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PPL Resident Services Assessment

Prepared in partnership with
Project for Pride in Living

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PPL Resident Services Assessment Self Sufficiency Program

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**PPL Resident Services Assessment
Self Sufficiency Program**
Libby Caulum, CURA Research Assistant
August 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This community based research project was intended to serve as a prototype providing questions and methodology for future research at the other Project for Pride in Living (PPL) Self Sufficiency Program (SSP) service sites. The project's goal was to expand the impact within family stability by creating and implementing comprehensive assessment of the current service model. The findings were to inform PPL staff of what changes might be made and what aspects of SSP are working well for residents.

The data was collected through a series of focus groups, individual interviews and surveys given to the residents of three geographically different PPL services sites.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The survey, focus groups and interviews showed a mostly positive perception of what SSP offers to residents. The most significant findings from each of the assessment methods are shown below.

Survey

- 56% report having a computer in their home.
- 44% report having **no** Internet in their home.
- The majority of respondents find the PPL Resident Newsletter somewhat to very helpful.
- 28% of respondents stated that they do not know what SSP offers.
- 57% of respondents heard about SSP services through staff or the newsletter.
- The top three services respondents would like to participate in are:
 - PPL Community Events
 - Resume and Job Search Help
 - Computer Skills Education
- The top three barriers keeping respondents from making progress on their goals are:
 - Lack of Money
 - Unreliable and unaffordable transportation

- Language skills

Focus Groups

- There confusion about what SSP is and what it offers.
- Residents would like more financial help.
- Transportation is a barrier for participation.
- The newsletter is helpful, but many residents do not read it.
- Residents would like to see more PPL Community Events
- Scheduling is a barrier for participation.
- Residents want Property Management staff to better hear their concerns.
- Residents would like more math and science in the Youth Programs.
- Residents regard SSP staff very highly.

Interviews

- Residents regard SSP staff very highly.
- Residents would like more community events.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- PPL should implement resident volunteer programs to meet needs in youth programming and outreach to new residents.
- SSP staff should use consistent language to describe SSP programs and continually remind residents that the services they provide are part of SSP.
- Offer alternative times for SSP events and services, including evenings and weekends, to see if attendance increases.
- There should be further examination of the usefulness of the newsletter, or ways to incentivize residents to read it.
- Property management staff should hold more meetings where residents can express their concerns about their buildings and their safety.
- There should be more focus on math and science in youth programming.
- There should be more teen-focused youth programming.
- Further research should be conducted on if/how men use SSP and how to increase their participation.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

This community based research project was intended to serve as a prototype providing questions and methodology for future research at the other Project for Pride in Living Self Sufficiency Program service sites. The project's goal was to expand the impact within family stability by creating and implementing comprehensive assessment of the current service model. The findings were to

inform PPL staff of what changes might be made and what aspects of SSP are working.

METHODOLOGY

To collect a rich set of data regarding how residents perceive and use SSP, I decided upon a mixed methods design. The design was constructed in consultation with Amanda Herbst, SSP Program Manager at PPL, and based off of previous research I have done under the academic supervision of Professor Dara Cohen at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

The survey, focus group questions and interview questions were created in consultation with SSP staff. Staff gave suggestions for the design in order to assure that the research met the needs of the organization.

The design included a survey, sent to 300 PPL residents, five focus groups in three different geographic PPL sites, and two individual interviews with PPL residents. Due to time constraints, the interviews were meant to be a test of the interview guide, more than a source of comprehensive research data.

Due to the short-term timeline we had for this project, we decided to look at only three of PPL's geographic sites: St. Paul (apartment buildings and townhomes located on and near Selby Avenue), New Hope (townhomes and apartment buildings, and South Minneapolis (scattered sites).

The surveys were sent only to residents of these sites and we only looked to those sites as settings for our focus groups. One of the individual interviews I conducted was from a South Minneapolis site, while the other one was with a resident of a St. Louis Park PPL site.

Because these sites are only a small portion of the number of PPL locations, this research was intended to not only be a source of good data, but to be a test for future research at PPL's other sites.

The surveys were mailed to residents of the three sites. Each survey included a pre-stamped envelope addressed to PPL to encourage residents to return the surveys. If the residents wanted to be included in a drawing for a \$25.00 gift card to Target, they were asked to include their name and contact information. This was optional for the residents and only intended to be an incentive for returning the surveys. Only those residents who returned completed surveys with their contact information were included in the drawing. (*See Appendix A for a copy of the survey.*)

Two focus groups were conducted for residents of South Minneapolis, one of which included only those residents who needed Somali translation and one that included only residents who needed no translation. Bi-lingual PPL staff members provided the transportation services for the Somali group. Participants in the focus groups

were given a \$20.00 gift card to Target for their time—only those who stayed until the end of the focus groups received the gift card.

As in South Minneapolis, two focus groups were conducted in New Hope, one with Somali translation, one without. One focus group was conducted in St. Paul. This focus group required no translation. SSP staff recruited participants for each of the focus groups through phone calls and door knocking. *(See Appendix B for a copy of the focus group guide and questions.)*

The two individual interviews were conducted primarily to test the questions in order for staff to use the tool for future assessments and research of SSP services. Participants of the interviews were given a \$20.00 gift card to Target for their time. *(See Appendix C for a copy of the individual interview questions.)*

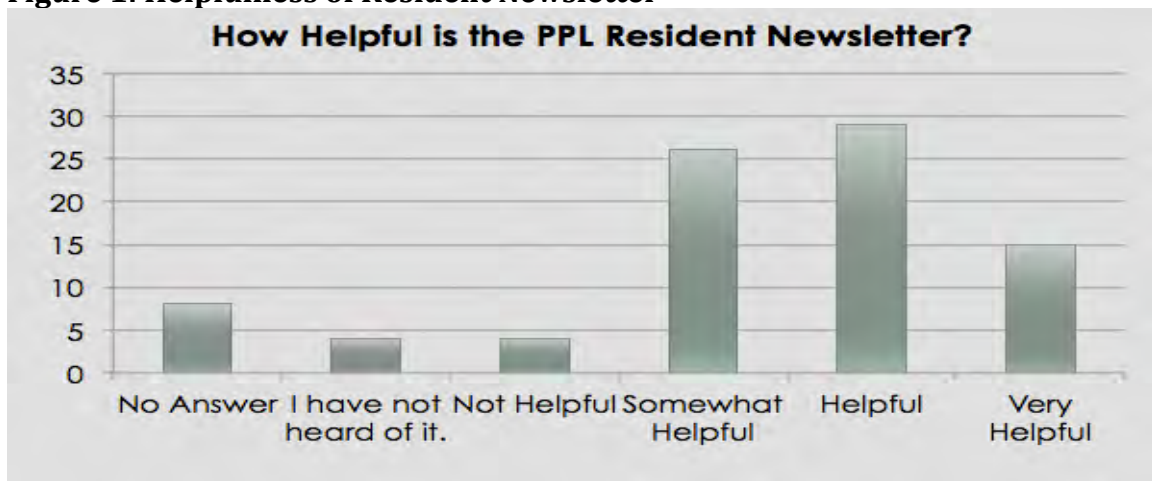
FINDINGS

Survey

The surveys were mailed to residents of the three sites. Each survey included a pre-stamped envelope addressed to PPL to encourage residents to return the surveys. If the residents wanted to be included in a drawing for a \$25.00 gift card to Target, they were asked to include their name and contact information. This was optional for the residents and only intended to be an incentive for returning the surveys. Only those residents who returned completed surveys with their contact information were included in the drawing.

300 surveys were mailed to the residents in the three portfolios. 86 surveys were returned, yielding a return rate of 29%. *(See Appendix D for the demographic results of the survey.)*

Figure 1: Helpfulness of Resident Newsletter



As shown in Figure 1, most respondents stated that the newsletter was at least “somewhat helpful”. However, questions later on in the survey make this response

questionable. When asked “If you don’t participate in SSP, why?” twenty-four of the respondents stated that they did not know what SSP offered. It is possible that the discrepancy in these answers reflects a problem with the term “SSP” (a term many residents seemed not to understand) or, the newsletter is in fact not as helpful as this question would suggest.

However, when asked how they heard about SSP, the most popular answer was that they had heard from the newsletter. The second most popular was that they had heard from SSP staff, followed by those who said that they had never heard of SSP at all.

Figure 2: How did Residents hear about SSP?



When respondents were asked why they do not participate in SSP, the most popular answer was that they did not know what SSP offers. Again, this calls into question the effectiveness of the newsletter in disseminating information about SSP services, but it could also be a reflection of the disconnect between the term “SSP” and what residents know of as PPL’s on-site services.

Figure 3: Participation

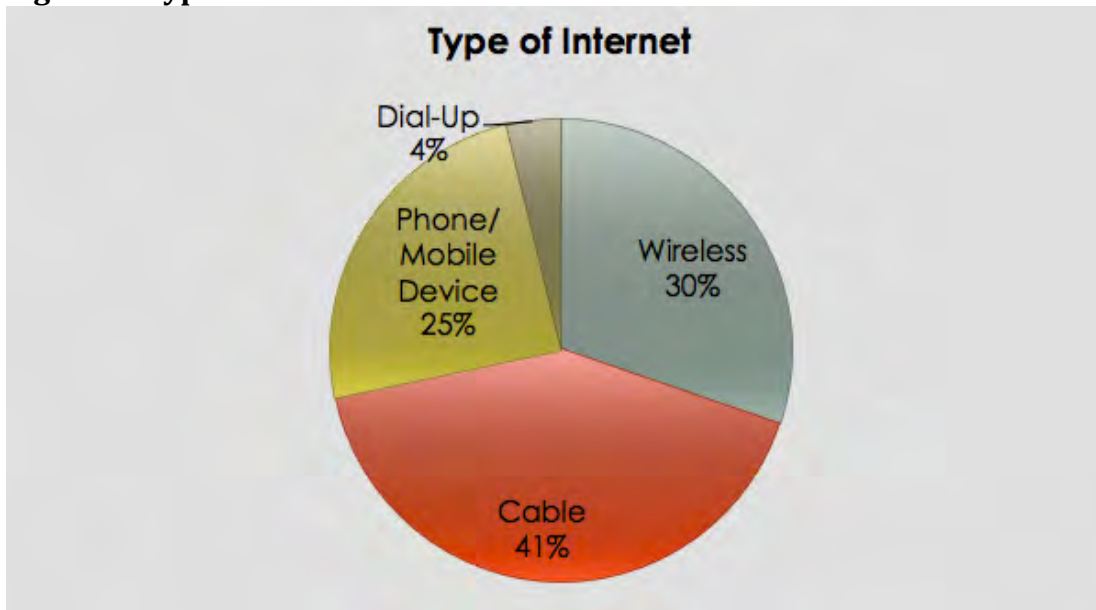


The survey also asked how many people have computers in their home.

- 56% of respondents reported that there is a computer in their home.
- 44% reported having **NO** Internet in their home.

Figure 4, below, shows the breakdown of the type of Internet people reported having.

Figure 4: Type of Internet in Resident Homes



It should be noted that some respondents said that they did not have Internet in their home, but marked “Cable” for the question that asked, “If you have Internet in your home, what type is it?” This could be a reflection of a question that was not fully understood by all respondents.

The surveys were also used to find out what services residents would like to participate in and what barriers are keeping residents from meeting their personal and professional goals.

What Services would you like to participate in?

- PPL community events: 40%
 - 35% of town home residents
 - 41% of those in sites with community rooms
- Resume and job search help: 31%
- Computer skills education: 30%
- Connecting to basic needs: 26%
- Educational support (GED/ESL): 20%
- Not interested in participating: 14%

What things are keeping you from making progress on your goals?

- Lack of money: 31%
- Transportation (unreliable, unaffordable): 29%

- Language skills: 23%
- Lack of education: 22%
- Lack of job/work experience: 15%
- Nothing. I am making progress on my goals: 21%

(For full results of services and barriers, see Appendix D.)

Finally, the survey was used to gain an idea of how SSP has made a difference in the lives of participants. To get at that information we questioned residents on their crisis management skills since working with SSP.

Do you feel better able to manage a problem or a crisis in your life since working with SSP staff?

- Yes: 26%
- No: 14%
- I don't work with SSP staff: 51%
- No answer: 8%

Of the 34 respondents who said that they work with SSP, 65% said they are better able to manage problems and crisis after working with SSP staff.

Focus Groups

The focus groups had three purposes:

- To enhance survey data about resident perceptions of SSP
- To connect with people who use SSP
- To cross-check the survey data

Between the five focus groups, there were thirty-three participants.

1. South Minneapolis (with translation): 9 participants
2. St. Paul: 10 participants
3. New Hope (with translation): 4 participants
4. South Minneapolis (no translation): 5 participants
5. New Hope (no translation): 5 participants

Only two focus group participants were men.

Several themes became apparent through each the focus groups. The following describes, primarily through resident quotes, the themes that were heard most often in the focus groups. The data collected from the focus groups largely reinforced the data learned from the surveys and helped to better explain some of the survey data.

Themes

1. There confusion about what SSP is and what it offers.

- In each of the focus groups, when asked if they participate in SSP, many residents answered, no. However, when asked about specific programs that SSP offers, those same residents said that they had participated.
 - The disconnect between what SSP is and what it offers seems to be a “branding” or marketing issue.
2. Residents would like more financial help.
 - In each focus group, residents mentioned that help finding resources to pay rent, utilities, and transportation costs would be helpful to them.
 - There was an understanding between the residents that funding resources were scarce, given the current economic conditions, but they agreed that PPL should still try to find more ways to provide financial assistance to them.
 - “[Staff member] told me that there just isn’t a lot of money to out there. But that’s what we need.” – New Hope Resident
 3. Transportation is a barrier for participation.
 - “I’m just saying that the things over there are just too far to go to. I don’t have no car.” –New Hope Resident
 - “If you want go to the Learning Center, you have to take bus all the way downtown. Then you got to transfer. I don’t have no hour to spend doing that. It’s just too far. And the bus is expensive.” – St. Paul Resident
 4. The newsletter is helpful, but many residents do not read it.
 - “That newsletter is good, but I get it in the mail and I just set it aside. I don’t have time to read it.” – South Minneapolis Resident
 - “It gets lost up in my mail. When I do read it, yeah, it helps me know what’s happening.” – New Hope Resident
 - “It has a lot of stuff in it. I like that. I use the calendar mostly.” – South Minneapolis Resident
 5. Residents would like to see more PPL Community Events
 - “I want them to keep trying to do things. Even silly things like Bingo. Game like that are fun to go to, but I don’t even like Bingo.” – South Minneapolis Resident
 - “I liked them picnics we had a while back. That was nice. I got to meet some neighbors I didn’t know before that.” – St. Paul Resident
 - “Family Literacy is a good one. I like that we can bring the kids and we all have things to do.” – New Hope Resident
 6. Scheduling is a barrier for participation.
 - “I work until 5:00. All these programs are always at 4:00 or something. I can’t get home in time. And I need to make dinner for my kids, too.” – St. Paul Resident
 - “I can’t go to things in the day. I work. I won’t be going as long as I’m working.” – South Minneapolis Resident
 7. Residents want Property Management staff to better hear their concerns.
 - In every focus group, residents asked if they could express their concerns about building management and the quality of their homes.

8. Residents have positive views about the Youth Programs but would like more math and science included. The desire for more teen-focused programming was also expressed.
 - “Those kids love it when they see that PPL van!” – St. Paul Resident
 - “I took my boy out of the afterschool program because he was only having fun. He wasn’t learning his science.” – New Hope Resident
 - “I want them to have more math and science. That’s what we need in this country. Our kids need to know math and science.” – South Minneapolis Resident
 - “My sons need something to do after school. I work, so I can’t be there. I would like some activities for him to do after school. I can’t afford to pay a tutor to come. I wish PPL would provide that for him.” – South Minneapolis Resident
9. Residents regard SSP staff very highly.
 - “I always feel like they have my back!” – St. Paul Resident
 - “I feel more alert. I pay more attention because [staff member] is always there, telling me about what programs he’s got. He’ll even text me! That’s good.” – St. Paul Resident
 - “The staff has provided an example for me and has been a source of encouragement to stay active and involved in my community, in my building, and in the city.” – South Minneapolis Resident
 - “[Staff member] is like a guide or something. She helps me figure it out. She motivates me to do things.” – South Minneapolis Resident
 - “It’s good that [staff member] comes to tell us about what’s happening in the building. He’s good at making me know I am welcome to come.” – New Hope Resident

Individual Interviews

The individual interviews conducted were meant mostly to be a test-run for the questions. The results they yielded were largely the same as those from the focus groups. The interviewees were both women who had long-term, positive relationships with SSP staff.

After the interviews were completed it was determined that the questions are ready for further use by SSP staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. Continue assessment at other PPL sites.
 - a. Because this study was intended to serve as a sampling and a prototype for future assessments, the data is limited.
2. Target men for future focus groups, interviews and surveys.

- a. Because men were largely absent from this study, I was unable to collect data on what services they want from SSP or what barriers prevent them from participating.
3. Use staff or volunteers to conduct surveys.
 - a. Because of literacy issues, a more effective way to gather data would be through face-to-face interviews.
 - b. Ideally, staff or volunteers who are fluent in multiple languages would be engaged to conduct this research.
4. When conducting focus groups with residents who are in need of translation, staff that speaks that language should fully conduct the session.
 - a. Bi-lingual staff should be trained to conduct focus groups and to write the translated reports for the assessments.
 - b. Engaging bi-lingual staff in this process would help ensure that the residents are fully understood.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Scheduling Focus Groups.

It was difficult to find times that worked for residents. Many residents work, or have other obligations during the day or early afternoon. This issue was compounded because Ramadan fell during the project's timeline. Many residents are practicing Muslims and were fasting and then preparing for breaking the fast during much of July and August. Because of Ramadan obligations and a staff member's brief illness, we rescheduled one of the New Hope focus groups three times.

Translation

The focus groups that required translation were difficult for all involved. As the moderator, it was difficult to follow the conversation and I could tell that I was missing a lot of information because the translator was unable to translate every thing that was said during the sessions. It was an overwhelming experience for the translator, as well, because there were up to nine people in the group who were all trying to express their opinions, often all at once.

Literacy

There is a portion of residents who, due to lack of education or English fluency issues, were unable to read the survey at the level needed to complete it. I tried to write the survey with this issue in mind, but it was beyond my ability to create it for people with little or no English literacy. To correct for this problem, I recommend that staff conduct the surveys face-to-face to account for the literacy issues during future use of this survey.

Participation Bias

Because SSP staff recruited the majority (if not all) of the focus group participants, it is probable that those who came to the sessions had strong relationships with staff. This may have resulted in more positive feedback than if we had been able to recruit residents who did not have such positive relationships with staff.

Men were largely absent from this research. This did not surprise PPL staff members, as few men participate in the SSP services offered. However, I think the results of the survey and the focus groups would have been different if men had been involved in the process.

The literacy level of some residents mostly likely prevented them from filling out the survey. Those residents who could not read the survey may have had different concerns than those who were able to do so.

Knowledge of PPL

My knowledge of PPL programs and the historical context of some issues were limited. While I included staff in the process of creating the questions for the surveys, focus groups and interviews, I was unable to get a complete grasp on all of the issues that were relevant to residents. This limited my ability to ask good follow-up questions in the focus group sessions that may have led to better information.

BEST PRACTICES OF THE STUDY

Mixed Methods Approach

The data of the survey was bolstered by the information gathered from the focus groups. The focus groups allowed for me to better understand why people answered how they did on the surveys.

Input from Staff

Input from the staff during the design of this research was essential. The staff was able to give feedback about the type of questions, how they were asked, and what they were aiming to discover which led to a final product that was useful to staff to understand the perspectives of their residents. Without their input, the study would likely not have produced relevant information.

Flexibility in Focus Groups

Being flexible with the order of the questions, as well as taking queues from the participants on what they wanted to talk about and what they thought was important led to more comprehensive data and a better understanding of the issues residents face.

APPENDIX A: Survey

Resident Survey - Self-Sufficiency Program (SSP)

We are interested in learning from you! Please help us improve the Self-Sufficiency Program (on-site services) at PPL communities.

Your answers and/or your agreement to do this survey will not affect your relationship with Self-Sufficiency Program (SSP) staff or the services they provide. Please be honest. This information will help us improve our services.

Returning this survey with your name and phone number OR address will enter you in a drawing for a \$25 Target gift card. PLEASE FILL OUT ONLY ONE SURVEY PER HOUSEHOLD.

Name (Optional): _____ Phone (Optional): _____

Address (Optional): _____

1. Male Female

2. Age: _____

3. Race:

African American/Black

African–Country of Birth: _____

Asian/SE Asian/Pacific Islander

American Indian/Native American

Caucasian/White

Chicano/Latino

Multi Racial

Other

4. Check the box next to your highest level of education:

Less than High School

High School/GED

Some College

2-year College Degree (Associate's Degree)

4-year College Degree (BA/BS)

Master's or Professional Degree or higher

5. Do you currently have income?

Yes- Employed

Yes – Benefits (Social Security, Disability, etc.)

No

6. Is your employment (or income from benefits) stable?

Yes

No

7. Do you feel your income is high enough to meet all of your family's needs?

Yes

No

8. How many people live in your household? _____

9. How long have you been in PPL Housing?

Less than 1 year

1 year

2 years

3 years

4 years

5 - 9 years

10 or more years

10. Do you have a computer in your home?

Yes

No

11. Do you have Internet access in your home?

Yes

No

12. If you have Internet in your home, what type is it?

- Wireless Phone/Mobile Device (Data Plan)
 Cable Dial-Up Other: _____

13. How helpful is the monthly PPL Resident Newsletter?

- Never heard of it. Not Helpful Somewhat Helpful Helpful Very Helpful

14. How did you hear about the Self-Sufficiency Program? (Check all that apply.)

- I have not heard of it.
 PPL Resident Newsletter
 SSP Staff
 Property Management Staff
 PPL sponsored community events
 Neighbors
 Other: _____

15. What services would you like to participate in? (Check all that apply.)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PPL community events | <input type="checkbox"/> Resume and job search help |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parenting education | <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding school systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition coaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College enrollment | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational support (GED/ESL) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connecting to medical services | <input type="checkbox"/> Support around staying sober |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health support | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal services/Immigration services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help finding childcare | <input type="checkbox"/> Accessing benefits from the county |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connecting to basic need items | <input type="checkbox"/> Not interested in participating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

16. Do you feel better able to manage a problem or crisis in your life since working with SSP staff?

- Yes No I don't work with SSP staff.

17. What things are keeping you from making progress on your goals?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No time. | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of reliable, affordable childcare |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation-reliable/affordable | <input type="checkbox"/> Language skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of education | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of money |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical health | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal skills (communication, relationship problems) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of job/work experience | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of positive social support (friends, family, others) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical health problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing is unstable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of safe living environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental-health issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence | <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal background (felony or misdemeanor) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemical dependency | <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing. I am making progress on my goals. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

18. If you don't participate in the Self-Sufficiency Program, why?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't think it would be useful. | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm accessing services at other organizations/agencies. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am too busy. | <input type="checkbox"/> My schedule conflicts with SSP programs. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know what SSP offers. | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't need any assistance from SSP. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I DO participate in SSP. | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

APPENDIX B: Focus Group Guide and Questions

STAFF INTRODUCTION: PPL staff explains the purpose of the focus group, confidentiality, etc.

INTRODUCTION:

Hello everyone. My name is Libby and I'm working for PPL in the capacity as a researcher. This is _____. S/he will be translating for us. If I'm going to fast at any time, please let me know and we'll slow down.

I'm here today to learn about how you use the on-site services or Self-Sufficiency Program that PPL offers. I'm going to first explain to you a little bit about what we're doing today before we get started.

We are going to discuss the Self Sufficiency Program that you've participated in. Each of you has been involved in these services to some extent. Please be honest about your experiences. What we talk about is confidential. I'm not going to share your names or any specific identifying information in my report. What you say will have no impact on your relationship with PPL. We want you to feel safe sharing this information. However, I will be recording the conversation so that I can make sure that I can represent what you say accurately when I write my reports. No one but me will hear the recording. I will erase the recording after I write my report.

What you're sharing with me today is really valuable for PPL and SSP staff. I'm going to write up a report about the suggestions and thoughts you and other residents of PPL housing have shared with me. This report will go to the people who make decisions about programming at PPL, so in a way, you're getting a chance to let the higher-ups hear what you really think about the services they offer. If you are interested in getting a copy of my report when I am finished, please contact SSP staff. They will be able to share the results with you.

I'd like to lay down some ground rules so that we can make sure the conversation goes smoothly.

GROUND RULES:

1. It is fine to leave to use the restroom.
2. Please do not interrupt.
3. What happens in this Group, stays in this Group.
4. Respect the opinions of others. We value everyone's opinion.
5. I will hand out your gift card at the end of the discussion. You need to stay the whole time to get the gift card.
6. I, as the moderator, will need to direct the conversation and occasionally interrupt. I apologize in advance for that.
7. Anything else you all would like to add?

All right! Let's get started.

SURVEY:

I'd like everyone to fill out the survey you have in front of you. Please let me know if you have any questions. You will get one of these in the mail soon, but you won't need to fill that one out. We only want one per household.

ICE BREAKER – What's your first name? How long have you lived in PPL housing?

QUESTIONS

1. How have you worked with SSP staff on-site?
 - a. Community room events? One on one meetings with staff? Family literacy?
 - b. What did you get out of it?
 - c. What was particularly helpful?
 - d. What was particularly frustrating?
2. Why did you get involved with SSP services?
 - a. Was there a point where you started coming more or less often to work with your SSP staff?
 - b. What made you comfortable working with the staff?
 - c. Has the economy had any effect on your interactions with SSP?
3. When do you seek out staff and programming through SSP?
 - a. Do you seek them out when you have an immediate problem or a crisis?
 - b. Do you think to seek them out when you want to work on long-term goals?
4. When PPL can't meet your needs, they often try to refer residents to other agencies to give you the help you need. Have you had any experience with this? (Food shelf, education services, county services.)
 - a. Tell me about a time when SSP staff referred you to an outside organization to get help on a particular need.
 - b. Did you follow up with that organization?
 - c. What would have gotten you to follow up with that organization?
5. What would get you more involved in the community events SSP staff offers?
 - a. Why do you think your neighbors don't you get more involved?
 - b. What gets in the way? (Barriers from survey)
6. Do you feel like you are in a partnership with staff when you are figuring out an issue in your life?
 - a. Do you work on it together?
 - b. Are staff members always giving you advice on how to move forward?
7. Is your life any different as a result of having participated in these services?

- a. How so?
 - b. Is your family life different? Work life?
 - c. Do you feel more confident since participating in these programs?
 - d. Has your view of yourself changed since participating in SSP services?
8. If you had a chance to give advice to the staff of SSP, what advice would you give them?
- a. What is something you wish SSP could offer you?
 - b. What should staff keep doing? What are they doing right?
9. Is there anything else you'd like me to know?

Thank you all, again, for participating! We really appreciate the time you've taken today to help improve what PPL has to offer you.

APPENDIX C: Individual Interview Questions

Hi. My name is Libby and I'm working for PPL in the capacity as a researcher.

I'm here today to learn about how you use the on-site services or Self Sufficiency Program that PPL offers.

We are going to discuss the Self-Sufficiency Program that you've participated in. Please be honest about your experiences. What we talk about is confidential. I'm not going to share your name or any specific identifying information in my report. What you say will have no impact on your relationship with PPL. I want you to feel safe sharing this information. However, I will be recording the conversation so that I can make sure that I can represent what you say accurately when I write my reports. No one but me will hear the recording and I will erase the recording after I've written my report.

What you're sharing with me today is really valuable for PPL and SSP staff. I'm going to write up the suggestions and thoughts you and other residents of PPL housing have shared with me. This report will go to the people who make decisions about programming at PPL, so in a way, you're getting a chance to let the higher-ups hear what you really think about the services they offer. If you are interested in getting a copy of my report when I am finished, please contact SSP staff. They will be able to share the results with you.

1. How long have you lived in PPL Housing?
2. How have you worked with SSP staff on-site?
 - a. Community room events? One on one meetings with staff? Family literacy?

- b. What did you get out of it?
 - c. What was particularly helpful?
 - d. What was particularly frustrating?
3. Why did you get involved with SSP services?
 - a. Was there a point where you started coming more or less often to work with your SSP staff?
 - b. What made you comfortable working with the staff?
 - c. Has the economy had any effect on your interactions with SSP?
 4. When do you seek out staff and programming through SSP?
 - a. Do you seek them out when you have an immediate problem or a crisis?
 - b. Do you think to seek them out when you want to work on long-term goals?
 5. When PPL can't meet your needs, they often try to refer residents to other agencies to give you the help you need. Have you had any experience with this? (Food shelf, education services, county services.)
 - a. Tell me about a time when SSP staff referred you to an outside organization to get help on a particular need.
 - b. Did you follow up with that organization?
 - c. What would have gotten you to follow up with that organization?
 6. What would get you more involved in the community events SSP staff offers?
 - a. Why do you think your neighbors don't you get more involved?
 - b. What gets in the way? (Barriers from survey)
 - c. What approaches do you find most effective in learning about SSP? Newsletter? Door knocking with staff? Etc.?
 - d. How would you prefer to be approached by SSP staff? What is the most respectful way for you?
 7. Do you feel like you are in a partnership with staff when you are figuring out an issue in your life?
 - a. Do you work on it together?
 - b. Are staff members always giving you advice on how to move forward?
 8. Is your life any different as a result of having participated in these services?
 - a. How so?
 - b. Is your family life different? Work life?
 - c. Do you feel more confident since participating in these programs?
 - d. Has your view of yourself changed since participating in SSP services?
 9. If you had a chance to give advice to the staff of SSP, what advice would you give them?
 - a. What is something you wish SSP could offer you?
 - b. What should staff keep doing? What are they doing right?
 10. Is there anything else you'd like me to know?

APPENDIX D: Survey Results

Return Rate:

- 300 surveys distributed
- 86 surveys returned
- 28.7% return rate

Demographics:

- Of 86 respondents: 74 Female/12 Male
- Average age: 41.6 years
- Age range: 18-79 years
- Average household size: 3 people
- Range of household size: 1 – 8 people

Table 1. Race/Ethnicity of Respondents

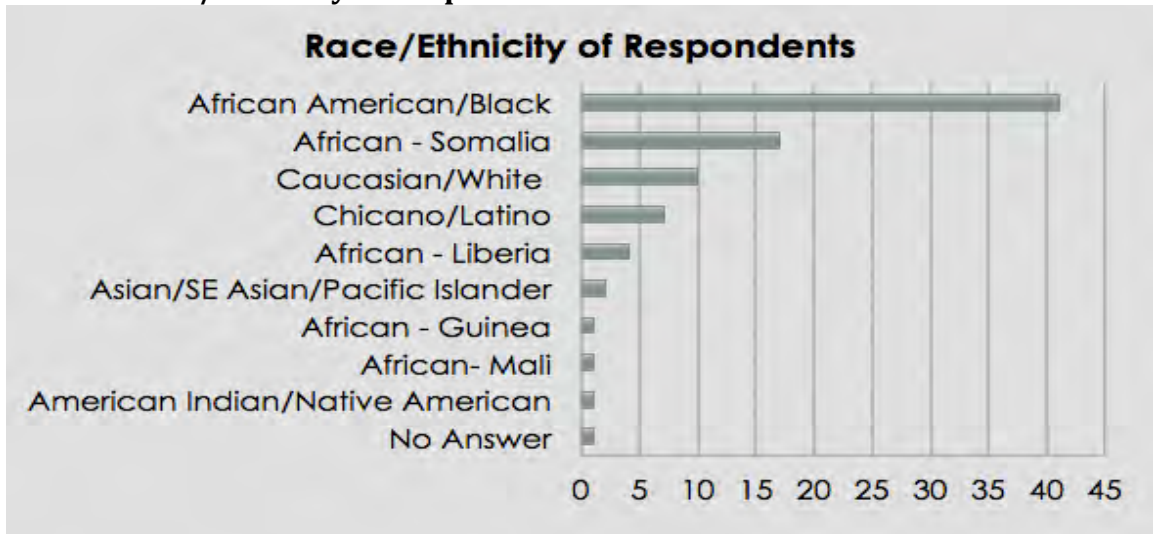


Table 2: Number of Years in PPL Housing



Table 3: Education Level

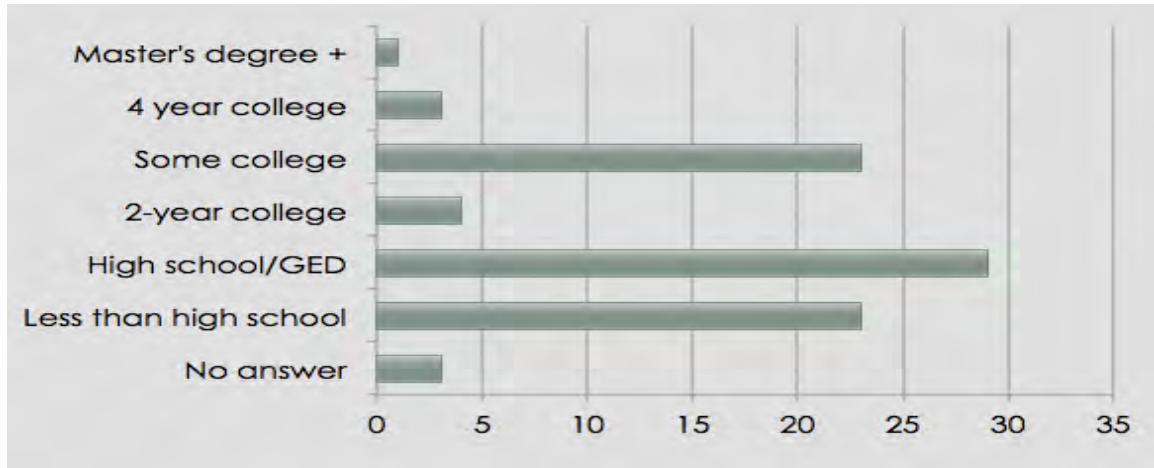


Table 4: What services would you like to participate in?

Type of Service	# of Responses	%
PPL community events	34	39.5%
Parenting education	8	9.3%
Nutrition coaching	7	8.1%
College enrollment	9	10.5%
Connecting to medical services	5	5.8%
Mental health support	9	10.5%
Help finding childcare	6	7%
Connecting to basic need items	22	25.6%
Resume and job search help	27	31.4%
Understanding school systems	7	8.1%
Computer skills	26	30.2%
Educational support (GED/ESL)	17	19.8%
Support around staying sober	6	7%
Legal services/Immigration services	8	9.3%
Accessing benefits from the county	11	12.8%
Not interested in participating	12	14%
Other	3	3.4%
No answer	9	10.5%

Table 5: What things are keeping you from making progress on your goals?

Type of Barrier	# of Responses	%
No time	8	9.3%
Transportation: reliable/affordable	25	29%
Lack of education	19	22%
Physical health	10	11.6%
Lack of job/work experience	13	15%

Physical health problems	9	10.5%
Lack of safe living environment	3	3.5%
Domestic violence	0	0%
Chemical dependency	0	0%
Lack of reliable affordable childcare	6	7%
Language skills	20	23%
Lack of money	27	31.4%
Personal skills (communication/relationship problems)	8	9.3%
Lack of positive social support (friends, family others)	8	9.3%
Housing is unstable	3	3.4%
Mental-health issues	5	5.8%
Criminal background (felony or misdemeanor)	3	3.4%
Nothing. I'm making progress on my goals.	18	21%
Other	1	1.16%
No answer	9	10.5%

Appendix E: Research Design

Project for Pride in Living – Self-Sufficiency Program

Research Design

Project: Self-Sufficiency Program Participant Services Assessment and Analysis

Libby Caulum, CURA Research Assistant/SSP Intern

June 14, 2012

Research Question: How effective are SSP services in furthering the life-goals of the PPL residents who use them?

Dependent Variable: The DV is the perceptions of residents regarding the effectiveness of programs. The perception of residents will vary from positive to negative, depending on how accessible the services are, how effective staff is in connecting residents to other agencies and resources when PPL cannot meet their needs, how much their lives have changed (and in what way) since beginning SSP services, and whether or not they feel their needs are being met by SSP.

Hypothesis	Observable Implications	Sources of Data
If a resident has reached a life goal (as defined by the matrix) he/she will have a positive attitude toward SSP services.	Reached a goal in the following: <i>Chemical Health</i> <i>Physical Health/Wellness</i> <i>Legal</i> <i>Immigration</i> <i>Technology Skills</i> <i>Income & Benefits</i> <i>Employment</i> <i>Housing</i>	1:1 Interviews Focus Groups

	<i>Basic Needs</i> <i>Transportation</i> <i>Safety</i> <i>Childcare</i> <i>Youth Education</i> <i>Parenting</i> <i>Adult Education</i> <i>Budgeting & Financial</i> <i>Literacy</i> <i>Support Network</i> <i>Community Involvement</i> <i>Health Care</i> <i>Mental Health</i>	
If a resident has not had their needs met by PPL staff or by referrals to other agencies, he/she will have suggestions for improvement in service.	-Resident has followed through with referral from PPL staff. -Resident has been referred to another agency but has not followed through.	1:1 Interviews Focus Groups
If a resident has been involved with SSP he/she will have an opinion on which services should be prioritized by PPL.	-Resident has participated in services.	1:1 Interviews Focus Groups

Additional Research for Surveys:

- Computer/Internet Access?
- How aware are you of SSP services?
- If you are aware of what SSP provides, do the programs hold any interest for you?

Possible Sources of Bias:

- Residents will not have established trust with me, which could influence their comfort in sharing experiences/opinions.
- Those who participate in the studies may have stronger opinions about programs than those who choose not to participate. This could influence answers.
- If participants have an existing relationship with each other, it could influence their answers in the Focus Group setting.
- Selection Bias – Demographic factors could influence answers and experiences with SSP.
- The length of residency in PPL housing and/or length of participation SSP could influence experiences.