

Tracking Progress Towards “Self-sufficiency”

Rex S. Green, Ph.D. and
Richard Speiglman, D.Crim.

Public Health Institute

Berkeley, CA

Funding Sources

- California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs
- Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
- Alameda County Social Services Agency
- Alameda County Department of Behavioral Health Care Services

Plan for Talk

1. Describe the Alameda County study
2. Define terms
3. Categorize income sources
4. Present study results at baseline
5. Review conclusions
6. Note further work needed

Selecting the Sample

- 16,687 active CalWORKs cases, with caretaker not exempt from work
- Between 18 and 59 years old
- 1 or 2 caretakers in the family
- Speaks English, Spanish, Vietnamese
- Children not receiving SSI
- Current Alameda County address

Study Participants

- Male = 8.2%
- Non-White = 86.9%
- Speaks English at home = 79.9%
- Married, living together = 13.1%
- Two caretaker families = 11.1%
- Family size 4 or fewer = 63.7%
- High school grad or GED = 36.1%

Measures for Evaluating Welfare Reform

A Measure of Family
Financial Well-being:

Ratio of total
household income
to federal poverty level
by size of family

A Measure of
Personal
Self-sufficiency:

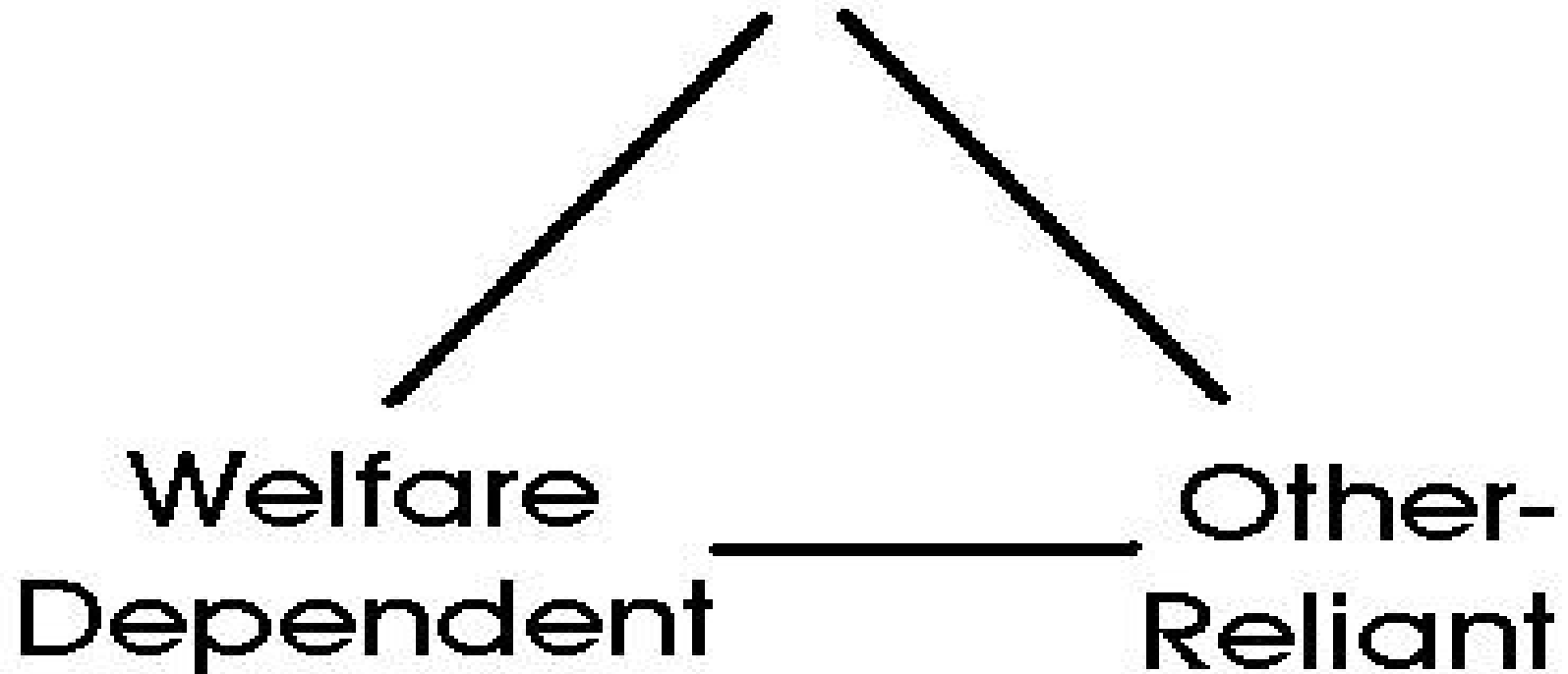
Self-generated income
minus
welfare income for
each non-exempt,
caretaker recipient

Self-sufficiency

The ability to provide
for oneself without
the help of others

Financial Bases of Support

Self-reliant



Earned Income Sources

1. Wages, tips, etc.
2. Interest
3. Dividends
4. Business income
5. Capital gains
6. Rental income
7. Royalties
8. Unemployment insurance
9. Retirement
10. Work-related disability
11. Employer contributions to current services, e.g., health insurance, child care

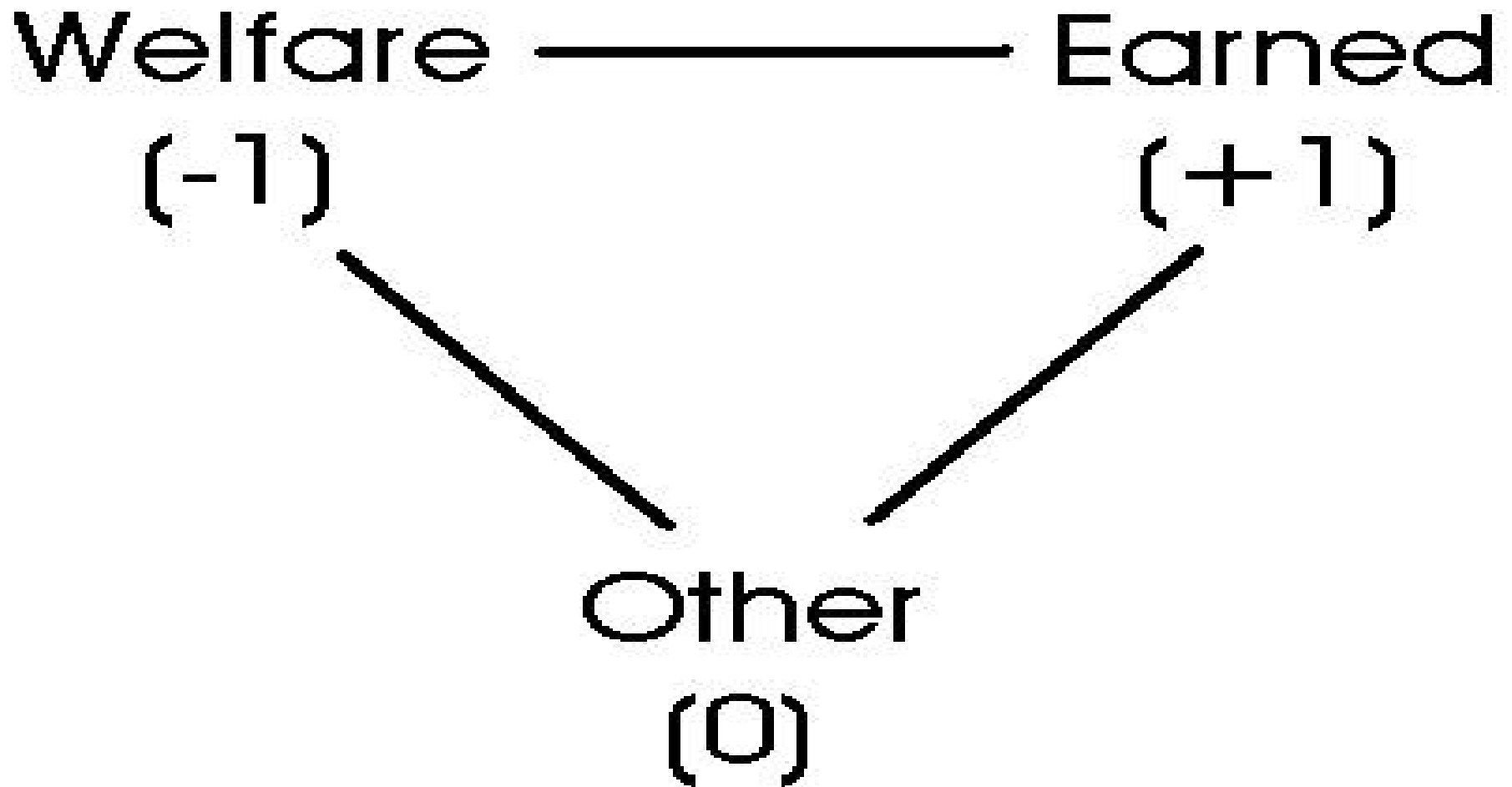
Public Welfare Income Sources

1. Temporary Aid to Needy Families
2. General Assistance/County Relief
3. Supplemental Security Income
4. Food Stamps
5. WIC
6. Medicaid
7. Subsidies for living expenses, e.g.,
childcare, transportation

Other Income Sources

1. Earned Income Credit
2. Other tax credits from government
3. Schedule A deductions, e.g., mortgage
4. Exchanging services with others, e.g., free rent, babysitting, hair care
5. Begging or panhandling
6. Sale of personal belongings, blood, etc.
7. Illegal work
8. One-time payouts, e.g., life insurance

Weighting the Sources of Income

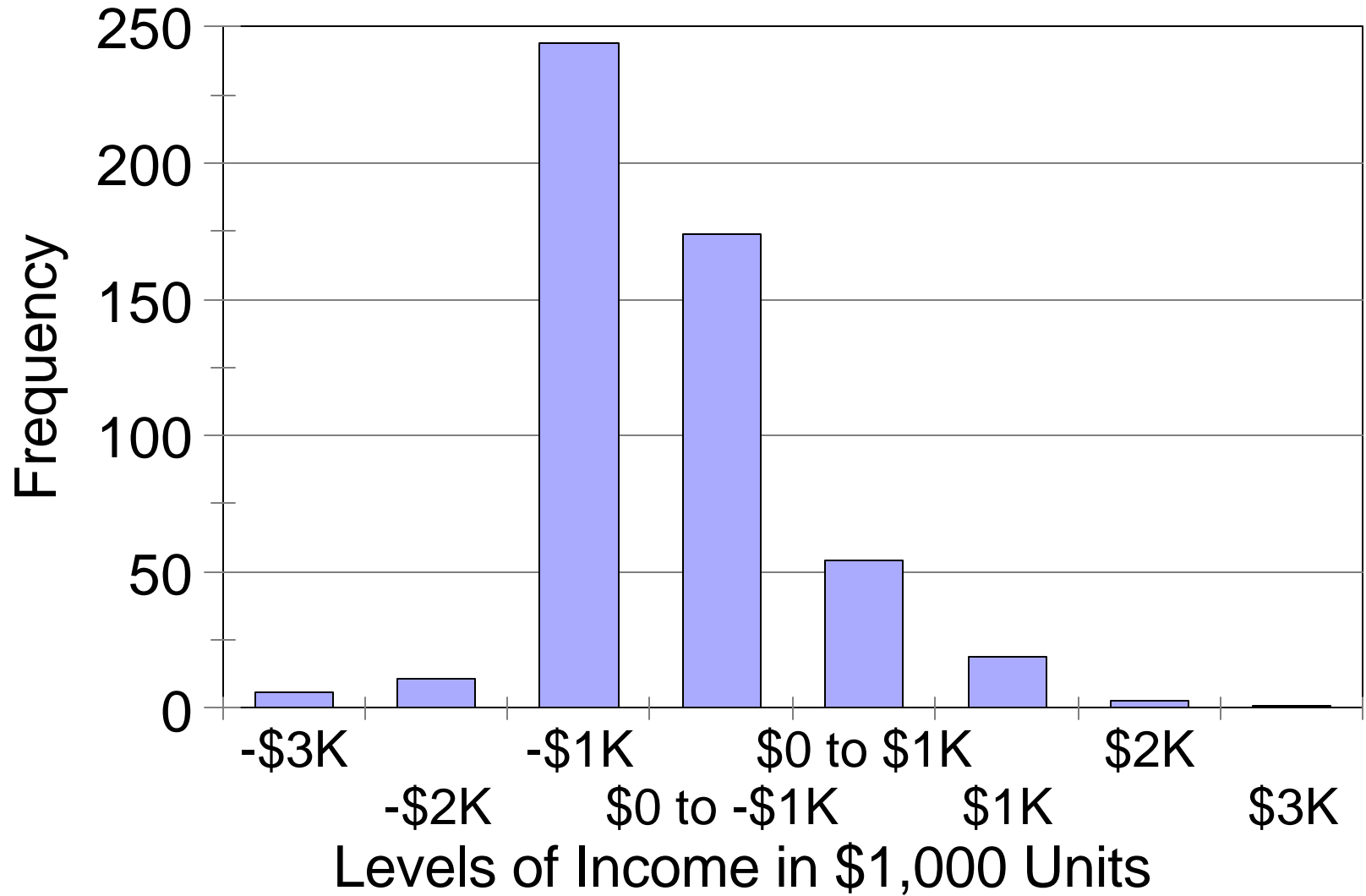


Personal Self-sufficiency Income

The difference between the sum of one's earned income and the sum of one's public welfare income, after calculating cash equivalent values.

Monthly Self-sufficiency Income

Alameda County, N=512 at Baseline



Predictors of Self-sufficiency at Baseline

Variable	Beta	T	Sig T
Worked before	0.13	2.87	0.004
No. kids < 6 years	-0.16	-3.77	0.000
Own stable residence	-0.16	-3.47	0.001
Afro-American	-0.14	-3.07	0.002
Years of schooling	0.14	3.02	0.003
Male	0.10	2.31	0.022
# Non-health barriers	-0.10	-2.30	0.022
(Constant)		-5.77	0.000

Conclusions

- Personal self-sufficiency income can be measured for research purposes
- At the study baseline seven predictors of self-sufficiency income differences were identified
- Prior work experience and years of schooling predicted higher self-sufficiency
- Raising more young children, being Afro-American, and having one's own stable housing predicted lower self-sufficiency

Further Work Needed

- Seek consensus regarding pursuing this type of measure and the weighting of income sources
- Identify how best to collect the data
- Explore multidimensional measures to track support from others
- Promote the adoption of outcome measures for evaluating welfare reform