

Dynamics of Poverty and Los Angeles County Record Linkage Project

ECONOMIC ROUNDTABLE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

1.0 Name of Organization that will conduct the Research Project

The Economic Roundtable (ER) is the lead research organization for this project.

2.0 Background

This project grows out a motion approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 7, 2005, which authorized the Economic Roundtable to “conduct a family-centered research project to understand the parents and children that now make up the County’s welfare caseload and the best practices for helping them achieve success.”

LEADER records from 2002 through 2010 have been provided by the Department of Public Social Services. These records were used for an analysis of homelessness among public assistance recipients, but have not yet been linked with records of other county departments.

3.0 Objective of the Research Project

The Economic Roundtable requests continued access to LEADER data for the remainder of 2016 for two projects, a near-term study of the dynamics of poverty and a longer-term record linkage project. LEADER records used for studying the dynamics of poverty will be in de-identified format. As soon as agreements are in place for the Economic Roundtable’s Los Angeles County Record Linkage Project, all LEADER records will be transferred to that project, which will be overseen by county staff and carried out within the county’s computer system. All LEADER records held by the Economic Roundtable will then be destroyed.

The Los Angeles County Record Linkage Project is a continuation of the Family Centered Welfare Research Project approved by the Department of Public Social Services on June 4, 2009. The purpose is to carry the project through to completion, including linkage of records with other public agencies.

The broad objective of the research project is to understand longitudinal utilization of local public services by public assistance recipients, attributes of subgroups with different service utilization profiles, and outcomes for those subgroups. An additional objective is to understand the effects of timing, that is, of the amount of time elapsed between occurrences that give rise to the need for services and the delivery of services.

4.0 Type of Research to be Conducted

Data Confidentiality for the Los Angeles County Record Linkage Project

The research will be carried out using administrative records provided by DPSS, other county departments, state agencies and health care providers. The project will be completed through analysis of administrative records that will be linked with LEADER records. This is a data-only research project. No information will be obtained directly from human subjects through interviews, surveys or other methods.

Records will be linked within the county's computer system. Linked records that are exported to the Economic Roundtable will be de-identified, that is, information such as name or Social Security number that could be used to identify specific individuals will be removed from records and replaced by a random identifier. The same random identifier will be used in all records for the same individual to enable the Economic Roundtable to connect records from different departments.

The Economic Roundtable Institutional Review Board has approved this project.

Dynamics of Poverty Study

The Great Recession that began in 2008 and the sluggish recovery that followed produced a record-high poverty population in urban centers like Los Angeles. However, the dynamics of poverty are uneven, with poverty emerging in new clusters of distressed and high-poverty neighborhoods with lower-income housing, limited job opportunities, worse health outcomes, higher crime rates, failing schools, which all make it harder for individuals and families to escape poverty, often perpetuating and entrenching poverty across generations.

We propose to study the dynamics of poverty in Los Angeles County during the last decade, assessing geographical shifts and the changes in employment and housing opportunities using the 2002-2010 LEADER data provided by DPSS. The study will show, at minimum, which neighborhoods have become high-poverty and distressed neighborhoods or have significant changes in their level poverty. The study will also relate these dynamics to affordable housing availability, overcrowding, homelessness, immigration flows, ethnic segregation, out-migration of middle-class households, and changing job opportunities.

LEADER data is a very valuable resource for assessing the movements of poor households over time. Integrating LEADER with US Census American Community Survey and LODES data will provide deep knowledge for understanding the geographic dynamics of poverty in Los Angeles County during the last decade.

LEADER data will be de-identified and used to show the census tract changes of poor households by race, and size of the household and level of poverty.

Los Angeles County Record Linkage Project

This research using cross-sector data will identify and analyze groups that will benefit from effective preventative services with the potential for long-term reductions in public costs. The research will include analyzing the timing of life events to identifying prior tripwire conditions associated with critically adverse outcomes, as well as to identify interventions that are strongly connected to improving social conditions and reducing public costs for specific groups.

Records for the county's low-income residents will be a powerful tool for targeting preventative services, improving care and reducing public costs:

- Individuals experiencing homelessness
- Children who experience trauma or homelessness
- Children with mental illness
- Transition age foster and probation youth
- Unemployed but employable adults
- Low-wage workers
- Ex-offenders
- Evicted and displaced households
- Individuals with disabilities

5.0 Funding

This project will be funded by private foundations.

6.0 Benefits of the Proposed Research to Los Angeles County

This project has been organized to provide the following benefits for Los Angeles County and the residents it serves:

1. Provide reliable information that will support operational progress in strengthening health services, employment programs, reducing homelessness, and improving the long-term well-being and self-sufficiency of low-income residents.
2. Identify factors affecting total long-term public costs for different groups of public assistance recipients and interventions for reducing those costs.

3. Build consensus among stakeholders about program policies for improving the economic self-sufficiency and well-being of low-income individuals and families.

7.0 Dynamics of Poverty and Research Project Time Frame

The Economic Roundtable study of the dynamics of poverty using de-identified LEADER records will be completed in 2016. The de-identified LEADER records will be destroyed after the project is completed.

The record linkage project carried out under county oversight and using county computers is expected to be underway in 2016. All LEADER records held by the Economic Roundtable will be handed over to this project or destroyed as soon as the project is underway. The Economic Roundtable will retain no LEADER records.

8.0 Nature of the Data or Other Information that is Being Requested from the Department and the Role of Department Staff

The Economic Roundtable is not requesting any additional records from DPSS. All additional data will be obtained through the county's Enterprise Linkage Project and non-county agencies.

9.0 Copies of Proposed Survey Forms and Questionnaires

No surveys, client interviews or personal contacts with clients are being proposed.

10.0 Release of Reports and Review and Comment by the Department of Public Social Services

DPSS will be provided with copies of all reports that discuss public social services for its review prior to the release of those reports. ER proposes a 30-day period for the review of each report. All written comments furnished by DPSS will be included in each report. DPSS will be invited to send representatives to participate as speakers at the ER meeting following the release of any report that discusses public social services.