

INTRODUCTION

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

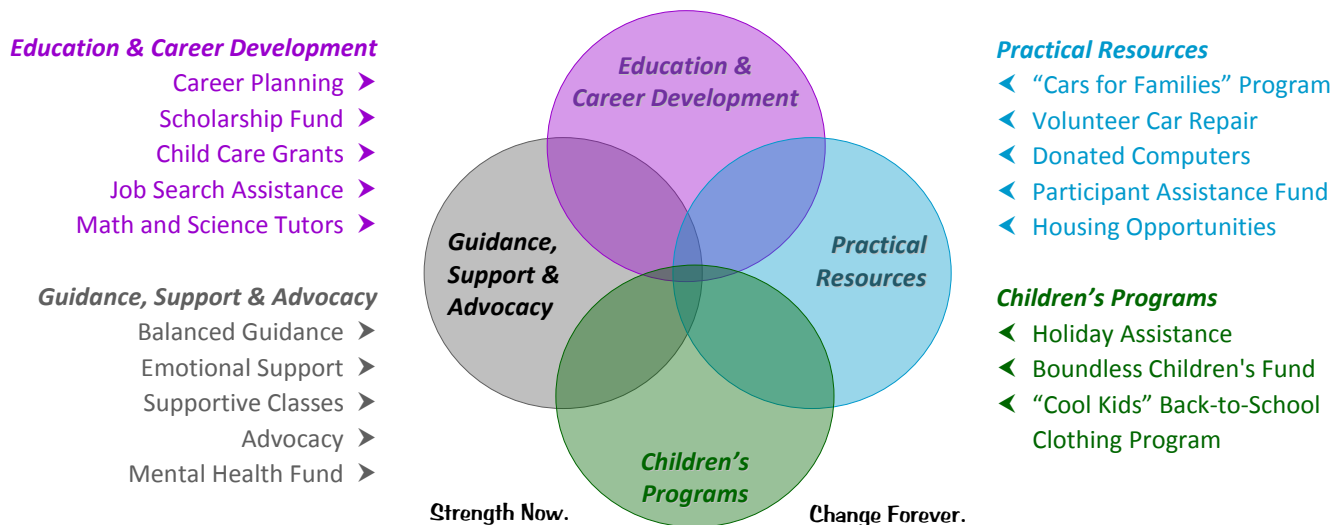
Each parent accepted into the program is assigned an advisor who assists in setting career and personal goals, developing a self-sufficiency action plan, identifying resources, resolving problems, and providing emotional support.

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.”



SERVICES PROVIDED TO PS-S FAMILIES IN 2011

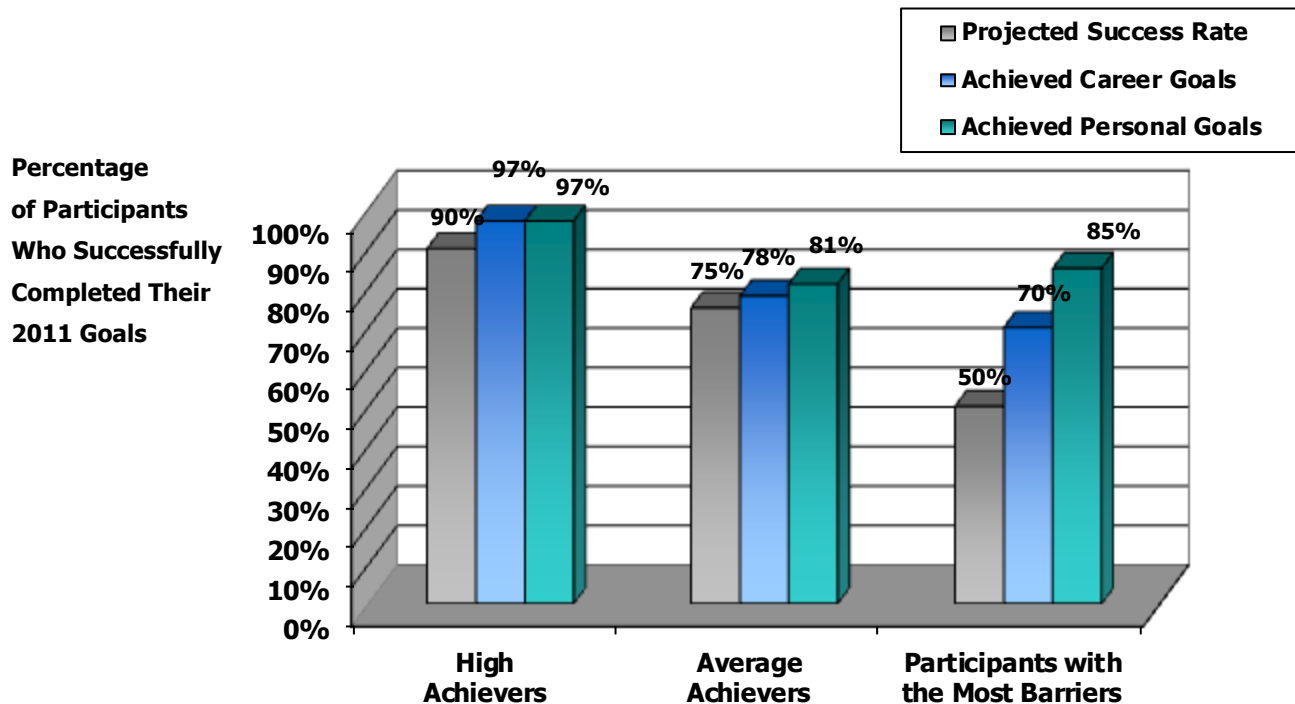
Project Self-Sufficiency provided services to 183 single parent families who were enrolled during all, or a portion of the calendar year. Many participants also received these services in a previous year. Below is a list of services provided:

Assistance in Developing or Updating a Self-Sufficiency Action Plan	170 Parents
Career Planning Guidance	147 Parents
Access to Higher Education and Financial Aid	129 Parents
Counseling and Guidance for Personal and Family Matters	63 Parents
Job Search Assistance	43 Parents
Information and Referral Services	176 Families
Advocacy with Systems	112 Families
Participant Financial Assistance	162 Families
Willow Place and Matuka Court Housing	32 Families
Scholarship Funds from PS-S	72 Parents
Scholarship Funds from PS-S Partners	55 Parents
PS-S Child Care Scholarships	44 Families
Donated Cars for PS-S Families	25 Families
Car Repair Assistance – Volunteer and Commercial	38 Families
Donated Computers or Printers	21 Families
“Cool Kids” Back to School Clothing for Children	150 Children
Holiday Assistance – Under-the-Tree Gift Sponsorship	103 Families with 196 Children
Holiday Party – Gifts and Children’s Activities	85 Families with 162 Children
Boundless Children’s Fund	73 Children
Parenting Class	12 Parents
Self-Esteem Building Classes	9 Parents
Mental Health Fund – evaluation and treatment	16 Parents
Volunteer Tutoring	15 Parents

2011 GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR PS-S PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Project Self-Sufficiency works with participants to set their own Career and Personal Goals. For measurement purposes only, participants are listed as either:

- 1) “High Achievers”
- 2) “Average Achievers” or
- 3) “Participants with the Most Barriers” to Self-Sufficiency



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 142 program participants enrolled in PS-S during 2011 and in the program long enough to set and reach goals. Another 36 participants were not active in the program long enough during 2011 to have worked on setting and reaching goals.

- There were 27 “high achievers” and 26 completed their career goals (97%). 26 of the 27 also completed their personal goals (97%). Only one person did not pass either her career or personal goals and she left the program with severe substance abuse and mental health issues. She would have otherwise been capable of reaching her goals.
- There were 95 “average achievers”. 74 of these 95 participants (78%) reached their career goals and 77 of the 95 (81%) completed their personal goals. 66 of the 95 reached both goals (70%).
- Of the 20 participants who faced the “most barriers” to success, 14 individuals (70%) completed their career goals and 17 participants (85%) completed their personal goals. 12 participants in this group reached both career and personal goals (60%).
- When all 142 participants across all three groups are considered, 114 (81%) reached their career goals for 2011. 120 of 142 (85%) accomplished their personal goals. A total of 104 of all 142 participants (74%) passed both their career and personal goals.

ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENT

Education is a key element as PS-S participants move forward with their career goals. During 2011 participants accomplished the following academic goals:

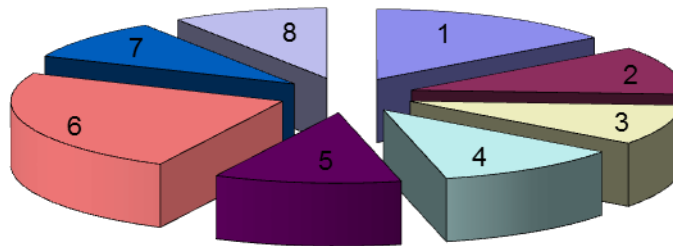
- 107 participants completed 2,108 credit hours for an average of 19.7 credits per person.
- 25 of these participants completed academic and certificate programs:
 - Ten earned Bachelor's degrees.
 - Five earned Associate degrees.
 - Two met requirements to be Registered Nurses.
 - Eight completed certificate programs.
- One earned a GED and is continuing her education.

EXIT REPORT

Each year PS-S completes an Exit Report for all participants leaving the program during that calendar year. All participants enrolled four months or longer are included. Some participants stayed in the program until they reached their career goals and had been employed for a time. 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 either contact PS-S or respond to follow-up surveys.

Prior to leaving the PS-S program, most participants have successfully accomplished one or more of the following: career planning, 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.

Outcomes for 54 Exited PS-S Participants in 2011



Category 1: There are **eight** participants in this category. All were successfully employed in their career and moving toward self-sufficiency. At least two were totally self-sufficient. Others were still eligible for one or more forms of public assistance such as housing subsidies. One graduate earned her Bachelor's with PS-S and then completed her Master's in 2012 after leaving PS-S. She secured a child protection position with the county and is earning a living wage. She exited PS-S in 2011 and was hired in 2012.

Category 2: There are **six** participants who increased their earned income while enrolled in PS-S but did not reach their career goals. Their long term potential to earn a living wage does not appear to be as high as those in category 1.

Category 3: **Five** participants completed either a Bachelor's or Associate's degree while enrolled in PS-S but were not working in their career field at the time of this report. Some were job searching, some working other jobs, and one was completing a Master's degree.

Category 4: **Six** participants were continuing their education as they left PS-S. Most were also employed part or full-time in stop gap employment while attending classes.

Category 5: There are **five** participants who completed some education while enrolled in PS-S but are not currently enrolled in school to the best of our knowledge.

Category 6: **Thirteen** participants completed career planning while in the PS-S program but did not continue beyond that point with us. The planning set the stage for future goal setting and helped participants identify an appropriate career expected to lead to living wages.

Category 7: **Five** participants did not accomplish any of the above but did remove some barriers to self-sufficiency while active in the program. This includes resolving housing, child care, and transportation problems, among others. Most participants in the program remove one or more barriers while enrolled.

Category 8: There are **five** participants who exited in 2011 who did not reach any goals while enrolled in the program. Four of the five were enrolled in the program less than six months and the fifth less than a year.

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS SURVEYED IN 2011

The following comments were provided by PS-S participants, former participants, and recent graduates who were enrolled in the program during 2010 and/or January through May of 2011. The purpose of the survey was to gather information on participant satisfaction, on unmet needs, and on progress made in the program as viewed by the participant. Some were relatively new to the program while others had been with PS-S for some time. A portion of the survey is provided here and a copy of the entire document can be provided upon request.

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

- (1) better off now – 61 responded**
- (2) about the same – 6 responded**
- (3) worse off now – 0 responded**

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

- I am not with my abuser husband and I am making a better way of life by going back to school.
- I have a plan and am making progress towards self-sufficiency! I have hope! And a future! When I started PS-S I had neither.
- The support and understanding I have received from my advisor has been such a positive addition to my life. Just being accepted into the program has given me hope and motivation for a better future for my daughter and me.

- I have support by others which helps me to be accountable for my success.
- Able to return to school and get a better job.
- Being a participant has changed my life.
- I am happy to begin with. I have peace of mind by having stable housing for myself and my children. I have a goal to look forward to.
- I was able to return to school with help paying for childcare.
- Not procrastinating getting things done with advisor's help.
- I have a career plan and steps to accomplish becoming self-sufficient.
- I am about to start my second semester in school and I have steady employment.
- My daughter and I have a home and food to eat, and I am moving toward my career. Before PS-S I didn't have money for groceries and didn't know what I was going to do to provide for her.
- On the path to self-sufficiency.
- Still working full-time. Want to go back to school, just haven't decided for what.
- PS-S was so great for me. They helped me to prioritize and utilize my resources as well.
- I'm in school to accomplish my dream, a positive role model for my girls, be self-sufficient.
- I feel I am more organized and I achieve more because I have support behind me, giving me a nudge when I need it.
- Getting better now, but I was worse off for a while.
- PS-S has helped me reach many of my goals that otherwise would have taken me much longer and a lot more financial debt to accomplish on my own.
- I'm working for a better life for my family.
- Have been able to accomplish school and get the help I need to remain in school.
- I received great help from my advisor that helped my job search skills. I also received a car from the car donation program that I'm still driving today.
- Wonderful organization. Has guided me in the correct direction to better my life for me and my children. Don't know where I would be if Project Self-Sufficiency wasn't currently in my life.
- Have a car, going to school.
- I know there is help out there and people really care.
- I feel confident in moving forward. I'm not so stressed or overwhelmed. PS-S help me take the big things, like finances, resumes, applications, scholarships and show me how to work them for the best outcomes.
- My advisor is wonderful. I feel like she really cares about me and is like a life coach.
- It's good to know I have support if I need it.
- I have received guidance, found therapy and have been able to work through a pretty severe depression thanks to PS-S.
- I had no idea how to get into college and especially didn't know what I was good at or wanted to become. I got into school and know exactly what I'd like to do in the criminal justice field.
- PS-S helped me to finish my BSN through support, good decision-making and finding a scholarship for childcare assistance.
- I have the support and information I needed to go back to school. We have a car that my children all fit in. The emotional support is immeasurable, and all of the other not so little things make all the difference in the world. All of our lives are greatly improved in so many ways!
- I didn't get to finish my schooling. I have a special needs daughter and she's had so many Dr. appointments and surgeries that I couldn't take care of her, go to school and work.

- Can't explain how much PS-S has helped me to learn how to help myself. I value my opportunity to be a PS-S participant.
- I feel that the program and my advisor help me to try to get my life together and on track to be a better parent and person.
- Before entering PS-S I had no dreams or the motivation to do what I really wanted. I always supported myself and had a job and home. But when I split up with my ex I had nothing, and I couldn't provide for myself.
- This is the first time ever that I have has a place on my own with my little girl. I am so very grateful for all that is transpiring and how my life is just beginning to open up for the better.
- I am a lot better off now and have accomplished a lot and will continue to accomplish more.
- I completed a bachelor degree in social work at CSU. My donated care is still running well and meeting our transportation needs. We ride our bikes to conserve gas. My computer runs well and the memory capacity is greater so I can use the computer to download compatible files for newer versions.
- Better that I have accomplished more education. Unfortunately, still striving for self-sufficiency.
- I receive emotional support by working closely with my advisor (Michele) to ensure the best actions for my life goals, and financial burdens are lifted with the various funds I am able to utilize. Through PS-S I've been able to gain more confidence in all aspects of life and feel more productive, which in turn enables me to be more productive.
- The support and resources are amazing! I feel like I have help and options that I didn't have before.
- Without PS-S I would not be surviving. I don't even want to think about where I would be without their help.
- Your help keeps me on track in school and won't let me give up when it gets too hard. You gave me an apartment with lower rent and helped me out with childcare. Most of all you gave me someone to really talk to.
- Just having and knowing the support is there helps tremendously.
- Childcare assistance has changed my educational experience for the better significantly. Career exploration and support from my advisor (Beth R.) have also been beneficial.
- I have established a well laid out plan for my career and mentally/emotionally feel better.
- Today I am in school, on my way to becoming a nurse with a definite goal for my future.
- I am way better off! Working with Maggie will forever stand out to be one of the high points of my whole life!!
- I gained my GED and am enrolled at FRCC working toward my BA to become self-sufficient.
- The path toward my goals is becoming increasingly focused.
- I just started the program and haven't had enough services to see a change.
- I have a car, computer, goals, in school, have financial support, etc.
- PS-S enabled me to succeed in my education and career goals, increase my self-esteem, and gave me emotional support that many single parents need.
- Completed ADN program, working on BSN.
- Without PS-S I wouldn't be anywhere!
- PS-S helped me so much and I do not know where I would be without PS-S.
- I like knowing I have someone to support me and encourage me. Accountability helps with progress.
- In working with PS-S, I believe I have a greater opportunity and understanding to achieve a better lifestyle for me and my children and provide much more support and encouragement to those I do and will influence around me.