

Opportunity Works

A Program of the Santa Clara County Opportunity Youth Partnership

2015-2018 Evaluation Report



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Key Findings

- The OW program served 111 youth from October 2015 through March 2018.
- There were wide differences in the length of time youth spent in OW, from one month to over two years, with an average length of one year (52 weeks).
- By the end of the program:
 - 44% of participants had graduated from HS.
 - 28% had attended postsecondary/college.
 - 51% had jobs.
- Over 30% of youth experienced improvements in either income, education and child care between their intake and final self-sufficiency assessments.
- The **amount of time** youth remained in the program appears to have been a decisive factor in whether they achieved specific milestones.
 - Pregnant/parenting youth tended to stay in the program for about seven weeks longer than other youth, on average.
- Key factors independently predicting **HS graduation**:
 - *Stable and secure housing status*: Youth with stable housing were much more likely to graduate than those with less stable housing.
 - Number of weeks in the program.
 - Number of credits at intake needed to graduate; **or**, age at intake. (Which of these factors is predictive depends on how you shape the analysis.)
- Key factors independently predicting **postsecondary enrollment**:
 - Youth who worked with Courtney were more likely to enroll in postsecondary. In Courtney's caseload, 8 out of 8 HS graduates enrolled in postsecondary.
- Key factors independently predicting increases in **self-sufficiency**:
 - Number of weeks in the program
 - Age (older youth more likely to see increase)
 - Frequency of meetings with Ed Nav
 - Education Navigator

Program Overview

From October 2015 to March 2018, the Opportunity Works program supported re-engagement in secondary education for 111 youth in Santa Clara County who left high school without a diploma. Each youth worked with one of five Education Navigators (ENs). The Navigators provided academic advising and personal coaching to keep the youth focused and connected to services to assist them along the path to education, employment and self-sufficiency. Education Navigators maintained records of their contact with the youth cohort and outcomes related to the youth’s education, work experience, self-sufficiency and other major events in their lives. All tables and figures within this report are sourced from records kept by ENs and provided to ASR.

OW Cohort Profile & Demographics

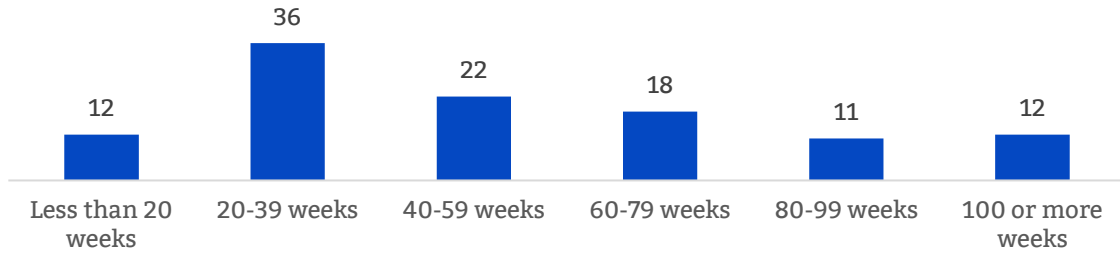
There were 111 youth with service records. Fifteen other youth signed up but left the program with a few weeks. On average, youth started the program at age 20 and spent 52 weeks in the program, although the program time varied widely (see Fig. 2). Nearly half (47%) of the youth had previously been engaged in the justice system, while somewhat fewer were foster youth (43%) and pregnant or parenting youth (40%). Nearly one quarter (22%) of youth were considered homeless when they joined the program.

Fig 1. Opportunity Works Cohort Demographics

	OW YOUTH (N=111)
NUM. WEEKS IN PGM (Average)	52 weeks (Min=5, Max=127)
AVERAGE AGE	
At ENTRY	19.9
At EXIT	20.9
MALE	47%
FEMALE	52%
RACE/ETHNICITY	
LATINO/A	77%
BLACK/AFR. AMER.	9%
WHITE	8%
ASIAN	3%
MULTIPLE	4%
JUSTICE ENGAGED	47%
FOSTER YOUTH	43%
PREGNANT/ PARENT	40%
HOMELESS	22%

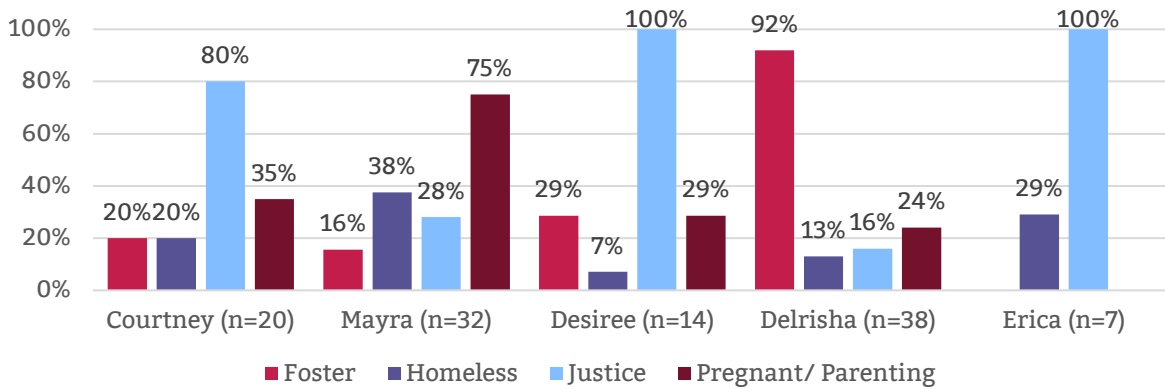
As Figure 2 shows, the amount of time youth spent in the program varied widely.

Fig 2. Number of Youth in Opp. Works, by Length of Participation



Each Education Navigator’s caseload represented a cross-section of the Opportunity Youth population.

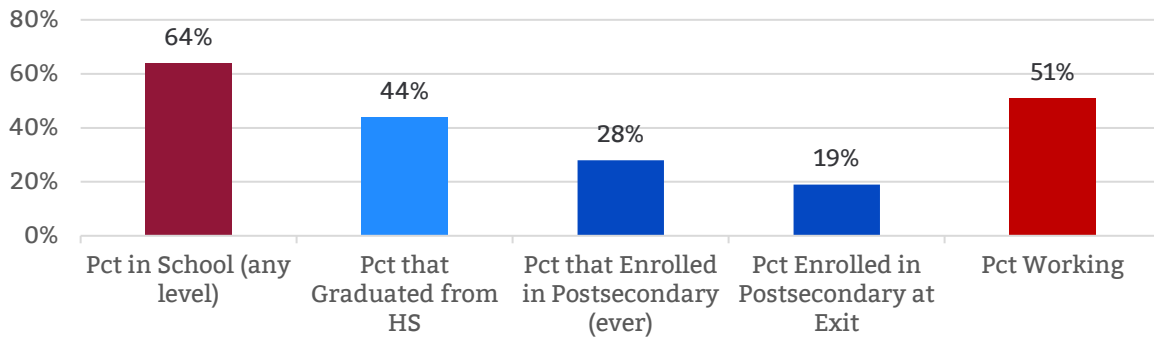
Fig 3. Percentage of Each EN’s Caseload by Opp. Youth Eligibility



Overall Outcomes

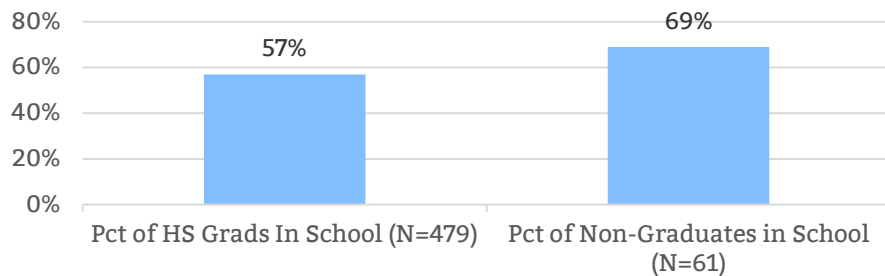
At the end of the program (or when youth were last engaged), 44% of OW youth had graduated from HS, and 64% were still in either HS or postsecondary. Twenty-eight percent of OW youth (31 of 111) had begun to attend a postsecondary institution while participating in the OW program, though the percentage reduced to 19% as of the last report by their Education Navigators.

Fig 4. Status of OW Youth at Program Exit (N=111)



Of those who graduated from HS, 57% continued their education in postsecondary, and 69% of those who had not graduated remained in school.

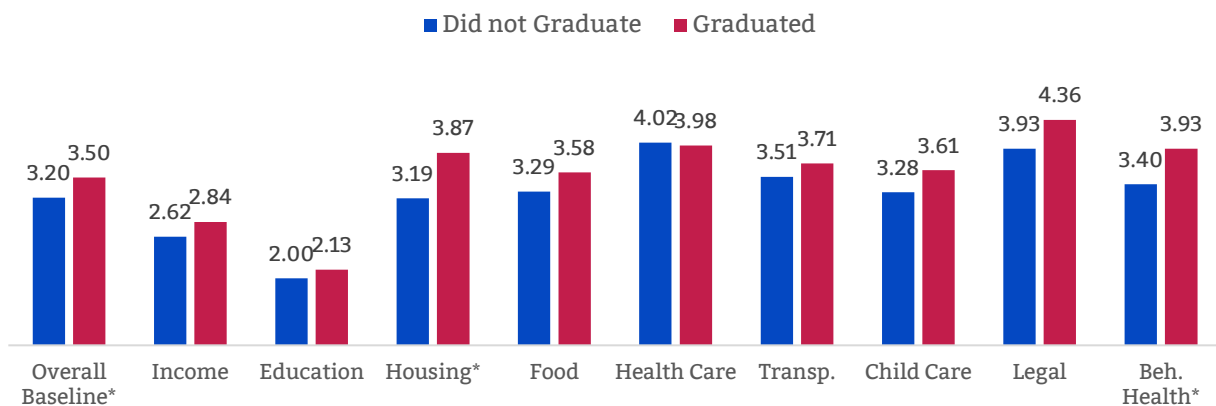
Fig 5. Percentage of OW HS Graduates in School, and Non-Grads in School at Exit



SELF-SUFFICIENCY BASELINE OF PARTICIPANTS WHO GRADUATED

Overall, youth who graduated from HS had **significantly better housing status** on average at the start of the program than youth who did not graduate.

Fig 6. Baseline Self-Sufficiency Levels by HS Graduation Status



*Statistically significant difference between groups ($p < .05$).

Note: Less than 5 youth had initial Pregnancy Care SSM, therefore not shown.

POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT

Of the 31 youth enrolled in a postsecondary institution, 30 enrolled in community college and one was in a vocational/adult education program. None had graduated yet from postsecondary.

At exit, 68% of the postsecondary students (21 of the 30) remained enrolled.

Contacts: How Many and How Frequent

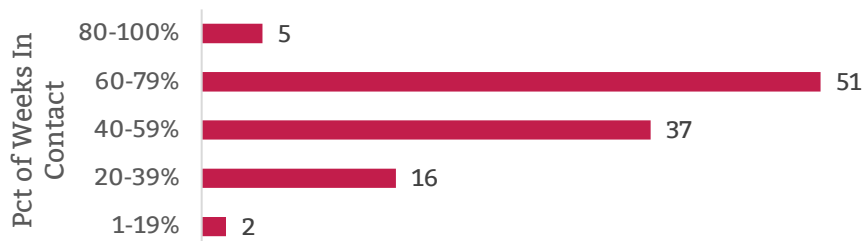
FREQUENCY OF CONTACT BETWEEN YOUTH AND THEIR EDUCATION NAVIGATOR

One of the OW goals was for 65% of youth to maintain weekly contact with their Education Navigator. None of the youth strictly met this criterion, though most youth were in contact with an EN for over 40% of the weeks they were involved.

On average, OW youth spent 52 weeks in the program and either met in person or were in communication with ENs in 31 of those weeks, which is 60% of the weeks they were active in the program.

The chart below indicates that five of the 111 youth met with ENs at least 80% of the weeks they were in the program. Most youth (79%) were in contact with ENs between 40% and 79% of the weeks they were in the program.

Fig 7. Number of Youth in Contact/Meetings with EN, by Regularity of Contact



DID MORE CONTACTS CONTRIBUTE TO LATER EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS?

CONTACTS & GRADUATION

Based on the contact data recorded by Education Navigator, the most notable difference between youth who did and did not graduate during the program is the **number of active weeks in the program**. HS graduates stayed in the program for an average of 27 weeks longer than non-graduates (68 weeks versus 41 weeks).

On average, ENs made just as many attempts at contacting youth who did not graduate (1.06 attempts/week) than they did attempting to contact youth who did graduate during the program period (0.94 attempts/week).

- The percentage of weeks that contact was either attempted or successfully occurred (regardless of who initiated it) was 77% for students that did not graduate, and 82% for those who did graduate.
- Youth who graduated were in greater contact with ENs (64% of weeks, 1.4 contacts/week) than were youth who did not graduate (52% of weeks, 1.2 contacts/week).
- Of the 61 non-graduates in the program, 42 exited or were discharged from the program before it ended. The reasons for early exits were:
 - Unable to contact youth – 22
 - Not interested in HS graduation – 7
 - Youth moved away – 5
 - Opted out of program – 5
 - Quit Re-engagement education – 3

Fig 8. Average & Total Contacts with ENs by HS Graduation Status

	Non-Grads (n=61)	Grads (n=47)
Average Weeks in Program	41	68
Average Total Contact Attempts	45	66
Attempted Contacts per Week	1.06	0.94
Average Weeks That Youth Met with EN	23	43
Total Meetings	55	100
Average Meetings per Week	1.23	1.43
Pct of Weeks with a Meeting	52%	64%
Pct. of Weeks Contact Attempted (or Made)	77%	82%

CONTACTS & SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Youth who were still enrolled in school at the end of the program had very similar rates of contact with ENs as compared to youth who were no longer in school.

Fig 9. Average & Total Contacts with ENs by School Enrollment Status

	Not in School (n=39)	In School (n=69)
Average Weeks in Program	52	53
Average Total Contact Attempts	52	55
Attempted Contacts per Week	1.05	.99
Average Weeks Youth Met with EN	31	33
Total Meetings	66	80
Num Meetings per Week	1.2	1.4
Pct of Weeks with a Meeting	58%	57%
Pct. of Weeks Contact Attempted (or Made)	81%	77%

CONTACTS & POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT

Among youth that graduated, those who attended postsecondary were in the program longer and had more meetings per week with their Navigator than those who did not attend postsecondary.

Fig 10. Average & Total Contacts with ENs by Postsecondary Enrollment

	No Post-Secondary (n=15)	Post-secondary (n=31)
Num Weeks in Program	59	74
Total Contact Attempts	62	70
Attempted Contacts per Week	1.07	.88
Num Weeks Youth Met with EN	37	47
Total Meetings	66	120
Num Meetings per Week	1.16	1.58
Pct of Weeks with a Meeting	63%	64%
Pct. of Weeks Contact Attempted (or Made)	84%	81%

Of those who did enroll in postsecondary, those who had remained in postsecondary by the end of the program had *fewer* meetings with Navigators than did those who were no longer enrolled. The sample sizes are very small, so these findings should not be considered conclusive.

Fig 11. Average & Total Contacts with ENs by Postsecondary Status at End of Program

	Left Post-Secondary (n=11)	In Post-Secondary (n=18)
Num Weeks in Program	80	71
Total Contact Attempts	75.9	65.0
Attempted Contacts per Week	.91	.78
Num Weeks Youth Met with EN	49.7	46.8
Total Meetings	129	115
Num Meetings per Week	1.72	1.48
Pct of Weeks with a Meeting	63%	65%
Pct. of Weeks Contact Attempted (or Made)	83%	80%

CONTACTS & EDUCATION NAVIGATORS

There were multiple differences between ENs with regard to the length and frequency of engagement with youth (Fig. 12). Many of these may be attributable to differences in the types of youth to which each Navigator was assigned.

Fig 12. Average & Total Contacts by Education Navigator

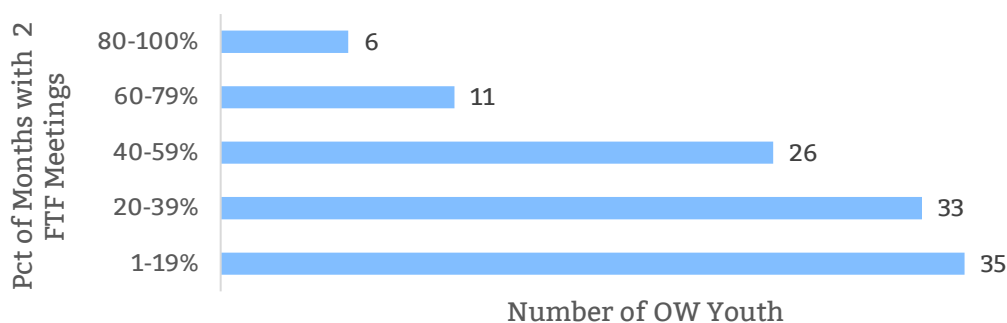
	Courtney (n=20)	Mayra (n=32)	Desiree (n=14)	Delrishia (n=38)	Erica (n=7)
Age at Start of Program	19.5	20.5	20.3	19.5	20.1
Num Weeks in Program	53	45	51	48	98
Total Contact Attempts	24.4	44.8	25.4	78.0	87.7
Attempted Contacts per Week	.38	.95	.49	1.55	.89
Num Weeks Youth Met with EN	29	29	29	29	61
Total Meetings	52	101	45	65	108
Num Meetings per Week	.90	1.85	.82	1.25	1.11
Pct of Weeks with a Meeting	54%	57%	57%	57%	62%
Pct. of Weeks Contact Attempted (or Made)	71%	77%	75%	84%	81%

FACE TO FACE MEETINGS

One of the OW goals was for 60% of youth have two face-to-face (FTF) meetings each month. Two youths (2%) met this goal. On average, OW youth had at least two face-to-face meetings in 34% of the months they were in the program.

The chart below indicates how many youths achieved each level of FTF meeting frequency. For example, it shows that six youth had at least two FTF meetings in 80-100% of the months they were in the program. Most youth met the two-FTF-meetings standard between 1% and 39% of the months they were in the program.

Fig 13. Frequency of Twice-Monthly Face-to-Face Meetings

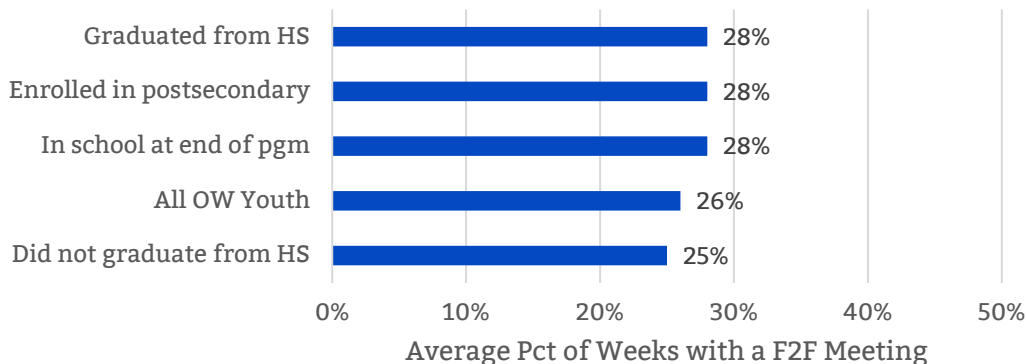


Note: Any months in which an OW youth was active for less than two weeks were excluded from the analysis.

FACE TO FACE MEETINGS AND OUTCOMES

There was is very little difference in the rate of face-to-face meetings as related to each of the key outcomes. Students who graduated and enrolled in postsecondary had FTF meetings only slightly more frequently than other students in the program.

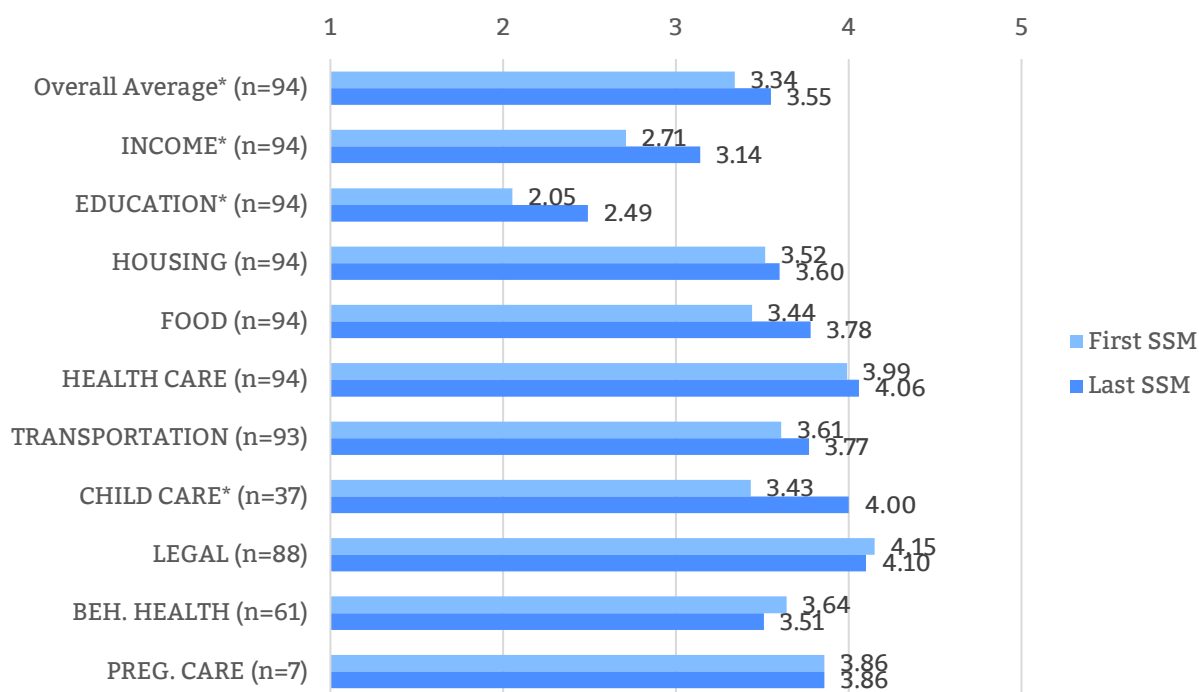
Fig 14. Average Percentage of Weeks with a Face-to-Face Meeting Between Youth and EN



SELF-SUFFICIENCY

ENs used the Self-Sufficiency Matrix (SSM) to assess youths' degree of self-sufficiency across 10 areas. Most of the changes in self-sufficiency from the initial to final SSM were due to small to moderate improvements in income, education, food security, and child care. The rating of "Overall Average" includes the average ratings for income, education, housing, food, health care, transportation, and legal issues.

Fig 15. Average Change from First SSM to Last SSM



*p<.05 (statistically significant difference).

CHANGE IN SELF-SUFFICIENCY BY EDUCATION NAVIGATOR

These average scores include the most commonly used SSM criteria: Income, education, housing, food, health care, transportation, and legal issues. They do not include: child care, behavioral health, and pregnancy care.

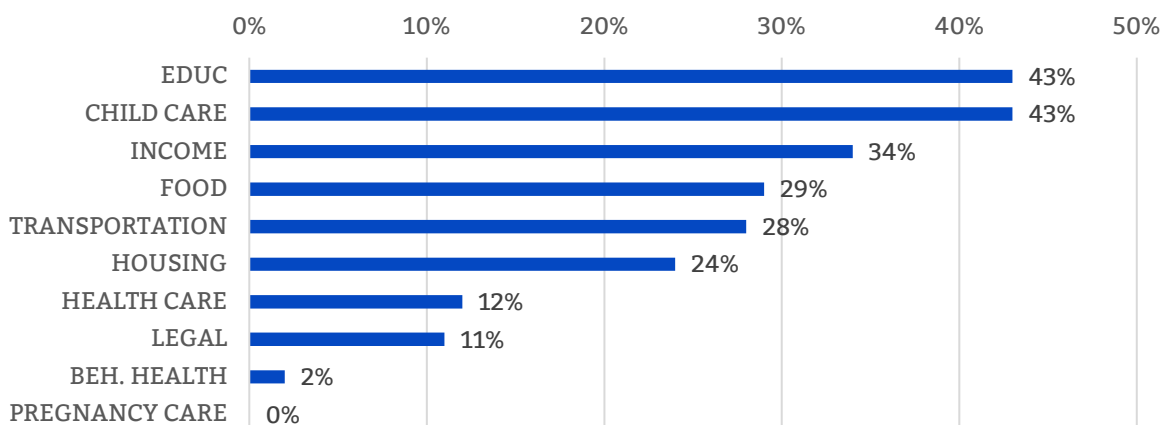
Fig 16. Changes in Self-Sufficiency by EN

EDUC. NAVIGATOR	PRE SSM	POST SSM	AVERAGE SSM CATEGORIES IMPROVED*
Courtney (19)	3.41	3.47	1.79
Mayra (21)	3.39	4.16*	3.10
Desiree (14)	3.37	3.63*	1.86
Delrishia (33)	3.22	3.16	0.85
Erica (7)	3.51	3.59	2.29

*Out of a possible seven.

The areas in which the greatest percentages of youth improved were in education (43% of youth) and child care (43%), followed by income (34%), food security (29%) and transportation (28%). Less than one quarter of youth showed improvement in housing, health care, legal issues, behavioral health or pregnancy care.

Fig 17. Percentage of OW Youth Whose Self-Sufficiency Improved from First to Last Assessment



ROLE OF MAJOR DISRUPTIONS

At the request of Opportunity Works program leadership, ASR attempted to investigate the extent to which certain major events in the lives of youth may have disrupted progress toward their goals. After a review of each youth's case history, 23 youth (21%) were identified with what could be called major disruptions. These disruptions included serious and sudden health issues, the death of a loved one, loss of housing, or expulsion from school. Education Navigators noted such events in the open comment areas of their case files.

The initial analysis found no link between serious disruptions and negative outcomes such as failing to graduate from high school or reduced self-sufficiency. Furthermore, youth with these disruptions did not spend less time in the program, on average, than those without disruptions.

These findings do not mean that such disruptions had no impact. Given the small sample size and the highly subjective nature of such events it is possible that other relevant factors and outcomes were not collected in the youth case files and considered in the analysis. Further analysis would require identifying the specific moment of the event and then comparing outcomes before and after.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS: INDEPENDENT PREDICTORS OF MAJOR OUTCOMES

The results below are from a regression analysis to identify *independent* predictors of HS graduation, postsecondary enrollment, self-sufficiency and time spent in the program. Within each regression model, any significant predictors are independent of (i.e., uncorrelated with) other factors in the model.

SIG = Significant independent predictor

Youth Predictors...	Outcomes				
	Num. of Weeks in the Program	HS Graduation (w/out baseline credits, n=106)	HS Graduation (w/ baseline credits, n=50)	Postsecondary Enrollment (among those who graduated HS)	Self-Sufficiency Improvement (Num. of Categories Improved)
Num Weeks in Pgm	n/a	SIG	SIG	-	SIG
EN: Courtney	-	-	-	SIG	-
EN: Mayra	-	-	-	-	-
EN: Delrisha	-	-	-	-	SIG (neg)
EN: Desiree	-	-	-	-	-
EN: Erica	SIG	-	-	-	-
Age at pgm entry (older: more likely to graduate)	-	SIG	-	-	SIG
Gender	-	-	-	-	-
Foster youth	-	-	-	-	-
Homeless	-	-	-	-	-
Justice-engaged	-	-	-	-	-
Preg/Parenting	SIG	-	-	-	-
Meetings/week	-	-	-	-	SIG
Meeting Regularity (pct of weeks with at least one meeting)	-	-	-	-	-
SSM: Housing Status at Intake	-	SIG (OR=2)	SIG (OR=12)	-	-
Num Credits Needed to Graduate (50 youth have these data)	n/a	n/a	SIG	n/a	n/a

Note: None of these results change after excluding the 6 youth who did not enroll within 8 weeks of intake.

YOUTH WHO STAYED IN OW LONGER ALSO HAD MORE FREQUENT MEETINGS

The regression results presented above indicate that the longer youth were in the program the more likely they were to graduate from high school and improve their self-sufficiency. To explore this pattern further, the figure below lists the frequency with which meetings were held according to the length of time youth were in the program.

Youth who were in the program for longer periods of time (40 or more weeks) also tended to meet more frequently each week with their ENs. This explains why the regression model identifies length of participation as a stronger predictor than meeting frequency. Most of the differences in outcomes that are attributable to meetings are explained by differences in participation length.

Fig 18. Frequency of Meetings by Length of Time in Opp. Works

