SELF-SUFFICIENCY RESEARCH CLEARINGHOUSE
Framework for Selecting, Organizing, and Identifying Research

Framework for Selecting, Organizing and Identifying Research for the Self-Sufficiency Research Clearinghouse

Contents

Introduction

Purpose. The purpose of this report is to describe and document a collective framework and the process used to guide decisions about the selection, organization, and identification of research resources to include in the Self-Sufficiency Research Clearinghouse (SSRC). Following this brief introductory section, which provides background on the SSRC and how it was developed, this document is organized in six sections[i]:

- Section I describes the substantive focus of the SSRC;
- Section II describes the methodological focus of the SSRC;
- Section III provides a set of short descriptions regarding the purposes and uses of different types of studies, based on the research design and methodologies used;
- Section IV provides information about how to assess study quality within and across different research designs methodologies;
- Section V provides information on the types of research resources available on the SSRC; and
- Section VI is a list of key informational sources used to gather material for the SSRC collection.

Background on the Self-Sufficiency Research Clearinghouse. Funded by the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), the Self-Sufficiency Research Clearinghouse (SSRC) serves as a repository for collecting, cataloguing, and disseminating quality research relevant to the self-sufficiency of low-income families. In addition, the SSRC is designed to function as a central hub to encourage dialogue and facilitate the exchange of information among three primary audiences-- researchers, practitioners, and policymakers–and to inform program and policy development and improve practice.

In the years leading up to and following the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) in 1996, the Federal and State governments and foundations supported numerous research and evaluation studies about welfare reform, employment, earned income subsidy programs, and the effects of these programs on family and child well-being. We now have an array of research and evaluation studies on these topics, including random assignment evaluations, implementation studies, analyses of survey data, and meta-analyses, as well as practice-based perspective pieces about programs and practices that seem to work.

With support from OPRE, the team selected to design and implement the SSRC (including senior research and management staff from ICF International, Child Trends, and The Finance Project) is utilizing proven technologies to create this clearinghouse. The ICF team has benefited from the input of a Technical Working Group (TWG), whose members continue to be essential in guiding and shaping the development of the SSRC. The TWG for the SSRC includes researchers and practitioners with expertise on self-sufficiency, TANF and other public assistance programs, poverty, low-income employment programs, and family and child well-being. Drawing on these diverse perspectives, TWG members have provided guidance on all aspects of SSRC development, including the identification of key topics; potential sources for research and evaluation studies; the criteria used for selecting, categorizing, and identifying research; information dissemination strategies; and input into the Web site design.

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The Substantive Focus of the Self-Sufficiency Research Clearinghouse

The Self-Sufficiency Research Clearinghouse (SSRC) includes a broad range of research reports and additional resources relevant to the self-sufficiency of low-income families. The criteria established to guide decisions about the inclusion of research resources based on its substantive or topical focus is discussed below.

In general, research resources with a substantive focus that addressed **one or more** of the following four criteria are considered for inclusion:

- The goals of the program or policy being examined;
- The outcome measures being examined;
- The target population being examined; and
- The core topical focus of the study and its pertinence to the self-sufficiency of low-income families.

Below are a set of questions relevant to the above criteria that are being used to help guide decisions regarding the inclusion of a study or a research-based resource based on its substantive and topical focus.

Program and policy goals
1. Does the study focus on programs or policies with a primary or secondary goal of improving the economic self-sufficiency of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients and other low-income populations?

Outcome measures
2. Does the study examine economic self-sufficiency outcomes, such as employment, earnings, income, poverty status, or the receipt of TANF and related non-TANF public assistance programs?

Target population
3. Does the study examine the issues faced by a key population of interest, such as current or past welfare recipients, low-income, economically disadvantaged families and children, or hard-to-employ populations?
4. Does the study focus on the well-being and experiences of TANF and low-income populations, including children and families?

Core topics[ii]
5. Does the study examine the implementation, fidelity, replication and cost-effectiveness of TANF or self-sufficiency related programs?

6. Does the study examine the implementation and effects of TANF and related welfare policies on economic self-sufficiency and on family and child well-being?

7. Does the study examine the implementation and effects of employment and training programs and strategies, such as education, employment placement and retention strategies, as pertaining to the economic self-sufficiency of TANF recipients and other low-income populations?

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8. Does the study examine the implementation and effects of earned income tax credits and work supports, including subsidized employment and tax policies, as pertaining to the economic self-sufficiency of TANF recipients and other low-income populations?

9. Does the study examine the implementation and effects of child support enforcement and receipt and non-TANF public assistance programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (commonly referred to as SNAP or Food Stamps), housing assistance programs, or child care subsidies on the economic self-sufficiency of low-income populations?

10. Does the study examine whether or how child support, child care, family structure, father involvement and non-TANF public assistance programs moderate or mediate the effects of welfare, employment, and earnings subsidy programs on economic self-sufficiency outcomes?

11. Does the study consider recent trends in relevant topics such as poverty, employment, particular barriers to self-sufficiency (i.e. incarceration), or the utilization of TANF and other public assistance programs, including food and housing assistance programs?

Out-of-Scope Topics. The SSRC collection is inclusive of a variety of substantive topics; however, not every study on a given topic is germane to self-sufficiency, and some topics are covered quite broadly by other clearinghouses. Therefore, studies specifically focused on work and family supports as stand-alone topics are only included when they are explicitly focused on and pertinent to the economic self-sufficiency of low-income families.

Links to Resources on Related Clearinghouses. In an effort to avoid exhausting resources by duplicating information available on other Clearinghouses, the SSRC provides links to related clearinghouses with research on topics that may be of interest to SSRC users. This includes but is not limited to:

- Child Care and Early Education Research Connections;
- Child Welfare Information Gateway;
- National Child Care Information Center;
- National Healthy Marriage Resource Center;
- National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse;
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) USER Information Dissemination Services; and
- Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network.

Organization of Information.[iii] While the primary organizing factor of the SSRC is the substantive topic of the study, the SSRC is designed to make it easy for users to search for information in a variety of ways. Based on feedback received through various outreach strategies, including focus groups and needs assessments, information is also organized and searchable by target population, location, frequently asked questions, publication type, research methodology, author, and date of publication.

The Methodological Focus of the Self-Sufficiency Research Clearinghouse

While the three target audiences of the Self-Sufficiency Research Clearinghouse (SSRC)—researchers, practitioners, and policymakers—share an interest in the economic well-being of low-income populations, they often seek different types of research resources based on their unique informational needs. Therefore, the SSRC collection includes studies that use varying research methodologies to address a wide range of research topics and questions. For example, the SSRC includes studies that examine the effects of programs and policies on the economic self-sufficiency of low-income families; examine the well-being and status of low-income families; describe trends in poverty rates; highlight strategies for effectively implementing social policy programs and their costs; describe changes in major policies; describe program utilization rates for public assistance programs; and describe whether or how social programs and policies affect the well-being of low-income families and children.

More specifically, studies using the following methodological designs are eligible for inclusion:

- Random assignment designs (also referred to as randomized controlled trials or experimental designs);
- Quasi-experimental designs;
- Non-experimental outcome study designs (including longitudinal and cross-sectional designs);
- Quantitative descriptive designs and trends analyses;
- Implementation study designs;
- Qualitative study designs (including ethnographies, qualitative case studies); and
- Mixed methods studies, involving both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Studies that rely on anecdotes or testimonials and that do not use systematic methods to gather and analyze data are not eligible for inclusion.

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Understanding Research Study Designs and Methodologies: A Resource for the Self-Sufficiency Research Clearinghouse

The Self-Sufficiency Research Clearinghouse (SSRC) has three target audiences: researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. The developers of the SSRC recognize that many of the targeted users of the site, particularly those without research backgrounds or expertise, may seek out the SSRC as a resource for quality research on family self-sufficiency but may not understand how to interpret or apply findings of different types of studies based on the research design and methodology used. To help address this issue, the SSRC provides brief definitions of different research designs and methodologies with information on their purposes and uses (see below).

The descriptions provided below also appear as "pop-ups" that are linked to study abstracts. For more detailed information on the definitions, purposes, and uses of different types of research studies, based on the research design and methodology employed, please click here to read Research Methods Fact Sheets.[iv]

Random assignment designs. Random assignment studies (also known as experimental studies or randomized controlled trials-RCTs) implement a lottery-style system to randomly assign individuals, families, groups, or community sites to a treatment group that has the opportunity to receive services or to a control group that does not have the opportunity to receive the same set of services. Along the continuum of methodological rigor for outcomes studies, well-executed random assignment studies provide the highest level of evidence of effectiveness of a program, policy or practice.

Purposes and Uses. Well-implemented random assignment studies with low attrition rates and appropriate methods of data analysis can be used to:

- Assess the overall impacts of a program, policy, or practice and allow for conclusions to be drawn about cause and effect;
- Provide information on whether, to what extent, and in what direction specific outcomes are changing for those in a treatment group as compared to the control group, both overall and for sub-populations; and
- Shed light on whether some sub-populations are benefiting from a program, policy, or practice while others are not.

However, in some cases, findings for random assignment studies cannot be generalized beyond the site or population studied. Moreover, not all policies and programs lend themselves well to random assignment designs. For instance, it is quite difficult to randomize communities.

Quasi-experimental designs. Quasi-experimental studies compare outcomes among groups receiving program services to a comparison group, comprised of a similar population or to national, state, or local benchmark data. Some types of quasi-experimental studies monitor changes within a group over time, using repeated measurement techniques to compare outcomes before, during, and after receipt of program services.

Purposes and Uses. Quasi-experimental studies can be used to:

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- Assess whether participation in a program is associated with intended changes in participant outcomes; and
- Provide information on whether, to what extent and in what direction outcomes are changing for program participants and whether outcomes differ by subgroup.

However, because access to the program is not determined through random assignment, these studies generally provide a less rigorous test of effectiveness. This is because changes in outcomes may be influenced by participant characteristics or other factors that are not related to program participation. Therefore, findings cannot clearly be linked to program participation. When random assignment studies are not feasible, well-implemented quasi-experimental studies can provide a moderate level of evidence of effectiveness.

Quasi-experimental studies may collect quantitative and qualitative data.

Non-experimental outcome study designs. Non-experimental outcome studies are descriptive or correlational studies that examine outcomes for a given population within a specific geographic setting. *Cross-sectional studies* are based on information that is collected at a single point in time, while *longitudinal studies* benefit from information being collected at multiple time points. In general, studies that examine associations among variables are strengthened when they use multivariate analyses to look at the effects of multiple variables. *Multivariate analyses* attempt to control for the effects of a given variable on an outcome of interest. Unlike random assignment and quasi-experimental studies, there is not *necessarily* an evaluative purpose for non-experimental studies. Instead, outcomes may be monitored to gather information on the status or well-being of a population of interest. A few examples of non-experimental outcomes studies that are relevant to the SSRC include: studies of welfare leavers in a state; longitudinal studies of welfare applicants in a state or locality; research on the implications of poverty or welfare receipt for children; or descriptive studies examining the status or well-being of the working poor nationally, at a single point in time or over multiple time points.

Purposes and Applications. There are several types of non-experimental outcomes studies that have various applications for the self-sufficiency field. These include:

- **Longitudinal, multivariate studies** may examine predictive relationships between key variables of interest, such as a study that examines how often varied groups of low-income families with housing vouchers keep their jobs. Alternatively, longitudinal multivariate analyses might examine how income and employment interact with program receipt to affect the development of young children in low-income families.
- **Trends analyses** that focus on national, state or local indicators. For example, the SSRC includes research on poverty levels or public assistance utilization rates. While these analyses are not able to shed light on whether a program or policy is effective in improving economic self-sufficiency among low-income families, trends analyses allow users, such as state policymakers, to understand how their state is faring relative to topic under examination.
- **Quantitative descriptive studies** may provide information about how a given population is faring. These rich, quantitative analyses differ from trends analyses in that they focus on a specific point in time rather than patterns over time, and are useful because they often include statistical comparisons of the well-being of different subgroups.

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Both trends analyses and descriptive reports can be used to indicate that certain sub-populations are in greater need, which would allow policymakers and practitioners to better target their services. Because these studies provide descriptive or correlational information they do not allow for causal inferences to be drawn from findings.

Compared to more rigorous studies that frequently take a long time to conduct, trends analyses and descriptive research on economic self-sufficiency may be of value because they can be conducted more quickly, they often use cross-sectional data without high attrition, and are often based on more recent data than rigorous outcomes studies.

Non-experimental outcomes studies may collect quantitative and qualitative data.

Implementation study designs. Implementation studies (including formative and process evaluations) use quantitative and qualitative methods, such as surveys, analysis, and review of administrative or program records, interviews, focus groups, and direct observations, to understand how a program, initiative, policy, or practice is being implemented, and the factors associated with its success or failure. Implementation research involves the systematic study of the processes and elements within and around program operations, including the community context, organizational characteristics, and program features.

Purposes and Applications. Implementation research is used to investigate and to document the following:

- Design and development factors:
    - The formation of a program, policy or initiative from the planning stages through early implementation;
    - The implementation of a program or policy during its re-structuring;
    - Effective practices that support replication across sites or ineffective practices that impede replication; and
    - Lessons about effective and ineffective practices.
- Program and organizational factors:
    - Programmatic and organizational operations, including the quality of leadership and management and staffing;
    - Staff training quality and needs; and
    - The formation, quality, and use of collaborative partnerships.
- Program quality, dosage, and fidelity factors
    - The experiences of participants;
    - The intensity and quality of program offerings and services;
    - The breadth, reach, interpretation, and application of a policy or practice;
    - The level of compliance of a policy across sites;
    - Differences in program implementation across sites; and
    - The implementation quality issues that may be responsible for the successful or unsuccessful performance of a policy, program, or site.
- Recruitment and participation factors:
    - Whether or how a program is reaching its target population;
    - Participant retention, loss, and use of services; and
    - Outreach strategies and barriers to participation.

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- External factors:
  - o Political, community, or other contextual factors that may affect implementation and success,
  - o Implementation studies may collect both quantitative and qualitative data.

Qualitative research methods and designs. Qualitative studies employ methods such as interviews, focus groups, observations, and document reviews to gather non-numerical information about individuals, programs, policies, or other phenomena. Qualitative studies are appropriately designed to answer a different set of questions than those addressed by impact or outcomes studies. Implementation studies *often* employ qualitative methods to gather information and, as such, are sometimes used to explore underlying issues, questions or generate a hypothesis. However, qualitative research is not necessarily linked to the implementation or operational processes of a policy, program, practice, or initiative; therefore, the two types of studies are not the same. For instance, ethnographic research (a qualitative research method) can be used to describe the experiences of individuals. Many studies, particularly evaluation research studies, use mixed methods, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods, to address research questions.

Purposes and Uses. Qualitative research can provide useful lessons about program or policy implementation, such as:

- Describe how a program was formed and implemented;
- Identify whether a program is implemented with fidelity to its original model; and
- Highlight whether or how programs or policies are implemented differently across locations.

Ethnographic research and case study reports can provide an in-depth exploration of the experiences of a set of individuals or groups in or across specific locations. They can be highly heuristic and may identify unintended consequences of policies or procedures.

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Assessing Study Quality and Rigor across and within Research Designs and Methodologies

The Self-Sufficiency Research Clearinghouse (SSRC) is inclusive of studies both with regard to the substantive focus and the research methodology employed. Rather than excluding a study based on the type of methodology used, the SSRC aims to do the following:

- Incorporate higher quality studies across and within each research methodology;
- Highlight studies that are especially strong or important; and
- Exclude studies that are considered to be of poor quality.

Below are a set of guidelines (presented in the form of questions) that are used as guidelines by the SSRC team to assess study quality and to identify studies that suffer from major methodological flaws that might be excluded from the site. Given the large number of studies that could be included in the SSRC, the research and products reviewed will be completed as resources permit. The guidelines below are presented as a resource for users of the SSRC to help them to distinguish between higher and lower quality studies. These guidelines are pertinent to all research designs and represent cross-cutting criteria of study quality and rigor:

- Is the study well-designed and well-implemented based on the core research questions it is designed to answer?
- Does the study suffer from any major methodological limitations that negate its usefulness?
- Does the study present information about the study design, analytic approach, sample size and selection criteria, measures used, and data collection methods and procedures?
- Does the study present information that is essential for understanding study quality, including study sample attrition rates, potential confounding factors that might explain findings, potential for omitted variable bias, and any other potential threats to the study's external and internal validity? Are the study authors clear, complete, and transparent in their presentation of the study's limitations?
- For quantitative or outcomes studies, is the study clear and complete in its presentation of numerical information in tables and figures, particularly as compared to similar studies? Depending on the type of study, information that might be expected to be presented may include means, coefficients, standard deviations, standard errors, effect sizes, missing data, and independent and control variables used in models.
- For quantitative and outcomes studies, does the study employ recognized standards for presenting and describing levels of significance and magnitude of study effects?
- Does the study use multiple sources or methods to triangulate data when possible and appropriate?
- Is there any reason to question the independence of the researchers who conducted the study? If so, is this issue adequately addressed in the study report?

For **random assignment and quasi-experimental studies**, quality criteria that are used to distinguish higher quality studies from lower quality studies may include the following:

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- Does the study use an adequate sample size? For designs using a control or comparison group, this is important for reducing selection bias resulting from pre-treatment differences in the treatment and control groups and to increase power to detect differences.
- For random assignment studies, are treatment and control groups largely equivalent, particularly on outcomes of interest, at the beginning of the study? For quasi-experimental studies, what methods were used to match treatment and comparison group members, such as propensity score matching, and what is the resulting quality of the match?
- Does the study have reasonably high response rates for surveys and interviews? Are the response rates relatively similar for the control and treatment groups throughout the duration of the study?
- What is the study's sample attrition or dropout rates, and are the attrition rates relatively equivalent for the control or comparison group and the treatment groups? Stronger studies maintain a higher proportion (e.g., 80% or more) of their original study sample over the course of the study, which helps to diminish selection bias resulting from any differences between study participants who chose to remain in the study and those who drop out.
- Based on the research questions, does the study use appropriate data collection methods and constructs and measures?
- Does the study use appropriate modeling and analytic techniques, such as intent-to-treat analysis?
- Do the study's analytic techniques match the method of randomization? For instance, are outcomes for the group cluster randomized studies analyzed at the group level?
- Does the study maintain a low level of cross-group contamination with high program participation levels for the treatment group and few, if any, control or comparison group members gaining access to the program intervention?
- Does the study provide adequate documentation about whether and how the program, policy, or initiative was implemented as intended?
- Is the duration of the study intervention period, such as the period of randomization, relatively comparable to the length of the program intervention in practice?

For **non-experimental outcome studies**, quality criteria that are used to distinguish higher quality studies from lower quality studies may include the following:

- How adequate is the sample size for addressing the core research questions and for conducting subgroup analyses?
- How representative is the study sample of the population or geographic region of study?
- Does the study have reasonably high response rates for surveys and interviews? Are the response rates relatively similar for all subgroups studied?
- For longitudinal studies, does the study have a reasonably high response rate? If not, does the study provide a good explanation for this and use statistical techniques to try to address concerns this may present?
- Does the study use adequate data collection methods?
- What is the quality and breadth of constructs and measures? Does the study provide an adequate level of depth of analysis for key outcome measures of interest?
- Does the study use appropriate modeling and analytic techniques, such as the use of controls for potentially confounding factors as relevant based on the study question?

For **implementation and qualitative studies,** quality criteria that are used to distinguish higher quality studies from lower quality studies may include the following:

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- Does the study use a large enough number and type of informants to allow for representation of different perspectives?
- Does the study use adequate data collection methods, including the systematic collection and documentation of qualitative and quantitative information? While qualitative research is not necessarily expected to be representative or comprehensive, the data collection procedures are expected to be systematic and methodical.
- What is the quality and breadth of the constructs and measures used? Does the study provide an adequate level of depth of analysis for key issues of interest?
- Does the study use appropriate techniques for qualitative and quantitative analysis?
- Does the study have high inter-rater reliability for direct observations?
- Does the study use records to document numerical facts or information when available and appropriate? Are records data collected and analyzed systematically across sites?
- For cross-case analyses, does the study employ consistent methods and procedures to gather information?
- For studies that require the recollection of facts and details from far in the past, does the study rely on multiple informants and data sources as opposed to individual interviews?
- Does the study use multiple sources or methods to triangulate data when possible and appropriate?
- For implementation studies using surveys with participants, program staff, or other stakeholders, how representative is the study sample? Does the study have high response rates for surveys and interviews?

Minimum Quality Criteria. The SSRC aims to serve as the primary resource for quality research related to the self-sufficiency of low-income families. To do this, the SSRC team responsible for designing and populating the SSRC has developed a collection strategy that prioritizes the collection of information from trusted sources that are highly recognized for producing high quality research and resources.[v]
As stated above, given the large number of studies that focus on topics that are pertinent to the self-sufficiency of low-income families, resources limit the SSRC team's ability to thoroughly review every study; therefore, studies falling in one or more of the following categories may be identified for a thorough quality-check review:

- Older studies that may not use currently accepted best practices in data collection and analytic methods;
- Studies produced by institutions with a reputation for producing low-quality or biased research;
- Studies that are not funded or commissioned by government agencies or other institutions that are widely recognized for supporting high-quality research;
- Studies that are not peer-reviewed by government agencies or through blind peer review boards that are used by journal or book publishing agencies and research institutions; or
- Studies that are conducted or funded by advocacy or membership organizations, or research, that for some other reason, may be potentially perceived as biased.

If one of the studies identified for the quality check suffers from major methodological limitations based on one or more of the guidelines for assessing study quality described above, such that its findings could not be trusted, the study may be excluded from the SSRC collection. Additionally, if a study is not well-designed or executed to answer its core research questions, it may be excluded. For example, studies with

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very high attrition rates or biased sampling strategies, with no reasonable explanations provided to explain these methodological flaws or why these studies are still valuable, may be excluded. Another example of a study that may be excluded would be a descriptive study that purports to focus on the state of New York, but that has a small, limited sample based on data from one region of the state (and that does not include weights or other analytic techniques to improve its representativeness). Alternatively, such a study might be included with a caveat in the study abstract indicating the study's limitations and noting its potential usefulness for its rich, detailed information about a specific region of the state of New York. Another example of a study that might be excluded would be a program implementation study that is heavily reliant on interview data, but does not include interviews with the key leaders or staff responsible for designing or implementing the program in question.

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Types of Resources Available on the Self-Sufficiency Research Clearinghouse

The three target audiences of the SSRC—researchers, practitioners, and policymakers—while they share an interest in self-sufficiency, often seek different types of research resources based on their unique informational needs. Therefore, in addition to providing research studies and articles, the SSRC will also provide different types of resources and publications that may be of interest to different types of users.

Resource Type	Description
Research Reports & Papers	Individual research reports or research papers that may or may not be peer-reviewed.
Journal Articles and Book Chapters	Peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters.
Literature Reviews and Meta-Analyses	Reports that employ systematic methods to collect, analyze and synthesize findings across a set of studies that are examining similar issues, programs, or policies. In the case of meta-analyses, studies also examine the same outcome(s) of interest as well.
Practitioner Briefs	Short documents that summarize research findings or other information that is relevant to practitioners, such as information about best practices in direct services or effective program strategies.
Research Briefs and Fact Sheets	Short documents that summarize research findings, statistics or other information. These documents are often short versions of research reports or literature reviews.
Policy Briefs and Fact Sheets	Short documents that summarize research or provide descriptive information about policies. In some cases, these documents are targeted to policymakers, although policy briefs are often of interest to practitioners responsible for implementing policies as well as to researchers conducting research or evaluations on policies.
Government Reports	Reports produced by government agencies that present research findings, statistical analyses, information on the utilization of public assistance resources, cost-effectiveness analyses and other types of information.
White Papers	Papers that are often produced by topical experts that discuss research findings, statistics, study methods or other issues.
Annotated Bibliographies	A topical-based list of references, with a brief description of the resources referenced.
Research Methods Papers	Papers that discuss research methods and statistical procedures for addressing key research questions.
Databases Available for Public Use	Links are provided to databases with relevant information on national, state and local data
Legislation	Links are provided to Web sites that regularly collect and update information on legislation that is relevant to low-income self-sufficiency issues.
Products of the SSRC	Background information about the SSRC that were produced by the ICF Team, including researchers from ICF International, Child Trends and The Finance Project.
Research Framework	A set of documents that, taken together, describe the process used to select, organize and identify research for the SSRC.
Research Methods Fact Sheets	A set of fact sheets that provide background information on different types of research methodologies, including their definitions, purposes and applications. Fact sheets are available on random assignment studies, quasi-experimental studies, non-experimental longitudinal outcomes studies, non-experimental cross-sectional outcomes studies, implementation studies and qualitative research.
"State of the Science" Review of Self-Sufficiency Research	Based on an analysis of the resources included in the SSRC collection as of June 2011, the State of the Science review summarizes the state of the existing literature on family self sufficiency. The review describes research currently underway, assesses the strength of the research base, identifies gaps in the existing knowledge, and incorporates a list of key resources.

Informational Sources

As a national clearinghouse, the Self-Sufficiency Research Clearinghouse (SSRC) collection includes resources gathered from a wide range of sources, including the following:

- Research and think tank organizations, including independent research institutions and university-based research centers;
- Federal, state, and local governments, other government agencies, and membership organizations of government employees that conduct, publish, sponsor, and/or disseminate self-sufficiency research;
- Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers that conduct or compile relevant research;
- Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers; and
- Child and family policy research centers;
- Clearinghouses that compile related research;
- Foundations that publish, sponsor, or disseminate research; and
- Advocacy organizations, membership organizations and policy institutes that publish, sponsor, or disseminate self-sufficiency research;

In addition to the institutional sources that are regularly scanned for information relevant for the SSRC, information is gathered from academic social science search engines and through calls for research through various listservs.[vi]

Please see Appendix I for a list of institutional sources that are used to develop the SSRC collection.

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[i] Note: This report is a compilation of six sections that, taken together, compose the research framework used to guide decisions about the selection, organization, and identification of research resources for the SSRC. Each section is written as if it might appear on the SSRC as an individual background document.

[ii] Note: The ICF team is currently developing a document describing our resource collection methodology. A critical component of this methodology is a list of key words and search terms, which has already been drafted, but is currently under review by the internal team. Once this list of key words and search terms has undergone review by OPRE and the TWG and is finalized, it may serve as an additional resource for users of the Web site who seek to understand the key substantive topics covered in the SSRC collection.

[iii] Note: Once the site is closer to final, this section will need to be updated to describe the organization of information on the Web site and actual search functions.

[iv] Note: In the year two continuation grant proposal, we propose to develop these fact sheets which will include lists of reference documents.

[v] Note: The ICF team is currently developing a document describing the resource collection methodology. Once completed, this section or the section on informational sources could be updated to provide more detail about how research studies and other resources were searched and selected. Alternatively, a final section on the collection strategy could be added to this document.

[vi]Note: Once the site is closer to final, this section will need to be updated to incorporate the actual and final list of institutions whose Web sites were searched and to describe any additional strategies used to gather information, such as calls for research on certain listservs.

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Appendix I: Institutional Sources used for SSRC Collection

Informational Sources		
Site Name	**Site Address**	**Categorization**
Abt Associates	www.abtassociates.com	Research and think tank organizations
Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	www.acf.hhs.gov	Federal Government
Aids.gov	http://aids.gov/	Clearinghouse for topical research and resources
American Enterprise Institute	www.aei.org	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
American Psychological Association	http://www.apa.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
American Public Human Services Association	www.aphsa.org	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
Annie E. Casey Foundation	www.aecf.org	Foundations
Asset Funders Network	www.assetfunders.org	Foundations
Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	www.aspe.hhs.gov	Federal Government
Association for Public Policy Analysis	www.appam.org	Researchers
Bendheim-Thoman Center for Research on Child Well-being - Woodrow Wilson School of Public Policy, Princeton University (Fragile Families Study)	http://crcw.princeton.edu/	Child and family policy research centers
Berkeley Policy Associates	www.berkeleypolicyassociates.com	Research and think tank organizations
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	www.gatesfoundation.org	Foundations
Brookings Institution	www.brookings.edu	Research and think tank organizations
Cato Institute	www.cato.org	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
Center for American Progress	www.americanprogress.org	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
Center for Community Change	http://www.communitychange.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
Center for Law and Social Policy	www.clasp.org	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes

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Informational Sources		
Site Name	**Site Address**	**Categorization**
Center for Poverty Research - University of Kentucky	www.ukcpr.org	Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers
Center for Social Service Research - School of Social Welfare, University of California-Berkeley	http://cssr.berkeley.edu/	Child and family policy research centers
Center for Work and Family at Boston College	http://www.bc.edu/centers/cwf/	Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities	www.cbpp.org	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
Center on Hunger and Poverty - Brandeis University	http://www.socialedge.org/features/resources/concerns-problems-and-solutions/hunger-and-famine/center-on-hunger-and-poverty-brandeis-university	Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers
Center on Poverty, Work and Opportunity - University of North Carolina	Law.unc.edu/centers/poverty	Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers
Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change - Case Western Reserve University	http://povertycenter.cwru.edu/	Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers
Chapin Hall Center for Children - University of Chicago	http://chapinhall.org/	Child and family policy research centers
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	www.mott.org	Foundations
Child Care and Early Education Research Connections	www.ResearchConnections.org	Welfare, social services, and economic self-sufficiency clearinghouse
Child Care Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb	Federal Government
Child Trends	www.ChildTrends.org	Research and think tank organizations
Child Welfare Information Gateway	www.ChildWelfare.gov	Welfare, social services, and economic self-sufficiency clearinghouse
ChildCare.gov	www.ChildCare.gov	Clearinghouse for topical research and resources
Congressional Black Caucus Foundation	http://www.cbcfinc.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress	www.loc.gov/crsinfo/	Federal Government
Corporate Voices for Working Families)	http://www.cvworkingfamilies.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
Council of State Governments	http://www.csg.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
Council on Social Work Education	http://www.cswe.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes

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Site Name	Site Address	Categorization
David and Lucile Packard Foundation	www.packard.org/	Foundations
Department of Labor Employment and Training Indian and Native American Program	http://www.doleta.gov/dinap/	Government agencies and entities
Economic Policy Institute	www.epi.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes / Research and Think Tank organization
Economic Success Clearinghouse (Welfare Information Network)	http://www.financeproject.org/index.cfm?page=24	Welfare, social services, and economic self-sufficiency clearinghouse
Edna McConnell Clark Foundation	www.emcf.org/	Foundations
Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor	www.doleta.gov/	Federal Government
Eos Foundation	www.eosfoundation.org/	Foundations
Family Self-Sufficiency Work Group (managed by Child Trends)	www.ChildTrends.org	Government agencies and entities
Food Research Action Center	www.frac.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
Ford Foundation	www.fordfound.org/	Foundations
Freddie Mac Foundation	www.freddiemacfoundation.org/	Foundations
Future of Children - Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University and the Brookings Institution	http://futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/	Child and family policy research centers
Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development Center - Georgetown University	www.gucchd.georgetown.edu/	Child and family policy research centers
Grant makers for Children, Youth, and Families	www.gcyf.org/	Foundations
Grant makers Income Security Taskforce	www.gistfunders.org/	Foundations
Heritage Foundation	www.heritage.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
Institute for Policy Research, Child, Adolescent and Families Studies Program - Northwestern University	http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/research/reschild1.html	Child and family policy research centers
Institute for Research on Poverty - University of Wisconsin	Irp.wisc.edu	Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers
Institute for the Study of Homelessness and Poverty - Weingart Center	http://www.weingart.org/	Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers
Institute for Women's Policy Research	www.iwpr.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes / Research and Think Tank organization
Institute of Education Sciences/What Works Clearinghouse	http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/	Clearinghouse for topical research and resources

Informational Sources		
Site Name	Site Address	Categorization
International City/County Management Association	http://icma.org/en/icma/home	Government agencies and entities
Joblessness and Urban Poverty Research Program - Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University	www.hks.harvard.edu/centers/wiener/programs	Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers
Jobs for the Future	www.jff.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	http://www.macfound.org/site/c.lkLXJ8MQKrH/b.3599935/k.1648/John_D__Catherine_T_MacArthur_Foundation.htm	Foundations
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies	www.jointcenter.org/	Research and think tank organizations
Joyce Foundation	http://www.joycefdn.org/	Foundations
Lewin Group	www.lewin.com/	Research and think tank organizations
Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.	www.mathematica-mpr.com/	Research and think tank organizations
MDRC	www.mdrc.org/	Research and think tank organizations
National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics	http://www.nawrs.org/	Researchers
National Association of Counties	www.naco.org/	Government agencies and entities
National Association of County Human Services Administration	http://www.nachsa.org/	Government agencies and entities
National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials	http://www.naleo.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
National Association of Social Workers	http://www.naswdc.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
National Association of State Budget Officers	http://www.nasbo.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
National Association of State Workforce Agencies	www.workforceatm.org/	Practitioners
National Association of Welfare Research and Statistics	http://www.nawrs.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
National Association of Workforce Development Professionals	www.nawdp.org/	Practitioners
National Black Caucus of State Legislators	http://www.nbcsl.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes

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Informational Sources		
Site Name	**Site Address**	**Categorization**
National Bureau of Economic Research	www.nber.org/	Welfare, social services, and economic self-sufficiency clearinghouse
National Center for Children and Families - Teachers College, Columbia University	http://ccf.tc.columbia.edu/	Child and family policy research centers
National Center for Children in Poverty - Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University	Nccp.org	Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers
National Center on Fathers and Families - University of Pennsylvania	www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu/	Child and family policy research centers
National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center	Nccic.acf.hhs.gov	Welfare, social services, and economic self-sufficiency clearinghouse
National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information	http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/	Clearinghouse for topical research and resources
National Conference of State Legislatures	www.ncsl.org	Government agencies and entities
National Congress of American Indians Policy Research Center	http://www.ncaiprc.org/	Government agencies and entities
National Council of La Raza	http://www.nclr.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
National Eligibility Workers Association	http://www.nationalnew.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices	www.nga.org	Government agencies and entities
National Healthy Marriage Resource Center	www.healthymarriageinfo.org/	Welfare, social services, and economic self-sufficiency clearinghouse
National Human Services Assembly	www.nassembly.org/	Practitioners
National Implementation Research Network	http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~nirn/	Research and think tank organizations
National Institutes of Health	www.nih.gov/	Government agencies and entities
National League of Cities	www.nlc.org/	Government agencies and entities
National Network for Social Work Managers	https://www.socialworkmanager.org/	Practitioners
National Organization of Black County Officials	http://www.nobcoinc.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
National Poverty Center - Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan	http://npc.umich.edu/	Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers
National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse	www.fatherhood.gov/	Welfare, social services, and economic self-sufficiency clearinghouse
National Transitional Jobs Network	www.heartlandalliance.org/ntjn/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes / Practitioners

Informational Sources		
Site Name	Site Address	Categorization
National Urban League	http://www.nul.org/	Government agencies and entities
Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government - State University of New York	Rockinst.org	Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers / Research and Think Tank Organizations
New American Foundation, Asset Building Program	http://assetbuilding.org/	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
Northwest Area Foundation	http://www.nwaf.org/Home.aspx	Foundations
Office of Family Assistance, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/	Federal Government
Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/	Federal Government
Office of Policy Development and Research, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	www.huduser.org/	Federal Government
Office of Research and Analysis, U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services	http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/	Federal Government
Open Society Institute	http://www.soros.org/	Foundations
Ottinger Foundation	www.ottingerfoundation.org/	Foundations
Pew Charitable Trusts, Center on the States	www.pewtrusts.org	Foundations
PolicyLink	http://www.policylink.org/site/c.lkIXLbMNJrE/b.5136441/k.BD4A/Home.htm	Research and think tank organizations
Public Welfare Foundation	www.publicwelfare.org/	Foundations
Public/Private Ventures	www.ppv.org/	Research and think tank organizations
RAND Corporation	www.rand.org/	Research and think tank organizations
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	www.rwjf.org/	Foundations
Rockefeller Foundation	www.rockefellerfoundation.org/	Foundations
RTI International	www.rti.org/	Research and think tank organizations
Rural Policy Research Institute - University of Missouri-Columbia	http://www.rupri.org/index.php	Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law	PovertyLaw.org	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes / Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers
Social Policy Research Associates	www.spra.com/	Research and think tank organizations
State Data Center - University of Connecticut	Ctsdc.uconn.edu	Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers
The Finance Project	FinanceProject.org	Research and think tank organizations
The United States Conference of Mayors	www.usmayors.org/	Government agencies and entities

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Site Name	Site Address	Categorization
The Urban Institute	www.urban.org/	Research and think tank organizations
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics	http://www.bls.gov/	Federal Government
U.S. Government Accountability Office	www.gao.gov/	Federal Government
United States Census Bureau	Ukcpr.org	Federal Government
University-Based Child and Family Policy Consortium	http://www.childpolicyuniversityconsortium.com/index.html	Advocacy organizations, membership organizations, and policy institutes
W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research	www.upjohninst.org/	Research and think tank organizations
W.K. Kellogg Foundation	www.wkkf.org/	Foundations
Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network (sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Family Assistance)	Peerta.acf.hhs.gov	Clearinghouses
Welfare Reform Academy - University of Maryland	www.welfareacademy.org/	Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers
West Coast Poverty Center - University of Washington	Wcpc.washington.edu	Poverty and self-sufficiency research centers
William T. Grant Foundation	www.wtgrantfoundation.org/	Foundations
Workforce3one.org (sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration)	www.workforce3one.org/	Clearinghouses
Workforceusa.net	http://workforceusa.net/	Clearinghouses

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