Catholic Charities Fort Worth

Five decades.

Trillions spent.

100+ federal anti-poverty programs.

And we're no better off. Why?

Padua Pilot

Because too often, the current system treats the symptoms of poverty and not the cause.

After 100+ years on the front-line of poverty, we've seen the inefficiencies of this system time and time again. We've seen it trap people in a cycle of dependency and stigma while ignoring the unique circumstances and value of every individual. We decided we could do better.

Two years ago, we launched the Padua Pilot - a model we built to measure outcomes instead of outputs, seek truth instead of rely on assumption, and empower the God-given potential of every person.

WHAT MAKES PADUA DIFFERENT?

Creating Real Relationships

In typical programs, case managers may have up to 100 cases and be constrained by strict funding parameters. In Padua, case management teams share a case load of 15 to 20 allowing them to develop a relationship with every client that's based on meaningful engagement.

Investing in the Person

Traditional anti-poverty programs are often burdened by bureaucratic red tape that ignore the unique skill sets and circumstance of each individual. Padua looks at the whole client, not just their need for today. We structure services to emphasize each client's strengths and self-determined goals.

Raising the Bar

Many other programs are designed to measure output instead of outcome. We can't end poverty for a family by signing them up for benefits. Padua's finish line is each family earning a living wage, having three months savings in the bank, no inappropriate debt, and being free of government benefits.

Collaborating with Community

Typically, people seeking services have to go to several organizations and fill out repetitive paperwork to get the help they need. Padua partners with other non-profits to create a community support system allowing us to streamline coordination of multiple resources that each client can utilize.

One of the biggest gaps in the fight against poverty is lack of in-depth research. We partnered with the Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO) research team at the University of Notre Dame to conduct an impact evaluation of our model. In addition, we conducted our own internal evaluation and findings from our year one group are in:

Here's what we **know.**

What we **think.**

Why it **matters.**

What we know

Potential clients were referred from three different CCFW Programs. These numbers represent the percentage that said yes to taking next steps for possible participation in Padua.

- 36% of Central Intake referrals
- 36% of Immigration referrals
- 58% of Families First referrals

One year after starting Padua, **60%** of the 2015 group were still engaged

Year one group

Enrolled between March and October of 2015

- **105** total clients
- **40%** single mothers
- **80%** female
- **1/3** had less than a high school education
- **23%** have English as a second language
- **42%** employed at the start of the program

What did the starting point look like?

- average household size of **four**
- **60%** on food stamps
- average annual income of **$18k**

The average annual income is particularly significant because of Padua's goal of each client earning a living wage–the amount needed for a household to cover basic needs. In Tarrant County, a living wage for a family of two adults and two children is $60,115. The federal poverty line for the same family is $24,250.

What did the case management relationship look like?

There were **5,000+** personal interactions with clients

83% of these interactions were face-to-face

43% took place in the client's home

Time with clients focuses on the 12-asset areas Padua uses to achieve long-term success and measure progress. Time spent on each asset is represented below.

- **25%** on Physical
- **20%** on Financial
- **11%** on Health
- **9%** on Education
- **8%** on Legal
- **6%** on Emotional
- **6%** on Relationships
- **3%** on Support Systems
- **1%** on Hope
- **1%** on Communication
- **<1%** on Social Skills
- **<1%** on Faith

Time spent on asset areas is based on areas of greatest need. For example, many clients started with high levels of faith, meaning less time needed to be spent developing this area.

Progress in asset areas is measured on a scale on one (crisis) to five (thriving). Overall, average client asset scores increased during the first year. The most significant changes were in the physical, financial, health, and support systems areas.

	DAY ONE	ONE YEAR
Physical	2.7	3.4
Financial	2	2.7
Health	2.7	3.3
Support Systems	2.6	3.2

98 referrals to key community partners
&
181 referrals to other CCFW services

INCOME Clients went from an average of **40%** to their target income on day one to **61%** at one year

SAVINGS Clients went from an average of **2%** to their savings goal on day one to **3%** at one year

DEBT Clients went from an average of **$943** in credit card debt on day one to **$869** at one year

What we think	Why it matters
Though three CCFW programs refer potential clients to Padua, Families First clients had more previous interaction with CCFW staff. We believe this **established relationship** with clients directly contributed to their increased likelihood of participation in services.	Many programs focus on service success once clients are enrolled, but less attention has been given to how to get clients to say **yes** in the first place. Recruitment is a common struggle in social services and being able to further quantify the impact of relationship is a valuable component for **ending poverty.**
We attribute Padua's high retention to the flexible structure and increased bandwidth of **the case management teams.** In short, we do whatever it takes to keep clients engaged–including continuing to pursue clients who miss meetings and scheduling appointments at a time and location convenient for the client.	Padua's **60%** retention rate is much higher than most long-term service programs in the private or public sector. To compare, another CCFW program had a 10% client retention rate for the same time period. Seeing firsthand the **impact** of "meeting clients where they are" led to our employer-based services initiative.

"The thing with other social services, they only allow you to mess up one time. This program doesn't. With Padua I've learned that if you're not going to give up on me, why should I give up on myself?" - Padua Client

The assets case management teams spent the most time on year one were the areas needed to **establish stability.** These are often areas of crisis for clients and these issues need to be resolved in order for clients to begin developing the assets needed to sustain success.	Traditional programs are often geared towards crisis alleviation, but fail to solve for **preventing** future crisis. We have learned that though it can take a year or more to establish stability, this investment is necessary to solidify the foundation needed for **lasting progress.** This experience led to a new agency wide framework for client progression.

Lydia, a single mom of four kids, was living in a homeless shelter when she joined Padua. She was paying child support to her mother, who cared for her two older kids. Her younger two children, one of whom is developmentally delayed, also stayed at the shelter. She needed housing, a better paying job, a GED and reliable transportation. A victim of domestic abuse, she also needed counseling. Most of all, she wanted all her children under one roof. It took nearly 11 months for Lydia to move into her own home and address the child custody issues. Today, she continues counseling, has earned her high school diploma, and has applied to community college. Most importantly, her family is now together. Lydia's story, like those of many Padua clients, could have ended very differently in a status-quo program.

A **living wage income** is needed for a client to save money and pay off debt. This might be why there is more progress in this area than in savings and debt. Another factor is while we were often able to establish savings behaviors, the saved money would be spent on other necessities. In one instance, a client had to put her savings toward her sister's funeral. These instances increased debt and reduced savings extending the timeline for reaching certain goals.	The slower progress in savings and debt further illustrate the need for a **higher bar** of what "out of poverty" really means. It's clear these income gains do not on their own indicate our work with a client is done. Truly leaving poverty behind takes time and this reality should inform program expectations. For example, by the 18-month mark, average savings had **increased significantly** from $185 to $1,767.

Encouraging results.

Gained insights.

Multiple opportunities for growth.

So, what's next?

CONTINUED RESEARCH

Research takes time and we only have year one results. We still have an additional cohort to review and future results for year two and three. Since Padua is designed to be a long-term intervention, there are impacts that may not yet be evident.

ADJUSTED PRACTICES

Poverty isn't fixed. It's fluid. So our work has to be too. As we move forward, we will continue to use what we are learning on the ground to influence the way we do business and adjust the way we provide services.

ASKED QUESTIONS

Nothing about poverty is easy and ending it won't be either. Continuing to foster research and innovation is critical for further testing and understanding of everything we need to know.