

# **Evaluation of Mentoring Programs**

*Year Five Report*

*Prepared for Good  
Samaritan Ministries*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Good Samaritan Ministries (GSM) contracted with the Carl Frost Center for Social Science Research to conduct a continuing evaluation of its mentoring programs. Previous evaluation has taken place over four years and is anticipated to continue for another year. This evaluation was designed to track cases at various intervals following the time at which cases exit a GSM program. The goal has been to evaluate case functioning at the time of discharge, as well as at three-, six- and 12-month periods following discharge to determine the extent to which the mentoring programs have long-term impact on case functioning. Until this series of reports, begun in 2002, no evaluation had been conducted beyond discharge.

This report represents the fifth year of the evaluation period. This report is referred to as Year 5 and includes all cases that were discharged from a mentoring program between July 1, 2001 and December 14, 2006.

This report (Year 5) is the sixth document in which there have been enough cases to evaluate separately those cases that completed their programs (referred to as cases completing programs) at discharge. In the first two reports, all cases were reported at intake and discharge, and are still listed in the first table corresponding to each outcome measure.

Case managers from GSM collected data via face-to-face interviews at intake and discharge, and follow-ups were completed over the telephone. The interviewer evaluated case functioning on several different dimensions (e.g., finance, social support, transportation). A total of 571 cases from six mentoring programs were interviewed and discharged between July 1, 2001 and December 14, 2006. Less than a third of these cases (29.4%, 168 cases) had completed programs at program discharge. The sizable decrease in cases completing programs compared to previous years is due primarily to the inclusion of 230 Workforce Investment Board cases, only 4 of whom (1.7%) completed the program.<sup>1</sup> In this report, the analysis, including the intake, discharge, and follow-up portions, includes only the cases completing programs.<sup>2</sup>

For the cases completing programs, the sample of all families and interviewees included the following characteristics:

- The case was almost always female (83.3%). Note that at intake, a majority of the total cases were female (68.8%).
- The average number of children reported per household was 1.56.
- A majority of households (53.0%) were headed by single-parent females.

<sup>1</sup> In order to be considered a successful completion in the Workforce Investment Board program, a case had to be in a job for 90 days. At the conclusion of the grant's funding, only four cases had reached that time mark, though many others were employed. <sup>2</sup> In the previous series of studies, the terms "successful case" (Year 1 Report 2) and "cases completing programs" (Year 2 Report 2, Year 2 Report 1, Year 3 Report 1, and Year 3 Report 2, ) were both used. In this second series of reports, we will continue the use of "cases completing programs."

- Most families (80.4%) contained four or fewer members based upon the information provided.
- The racial/ethnic make-up of the sample was mostly European American (55.0%). African American (20.6%) was the next largest group, followed closely by Latino/Hispanic (20.0%).
- The most common source of income was full-time work (35.2%), and 57.1% of the sample was classified as very, very low income.

This report contains comparisons between intake and discharge data for all cases completing programs (some variables are missing for some cases, which is not unusual in a field-research project such as this). In addition, comparisons are also made using the three-month, six-month, and 12-month follow-up data for cases completing programs. However, it should be noted that since the second year of reporting, the percentage of cases reached in the follow-up contacts has steadily decreased (Table 2c). For this (Year 5) report, only 61% of cases 3 months following discharge, 55% of cases 6 months following discharge, and 48% of cases 12 months following discharge were contacted for the follow-up interviews.

Patterns that emerged in previous reports are supported by the cumulative data in this report:

- *Debt-repayment plans:* The number of cases who had no debt-repayment plan or no interest in a debt-repayment plan continued to demonstrate a decrease, from 116 cases (71.6%) at intake to 23 cases (14.0%) at discharge. Similar to the last reports, these percentages were even smaller at the three-month and six-month follow-ups (12.6% and 11.0%, respectively). Although this figure moved back up at the 12-month follow-up (18 cases; 27.7%), it still represents a sizeable reduction from intake levels.
- *Manageable debt ratios:* It is encouraging to observe an increase from 6.8% of cases with manageable debt ratios at intake to 30.5% at discharge. Percentages continued to increase at three months (49.5%) and six months (56.1%), but then decreased slightly at 12 months (46.2%). It is notable that, at the 12-month follow-up, 26.2% had a debt repayment plan, including 18.5% who had followed their plan for the last 7-12 months.
- *Employment:* This report continues to show positive changes in the percentage of cases that were adequately employed for more than six months. Adequate employment (greater than six months) among cases completing programs increased from 23.5% at intake to 53.3% at discharge. As in the Year 4 Report, the percentage of cases reporting more than six months adequate employment remains higher in each follow-up period than at discharge.
- *Housing acquisition:* At intake, 19 of the cases completing programs were coded as living in an emergency shelter (11.7%) and 34 cases (20.9%) were homeless or precariously housed<sup>3</sup>. Nine cases remained homeless/precariously housed and

<sup>3</sup> Cases were categorized as Homeless/Precariously Housed if they were living in a car, on the street, in an abandoned building, or staying with family or friends. For further definitions of housing categories, please see the Quality of Life Monitoring Tool included at the end of this report.

two cases remained in an emergency shelter at discharge. At three months, three cases were homeless, at six months, just one case was homeless, and at the 12 month follow-up, no cases were homeless or in shelters. It should, however, be kept in mind that people who are precariously housed or in shelters may be more difficult to reach for follow-ups. The percentage of cases who were renting increased from 41.1% at intake to 53.9% at discharge. However, these numbers decreased at the follow-up interviews (48.5%, 53.7% and 41.5%) and the percentage of individuals in transitional/subsidized housing went up from the 16.4% at discharge (28.9%, 24.4% and 33.8%).

- *Non-stable/stable housing:* The number of cases who were not in stable housing dropped from 52 cases (32.1%) at intake to 12 cases (7.5%) at discharge. Five cases (5.2%) were in non-stable housing at three months, 2 cases were at six months (2.4%), and none were found to be in non-stable housing at 12 months. At 12 months, 84.4% of the sample (54 cases) had been in stable permanent housing 10-12 months,<sup>4</sup> compared to 40.1% at intake and 49.7% at discharge.
- *Transportation:* The number of cases completing programs who rated transportation as not reliable dropped from 45 cases (28.3%) at intake to four cases (2.4%) at discharge. The decrease was most evident for the CarLink program. The CarLink program reported 29 cases (44.6%) who had transportation that was not reliable at intake compared to none at discharge. The percentage of cases completing any program who had transportation that was reliable for all purposes was 66.0% at three months, 67.5% at six months, and 56.3% at 12 months.
- *Support system:* Reported information continues to demonstrate some improvement in the social support system, with 37.7% of cases reporting at intake that family and friends were always available and 58.8% reporting so at discharge. The social support response that family and friends were always available increased at three months (61.5%), at six months (64.2%) and at 12 months (69.2%).

Additionally, data in this report continue to demonstrate the sustained relationship between cases and churches. In each of the reports in this series, increases in the numbers of churches participating in GSM programs, either as sources for referrals or mentors, is noted. The sample data for cases completing programs indicate that structured church activity is part of the household experience. From intake to discharge, those cases indicating no relationship or no desire for a relationship decreased from 24.2% to 12.0%, while those with an established social relationship with church members and those participating either periodically or regularly in church sponsored activities together increased from 67.6% to 84.9%.

In general, the evaluation using these indicators provides strong evidence of the immediate impact of GSM programs on cases. Furthermore, although some of the

<sup>2</sup> Note: In the first two reports, Section 8 housing was considered unstable. The data in subsequent reports (Year 2 Report 1 to present) reflects a re-classification of Section 8 housing, from unstable to stable under transitional/subsidized housing. In effect, the reclassification prohibits a direct comparison of the housing tables from the first two reports.

sample sizes are relatively small, this evaluation series has increasingly indicated a robust, long-term positive economic and social benefit of GSM intervention on case functioning.