

## **Article 53: Human Development and the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix (ASSM) in the United States**

The **Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix (ASSM)** has profoundly reshaped the landscape of social services delivery in the **United States** by shifting organizations towards data-driven, holistic care models. Its widespread adoption across the country has enabled human services agencies to break down communication barriers between different departments and establish a unified language for measuring client well-being. The systematic impact of this tool extends from individual case management to federal impact reports, translating complex human experiences into quantifiable outcomes. Therefore, the matrix actively influences policy decisions, optimizes public and private funding allocations, and proves that targeted social interventions can successfully foster long-term human development through measurable growth in personal independence and overall well-being (Family Scholar House, 2023; Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, 2014; Siemer Institute, 2020; Transition To Success, LLC, 2023; United Way of the Mid-South, 2021).

### **Uses and Impact of the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix (ASSM) in the United States**

Organizations across different regions of the United States have documented diverse applications and outcomes associated with the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix. For instance, the Siemer Institute showed how organizations have integrated the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix into family stability initiatives serving low-income households at risk of homelessness. Working through a nationwide network of United Ways, the Institute supported 88 community-based service providers operating in 49 communities, each combining locally tailored interventions with standardized approaches to outcome measurement. Within this framework, participating organizations administered an adapted version of the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix at program entry and exit to monitor changes in family well-being over time. The assessment helped inform case management by enabling service providers to identify participant needs, evaluate progress through multiple dimensions of self-sufficiency, and compare outcomes among programs while preserving flexibility to address community-specific priorities. Services commonly included intensive case management, financial coaching, housing assistance, employment support, educational assistance, and coordinated referrals through community partnerships. Furthermore, families receiving services generally experienced improvements in self-sufficiency over the course of the intervention, particularly in the areas of financial stability, basic needs, and community support, while network-wide analyses also reported improvements in housing and income stability over time. Beyond documenting positive outcomes, the evaluation conducted by the Siemer Institute identified differences in gains among racial groups, encouraging continued refinement of assessment practices and service delivery strategies to strengthen equitable human development. Overall, these findings highlighted how the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix can support standardized outcome measurement while informing individualized service delivery and continuous program improvement within diverse human service settings (Siemer Institute, 2020).

Similarly, Family Scholar House incorporated the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix into its HEROES program to evaluate and strengthen the self-sufficiency of single parents pursuing higher education before and after accessing residential services. Accordingly, the program adopted the assessment within a broader framework that combined affordable housing, case management, academic coaching, financial literacy, employment support, health and wellness resources, and community partnerships to address barriers associated with long-term economic stability. The Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix

was administered throughout participants' engagement to monitor progress across domains including housing, income, employment, health care access, adult education, workplace skills, money management, and life skills. Results showed increases in self-sufficiency scores throughout nearly every assessed category, with the greatest improvements observed in housing, followed by significant gains in income, health care access, adult education, money management, and life skills. Participants also experienced better physical and mental health outcomes, greater access to primary care providers, and reduced interference of poor health with daily activities. Furthermore, families receiving services generally experienced improvements in self-sufficiency over the course of the intervention, particularly in the areas of financial stability, basic needs, and community support, while many also reported greater housing and income stability. The independent evaluation further found that most participants completed multiple program objectives, while many who finished their education reported stable employment or continued educational pursuits. Overall, these findings highlighted how the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix can support standardized outcome measurement while informing individualized service delivery and comprehensive interventions that promote long-term human development among vulnerable families (Family Scholar House, 2023).

Likewise, United Way of the Mid-South utilized the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix as part of the Driving The Dream initiative to strengthen coordinated care for individuals and families experiencing poverty. Thus, they implemented the matrix into the Transition to Success® care model, bringing together a network of nonprofit organizations and professionals to deliver holistic, client-centered services through a shared system of care. Following that lead, the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix served as a standardized assessment tool to identify client needs, guide individualized service planning, and monitor progress towards economic self-sufficiency across multiple life domains, including housing, employment, income, food security, childcare, and adult education. Technology further supported this collaborative approach by enabling participating agencies to access shared client information, track progress, coordinate referrals, and connect individuals with available community resources through a common web-based platform. Beneficiaries also worked with service providers to develop personalized "maps of their dreams," outlining the sequence of services, programs, and milestones needed to achieve greater independence and long-term stability. Furthermore, the initiative adopted a "no-wrong-door" approach, allowing individuals to access coordinated services regardless of their point of entry into the network while providing different levels of support according to assessed needs. This integrated framework highlighted how the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix can facilitate interagency collaboration, strengthen coordinated case management, and promote human development by supporting comprehensive, person-centered pathways towards self-sufficiency (United Way of the Mid-South, 2021).

On that same note, the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) designated the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix as a core component of its Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program to strengthen homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing services throughout the state. To that end, they embedded the assessment within the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), requiring trained case managers to complete structured evaluations during participant intake and throughout service delivery. Information collected through the matrix helped identify barriers affecting housing stability, establish measurable case management goals, develop individualized housing plans, and prioritize interventions according to each participant's circumstances. The assessment also provided a standardized framework for monitoring participants' progress from homelessness towards stable housing while documenting changes in self-sufficiency over time.

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Beyond supporting individualized services, the institution directed funded agencies to employ the matrix so they could evaluate program performance, strengthen staff supervision, and promote greater consistency in case management practices among participating organizations. Meanwhile, case managers further relied on assessment findings to revise housing plans, coordinate referrals, and connect participants with community resources capable of addressing employment, financial, and educational barriers associated with long-term housing stability. Additionally, they emphasized that housing plans should remain dynamic throughout service delivery, using information obtained from the matrix to continually refine participant goals and interventions as individual circumstances evolved. Overall, IHCD presented the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix as a comprehensive framework for standardized assessment, coordinated case management, and continuous outcome monitoring while supporting human development and sustainable housing stability across statewide homelessness services (Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, 2014).

Lastly, Transition To Success (TTS) demonstrated the broad applicability of the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix through independent evaluations conducted across multiple health, education, and human service organizations serving diverse populations in the United States. Rather than relying on additional program funding, they implemented a coordinated standard of care within existing service delivery systems, combining the matrix with case management, financial literacy, peer mentoring, and volunteerism to address social determinants of health. The assessment helped organizations identify client priorities, monitor changes in self-sufficiency, and evaluate outcomes within nineteen social determinant domains using standardized pre- and post-assessments. Consequently, the organizations involved reported statistically significant improvements in family relations throughout the seven independent evaluations, while many also documented positive changes in community involvement, employment, housing, transportation, financial management, health care, and mental health. Several sites also reported measurable improvements in broader health and well-being outcomes, reinforcing the value of combining social and health-related interventions within coordinated systems of care. TTS also emphasized that organizations achieved these outcomes while working within their existing staffing structures and operational resources, highlighting the feasibility of implementing standardized assessment practices without requiring substantial additional funding. Overall, Transition To Success depicted the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix as an effective framework for promoting coordinated service delivery, measuring human development outcomes, and strengthening organizational capacity to address complex social determinants of health in diverse community settings (Transition To Success, LLC, 2023).

## References

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