

LEO CASE STUDY

April 2018

INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT & PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY: LAUNCHING AN OBJECTIVE IMPACT EVALUATION

ISSUE: SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Many current approaches to fighting poverty provide temporary relief, but do not support individuals and families striving for permanent pathways out of poverty. Innovative programs that take a holistic and comprehensive approach offer an alternative. Such programs help individuals and families identify and address the root causes of poverty and often coordinate across areas such as housing, health, employment, and education.



"Strong research can not only lend support to a new, promising intervention, but can also let policymakers and practitioners know when it is time to improve."

Corinne Weaver, Director of Research & Evaluation,
Catholic Charities Fort Worth

WHY EVALUATE?

The **Padua Pilot** is a "supercharged" case management program developed by Catholic Charities Fort Worth to help families experiencing poverty achieve long-term self-sufficiency. The program combines wrap-around case management with low caseloads, detailed needs assessments, customized action plans, and financial assistance. Stakeholders commissioned the study to learn more about the program's impact on outcomes such as **income, employment, and health**.

COLLABORATORS

LEO is collaborating with Catholic Charities Fort Worth, the University of Chicago, the University of Wisconsin Survey Center, and the Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

1. COMPARING OUTCOMES

LEO studies isolate the impact of a particular program by comparing outcomes for two groups of individuals who are the same, on average, except for the program of interest (i.e., "treatment" and "control" groups). In this case, there is **excess demand** for the Padua Pilot: more need than available program openings. Given this, LEO helped stakeholders set up an enrollment system where all eligible individuals have a fair and **equal chance** of being offered an available program opening. This, in turn, has enabled a rigorous **randomized controlled trial** (RCT) evaluation to study program impact. Individuals unable to be served due to existing program capacity constraints are offered another service or a referral.

2. STUDY SIZE & TIMELINE

The study involves **427 participants**: 193 program participants and 234 individuals in a comparison group. The sample includes two cohorts: the first enrolled in 2015 and the second in 2016. Short-term outcomes will be tracked over 24 months and long-term outcomes for up to five years.

3. DATA

The evaluation utilizes surveys and administrative data to measure outcomes. Baseline information for both groups is collected at enrollment. Participants are invited to retake the survey via an in-person interview with personnel from the **University of Wisconsin Survey Center** at 12 and 24 months. In addition, LEO will leverage administrative data from the **Ray Marshall Center** to measure participation in government benefit programs.



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About LEO: The Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO) is a nonpartisan research center at the University of Notre Dame. LEO works with nonprofit and government agencies to build objective evidence about programs designed to reduce poverty and improve lives in the U.S. To learn more, please contact us at leo@nd.edu.