

How the Self-Sufficiency Standard Has Been Used

The Self-Sufficiency Standard is currently being used to better understand issues of income adequacy, to analyze policy, and to help individuals striving for self-sufficiency. Community organizations, academic researchers, policy institutes, legal advocates, training providers, community action agencies, and state and local officials, among others, are using the Standard.

POLICY ADVOCACY

New Jersey used the Standard to successfully lobby the state legislature to increase the minimum wage from \$5.15/hour to \$7.15/hour.

The Self-Sufficiency Standard was an integral tool to increase Maryland's EITC by an additional \$40 million for the state's low-income families.

Alabama Arise led a coalition that successfully advocated for more progressive taxes, increasing the income level at which families begin paying taxes.

Pennsylvania used the Standard as an analysis of the impact of proposed increased child care co-payments on low-income working parents. This analysis was instrumental in preventing the proposed increase.

When the Oklahoma Department of Human Services proposed large increases in the child care co-payments, the Oklahoma Community Action Project of Tulsa County (CAP) incorporated analysis based on the Standard in the report "Increased Child Care Co-Payments Threaten Access to Care for Low Income Families," resulting in rescinding of the proposed increases.

BENCHMARK FOR EVALUATION

Sonoma County, California adopted the Standard as its formal measure of self-sufficiency and benchmark for measuring success in welfare to work programs.

Under its Workforce Investment Act, the Chicago Workforce Investment Board adopted the Self-Sufficiency Standard as its self-sufficiency benchmark.

Counselors at the San Francisco Labor Council calculate vocational ESL students' self-sufficiency level at the beginning and end of the program to gauge the effectiveness of the courses and program.

COUNSELING TOOL

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County has implemented a curriculum to train caseworkers in the workforce system to conduct financial planning, career counseling, and goal-setting in a self-sufficiency context with their clients.

Counseling tools developed by PathWays PA, a community-based organization in Pennsylvania, are used by the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board to enhance individuals' paths to self-sufficiency by helping people access tax credits and other transitional work supports.

Several states have developed online Self-Sufficiency Calculators, counseling tools that empower clients to evaluate strategies to reach self-sufficient wages.

LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGNS

Many employers have used the Standard to set living wage policies, including Pennsylvania CAP agencies and the California Child Care Workforce.

The Standard has been used in California, Illinois, New York, New Jersey, Hawaii, Nebraska, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington State to advocate for higher wages through Living Wage ordinances and in negotiating labor union agreements.

JOB TRAINING

In Washington, D.C., the Standard is now being used as the definition of economic self-sufficiency used to meet the federal requirement to identify a wage level that determines eligibility for receiving intensive services.

The Colorado Center on Law and Policy successfully lobbied the Eastern Region Workforce Board in Fort Morgan, Colorado to officially adopt the Self-Sufficiency Standard to determine eligibility for intensive training services.

The Missouri Women's Council of the Department of Economic Development used the Standard in the development and promotion of a career program for low-income women that encourages non-traditional career options that pay self-sufficiency wages.

For more information about the Self-Sufficiency Standard please visit www.selfsufficiencystandard.org or contact Dr. Diana Pearce at pearce@u.washington.edu or (206) 616-2850. Information on national policy initiatives can be obtained by contacting the Wider Opportunities for Women Family Economic Self-Sufficiency (FESS) project at (202) 464-1596 or www.wowonline.org/ourprograms/fess.