01	87.74	448.75	p<.001
	n	186	165	118	
	s.d.	39.138	74.360	327.590	
Total	Mean	25.98	77.23	546.63	p<.001
	n	1427	1397	302	
	s.d.	25.675	55.355	312.909	

**Implications of this finding:** These findings suggest that CaPROMISE students were able to begin receiving services two weeks sooner than the Usual Service students. A larger difference is reflected in the case closure for Usual Services students - closing more than five months sooner than the CaPROMISE students. Factors that may contribute to these discrepancies have already been mentioned throughout this research brief – expectations, flexibility, collaboration, and individualized planning and support.

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## Time between Application to Determination and IPE Approval Shorter for CaPROMISE QRPs than Non-CaPROMISE QRPs

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A comparison of the students assigned to CaPROMISE QRPs and Non-CaPROMISE QRPs reveals an identical pattern of differences on the three measures of time between statuses. Specific details regarding this series of three analyses are shown in Table 8 below.

**Table 8: Average Days Between Statuses: CaPROMISE QRPs and Non-CaPROMISE QRPs**

QRP Assignment		Application to Eligibility	Application to IPE Approval	Application to Case Closure	Statistical Significance
CaPROMISE QRP	Mean	23.59	73.77	624.86	p<.001
	n	1160	1154	156	
	s.d.	22.433	50.786	238.924	
Non-CaPROMISE QRP	Mean	36.34	93.71	463.05	p<.001
	n	267	243	146	
	s.d.	34.768	71.116	358.626	
Total	Mean	25.98	77.23	546.63	p<.001
	n	1427	1397	302	
	s.d.	25.675	55.355	312.909	

**Implications of this finding:** With the determination for eligibility and IPE approval, the CaPROMISE QRPs provided these decisions between two and four weeks faster than the Non-CaPROMISE QRPs. The expedience of eligibility and IPE-related decisions increases responsiveness and enables the student to begin services quicker. This finding reinforces the importance of staff development and training that emphasizes individual over system, high expectations, meaningful and intentional engagement, and true collaboration.

The following analyses focus on group differences related to two aspects of employment; hourly wage and hours worked per week. Regarding wages, CaPROMISE students earned a slightly higher hourly wage (\$13.00) than the Usual Services students (\$11.83) [ $F(1,66)=4.736$ ,  $p=.03$ ]. Students assigned to a CaPROMISE QRP earned \$12.81 while students assigned to a Non-CaPROMISE QRP earned \$12.23. This difference in hourly wages was not significant. Regarding average number of hours worked per week, the CaPROMISE students worked 26.36 while the Usual Services students worked 25.59. This difference was not statistically significant. Students

assigned to a CaPROMISE QRP worked an average of 24.66 while the students assigned to a Non-CaPROMISE QRP worked an average of 27.25. This difference was not statistically significant.

**Implications of this finding:** As students from both cohorts exit high school and build on their current work experiences, we anticipate they will ultimately attain competitive integrated employment. It is vital that the students receive individualized, person-centered services to realize this outcome. The assumption is that the CaPROMISE QRPs are better equipped to provide such services based on their training and extensive experience working with the students, their family members, and the LEA staff early in the transition process.

In summary, an analysis of the AWARE data pertaining to the CaPROMISE and Usual Services students who have applied for services through DOR consistently showed that the CaPROMISE students were more successful in negotiating the stages in the rehabilitation process and were enrolled in plans of longer duration. This was the case for those students who were assigned to CaPROMISE QRPs rather than generalist Non-CaPROMISE QRPs. The only exception to this trend pertained to hours worked per week, where no differences between groups were observed.

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