



2020 IMPACT REPORT

October 2020

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Across the United States, hundreds of thousands of vulnerable families with school age children are at risk of homelessness due to financial instability and other risk factors. Children of these at-risk families face the possibility of increased school mobility, decreased school attendance, and diminished school performance.

In response to these familial and communal needs, Al and Barbara Siemer founded the Siemer Institute to **prevent family homelessness** and **reduce school instability** among low-income families, with the goal of creating opportunities for families to thrive and for students to achieve academic success. From 2014 to 2020, Siemer Institute supported programs across the United States served over **65,500 families** and over **113,000 school-aged children**.

Programs that receive support from the Siemer Institute use this funding to connect adults and children to a variety of services that help bring about longer-term stability. The flexible use of these funds, allowing each program to design and deliver services that are customized to meet the needs of its community, is one of the Siemer Institute's signature attributes.

Overall, Siemer Institute supported programs achieved moderate to high levels of success in 2019 regarding families' educational, housing, and financial stability. Furthermore, the families served in 2019 were more likely to experience success with their housing stability and income stability compared to five years ago, suggesting network-wide improvements over time.

2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



97% of families experienced success with **educational stability**
(10,284 families did not experience a disruptive school move)



68% of families experienced success with **housing stability**
(7,249 families obtained or maintained stable housing)



37% of families experienced success with **income stability**
(3,924 families increased their income)

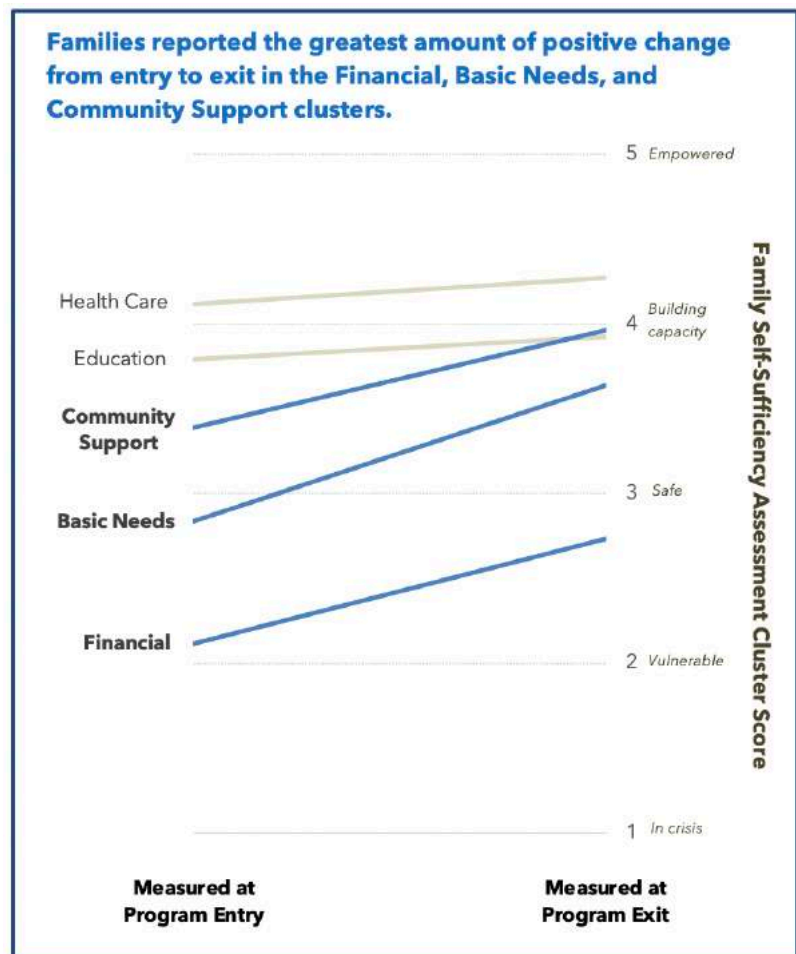
Executive Summary

An analysis of family-level self-sufficiency data - assessed first at program entry and again at program exit - clearly indicates many Siemer Institute supported programs are having strong impacts. Among those service providers that collect such data, many families reported improvement in the areas of Financial, Basic Needs, and Community Support self-sufficiency.

Furthermore, most families engaged with Siemer Institute supported programs showed significant changes in self-sufficiency from program entry to program exit. The greatest programmatic improvements over time were observed in the areas of Basic Needs, Community Support, and Financial self-sufficiency.

For example: Families tended to enter Siemer Institute supported programs with a financial self-sufficiency cluster score that would identify them as “vulnerable.” By the time of their exit, families had improved their financial situation to be close to “safe.”

However, additional analyses suggest the possible presence of racial bias or systemic racism affecting the services delivered to participating families. Although most families became more self-sufficient after their time in these programs, Black families had lesser gains (on average) from program entry to exit. This analysis, along with other observations made by the evaluators in this report, suggest a number of possible improvement opportunities regarding future impact measurement and program delivery efforts.



Overall, the data reviewed in this 2020 Impact Report suggest that many Siemer Institute supported programs are having strong impacts on the families they serve.

ABOUT THE SIEMER INSTITUTE

Across the United States, hundreds of thousands of vulnerable families with school age children are at risk of homelessness¹ due to financial instability and other risk factors. Children of these at-risk families face the possibility of increased school mobility, decreased school attendance, and diminished school performance.²

Founded by Al and Barbara Siemer in 2011, the Siemer Institute works to **prevent family homelessness** and **reduce school instability** among low-income families, helping to create opportunities for families to thrive and for students to achieve academic success.

The Siemer Institute is guided by research that shows children who experience frequent housing moves, school moves, and homelessness are less likely to have academic success than children who do not experience these hardships.^{3,4} The Siemer Institute works to improve children's educational opportunities by focusing on the context in which they live rather than traditional educational factors (e.g. curriculum).

To accomplish its goals of helping families to achieve financial stability, obtain and maintain stable housing, and enhance children's educational development, the Siemer Institute works through the United Way network to fund service providers that work to prevent family homelessness and school instability. A hallmark of this effort is that these programs are locally designed and locally managed to ensure they are responsive to immediate community needs. These programs typically provide: intensive case management and coaching; financial assistance and other material assistance; a Two-Generation approach to service delivery; strategic partnerships with school districts and other local service providers; and data driven assessments of family need and progress.

In 2019, community-based service providers that received funding from Siemer Institute were located in 49 communities across the United States and served nearly **10,600 families** and more than **18,700 school-aged children**.

¹ National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2019). "How Many Children And Families Experience Homelessness?" Retrieved October 5, 2020 from <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/who-experiences-homelessness/children-and-families/>

² The Siemer Institute. (2017). Logic Model. Personal communication, August 21, 2020.

³ Schwarz, A.E., Stiefel, L., & Cordes, S.A. (2015). "Moving Matters: The Causal Effect of Moving Schools on Student Performance." NYU Steinhardt Working Paper #01-15.

⁴ Orbadocic, J., Long, J.D., Cutili, J.J., Chan, C.K., Hinz, E., Heistad, D., & Masten, A.S. (2009). "Academic Achievement of Homeless and Highly Mobile Children in an Urban School District: Longitudinal Evidence on Risk, Growth, and Resilience." *Development and Psychopathology*. 21: 493-518

ABOUT THE 2020 IMPACT REPORT

In 2014, the Siemer Institute adopted a Shared Measurement Framework that collects the same data from every service provider. This framework has three important elements. First, it includes a program description in which each partner describes their primary intent, the types of services they offer, their partnerships, and their use of data. Second, it captures each partner's outputs (e.g., counts of program entrants and exits, total families served). Finally, it ensures that all partners are tracking the same outcomes across three domains: financial stability, housing stability, and educational stability. All data collected by this framework are reported at an aggregate, community level by the programs funded by the Siemer Institute.

In 2017, the Siemer Institute also implemented a Family Assessment Framework that measures the magnitude of successful changes experienced by participating families. All data collected within this framework are at the individual (family) level, as reported by each family's head of household. Service provider participation in the Family Assessment Framework is optional; in 2019, only 29 service providers participated.

Overall, the data collected through the Shared Measurement Framework and the Family Assessment Framework provide the foundation for the 2020 Impact Report. Of course, this evaluation effort and the conclusions that come from it are only as strong and reliable as the data that are provided by the service providers to the Siemer Institute.

This document is divided into four parts:

- Part 1 provides a brief descriptive overview of the Siemer Institute network.
- Part 2 summarizes the key findings from the Siemer Institute's Shared Measurement Framework, which focuses primarily on network outputs and secondarily on network outcomes, from 2014 through 2020.
- Part 3 summarizes the key findings from the Siemer Institute's Family Assessment Framework, which focuses primarily on the impacts observed among families served by Siemer Institute supported programs, from 2017 through 2020.
- Part 4 includes a summary of findings and offers strategic considerations (questions, observations) for future planning.

Siemer Institute works through the United Way network to fund programs that prevent family homelessness and school instability. These programs are designed and managed by local service providers to ensure they are responsive to the needs of the community being served.

88 Service Providers Supported By The Siemer Institute (2019)

49 Communities Served (2019)

In 2019, a total of 88 Siemer Institute supported service providers offered direct services to families. Within a particular community (e.g., Atlanta, GA), multiple service providers may receive financial support from Siemer Institute.

PROGRAM INTENT

Those local service providers who were part of the Siemer Network in 2019 were asked to complete a Service Provider Profile. As part of this profile, these organizations were asked to describe (in their own words) their Siemer Institute supported program (e.g., a school-based program, a housing program, a financial capability program, etc.). The open-ended responses to this program description question were coded by a researcher into the categories shown in Table 1. These categories reflect Siemer Institute’s measurement emphasis on housing, financial, and educational stability outcomes.

Overall, most of the 2019 Siemer Institute supported service providers who completed this profile described their program as offering **housing stability services** (49%). Many programs (43%) also described their program as **helping families to become more financially stable**.

Table 1: Self-described Program Intent

% of 2019 Siemer Institute service providers (n=83)	
Housing stability	49%
Financial stability	43%
School-based program	30%
Other (e.g., wrap-around case management)	23%

Multiple responses were allowed (percentages will not sum to 100).

A homelessness prevention program housed within a school.

A collaborative, one-step integrated service delivery center empowering whole families to lift themselves out of poverty.

We are a housing/eviction prevention program.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM OPERATIONS

Each Siemer Institute supported program that completed the 2019 Service Provider Profile shared information about the length of time families were enrolled in their program, as well as some high-level metrics regarding the program’s resources, including the number of full-time employees dedicated to the program and the average amount of cash assistance provided to each family. A typical family spent less than a year in these programs in 2019. However, 46% of programs had an average length of enrollment of 52+ weeks, and 18% had an average length of enrollment of 78+ weeks (a year and a half). Additionally, families typically received \$900+ in cash assistance.⁵

40

\$938

Weeks enrolled in program
(median across programs, 2019)

Per-family cash assistance
(median across programs, 2019)

Across Siemer Institute supported programs in 2019, nearly a quarter of participants were considered to be homeless (see Table 2), according to one of these definitions:

- HUD: Families who “lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” or will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence or are fleeing domestic violence situations;⁶
- McKinney-Vento definition, which focuses on children specifically, and the same lack of “a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” including shared housing, living in hotels, motels, campgrounds, cars, parks, substandard housing, public places, etc. due to economic hardship.⁷

Table 2: Overview Of Program Participant Demographics

Among 2019 Siemer Institute service providers (n≈80)						
	Median	Average		Median	Average	
Homeless	23%	35%	African American/Black	42%	50%	
Employed	60%	60%	Asian American/Asian	1%	2%	
Single parent/guardian	75%	71%	Latino(a)/Hispanic	9%	28%	
Undocumented immigrants	3%	14%	White	17%	22%	
			Other/multi-racial	3%	7%	

⁵ Note: Not all providers offer direct cash assistance.

⁶ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2013). “Expanding Opportunities to House Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness through the Public Housing (PH) and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Programs.” Retrieved October 5, 2020 from <https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=PIH2013-15HomelessQAs.pdf>.

⁷ National Center for Homeless Education. (undated). The McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless. Retrieved October 5, 2020 from <https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/>.

Interestingly, eight service providers reported that 98%+ of their participants were homeless at program entry, using either the HUD or McKinney-Vento definitions. Note that neither of these definitions requires a family to be chronically homeless; instead, families may be doubled up with friends or family rather than living on the street. Across the programs, over half of the participating families had at least one adult who was employed at program entry.

SERVICES PROVIDED TO PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Siemer Institute supported programs are customized to reflect the needs and nature of the community in which they are located; they are diverse. This flexibility allows programs to rely on a wide array of partners who can provide different resources to families. As shown below in Table 3, nearly all Siemer Institute supported programs directly provide case management services; most (over two-thirds) also directly provide one-on-one financial literacy or financial coaching services to families. Beyond these integral services, programs provided a wide variety of services to participating families - some via their own staff, and others indirectly via referrals.

In 2019, Siemer Institute supported programs were less likely to directly provide housing classes or employment classes to their participants, instead relying on referrals to partners or on individualized (i.e., one-on-one) service delivery.

Table 3: Services Provided To Families

How 2019 Siemer Institute supported programs deliver their services (n≈81)			
	Provided in-house ⁸	Provided via referral	Even mix of in-house & referral
Case management	93%	2%	5%
Financial literacy services (one-on-one)	69%	10%	21%
Housing services (one-on-one)	58%	19%	23%
Financial literacy classes	51%	23%	21%
Employment services (one-on-one)	44%	25%	31%
Housing classes	32%	42%	17%
Employment classes	30%	43%	22%

Services directly related to **housing stability** are highlighted in **dark blue**.

Services directly related to **financial stability** are highlighted in **light green**.

⁸ For Tables 3-5, service provision was classified as "Provided in-house" if the program indicated (via its 2019 Service Provider Profile) that the service was provided "Exclusively In House" or "Mostly In House." Services delivered "Mostly Through Referrals" or "Exclusively Through Referrals" were classified as "Provided via referral." The percent of service providers that don't offer a service through any means is not shown, as this is infrequent.

In 2019, most Siemer Institute supported programs directly provided adults with a variety of specific services to increase housing stability: housing application assistance; rent arrears or mortgage assistance; housing referrals; and negotiation/mediation with landlords. See Table 4. Nearly half of the programs also helped adults by directly providing utility assistance and/or deposit assistance. Relatively few programs directly provided legal, health, or mental health services, or employment services like hard skills and job training, instead relying on referrals.

These patterns reinforce the importance of collaboration and partnerships with other organizations offering crucial services, a theme that recurs throughout this evaluation.

Table 4: Services Provided To Adults

How 2019 Siemer Institute supported programs deliver their services (n≈81)			
	Provided in-house	Provided via referral	Even mix of in-house & referral
Housing application assistance	56%	19%	21%
Rent arrears or mortgage assistance	54%	19%	27%
Housing referrals to landlords/property managers	52%	19%	26%
Negotiation/mediation with landlords	52%	23%	21%
Utility assistance	48%	21%	30%
Deposits and/or moving assistance	48%	24%	21%
Employment services (job search, resume writing)	47%	22%	30%
Financial assistance	43%	17%	40%
Public benefits screening and referrals	38%	33%	23%
Transportation assistance	37%	23%	33%
Food (e.g., food pantry)	35%	38%	26%
Income tax assistance	31%	53%	12%
Employment services (soft skills)	30%	44%	25%
Adult education services (GED, etc.)	27%	62%	9%
Clothing	19%	52%	30%
IDA or matched savings	16%	35%	11%
Home ownership assistance	14%	58%	15%
Employment services (hard skills, etc.)	11%	72%	15%
Medication assistance	11%	63%	11%
Mental health and substance abuse services	10%	70%	20%
Health services	6%	77%	17%
Legal services	1%	83%	16%

Services directly related to **housing stability** are highlighted in **dark blue**.

Services directly related to **financial stability** are highlighted in **light green**.

As shown in Table 5, the majority of Siemer Institute supported programs in 2019 indirectly provided (i.e., via referral) a wide range of services to help children improve their educational outcomes. Examples of this include tutoring or educational assistance, mentoring, afterschool programs, or summer programs.

Table 5: Services Provided To Children

How 2019 Siemer Institute supported programs deliver their services (n≈81)			
	Provided in-house	Provided via referral	Even mix of in-house & referral
Family events (e.g., parent-child nights)	40%	27%	28%
Financial literacy classes	31%	36%	28%
Life skills classes	26%	50%	20%
Tutoring or educational assistance	23%	62%	14%
Personal enrichment classes	23%	53%	13%
Summer programs	20%	56%	21%
After school programs	20%	60%	15%
Parenting classes	15%	46%	36%
Mentoring	14%	64%	16%
Mental health services	13%	65%	21%
Family counseling services	11%	63%	25%
Childcare or childcare vouchers	9%	75%	9%
Health services	6%	78%	15%

Service providers' reliance on indirect provision of these child-focused services is consistent with most providers self-descriptions as a housing or financial stability program, as opposed to focusing on educational stability or academic achievement.

TWO-GENERATION PROGRAM ORIENTATION

Two-Generation (2-Gen) programs create opportunities for families by simultaneously addressing the needs of parents and their children, so that both can succeed together.⁹ In a seminal white paper,¹⁰ the Siemer Institute presented the following operational definition for 2-Gen approaches in the context of family stability programs:

Two-Generation approaches require programs to design and deliver services that intentionally strengthen the whole family, so that all generations within the family can experience improved economic, housing, and educational outcomes. As a result, the whole family becomes more resilient to future disruptive events.

According to the information shared with the Siemer Institute by the supported programs in 2019, most (89%) reported that their program designs and delivers services that intentionally strengthen the whole family, so that all generations within the family can experience improved economic, housing, and educational outcomes.

Service providers were then asked to describe their approach to identifying and addressing the needs of both adults and children in the same family. These open-ended descriptions were coded by a researcher who was very familiar with the Siemer Institute's operational definition of 2-Gen programming (described above). Specifically, the researcher looked for clear descriptive evidence of a multi-generational approach to needs assessment and service delivery, with a focus on the family as a whole.

Overall, slightly more than a quarter (28%) of the Siemer Institute supported programs in 2019 clearly described the use of a 2-Gen approach to their services.¹¹ Of course, this does not mean that other Siemer Institute supported programs in 2019 were not using a 2-Gen approach; rather, the description they provided to the Siemer Institute did not allow for such a judgment to be made.

⁹ Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2014). *Learn More: A Collection of Resources on Two-Generation Approaches*. Retrieved October 5, 2020 from <http://www.aecf.org/blog/learn-more-a-collection-of-resources-on-two-generation-approaches/>.

¹⁰ The Siemer Institute. (2017). *Defining Two-Generation Programming in a Family Stability Context*. Retrieved October 5, 2020 from <https://familystability.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Siemer-Institute-Defining-2Gen-Programming.pdf>.

¹¹ For comparison's sake, a similar analysis completed in 2016 found that 26% of Siemer Institute supported programs clearly described the use of a 2-Gen approach to their services.

Prototypical descriptions of 2-Gen programming – ones that clearly describe service providers' intergenerational approach – are displayed below.

At entry, the entire family is assessed for needs, strengths and goals of the entire family. They are immediately linked to a LMFT and MSW to work on trauma and link to needed family resources. We have a team of Child Specialists that come into the shelter twice/week to work with school-aged children on socio/emotional learning curriculum.

From day one, our goal is to meet the needs of the family as they work towards stable housing through financial empowerment while considering how the whole family is functioning and the resilience of each family member. Both parents/guardians and children receive services simultaneously through our case management team to address both generation's needs. Adults are linked for financial coaching while also receiving other services such as mental health, parenting classes, ESL class or computer classes and much more. Children are linked with a mentor to provide school guidance and support while also receiving other services such as mental health, tutoring, and college readiness programming. All service plans for both child and adult are developed with entire family unit so there is a connection to each other's goals.

Through the assessment process, needs are identified, and an initial plan is developed. As relationships are established with service provider, additional family issues surface that require attention. In these instances, parents may be seen for counseling and consultation on their own, as part of the entire family or the children may be seen separately. In most situations, if a child is in treatment, so is the parent. Small children access play therapy and sand tray therapy, while older adolescents engage in traditional talk therapy. In most instances, parenting skills training is provided in the home using a combination of education and role modeling.

When we begin services with a family, we usually spend time with each member of the family, assessing needs and strengths. We also work to connect each member of the family with resources that will strengthen the family as a whole. Whether it is childcare, behavioral health care, employment services, etc., we work to ensure the needs of all family members are considered as the family makes decisions toward improving their lives. We also help ensure that the family is able to successfully navigate systems they will encounter through this process and we work to give those systems feedback to improve the process for families in the future.

The 2Gen approach used to address the needs of the adults and the children in the same family begins during the initial intake process. The needs assessment is administered, covering certain areas (housing, insurance, mental state, substance abuse, family dynamics, employment, education, etc.) to determine if family is thriving, connected to resources for improvement, or needs assistance. New members are asked about family needs overall, not just their own. Based on their responses, they are prioritized, and the Coach starts the process to customizing a strategic plan to work with the entire household to move the family toward self-sufficiency... It is not uncommon to have a 3rd generation in a household (for example, an elderly or disabled parent/grandparent), and they are as much welcome and eligible to attend classes as full members.

This overview of service providers' 2-Gen information suggests a clear opportunity for the Siemer Institute to continue **educating and advising service providers on this topic**. It seems that many providers consider any provision of services or activities to children (e.g., after-school camp or summer camp, family dining events, or referrals to external case management workers) alongside programming that increases adults' financial capability to be a "2-Gen approach," when the reality is more complicated.

SIEMER INSTITUTE NETWORK OUTPUTS

As mentioned previously, 88 community-based service providers received funding from the Siemer Institute in 2019.¹² Affiliated with 49 United Ways across the United States, these programs served nearly **10,600 families** and more than **18,700 school-aged children** in 2019. From 2014 to 2019, there has been a continued increase (year-over-year) in the total number of families and the total number of school-aged children served by Siemer Institute supported partners.

Table 6: Network Outputs - Families And School-Aged Children Served (2014-2020)

	Total families served	% change (year-over-year)	Average families served per provider	Total school-aged (SA) children	Average SA children per provider
2014	5,783	-	77	9,390	125
2015	8,240	42%	97	13,037	153
2016	8,403	2%	98	15,019	175
2017	8,706	3.6%	107	15,247	188
2018	10,016	15%	108	17,480	188
2019	10,592	5.8%	120	18,748	213
2020 ¹³	13,789 ^{\$}	30.2% ^{\$}	152 ^{\$}	24,230 ^{\$}	266 ^{\$}

In addition to designing programs to reflect their local community’s needs, service providers also create and use their own criteria for determining when families complete their program. In 2019, the 81 Siemer Institute supported programs that defined program completion in their Service Provide Profile did so as follows:

- 39% | The family has stable housing and adequate income to maintain it.
- 35% | The family has achieved most or all of their goals.
- 8% | The family has completed the program.
- 18% | Some other response.

Only 4% of the programs in 2019 measured completion based on the family’s achieving a certain score on a standardized assessment.

¹² By way of comparison, the number of service providers supported by the Siemer Institute in 2014 was 75.

¹³ The 2020 data reported in this section of the Impact Report are end-of-year projections based on the partial (half-year) data available at the time of report creation. These 2020 projections are marked by the ^{\$} symbol and should be interpreted with caution.

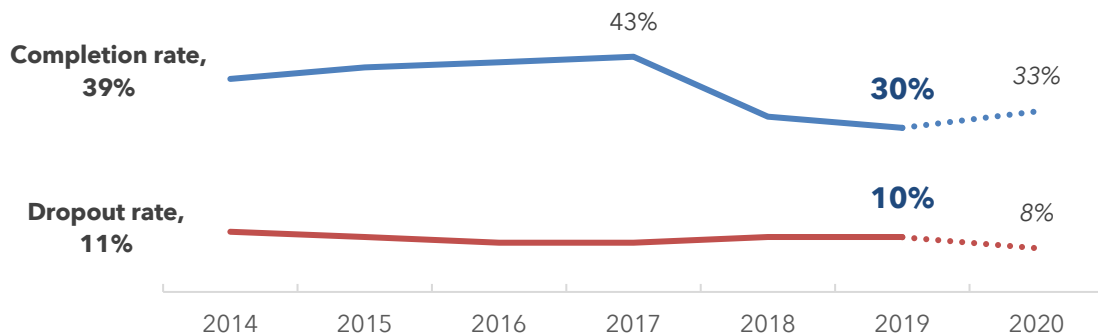
Across the Siemer Institute network, the total number of completions decreased from 2017 to 2019. However, a significant increase is projected for 2020, attributed in part due to the tremendous economic pain and uncertainty facing many Americans.

Table 7: Network Outputs - Completions And Dropouts (2014-2020)

	Total completions	% change (year-over-year)	Average completions per provider	Total dropouts	Average dropouts per provider
2014	2,275	-	30	627	8
2015	3,411	50%	40	836	10
2016	3,511	2.9%	41	795	9
2017	3,730	6.2%	46	793	10
2018	3,171	-15%	34	998	11
2019	3,172	0%	36	1,077	12
2020	4,516 ^{\$}	42.4% ^{\$}	50 ^{\$}	1,060 ^{\$}	12 ^{\$}

As shown in Figure 1, the completion rate across the Siemer Institute network was in the low 40%s from 2014 to 2017, but then dropped in 2018 and again in 2019. Looking ahead to 2020, the projected completion rate is expected to increase slightly. The dropout rate has remained steady since 2014.

Figure 1: Network Outputs - Completion And Dropout Rates (2014-2020^s)



SIEMER INSTITUTE NETWORK OUTCOMES

Siemer Institute’s Shared Measurement Framework includes 13 outcomes distributed across three domains: 1) financial stability; 2) housing stability; and 3) educational stability, as shown below in Table 8. Three core outcomes - those that closely align with the mission and purpose of the Siemer Institute - are tracked and reported by each service provider.¹⁴ The other outcomes in the Shared Measurement Framework are optional.

Table 8: Siemer Institute Network Outcomes Overview

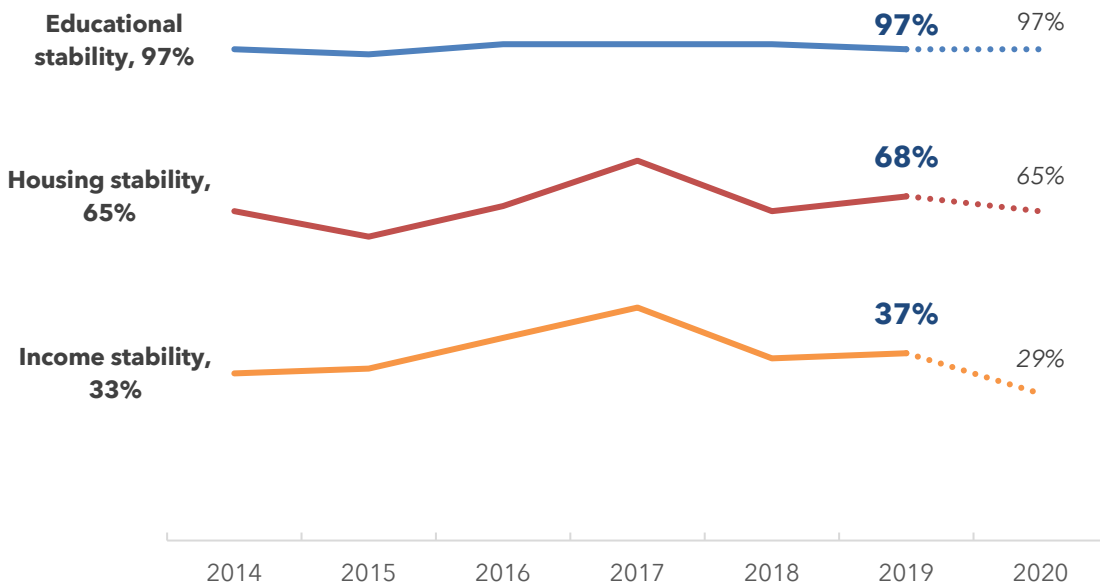
Financial Stability	Housing Stability	Educational Stability
Families who move to a higher level on the income dimension of the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix after a reasonable amount of time. (core)	Families who set a goal to obtain and/or maintain appropriate, safe, stable housing and achieve outcome after a reasonable amount of time. (core)	Families with school-aged children that (did not have) a disruptive move to a school other than school of origin. (core)
Families who set financial goals and achieve their goals after a reasonable amount of time.	Families who set the goal to pay their mortgage or rent on time and achieve this outcome after a reasonable amount of time.	Adults who set the goal to obtain their GED or high school diploma and achieve this outcome after a reasonable amount of time.
Families who set the goal to develop and maintain a monthly budget who achieve this outcome after a reasonable amount of time.		Adults who set the goal to enroll in college or a technical/vocational program and achieve this outcome after a reasonable amount of time.
Adults who set a goal to obtain employment and achieve this outcome after reasonable amount of time.		Children who set the goal to reduce the frequency of disciplinary incidents and achieve this outcome after a reasonable amount of time.
Adults who set a goal to increase income by a mutually agreed upon amount and achieve this outcome after a reasonable amount of time.		Children who move to a higher level of enrollment and attendance on the children's education dimension of the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix after a reasonable amount of time.
		Children who set the goal to improve grades by a mutually agreed upon amount and achieve this outcome after a reasonable amount of time.

¹⁴ A fourth key outcome (i.e., families who have a planned school move) is no longer reported.

A number of stories reveal themselves when one looks at the core outcome success rates¹⁵ across the Siemer Institute network from 2014 through 2020 (see Figure 2).

Regarding the core outcome of housing stability, **68%** of the families served across the Siemer Institute network in 2019 experienced success with this. Note that the difference between the 2019 rate (68%) and the 2014 rate (65%) for this core outcome is statistically significant, meaning it is unlikely to have occurred due to chance alone; **more families are achieving success on this dimension as compared to five years ago**.¹⁶ This suggests that as a whole, the Siemer Institute network of programs might be improving its ability to help families experience housing stability.

Figure 2: Network Core Outcome Success Rates (2014-2020^s)



With regard to the core outcome of income stability, **37%** of the families served across the Siemer Institute network in 2019 experienced success with this. Note that the difference between the 2019 rate (37%) and the 2014 rate (33%) for this core outcome is statistically significant; **more families are achieving success on this dimension as compared to five years ago**. This suggests that as a whole, the Siemer

¹⁵ The network-wide completion rate for each of the three core outcomes was calculated by dividing the sum of the total number of reported (or projected) successes by the sum of the total number of families served that year.

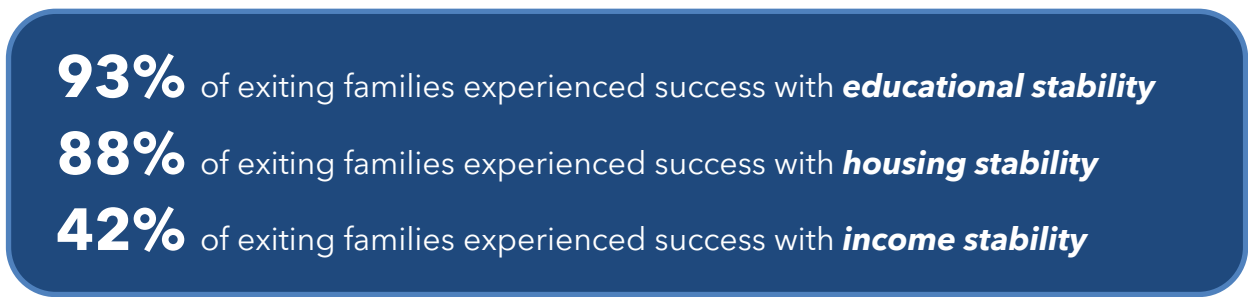
¹⁶ To test whether the difference between the 2014 and 2019 outcome rates was statistically significant, a proportions test was computed. This analytic procedure calculates the difference between the 2014 and 2019 outcome percentages, considers the total number of observations in each sample, and then computes a z statistic. The z statistic was statistically significant ($p < .05$), which suggests the difference between these two outcome percentages is not due to chance alone. Additionally, this test revealed that the 95% confidence intervals for each outcome percentage do not overlap with one another, which is a marker of statistical significance.

Institute network of programs might be improving its ability to help families experience financial stability.

Turning to educational stability, disruptive moves occur when neither a Siemer Institute supported program nor a child’s school has sufficient advance notice of a child moving to a different school. With regard to this core outcome, **97%** of the families served across the Siemer Institute network in 2019 experienced success with this (i.e., did not have disruptive/unplanned moves). This rate is similar to that observed in 2014.¹⁷

The data from service providers provided through the Siemer Institute’s Family Assessment Framework in 2020 paint a stronger picture of successful impact with these core outcomes.¹⁸ When this more stringent view is adopted, one can clearly see that families that exited from Siemer Institute supported programs in the first 6 months of 2020 had success in each domain, but especially with housing stability and educational stability (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Network Core Outcome Success Rates, Family Assessment Framework (mid-year 2020)



¹⁷ For ease of reporting, service providers recorded instances of a family having a disruptive/unplanned move; there were 308 such events recorded by Siemer Institute supported programs in 2019. The network-wide success rate for this core outcome subtracts the total number of families experiencing a disruptive/unplanned move from the total number of families served and then divides that value by the total number of families served.

¹⁸ The outcomes data generated by the Family Assessment Framework only include those families that have exited the program (successfully or otherwise); families that are still receiving services are not included.

In addition to the core outcomes, some Siemer Institute supported programs also track optional outcomes. Success rates for these optional outcomes (as of mid-year 2020) are shown below in Table 9, along with the number of service providers that measure success with these optional outcomes.

Table 9: Network Optional Outcome Success Rates (mid-year 2020)

Optional Outcomes, by Stability Domain	Success Rate	# of Providers Measuring
Financial Stability		
Families that set and achieve financial goals	77%	42
Families that develop and maintain a monthly budget	68%	44
Adults who increase their income	54%	28
Adults who obtain employment	48%	38
Housing Stability		
Families that pay mortgage or rent on time	84%	36
Educational Stability		
Children who improve grades	75%	21
Children who move to a higher level of enrollment, attendance	72%	21
Children who reduce the frequency of disciplinary incidents	49%	18
Adults enroll in college or vocational program	34%	27
Adults obtain GED or HS diploma	5%	14

The most frequently measured optional outcomes in 2020 relate to financial stability, with many programs tracking the extent to which families set and achieve financial goals, develop and maintain a monthly budget, adults who increase their income, and adults who obtain employment.

About a quarter of service providers in 2020 measured optional outcomes that relate to educational stability and that are child-focused.

Lastly, in addition to reporting key output and outcome data back to Siemer Institute, many programs also follow-up with participants after they complete and exit these programs. In 2019, 49 of the 83 Siemer Institute supported programs that completed a Service Provider Profile (47%) reported they follow up with families that exit their programs, typically at the 6-month and/or 12-month mark(s).

Part 3: Key Impacts Of Siemer Institute Programs

This report now shifts from a high-level, aggregate view of what the Siemer Institute supported programs recently achieved to a more individualized view of the Siemer Institute’s impact on families.

To do this, Illuminology analyzed the Family Assessment Framework dataset provided by the Siemer Institute. This framework relies on two administrations of an adapted version of the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix to participating families: once at program entry and again at program exit. This instrument assesses self-reported stability and self-sufficiency across 18 domains, which in turn can be grouped into the 5 clusters shown below in Table 10.

Table 10: Clusters and Domains Measured by the Family Self-Sufficiency Assessment

Financial Cluster <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Credit History• Debt/Savings• Employment• Income	Basic Needs Cluster <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Childcare• Food• Housing• Safety• Transportation
Healthcare Cluster <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disabilities• Healthcare• Mental Health• Substance Use	Community Support Cluster <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Involvement• Family Relations• Legal
Education Cluster <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult Education• Children’s Education	

The family’s status with each self-sufficiency domain was measured by a sequence of (typically four) nested questions; this process was repeated for each of the 18 domains. Case managers input responses into a database that then calculated a score for each domain; domain scores could range from 1 (“in crisis”) to 5 (“empowered”).¹⁹

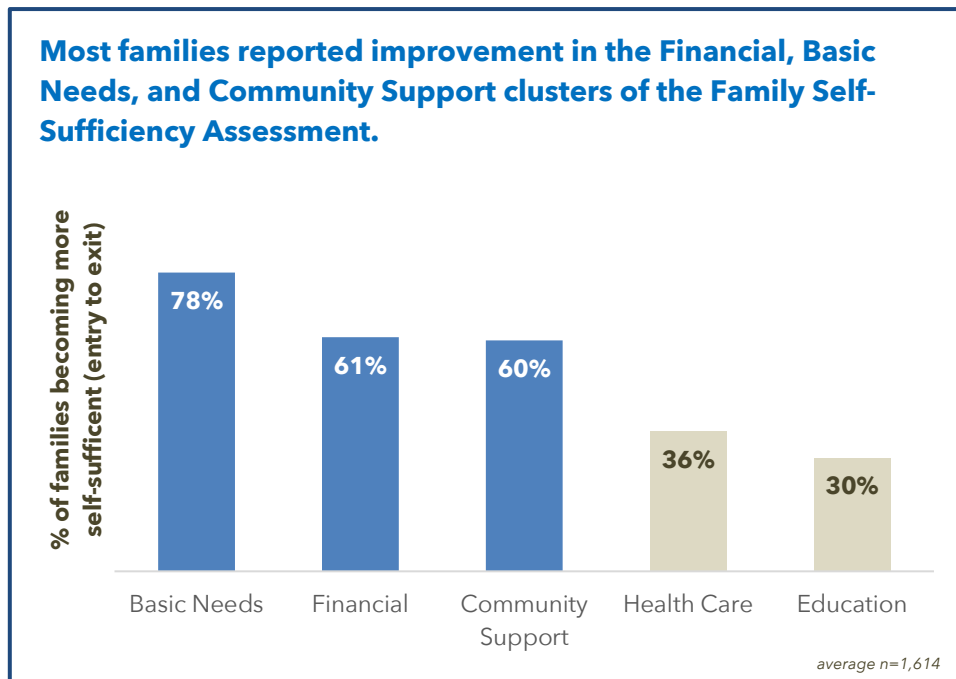
¹⁹ The Siemer Institute provided Illuminology with an Excel dataset containing the results of 6,580 family interviews, which occurred from October 2017 through August 2020. Most of these interviews (4,897) occurred as families entered Siemer Institute supported programs; many (1,682) occurred when families were exiting these programs. After reviewing and cleaning these data, Illuminology restructured this information into one “wide” file, such that each row of data had information about the same family at program entry and again at program exit (if available). The dataset was then trimmed to only focus on the 1,680 families who provided self-sufficiency responses at both entry and at exit. “Change scores” were then calculated for each of these families; the numeric

Note: most Siemer Institute supported programs do not participate in the Family Assessment Framework, and not all that participate in this framework do so for all of their families. For example, 25 service providers entered data for at least 1 family that began receiving supportive services in 2019. In other words, the results of the following analyses should be interpreted with caution, as those organizations who chose to participate may be different in systematic and meaningful ways from those organizations that did not participate.

IMPACT: MOST FAMILIES INCREASED THEIR SELF-SUFFICIENCY

As shown in Figure 4, most families assessed by service providers using the Family Assessment Framework became more self-sufficient (and therefore, more stable) regarding their **Financial**, **Basic Needs**, and **Community Support** situations. For example, 78% of families increased their self-sufficiency in the Basic Needs cluster. Although fewer families showed improvement with their health care or education situations from program entry to exit, about a third of families did report improvement over time in these areas.

Figure 4: Percentage of Families that Become More Self-Sufficient, by Cluster

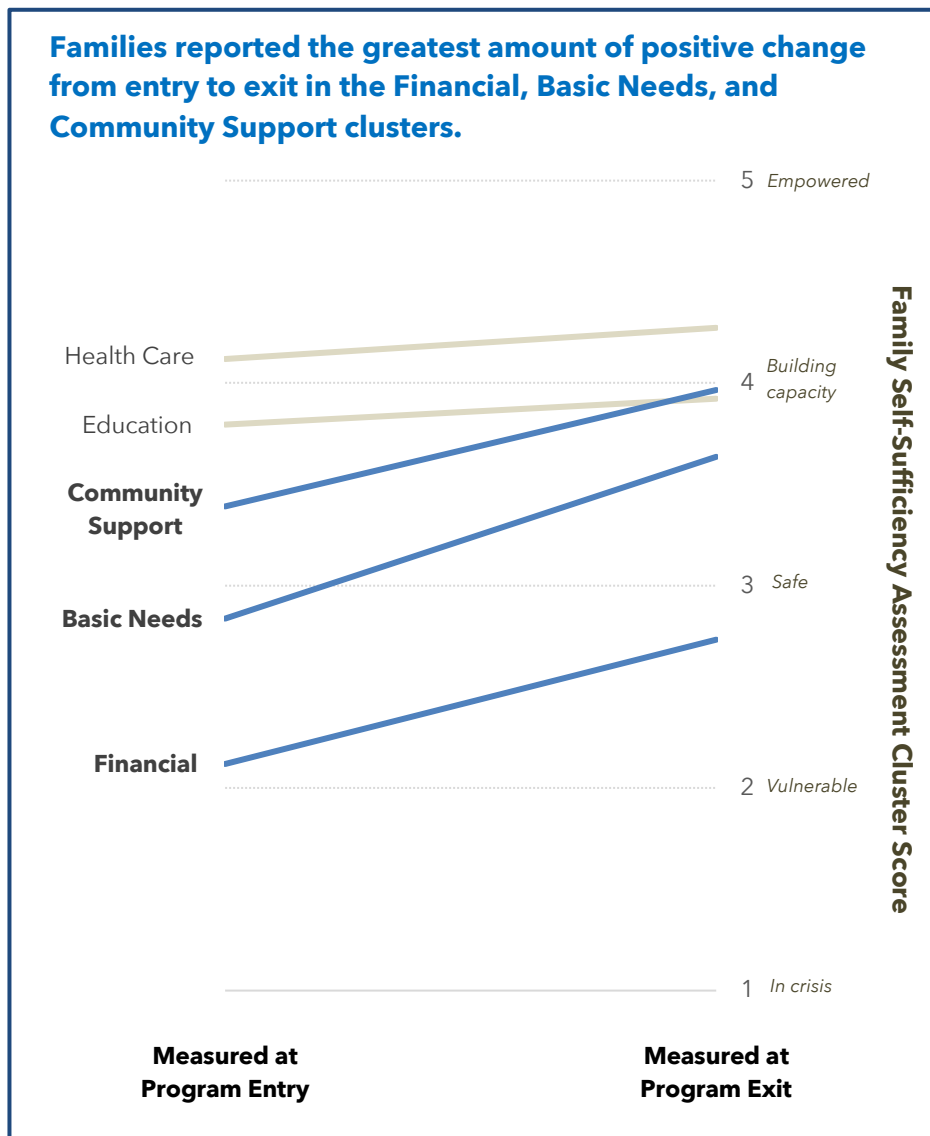


score at program entry was subtracted from the numeric score at program exit. Lastly, average change scores for each cluster and each domain were computed.

Clearly, Siemer Institute supported programs helped many families become more self-sufficient or more stable. But how much more self-sufficient or stable did families tend to become? What was the magnitude of these changes over time?

As shown in Figure 5, there was a clear trend for families to increase their self-sufficiency scores from program entry to program exit for all five clusters. However, the **Basic Needs, Community Support, and Financial** clusters showed the greatest improvement over time. On average, families increased their self-sufficiency or stability by half a scale point or more for each of these three clusters. For example, families tended to enter Siemer Institute supported programs with a financial self-sufficiency cluster score that would identify them as “vulnerable;” by the time of their exit, they had improved their financial situation to be close to “safe.”

Figure 5: Change in Average Self-Sufficiency Cluster Scores from Program Entry to Exit



As shown in Table 11, the average difference in each cluster self-sufficiency score from program entry to exit was statistically significant ($p < .05$). This means that these observed differences are unlikely to have occurred due to chance alone. However, the size of the average difference from entry to exit was greatest for the **Basic Needs**, **Financial**, and **Community Support** clusters, as displayed previously in Figure 5.

Table 11: Change in Average Self-Sufficiency Cluster Scores from Program Entry to Exit

Cluster	Average score (entry)	Average score (exit)	Average difference in scores	Average diff. is statistically significant	Unique families
Basic Needs (BN)	2.84	3.64	0.80	Yes	1,573
Financial (FIN)	2.12	2.73	0.61	Yes	1,648
Community Support (CS)	3.39	3.97	0.58	Yes	1,629
Healthcare (HC)	4.12	4.27	0.15	Yes	1,597
Education (ED)	3.80	3.92	0.13	Yes	1,627

Table 12 (next page) presents the results of a similar analysis, this time focusing on each of the 18 domains measured by the Family Self-Sufficiency Assessment. A number of useful insights that might inform future programmatic efforts or operational changes are evident after a careful review:

- The greatest overall average differences from program entry to program exit occur with the **Housing** and **Community Involvement** domains. These two domains align very closely with the central purpose of Siemer Institute programming, which is to connect vulnerable families with community-based organizations that can help stabilize housing situations. Ultimately, there is an expectation that this connection will help children have a more stable environment in which they can pursue academic success.
- 7 of the 18 domains have an average difference in self-sufficiency scores greater than half a scale point; these are listed first in Table 12. These seven domains likely represent the areas in which Siemer Institute supported programs are achieving the greatest impact with vulnerable families.
- 5 of the 18 domains have an average self-sufficiency score at program entry of 4.5 or higher, which means most families were already “empowered” in these areas *before receiving support from Siemer Institute supported partners*. These domains include Mental Health, Disabilities, Children’s Education, Legal, and Substance Use. This pattern raises the possibility that many programs are screening out (or are not receiving referrals to) families that are struggling to cope with behavioral health issues, significant legal challenges, or serious educational instability.

- As stated previously, the Siemer Institute was founded in part to help create opportunities for families to thrive and for students to achieve academic success. With that in mind, the fact that so many families with school-age children do not appear to have acute educational instability challenges should be considered during the Siemer Institute’s next strategic planning effort and/or operational review. Are programs targeting all of the families who might most need this help? Or is educational instability itself a rarely observed phenomenon?

Table 12: Change in Average Self-Sufficiency Domain Scores from Program Entry to Exit

Domain	Average score (entry)	Average score (exit)	Average difference in scores	Average diff. is statistically significant	Unique families
BN_Housing	2.00	4.03	2.02	Yes	1,538
CS_Community Involvement	2.36	3.55	1.19	Yes	1,503
FIN_Income	2.44	3.23	0.79	Yes	1,509
FIN_Debt/Savings	2.06	2.68	0.62	Yes	1,489
FIN_Employment	2.19	2.80	0.61	Yes	1,612
BN_Food	2.55	3.12	0.57	Yes	1,543
FIN_Credit History	1.86	2.37	0.51	Yes	1,619
BN_Safety	3.64	4.13	0.49	Yes	1,530
CS_Family/Social Relationships	2.83	3.31	0.49	Yes	1,521
BN_Transportation	3.31	3.76	0.45	Yes	1,528
BN_Childcare	2.67	3.06	0.39	Yes	1,264
HC_Health Care	2.80	3.08	0.28	Yes	1,530
HC_Mental Health	4.39	4.54	0.15	Yes	1,498
ED_Adult	3.10	3.25	0.15	Yes	1,611
HC_Disabilities	4.57	4.71	0.15	Yes	1,521
ED_Children	4.72	4.84	0.12	Yes	1,478
CS_Legal	4.81	4.88	0.08	Yes	1,599
HC_Substance Use	4.93	4.92	0.00	No	1,450

Cluster Key: BN=Basic Needs | CS = Community Support | FIN = Financial | HC = Healthcare | ED = Education

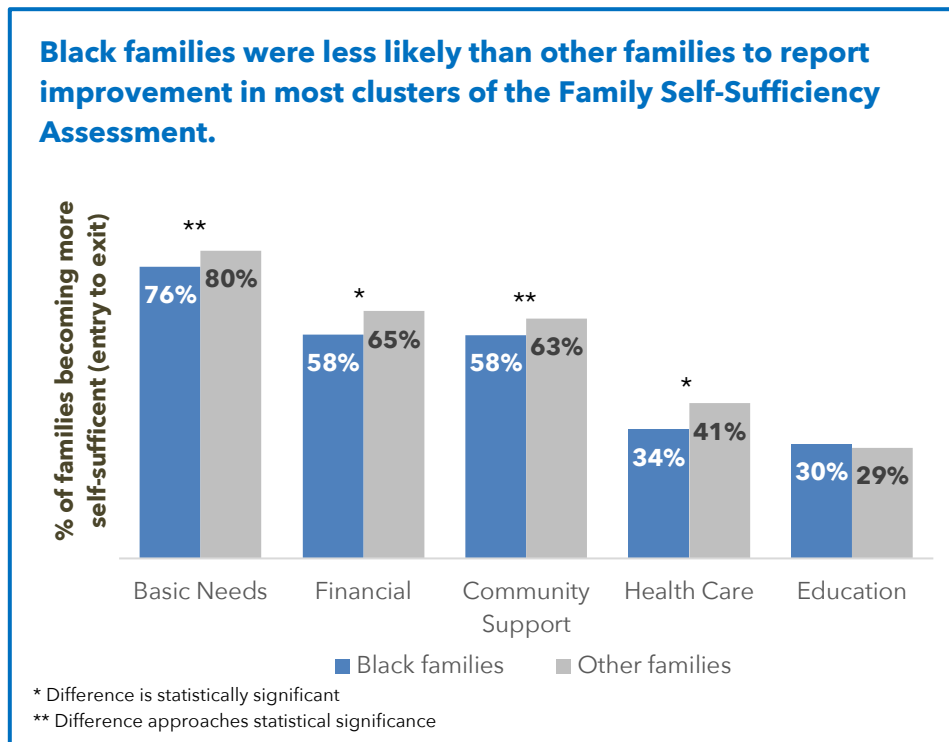
UNDERSTANDING IMPACT: EXPLORING FOR RACIAL DIFFERENCES

The events of 2020 changed our lives in ways we did not imagine when the year began. Throughout it all, philanthropic and other nonprofit organizations across the United States have risen to the challenge, helping to provide frontline defenses for millions of residents. Reflecting a growing movement to be more mindful of how nonprofit services and supports are delivered to program participants, additional analyses were conducted to learn if outcomes vary based on clients' racial backgrounds.

Specifically, the 2020 Impact Report re-analyzed the Family Self-Sufficiency Assessment cluster scores by the race of the family representative. Of the family representatives who reported self-sufficiency data at both program entry and at program exit, 60% identified as African American, whereas 40% did not.

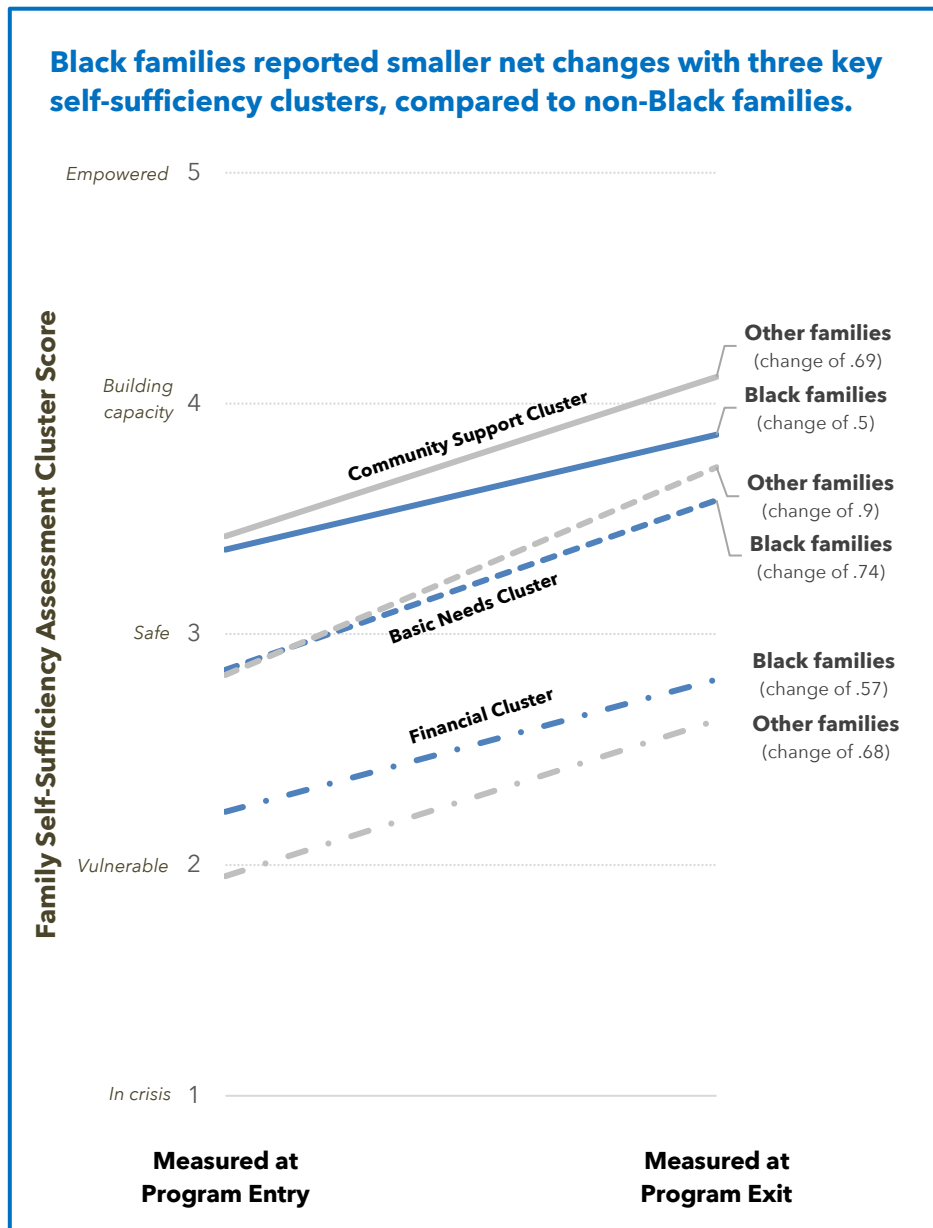
Unfortunately, the positive impacts evidenced in this report were not experienced equally by all families. Black families were less likely than other families to report positive changes for most of the self-sufficiency clusters (see Figure 6). With four of these self-sufficiency clusters, the difference between Black families and other families was statistically significant or approached statistical significance, meaning the difference is unlikely due to chance alone.

Figure 6: Percentage of Families that Become More Self-Sufficient, by Cluster and by Race



Follow-up analyses were conducted to determine if the magnitude of change in self-sufficiency scores was similar or different between Black families and non-Black families that enrolled and exited from Siemer Institute supported programs. Overall, statistically significant differences by race were observed for three of the five self-sufficiency clusters: Community Support, Basic Needs, and Financial (see Figure 7). Although average self-sufficiency scores increased from program entry to exit for both Black and non-Black families, Black families tended to report less change over time, as compared to other families.

Figure 7: Change in Average Self-Sufficiency Cluster Scores from Program Entry to Exit, by Race



UNDERSTANDING IMPACT: PREDICTING PROGRAM DROPOUTS

The Family Assessment Framework included other potentially useful information about the families who received services and support from Siemer Institute supported programs. For most of the 1,680 families that had self-sufficiency assessment data at both program entry and exit, the framework also recorded the type of exit from the program.

- Most families (71%) exited the programs successfully, completing the tasks and goals they identified in partnership with their case managers.
- Some families (22%) dropped out of the program, failing to successfully complete the tasks and goals they identified with their case managers.
- Additionally, a small set of families (6%) had exited but the service provider hadn't yet completed all the outcomes assessment measures.

If the Siemer Institute and its partners can better understand the factors that are correlated or associated with program dropout, they would be better positioned to either (1) change the process by which they consider families for participation and/or (2) introduce additional actions to retain and assist all families through to successful completion.

A series of statistical analyses (ordinary least squares regression) was conducted in an attempt to predict which families are more likely to drop out of these programs before completing successfully. The outcome variable in this predictive analysis was whether each family dropped out - this was coded such that dropouts were equal to 1, whereas all others were equal to 0. The predictor variables included each of the 18 self-sufficiency domain scores measured at program entry, along with a few variables that describe aspects of the programs and the families they serve.

As shown in Table 13 (next page), a host of statistically significant predictors were identified from this analysis.²⁰ These relationships clearly suggest specific areas where the Siemer Institute and its partners may wish to have conversations regarding screening and program retention practices. The following types of families were more likely than others to drop out of Siemer Institute supported programs:

- Families with **lower** Employment self-sufficiency scores;
- Families with **higher** Debt/Savings self-sufficiency scores;
- Families with **higher** Housing self-sufficiency scores;

²⁰ A different predictive statistical analysis (i.e., logistic regression) yielded results that were slightly stronger than those presented here. Because different analytic techniques produced similar conceptual results (with similar implications), the underlying relationships discussed here are likely stable ones.

- Families with **lower** Food self-sufficiency scores;
- Families with **higher** Health Care self-sufficiency scores;
- Families with **lower** Mental Health self-sufficiency scores;
- Families with **higher** Family/Social Relationship self-sufficiency scores;
- Families with **lower** Community Involvement self-sufficiency scores
- Families who entered programs in 2019 or 2020.

Table 13: OLS Regression Predicting Program Dropout from Self-Sufficiency Domain Scores, Family Information, and Year of Entry into Program

Predictor	Unstandardized	
	Regression Coefficient	p-value
FN_Income	-.02	.18
FN_Employment	-.02	.12**
FN_Credit History	.01	.47
FN_Debt/Savings	.02	<.05*
BN_Housing	.02	.05*
BN_Food	-.03	.05*
BN_Childcare	-.01	.21
BN_Safety	.01	.59
ED_Children’s Education	-.02	.33
ED_Adult Education	-.01	.25
HC_Health Care	.05	<.05*
HC_Mental Health	-.03	<.05*
HC_Substance Abuse	-.02	.53
HC_Disabilities	.02	.17
CS_Family/Social Relationships	.03	<.05*
CS_Community Involvement	-.02	<.05*
CS_Legal	-.01	.71
Race of Family Representative (African American=1, Other=0)	.01	.61
Number of Children in School	.01	.62
Year of Entry into Program (2019 or 2020=1, 2017 or 2018=0)	.17	<.05*
Number of observations	1,119	
R ²	.08	

Cluster Key: BN=Basic Needs | CS = Community Support | FIN = Financial | HC = Healthcare | ED = Education
 Light grey highlighting indicates the predictor variables that have a statistically significant relationship (or one that approaches statistical significance) with whether or not a family dropped out of the program.

Considering the statistically significant relationships discussed above, it might be the case that there are at least two scenarios in which dropouts are more likely to occur:

- (1) families that are highly vulnerable to job loss, food insecurity, and/or mental health issues; and
- (2) families that have relatively strong supports in place (savings, housing, health care, and family/social relationships) that allow them to ride out a temporary crisis vs. depending on a Siemer Institute supported program.

Any summary of key findings should begin by acknowledging the sheer number of families and children that have trusted Siemer Institute supported programs to enter their lives over the past seven years. From 2014 to 2020, Siemer Institute supported programs across the United States served **over 65,500 families** and **over 113,000 school-aged children**.

The Siemer Institute was founded to prevent family homelessness and to reduce school instability among low-income families, with the goal of creating opportunities for families to thrive and for students to achieve academic success. Overall, Siemer Institute supported programs achieved moderate to high levels of success in 2019 regarding families' educational, housing, and financial stability, as shown below.

2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



97% of families experienced success with **educational stability**
(10,284 families did not experience a disruptive school move)



68% of families experienced success with **housing stability**
(7,249 families obtained or maintained stable housing)



37% of families experienced success with **income stability**
(3,924 families increased their income)

Furthermore, the programs supported by the Siemer Institute appear to have become more effective with their service delivery over the years. Service providers supported by the Siemer Institute in 2019 were more likely to report their families experienced success with housing stability and income stability, compared to the service providers supported in 2014.

A stronger impact story emerges when one moves from these program-level outcomes to family-level ones. Among those agency partners that collect such data, the great majority of families reported improvement from program entry to program exit with regard to their Financial, Basic Needs, and Community Support self-sufficiency. Programmatic impact, measured by the magnitude of change from entry to exit, is greatest for these three areas as well.

However, additional analyses suggest the possible presence of racial bias or systemic racism affecting the effectiveness of services delivered to participating families. Although most families became more self-sufficient after their time in these programs, Black families had lesser gains (on average) from program entry to exit.

Overall, the data reviewed in this 2020 Impact Report suggest that many Siemer Institute supported programs are having strong impacts on the families they serve.

During the process of cleaning the Shared Measurement Framework dataset and the Family Assessment Framework dataset, analyzing the data, and reporting the key findings from our analyses, the evaluators generated a list of strategic considerations that may aid the Siemer Institute's future efforts to measure impact and deliver services to vulnerable families. Most of these observations and questions are strategic in nature and likely require Board and senior staff discussion, whereas some are more tactical or incremental. The evaluators suggest the Siemer Institute seriously consider the issues and concepts underlying each of the following strategic considerations.

STRATEGIC OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS

Regarding Program Efficiency

"A program that appears to be highly effective may actually be highly inefficient if it targeted people who wouldn't become homeless anyway."

- Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness (2019)

Nearly all of the data collected, analyzed, and reported in the 2020 Impact Report relate to *effectiveness* (i.e., the extent to which interventions help vulnerable families maintain stable housing). Strategically, the Siemer Institute should also consider incorporating measures of *efficiency* (i.e., whether interventions provide assistance to the people who are most likely to benefit from them, and minimize the extent to which resources are directed to those who are unlikely to experience housing instability in the absence of any assistance).²¹

²¹ Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness. (2019). "Homeless Prevention: A Review of the Literature." Retrieved October 7, 2020 from http://www.evidenceonhomelessness.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Homelessness_Prevention_Literature_Synthesis.pdf

- Many of the families entering Siemer Institute supported programs tended to have Housing, Income, Employment, and Savings/Debt self-sufficiency scores that suggest they were vulnerable to and at risk of experiencing housing or financial instability. In other words, this suggests that many of the supported programs may be operating efficiently. However, **28%** of the families served by programs using the Family Assessment Framework had Housing self-sufficiency scores of “Safe” (i.e., 3 or greater) at program entry. And **37%** of the families served by programs using the Family Assessment Framework had Income self-sufficiency scores of “Safe” (i.e., 3 or greater) at program entry.

The Siemer Institute should therefore consider explicitly incorporating the construct of efficiency into its program measurement criteria (e.g., via a screening algorithm). It should also consider providing guidance to supported programs regarding which types of families may not be good candidates for services, because they are likely to weather a short-term housing or income crisis with their own natural supports. Such actions would ensure resources are preserved for more vulnerable families.

- The impact analyses may suggest that many programs are screening out, or are not receiving referrals to, those families that are struggling to cope with behavioral health issues, significant legal challenges, or serious educational instability issues. If this interpretation is a reasonable one, to what extent is such screening reasonable and appropriate? Again, how can the Siemer Institute ensure that the families receiving these services are the ones who need it the most, and that can benefit most?
- The dropout analyses suggest there may be at least two scenarios in which families are at increased risk of dropping out from Siemer Institute supported programs: (1) families that are highly vulnerable to job loss and/or mental health issues; and (2) families that have relatively strong supports in place that allow them to ride out a temporary housing crisis vs. depending on a Siemer Institute supported program. (The latter point, of course, relates to the notion of program efficiency.) The Siemer Institute may need to carefully review the available data on this topic, and then discuss and set its expectations regarding dropouts with service providers.
- Another way to think about efficiency relates to the amount of time spent with the families who receive service and support. As was the case in 2016, there is

significant variability when it comes to the length of time families spend working with Siemer Institute supported programs. In 2019, a typical family spent less than a year in these programs; however, nearly half of programs had an average length of enrollment that was a year or longer, and nearly a fifth of programs had an average length of enrollment that was a year and a half or longer. Should the Siemer Institute issue more direct guidance regarding a reasonable length of time it is willing to support programs' work with a family? What data can be collected that would help guide such a decision?

- There is significant variability when it comes to how service providers operationalize completion from the Siemer Institute supported program. For example, only 4% of the programs in 2019 measured completion based on the families achieving a certain score on a standardized assessment. Instead, many programs rely on the case manager and family to set goals and achieve them "after a reasonable amount of time." Such variability is likely not optimal for a philanthropic entity with aspirations to increase the scale of its work and impact across the United States. How, then, should completion be defined?
- Related to the above point, could a standardized assessment (e.g., the Family Self-Sufficiency Assessment or similar) be used not only when a family enters and exits, but also during service delivery, to help determine if and when a family is ready to exit successfully?

Regarding Siemer Institute's Desired Impact

- The greatest overall average differences from program entry to program exit occur with the Housing and Community Involvement domains. Strategically, are these the areas of impact that the Siemer Institute would expect to see the greatest self-sufficiency gains? Are there others? For example, should families' average difference from program entry to exit in the Income self-sufficiency domain be greater than it is currently?
- Related to the above point, families showed sizable, significant increases from program entry to program exit on seven of the 18 domains measured by the Siemer Institute's Family Self-Sufficiency Assessment: Housing; Community Involvement; Income; Debt/Savings; Employment; Food; and Credit History. These seven domains likely represent the areas in which Siemer Institute supported programs are achieving the greatest impact with vulnerable families.

Are these the right ones, strategically? Are there other areas of impact that the Siemer Institute wishes to see evidence of large self-sufficiency gains over time?

- As noted in the 2020 Impact Report, families tended to enter Siemer Institute supported programs with a Financial self-sufficiency cluster score that would identify them as “vulnerable;” by the time of their exit, they had improved their financial situation to be close to “safe.” For whichever domains that the Siemer Institute decides to prioritize in terms of assessing the extent to which families are stronger after this intervention, what magnitude of change in these measurements should be considered sufficiently large?
- Siemer Institute’s core outcome for housing stability (i.e., families who set a goal to obtain and/or maintain appropriate, safe, stable housing and achieve outcome after a reasonable amount of time) is not measured consistently across programs. This makes it impossible for a rigorous assessment of the impacts that Siemer Institute supported programs are having in this domain (across programs), or if these outcomes are being achieved consistently (within programs).

Perhaps supported programs could also measure housing cost burden, or the percentage of household income spent on housing costs, at program entry and again at exit. Or perhaps supported programs could use the Housing self-sufficiency domain of the Family Self-Sufficiency Assessment, measured at program entry and again at exit (note: this is similar to how the Siemer Institute measures its core outcome of financial stability).

- Conceptually, is the construct of “self-sufficiency” the most appropriate and most useful metric for evaluating the impact of programs supported by the Siemer Institute? For measuring and demonstrating programming success with participating families?
- Overall, only about a quarter of service providers in 2020 measured optional outcomes that relate to educational stability and are child-focused. Yet the Siemer Institute was founded with the goal of creating opportunities for families to thrive and for students to achieve academic success. Strategically, should many more service providers be purposefully working on enhancing children’s educational situations?

- Is the Siemer Institute's current operationalization of its core educational stability outcome (i.e., children who did not have a disruptive move to a school other than school of origin) the most appropriate for assessing impact in this domain? Are there complementary ones that could be measured? Perhaps supported programs could also measure whether or not each family had a disruptive move during the 12 months *prior* to entering the program?²²
- As mentioned previously, although average self-sufficiency scores increased from program entry to exit for most families, Black families tended to report less change over time, as compared to other families. What specific, concrete steps can the Siemer Institute and its program partners take to understand the factors that may contribute to racial bias in families' experiences, and to design policies and procedures that eliminate these differential impacts?

Regarding 2-Gen Programming

- Strategically, does the Siemer Institute only want to work with service providers that clearly offer a 2-Generation informed approach to its programming? If yes, different service provider profile measurements and program effectiveness metrics are likely needed.
- Relatedly, many service providers do not seem to fully understand what the Siemer Institute expects with regard to 2-Gen programming, considering many of the self-descriptions programs provided. It is the evaluators' understanding that a 2-Generation approach is a strategic priority for the Siemer Institute. Ultimately, the Siemer Institute may need to provide more guidance to service providers and more directly measure the extent to which programs are truly implementing a 2-Gen approach with families.
- The Siemer Institute should consider encouraging providers to provide more detailed descriptions of their approach to designing and delivering 2-Gen programming or should include specific evaluation measures that assess a more complete definition of 2-Gen programming.

²² This hypothesis is inspired by other research in the homelessness prevention literature which found that one of the strongest predictors of a family entering shelter is whether or not that family has previously been in shelter. A similar pattern (conceptually) may be true for school instability as well.

Other Considerations

- In 2019, 49 of the 83 Siemer Institute supported programs that completed a Service Provider Profile (47%) reported they follow up with families that exit their programs, typically at the 6-month and/or 12-month mark(s). Looking to the future, the Siemer Institute should consider exploring the possibility of expanding its evaluation efforts, for example by working with these program partners that are currently following-up with exited participants. How could the Siemer Institute and these partners collaborate together to develop and implement a longitudinal impact assessment?
- Only a small percentage of supported programs have volunteered to use the Family Assessment Framework. As mentioned previously, those organizations that choose to participate may be different in systematic and meaningful ways from those organizations that do not participate. Is it possible to classify or categorize the programs that use and contribute to this Framework? If yes, how are they different from other (non-participating) organizations, in terms of the strategy that guides them, the processes they follow, and the results they achieve?
- Strategically, should all supported programs be required to use the Siemer Institute's Family Assessment Framework (or similar), tracking each family's progress over time on a standardized assessment? Because the Family Assessment Framework only reports outcomes for those families that exited these programs (vs. all families regardless of their exit status, which was a problem identified in the 2016 Impact Report), this could make it easier for the Siemer Institute to understand the actual impact its supported programs are having.

TACTICAL OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS

- Future versions of the Shared Measurement Framework and Family Assessment Framework data tools should include "logic checks" to proactively detect invalid, illogical, or impossible responses. The datasets should also be reviewed regularly to identify and correct such responses. For example:
 - Families without children should not be served by Siemer Institute supported programs, yet there are a small number of families with "0" children.
 - Families should not be allowed to answer "0" to the questions posed by the Family Self-Sufficiency Assessment.
 - No outcome measure should have a success rate greater than 100%.

- The core outcomes of housing stability and income stability increased markedly from 2016 to 2017 but then showed a marked decrease from 2017 to 2018. Was there a short-lived increase in program effectiveness? Or does this reflect some unknown artifact in data reporting or collection? If the pattern is likely attributable to a short-term increase in program effectiveness, then the Siemer Institute should explore this pattern in more detail, attempting to identify the factors that caused it and sharing these lessons with network partners.
- The analysis of Family Assessment Framework data that predicted which families dropped out of Siemer Institute programs identified a relationship that is not well understood. Specifically, families that entered Siemer Institute programs in 2019 or 2020 were more likely to drop out as compared to families that entered such programs in 2017 or 2018. What factor(s) might be responsible for this?
- Looking at the Family Assessment Framework dataset, some service providers appear to have extreme and therefore unlikely reporting values (e.g., completion rates of 100% or dropout rates that are nearly 50%). According to the Siemer Institute, this may be due to site providers “clearing cases” in bunches (e.g., reporting families that exited well after they had done so), among other possible explanations. What can be done to ensure proper use of this framework?
- The Siemer Institute should consider requiring funded programs share the family-level data they collect for the three core outcomes. Programs are already collecting this information, so the only additional programmatic burden would relate to sharing these with the Siemer Institute.
- There is measurement error associated with how the educational stability core outcome variable is calculated. When calculating the rate of disruptive moves that occur, the correct denominator should be the number of families with a school-aged child. Unfortunately, that specific number is not tracked/reported to the Siemer Institute, so instead it must use the total number of families as a proxy.
- The Siemer Institute should also continue to look for ways to streamline its data collection and aggregation processes.