

INTRODUCTION

The mission of Project Self-Sufficiency is to assist low-income, single parents in their efforts to build and maintain strong, healthy families; achieve economic independence; and become free from community and government assistance.

Each parent accepted into the program is assigned an advisor who assists in setting career and personal goals, developing a self-sufficiency action plan, identifying resources, resolving problems, and providing emotional support.

Project Self-Sufficiency takes a holistic approach, emphasizing areas such as self-esteem, parenting and recovery from domestic violence along with specific career and educational goals. Families are provided with services in the following areas:

- **Education & Career Development**
- **Guidance, Encouragement & Advocacy**
- **Practical Resources**
- **Children's Program**

Applicants come to the program requesting career and personal development, resources necessary to allow them to succeed with their goals, and the encouragement that is critical to maintaining momentum during challenging times. The support provided by PS-S is an investment in our families that enables them to reach their career and personal goals. In the end, it is all about preparing for and securing living wage employment. Without the assistance of these services and funds, it would be difficult for our families to absorb the initial costs and maintain the momentum needed to succeed.

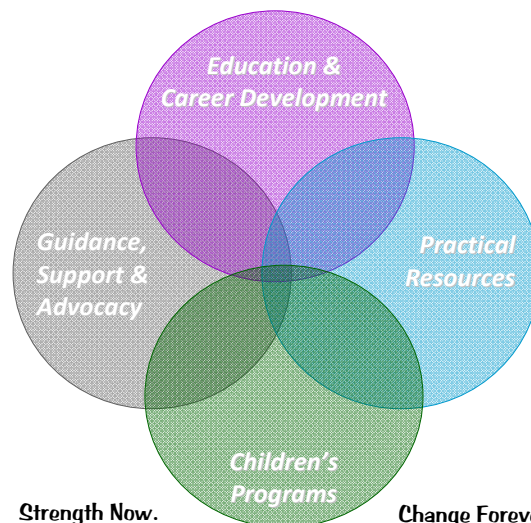
At Project Self-Sufficiency, single parent families are wrapped in meaningful services that help them to overcome the obstacles that brought them into our program. We provide “strength now” so that our families can experience “change forever.”

Education & Career Development

- ▶ Career Planning
- ▶ Scholarship Fund
- ▶ Childcare Grants
- ▶ Job Placement
- ▶ Career Clothing

Guidance, Support & Advocacy

- ▶ Balanced Guidance
- ▶ Emotional Support
- ▶ Supportive Classes
- ▶ Advocacy
- ▶ Mental Health Fund



Practical Resources

- ◀ “Cars for Families” Program
- ◀ Car Repair
- ◀ Donated Computers
- ◀ Participant Assistance Fund
- ◀ Limited Housing Opportunities

Children's Programs

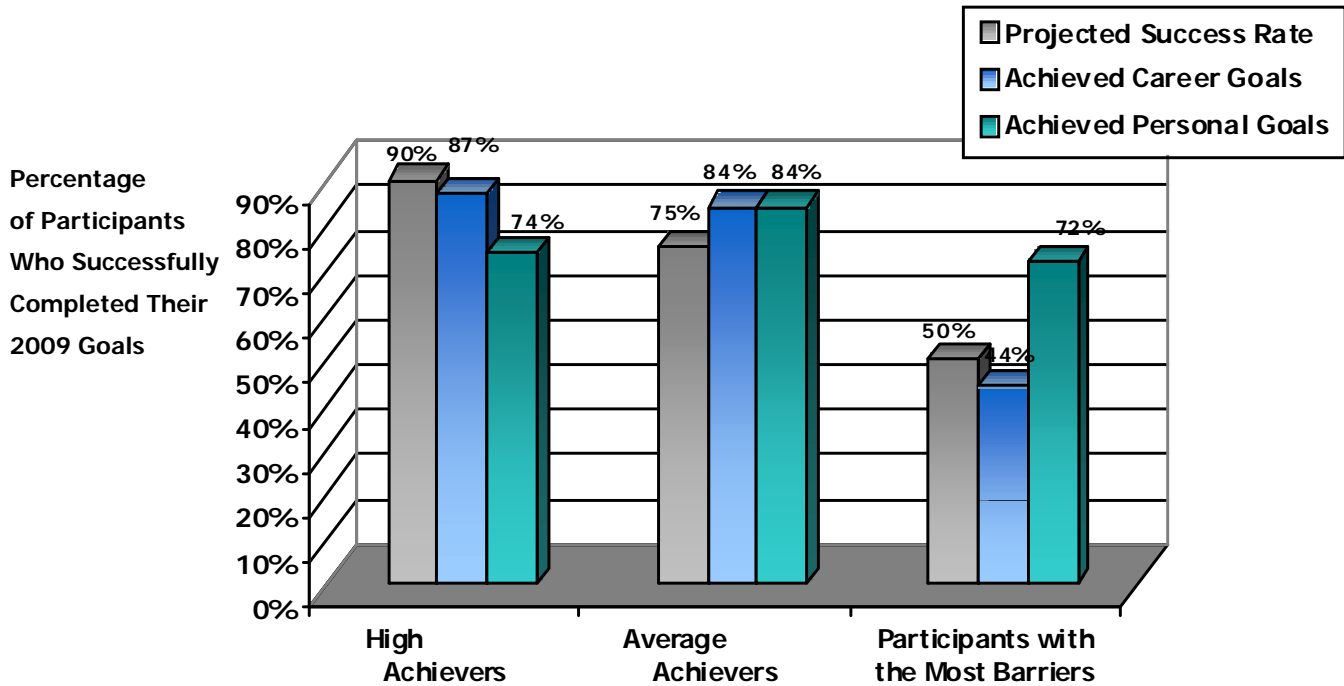
- ◀ “Kid Power” Class
- ◀ Holiday Assistance
- ◀ Boundless Children's Fund
- ◀ “Cool Kids”
- ◀ Back-to-School Clothing

SERVICES PROVIDED TO PS-S FAMILIES IN 2009

During 2009, Project Self-Sufficiency served **158** single parent families who were enrolled during all or a portion of the calendar year. Many participants received the services below in a different year.

Assistance in Developing or Updating a Self-Sufficiency Action Plan	155 Parents
Career Planning Guidance	139 Parents
Access to Higher Education and Financial Aid	83 Parents
Counseling and Guidance for Personal and Family Matters	147 Parents
Job Search Assistance	58 Parents
Information and Referral Services	158 Families
Advocacy with Systems	61 Families
Participant Financial Assistance	127 Families
Willow Place Housing	24 Families
Scholarship Funds from PS-S	41 Parents
Scholarship Funds from PS-S Partners	39 Parents
PS-S Child Care Scholarships	9 Families
Donated Cars for PS-S and Workforce Center	33 Families
Purchased Cars for PS-S and Workforce Center	25 Families
Volunteer Car Repair Assistance	31 Families
Donated Computers & Related Equipment	21 Families
Career Clothes for Single Parents – Includes Able Women	39 Parents
“Cool Kids” Back to School Clothing for Children	117 Children
Holiday Assistance – Under-the-Tree Gift Sponsorship	98 Families with 178 Children
Holiday Party – Gifts and Entertainment	97 Families with 177 Children
Boundless Children’s Fund	73 Children
Parenting Class – attendance at one or more sessions	17 Parents
Self-Esteem Building Class	13 Parents
Mental Health Fund – evaluation and treatment	20 Parents
Volunteer Math Tutoring	16 Parents
Women’s Wellness Exams Donated by Women’s Clinic	6 Parents

2009 GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR PS-S PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



For measurement purposes only, participants are listed as either:

- 1) “High Achievers”
- 2) “Average Achievers” for success or
- 3) “Participants with the Most Barriers” to self-sufficiency

The above chart reflects the performance of 119 of the 158 participants who were enrolled in the program long enough during the 2009 calendar year to have worked on setting and reaching goals.

- There were 31 “high achievers” and 27 completed their career goals (87%) and 23 completed their personal goals (74%)
- There were 63 “average achievers”- 53 of this group of participants (84%) reached their career goals and 53 (84%) completed their personal goals.
- Of the 25 participants who faced the “most barriers” to success, 11 individuals (44%) completed their career goals and 18 participants (72%) completed their personal goals.
- When all 119 participants across all three groups are considered, 66% reached both their career and personal goals for 2009. 76% reached career goals.

Project Self-Sufficiency anticipated in advance that the high achievers would be most likely to reach their goals, while the other two groups would experience more difficulty. Both career goals and personal/family goals were considered. It is interesting to see that in 2009 the results are mixed. High achievers tended to work harder on their career goals and came close to reaching the target for career. The “average” achievers exceeded expectations in both goal categories. Those participants with the most barriers worked hardest on their personal issues and fell below expectations in the career area. While these results are understandable based on the dynamics of the groups, outcomes tend to differ a fair amount from year to year.

ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENT

During 2009, 64 program participants collectively completed 115 semesters of school during the calendar year. Eighteen of these participants completed academic and training programs: nine earned Bachelor's degrees, six earned Associate degrees, and three completed certificate programs. Of the nine who earned Bachelor's degrees, three are working as teachers (two full-time and one part-time), one has a stop gap job as a test scorer while she is searching for a position, one has a job in a non-related field, two are job searching, and two are continuing their educations. Of those who completed Associate degrees, one just earned her nursing license and is job searching, while the other five are continuing toward a Bachelor's degree. Of those who completed certificate programs, one is taking additional training and volunteering in her field while she job searches, another is building work hours in his field, and the third is looking for an externship to gain work experience.

Project Self-Sufficiency also celebrated with three former participants, two who completed Masters Degrees in Social Work and one who finished her Associates degree. Both social work students had completed their Bachelors degrees while enrolled in PS-S and one of these graduates has already secured a position and is earning more than she did at the Bachelor's level.

EXIT REPORT DESCRIPTION

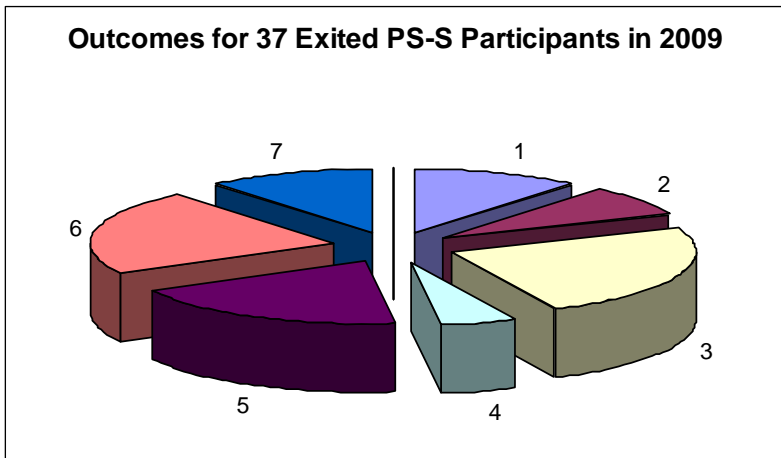
The Exit Report focuses on only those families who left the program during 2009. The report includes participants who were enrolled five months or longer and excludes some participants who did not pass the probationary period and never really engaged in the process.

Some participants stayed in the program until they reached their career goals and had also been employed for a time. In these cases, PS-S is able to include their employment in our program results. Other participants work with PS-S to launch their self-sufficiency plan, accomplish some of their goals, and then decide to finish independently. It can be difficult to track the ultimate level of success in these situations unless former participants share their good news or we can locate them later through surveys.

Most participants leave the program after successfully accomplishing one or more of the following: career planning, personal goals, stabilization of their situation, removal of barriers to self-sufficiency, all or a portion of an academic program, and securing employment. There are a few participants who do not accomplish any of the above goals prior to leaving the program. Participants exit PS-S for a number of reasons including: completion of career goals, marriage, a move out of the area, lack of time or interest to meet with their advisor, the desire to continue independently without enrollment in PS-S, or failure to follow through with the program.

See exit results and graphics on the following page.

EXIT CATEGORIES & DESCRIPTION



Category 1: These are the most successful program graduates. They completed academic programs and secured career-related employment while enrolled in PS-S. One graduate was working 30 hours a week as a Pharmacy Tech when she graduated from PS-S and was supporting three children with this income. She continued to receive a \$363 monthly housing subsidy after leaving Project Self-Sufficiency but was not eligible for any other public assistance because of her level of income. A second

graduate completed medical technician training and was employed in this field. She continues to receive only a housing subsidy. The two others in this category secured positions as teachers in rural communities. One was self-sufficient in her new community with lower housing costs. The other may have been eligible for a small subsidy but was not receiving one. As these graduates advance in their careers they are expected to be fully self-sufficient in a short period of time. **11% (4 participants)**

Category 2: Graduates employed in their career field but not as well positioned as those in the first category. These graduates were working in careers that did not pay as well as those in the category above. One of the three earned a Bachelor's degree that helped her secure a restaurant management position. Another completed cosmetology training and works in a salon. The third is a social worker who is employed and seeking a higher paying position. **8% (3 participants)**

Category 3: These graduates were continuing their education as they left PS-S. They decided to proceed on their own without enrollment in the PS-S program. Six of the ten in this category were working in "stop gap" jobs while completing school and four were not working. **24% (9 participants)**

Category 4: Participants who completed a portion of their education while enrolled in PS-S but were having personal difficulties when they left the program and their future was uncertain. One of them had nearly completed a Bachelor's degree plus internships. She was addressing multiple problems with her children. It is our hope she is able to complete her goals over time. **5% (2 participants)**

Category 5: Program participants who left the program having completed career planning but not advancing beyond that point while active in PS-S. Many of these participants also removed significant barriers to self-sufficiency and worked on personal goals. **19% (7 participants)**

Category 6: Program participants who removed barriers to self-sufficiency while enrolled in the program but did not reach other goals. This includes both practical (6) and mental health barriers (2). **22% (8 participants)**

Category 7: Program participants who left the program without reaching any personal or career goals and who lacked follow through with their PS-S advisor. **11% (4 participants)**

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS SURVEYED IN 2009

The following comments are representative of the personal and career related benefit described by program participants and recent graduates. Some were relatively new to the program while others had been with PS-S for some time. 44 participants completed the survey.

Question: Compared to before your participation in Project Self-Sufficiency, do you feel you are:

- (1) better off now - 37 responded or 84%**
- (2) about the same – 7 responded or 16%**
- (3) worse off now – 0 responded or 0%**

Participant's response when asked to explain the above selection:

- Before entering PS-S I did not know what to do about being self-sufficient and what steps to take. Now I have goals and know exactly what I need to do to provide my family with stability.
- PS-S has given me the confidence to realize and know that I can accomplish anything I set my mind to, especially with school, career goals, and raising my daughters.
- I am excited to go to college and make a better life for my daughter and me. I can't wait to be self-sufficient.
- I have accomplished many things I know I would not have if I was not in PS-S, as many of them I had tried on my own and was not successful.
- I now have more resources than before and I am able to live within my means without having to work 2-3 jobs. I am able to spend time with my children every day now.
- Just started-I'm in my third month. It has helped, but not in long enough to tell change yet.
- I know that I have someone who will listen and help me out if I need something.
- My PS-S advisor has done so much for me. She has helped me to become a stronger person, helped me to problem solve, shown me resources to use when I need, etc.
- I am learning new skills and my advisor has helped with everyday things.
- I do not think I would have been able to accomplish so much (school) without the support and resources from PS-S.
- Now I feel like my life has direction to it. I'm not just living day to day. I have a plan and goals.
- I have been blessed with Lincoln Center tickets, Easter food and baskets, College scholarships, Women Give scholarship while at CSU, computer repair, and awesome advisor/encourager, and car donation (arriving soon), which is huge since the current car's transmission is going out!
- I have graduated, have housing and do not have government aid.
- Now have stability and goals. Support has been wonderful.
- After career search I feel better about the choice of career I have made to go to school for.

- I have completed my undergrad degree in nutrition and am about to start my internship/grad degree to become a registered dietitian.
- I feel that PS-S has made a very positive difference in my life.
- I've just started the program. I have had lots of information, but one of the most important things I will do and have been taking baby steps to getting at is learning what I would like to do as a career.
- Higher self-esteem, more focus on the future
- I have been able to accomplish things I never imagined.
- Still working on career decisions, but feel very motivated and hopeful that things will change for the best. I really enjoy working and talking problems or issues with Beth R.
- This program has helped me to regain control of my life and define my future goals clearly.
- I have been given the opportunity and means of providing a better life for me and my children which would not have been as accessible without PS-S.
- My advisor encourages, tracks and supports me in decisions. I feel like I have something to hold on to when things feel uncertain. Weighing out the pros/cons/choices is very helpful.
- PS-S gave me access to resources that bettered my life. They helped me find scholarships that allowed me to stay in school.
- I was very lost and had a hard time taking responsibility for circumstances and negative things in my life. PS-S helped me take responsibility and charge of my life.
- I feel more confident, but at the same time I feel I have great support if needed.
- More focus, support and I am reaching for goals I set for myself.
- More focused, better health, more confident, grateful for help
- My advisor has helped me to line things up and helped me to look at things in a different light, which has helped me to handle things differently; put them in a better perspective.
- I have not received any help yet.
- I am working in a career I really enjoy. I am making enough money to support my family. I am confident. I have more self-esteem and I am a better person.
- If it wasn't for PS-S I would not be as strong, confident and optimistic as I am now. I am so thankful for the people and help from PS-S.
- Right now I'm just waiting to begin externship to begin my career.
- I have made so many positive transformations since I have joined the program. I feel a lot more independent.