

SELF-SUFFICIENCY ADVOCATES FOR INDIVIDUAL LIFE SKILLS (SAIL)

by Upper Des Moines Opportunity (UDMO)

Region 7 • Graettinger, Iowa
udmo.com

Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc
UDMO

Workforce Development • Lifeskills • Financial Literacy

INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

Self-Sufficiency Advocates for Individual Life Skills (SAIL) was created in 2016. The program helps elderly clients to maintain independence and remain in their homes as long as possible. Participation in SAIL is voluntary for individuals and families receiving CSBG at or below 125% poverty level. Eligible families are identified and referred through Head Start, FaDSS, KIDS, other community organizations, or self-referral. **Utilizing a strength-based approach, the program is delivered to families through home visits by certified Family Development Specialists.** Core services include assessment and screening, individual & family-driven goal setting, referrals to community resources and supports, financial literacy, and advocacy and self-empowerment.

LOCAL NEED ADDRESSED BY INITIATIVE

The SAIL design arose out of discussion to provide a form of service similarly modeled from the Family Development and Self Sufficiency (FaDSS) program, but using the flexibility of the CSBG program requirements.

- The focus was to meet a similar population of clients who didn't necessarily qualify for promised jobs and FaDSS yet wanted to secure their goals towards self-sufficiency, ultimately providing developmental services to individuals and families who are at risk of long-term welfare dependency.
- The need is determined by previous customer surveys indicating the desire to participate in life skills services. Each program participant is given flexibility in designing their goals



that best respond to the unique needs of their family/household.

ROLE OF CSBG FUNDS

Initially, the UDMO Outreach Program, which was strictly funded by CSBG, provided emergency-crisis services. By redesigning how we delivered these services we were able to budget CSBG funds to cover the salaries for two staff members to deliver these services.

TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT

SAIL is a family-level initiative that addresses individual/family needs and has the following characteristics: SAIL addresses one or more causes or conditions of poverty, it is an agency-wide program, it has clearly defined and measurable goals, and it has strategic activities designed to achieve program goals that were modeled and developed from the FaDSS program standards.

EVIDENCE-BASED OUTCOMES

SAIL was developed from the FaDSS program standards which is an established evidence based program. SAIL collects quantitative and qualitative data on each family receiving services.

Service data collected and tracked includes: demographics, assessments and screenings, home visits, goal setting, and family supports. The UDMO Outreach staff and administrative staff frequently review and analyze the service data and use the information to make program adjustments as necessary.

- 55% of household improved their home environment
- 65% of households increased nutritional skills
- 62% of households demonstrated improved physical health and well being
- 100% of homeless households obtained safe temporary shelter
- 63% of households maintained safe and affordable housing for 90 days
- 64% of households achieved and maintained ability to meet basic needs for 90 days

EQUITY LENS

The SAIL program does collect, track, and report demographic data on families served and does have goals to address racial/ethnic equity, but does not conduct a specific analysis on the program impacts by racial/ethnic groups.

CUSTOMER VOICE

Like with our CSBG and FaDSS customers, SAIL participants are asked to voluntarily contribute their satisfaction with the services they receive. As with all of our services, reports of program participation are provided to the board.

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PARTNERSHIPS

Family Support Coordinators have many partnerships in each of their service areas. They work very closely with all Outreach staff and FaDSS staff. Coordinators make referrals and coordinate services with other resources in the communities. Partners include Upper Des Moines Opportunity Outreach programs, FaDSS programs, Housing Agencies, IWD, Elderbridge, Family Foundations, Kids, Head Start, and Social Security Administration.

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