## Contents

INTRODUCTION 4
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM CLIENTS AT INTAKE 7
SATISFACTION WITH THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM 11
TARGETED FACTORS AT INTAKE AND FOLLOW-UP 13
   FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES 13
FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE 13
   FINANCIAL LITERACY 14
   FINANCIALLY SOUND PRACTICES 15
FINANCIAL SITUATION 16
   CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS 16
   ECONOMIC HARDSHIP 17
   MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME 19
   CURRENT SAVINGS 19
   SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION 20
QUALITY OF LIFE 21
   QUALITY OF LIFE RATING 21
   FEELINGS ABOUT OWN LIFE 22
SECONDARY FACTOR 23
   INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE 23
SUMMARY 26
   STUDY LIMITATIONS 27
   CONCLUSION 28

APPENDIX A. STUDY METHOD 29

APPENDIX B. COMPARISON OF FOLLOWED-UP:
PARTICIPANTS WHO WERE NOT FOLLOWED 32
Article I. INTRODUCTION

Financial literacy and counseling programs were launched in the 1990s and 2000s within a variety of organizations with the overarching goals of educating vulnerable individuals (e.g., welfare recipients, domestic violence victims, low-income families, adolescents, and college students) about the increasingly complex financial products and realities of the economy.\(^1\) Individual Development Accounts (IDA) and other financial education programs have shown to be effective in helping individuals become more financially independent and secure across populations, states, and programs.\(^2,3,4,5\) A decade ago, the Kentucky Coalition Against Domestic Violence (KCADV) began providing financial education and case management, along with asset-building through IDAs, to residents/clients of the 15 member domestic violence programs throughout the state. The overall goal of the Economic Empowerment Program is to empower clients and their families to become more financially independent and secure, using several strategies including financial education classes and counseling, case management, and asset building.

In 2014, a partnership between KCADV and Kentucky Community and Technical College System’s (KCTCS) was launched to expand the Economic Empowerment Program and integrate it into the Ready to Work/Work and Learn program. The partnership between KCADV and the KCTCS Ready to Work team was a natural fit because transitional students (i.e., welfare recipients) struggle to achieve financial self-sufficiency. Based on research that has found higher rates of intimate partner violence among TANF recipients compared to the general population\(^6,7\) and that victims of intimate partner violence report that obtaining independent

---

financial support is critical to leaving an abusive partner\textsuperscript{8}, KCADV seized the opportunity to reach more intimate partner violence survivors through their partnership with KCTCS with the program called, \textit{Your Money, Your Future}.

The Economic Empowerment Project uses several strategies to accomplish the program goal of empowering low-income families become more financially independent and secure:

1. **FINANCIAL EDUCATION CLASSES AND COUNSELING:** Providing formal education classes and individualized financial counseling.

   a) The KCTCS Coordinators provide a number of classes as well as individualized sessions to Ready-to-Work students participating in the Economic Empowerment Project at campuses across the state. In 2014-2016, the program provided 1,428 individuals with financial education classes, 534 of those with additional individual financial education counseling.

2. **CASE MANAGEMENT:** Integrating financial independence and security strategies into safety planning and other case management services.

   a) The Economic Empowerment Project trains KCTCS Coordinators on ways to integrate financial independence and security strategies into their current case management practice. The goal is to have case managers offer financial education, financial counseling and encourage families to pay down debt, stop using predatory lending, open bank accounts and, ideally, Individual Development Accounts (IDA).

   b) Tax season is a busy time for the Economic Justice Project. Tax filing season is the time most low-income families get the largest infusion of cash each year. Case managers talk about tax season year-round during their counseling sessions. Participants are encouraged to plan for (or put off) major expenses until tax time when they are likely to get a large refund. IDA participants are especially encouraged to deposit a portion of their refund in their IDAs. Further, the free tax preparation services were provided to 381 KCTCS Ready-to-Work students in the 2014-2016 project period.


3. ASSET BUILDING: Asset building through IDAs and improving credit scores.

a) Traditional IDA programs help participants purchase a home, pursue a post-secondary education or start a small business. In the course of the project, 211 KCTCS students opened IDAs. Since 2015, 107 IDA participants in the KCTCS program used their IDAs to pay for their tuition, books, or fees. One KCTCS participant is using an IDA to save for a home.

b) Car IDAs are used as an “entry way” to asset building. Car IDAs are critically important for employment especially in rural Kentucky because so many families need a "stepping stone" to the traditional IDA program. Unlike the federally funded IDAs (which help participants purchase a home, pursue a post-secondary education or start a small business), Car IDAs do not help families buy an appreciable asset. However, they give advocates a way to open the door to asset-building. For some families, purchasing a home or starting a small business can seem like too big a step because they are struggling to address basic needs. Also, the lack of public transportation is a major obstacle in most parts of rural Kentucky, so helping families buy cars is often an important precursor to finding and maintaining employment or pursuing an education. Three KCTCS students used IDAs to purchase cars.

c) Good credit is also an important asset even if participants never plan on purchasing a home. Participants are taught to think of credit reports as financial resumes that landlords, employers, insurance companies and others will use to make decisions about them. As soon as participants open their bank accounts, their credit reports are pulled. The credit reports serve as road maps for the participants and their advocates during the monthly credit counseling sessions. Increasing a credit score is an important goal and incremental increases help participants stay motivated. Since the installment of this program, 380 students have reviewed their credit report with a KCTCS or KCADV staff member. 81 have increased or established a score, including 23 who have increased their score by 50 or more points.

Concurrent with the implementation of the Economic Empowerment Project in KCTCS Ready to Work programs, an outcome evaluation of the project was launched to examine changes in program participants’ financial knowledge, financial practices, financial status, and quality of life from the time they enter the project to 12 months later (i.e., 12-month follow-up
interview). Data collected in the outcome evaluation includes a telephone or face-to-face intake interview conducted by KCADV program staff as individuals begin participation in the Economic Empowerment Program (i.e., intake interview) and approximately 12 months later by KCADV program staff by telephone to assess targeted factors in three domains: (1) financial knowledge and practices, (2) financial situation, and (3) quality of life. In addition, at the beginning of the follow-up interview, participants are asked a series of questions about their level of satisfaction with the Economic Empowerment Program. At the completion of the intake interview, staff persons inform individuals about the follow-up telephone interview 12 months later, and ask if participants are interested in participating. Individuals who agree to be contacted for the follow-up interview (98.5% of individuals who completed intake interviews) are also asked to provide mail and phone contact information for themselves and two other individuals who they believe will know how to reach them a year later. More details about the study method are described in Appendix A.

This final report is a presentation of the outcome evaluation findings. This report describes the sample of program’s clients in two main ways: (1) providing a description of characteristics for 400 adults who completed an intake interview between June 2014 – June 2015), and (2) presentation of the outcomes for 203 adults who completed an intake and 12-month follow-up telephone interview between April 2015 – August 2016—on average 378.8 days after the intake interview. Approximately 80% of the initial 400 adults who completed intake were selected for a follow-up interview. Some of the participants were removed from this selection due to circumstances that prevented successful follow up contact including incarceration or lack of follow-up contact information. Of the 307 selected for follow-up, 203 completed, leaving a final follow-up rate of 66%.

**Article II. DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM CLIENTS AT INTAKE**

In this sample of 400 individuals who completed an intake interview when they began their involvement in the Economic Empowerment program hosted in the Kentucky Community & Technical College System (KCTCS), the majority of participants were female (93.0%) and White (75.6%; see Table 1). About 1 in 6 participants was Black/African American (16.9%), and the remaining 7.6% reported other race/ethnicities (such as Asian, Hispanic) or multiple races/ethnicities. Clients were, on average, 29.6 years old, ranging from 18 to 61 years old. Almost all of the program participants reported they resided in Kentucky (99.5%).
Because of the requirements for the KCTCS Ready-to-Work program, all of the participants received some form of public assistance and all participants were parents. KCTCS students who participated in the Economic Empowerment program reported having, on average, 2.2 children in their lifetime, and an average of 1.8 children under the age of 18 living with them (see Table 2). The majority of participants (72.0%) reported they were the only adult in their household, and 22.0% reported only one other adult lived in their household. Participants reported an average monthly income of $1,533 (from all sources of income). The majority of participants (83.0%) reported living in their own home or apartment, with 16.5% reporting they were living in someone else’s home (e.g., family member’s house), and 0.5% reporting living in a halfway house or shelter. The vast majority of participants who lived in their own home reported they were renting (91.5%), with only 7.6% reporting they owned their home. Only a small minority of participants stated they were currently homeless (2.6%).

---

9 One case had missing data for race/ethnicity.
TABLE 2. (n=400)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics for KCTCS Students Who Completed an Intake Survey for the Economic Empowerment Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN HAD IN LIFETIME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS OLD RESIDING WITH PARTICIPANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT IS THE ONLY ADULT IN THE HOUSEHOLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME (FROM ALL SOURCES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where the Client Lived in the 30 Days Before Entering the Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own home or apartment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone else’s home or apartment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halfway house, homeless shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently Homeless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current living situation is very or fairly suitable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current Employment Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than one-third of program participants (38.7%) reported they had experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) in the 12 months before they completed the intake interview (see Figure
1. An additional 33.3% of participants reported they had ever experienced partner violence in their lifetime but not in the prior 12 months. Thus, 72.0% of the KCTCS students had experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime and only 28.0% of KCTCS students who were involved in the Economic Empowerment Program had not experienced partner violence in their lifetime.

When those with a follow-up interview were compared with those without a follow-up interview on a variety of variables at intake, there were few significant differences. Specifically, followed-up individuals had a significantly higher score on the financial literacy scale at intake when compared to individuals who were not followed-up. Also, significantly more individuals who completed a follow-up interview reported they had claimed the Earned Income Tax Credit in the 12 months before intake when compared to individuals who did not complete the follow-up interview. None of the demographic variables, parenting, living situation, or other factors were significantly different between the two groups of program participants. See Appendix B for detailed comparisons of program participants who completed a follow-up interview (n = 203) and participants who did not complete a follow-up interview (n = 197).

---

10 Seven individuals had missing data on at least one of the items used to measure IPV.
Article III. SATISFACTION WITH THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

At the beginning of the follow-up interview when asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the Economic Empowerment Program, participants largely gave high ratings. On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 representing the ‘worst experience’ and 10 representing the ‘best experience,’ 85.2% of participants gave highly positive ratings of 8 – 10. The average rating was 8.7 (see Figure 2).

When asked about specific aspects of the Economic Empowerment program, the vast majority of participants reported they either agreed or strongly agreed with each aspect of the program that was assessed (see Figure 3). The vast majority of participants stated that program staff treated them with respect, they would recommend that a friend in a similar situation become involved in the program, they received information and referrals that were useful to them, they felt more capable of creating and sticking to a budget, they made more informed and better decisions about household finances than they did when they entered the program, they were more financially secure because of the knowledge, practices, and assistance they learned while in the program.

“I gave it a high rating because the program had everybody involved set up goals and actually meet them and that doesn’t happen in a lot of programs.” – Quote from participant

---

11 Thirteen individuals did not provide a rating of the program.

12 Answers of don’t know/don’t remember were treated as missing on these items. Twenty-four participants had missing values one three of the items.
In the follow-up interview, participants were also asked how successful they were in making progress on their financial goals in the past 12 months (i.e., the period since they had completed an intake interview). The vast majority of participants (95.6%) stated they were somewhat or very successful in making progress on their financial goals, with only 4.4% stated they were not at all successful (see Figure 4). At intake, nearly half of participants (48.3%) stated that at least one of their financial goals was to become financially stable/self-sufficient. The next most commonly mentioned goals were to buy a home/pay off a mortgage (36.0%), pay for their education (23.2%), get out of debt (22.7%), buy a car/pay off a car loan (16.7%), and improve their credit (12.3%).

---

13 Eighteen individuals were not familiar enough with the program at follow-up to feel comfortable answering questions about the program. They chose not to answer the program rating and satisfaction items.
Article IV. TARGETED FACTORS AT INTAKE AND FOLLOW-UP

*Economic Empowerment Program participants had positive changes from intake to follow-up in three domains: (1) financial knowledge and practices, (2) financial situation, and (3) quality of life.*

Section IV.01 FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES

(a) FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

In the intake and follow-up interviews, participants were asked 11 items from the Assets for Independence (AFI) assessment that assessed their financial knowledge of credit, financial services, and taxes.\(^\text{14}\) Response options were True, False, or Unsure. Correct responses were given a score of 1 for each item and then the number of correct responses were summed. The highest score is 11 and the lowest score is 0. There was a significant increase in program participants’ knowledge of financial knowledge of credit, services, and taxes from intake to follow-up (see Figure 5).

---

(b) FINANCIAL LITERACY

In the intake and follow-up interviews, participants were asked eight items that assessed their financial literacy, such as their knowledge of how to access their credit score and file a tax return.\(^\text{15}\) Response options were No (0) and Yes (1). Every item participants answered yes to was summed; the lowest possible value was 0 and the highest value was 8. Program participants' financial literacy increased significantly from intake to follow-up (see Figure 6).

---

(c) FINANCIALLY SOUND PRACTICES
In the intake and follow-up interviews participants were asked if they had engaged in various practices related to their household finances in the past 12 months.\textsuperscript{16,17} Figure 7 presents the percentages of participants who reported engaging in the financial practices at intake and follow-up. Significantly more individuals reported they engaged in the following sound financial practices at follow-up than did at intake: saw their credit score, used a written budget, made deposits into a savings account, decreased household debts a little or a lot, made deposits into an education savings account (for their children or themselves), and claimed the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). There was no significant change from intake to follow-up in the percentage of individuals who reported their household income had increased a little or a lot in the past 12 months.

“Coordinators were readily available to help me save and budget. They helped me to recover after a major financial crisis. They helped me develop an effective plan for cutting back and reorganizing my finances.” –Quote from participant


\textsuperscript{17} Responses options were modified from the source from a Likert scale to Yes/No.
Section IV.02 FINANCIAL SITUATION

(a) CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS

In the intake and follow-up interviews participants were asked their current employment status. Because of the students’ involvement in the Ready-To-Work program nearly all reported that they were currently employed at intake, with the vast majority stating they were employed part-time (see Figure 8). By follow-up, a significantly higher proportion of students reported they were employed full-time, with the majority still reporting they were employed part-time and more were unemployed.

YY, YY

**p < .01, ***p < .001.

“It definitely benefited me and my family: doing taxes, bank account information was helpful. It had a positive impact on everything involved.” – Quote from participant
“This helped me journey through my life. It helped me when I needed someone to be there. It definitely helped me and my fiancé save more, be more conscientious of ways to save. I really liked the 'snowball effect' training.”

–Quote from participant

(b) ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

Economic hardship may be a better indicator of the actual day-to-day stressors individuals face than a measure of income. Therefore, the intake and follow-up surveys included questions about clients’ difficulty meeting basic living needs and health care needs in the past 12 months, which were modified from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP).\(^\text{18}\) Clients were asked nine items: six of which asked about difficulty meeting basic living needs such as food, shelter, utilities telephone, and transportation;

and three items asked about difficulty for financial reasons in obtaining health care (e.g., doctor, dentist, and prescription medication). Participants were also asked if they were concerned about those same difficulties occurring in the next 12 months. Answers of yes to each item were given a score of 1 and answers of no were given a score of 0. Thus, the lowest possible score was 0 and the highest possible score was 11.

The number of basic living and health care needs participants had difficulty meeting in the past 12 months decreased significantly from 2.3 at intake to 1.5 at follow-up (see Figure 9). In addition, the number of basic living and health care needs participants were concerned about meeting in the next 12 months also decreased significantly from intake to follow-up.

**FIGURE 9. NUMBER OF BASIC LIVING AND HEALTH CARE NEEDS PARTICIPANT HAD DIFFICULTY MEETING IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS AND WAS CONCERNED ABOUT MEETING IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS AT INTAKE AND FOLLOW-UP (N = 203)**

```
**p < .01, ***p < .001.
```

“"The program helped me a lot. I was able to get an apartment. I gained skills and got support I needed. Money management was the most helpful thing I learned." –Quote from participant

18
(c) MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME
In the intake and follow-up interviews participants are asked a series of questions about whether their household receives income from a variety of sources (e.g., employment, public assistance, child support, regular income from family members, and other regular sources of income). They are then asked to report the amount of their gross monthly income (i.e., before taxes and deductions are taken out). Participants’ average monthly household income increased significantly from intake to follow-up (see Figure 10).

![Figure 10. Average Monthly Income From All Sources at Intake and Follow-up (n = 201)]

\[ *p < .05. \]

(d) CURRENT SAVINGS
The amount of money participants reported having in savings increased significantly from an average of $182 at intake to $418 at follow-up (see Figure 11). The average amount in participants’ savings accounts more than doubled from intake to follow-up.

---

19 Two participants had a missing value on monthly income at intake.
At follow-up, participants were asked if, in the past 12 months, they had to spend money from their savings. Nearly half of participants (49.5%) reported they had to spend money from their savings—on average, $918 (not depicted in a figure).

“*My coordinator really helped me to understand what I needed to do to get stable and how to track my expenses. Learning about credit and how to fix it was the most helpful part.*”

-Quote from participant

### (e) SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION

In the intake and follow-up interviews participants were asked their level of satisfaction about their current financial situation. Response options were: very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied, and very satisfied. Responses in the very or somewhat dissatisfied categories were grouped together and responses in the very or somewhat satisfied categories were grouped together for this analysis.

The percentage of participants who reported they were somewhat or very satisfied with their current financial situation increased significantly from 41.6% at intake to 56.4% at follow-up (see Figure 12).
Section IV.03 QUALITY OF LIFE

(a) QUALITY OF LIFE RATING
In the intake and follow-up interviews participants were asked to rate their quality of life, with 1 representing the worst imaginable and 10 representing the best imaginable. Participants’ average quality of life ratings increased significantly from intake to follow-up (see Figure 13).

---

20 One participant had a missing value at intake.
(b) FEELINGS ABOUT OWN LIFE

Participants were also asked five items about how positively they felt about their life in the intake and follow-up interviews. Examples of items include: “In most ways, your life are close to your ideal,” and “So far, you have the important things you want in life.” There were four response options for each item, which ranged from 1 ‘Strongly Disagree’ to 4 ‘Strongly Agree.’ Values for each of the five items were summed to calculate a score; higher scores indicate a higher level of satisfaction and higher quality of life (Minimum = 5, Maximum = 20).

Average scores on the Feelings About Own Life scale increased significantly from intake to follow-up, indicating that participants’ level of satisfaction with and their overall quality of life had improved (see Figure 14).

**FIGURE 14. AVERAGE SCORE ON FEELINGS ABOUT OWN LIFE AT INTAKE AND FOLLOW-UP (N = 203)**

![Graph showing average scores](image)

***p < .001.

Article V. SECONDARY FACTOR

Section V.01 INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

A secondary goal of the program was to connect students who were experiencing intimate partner violence victims to community resources, such as Kentucky Coalition Against Domestic Violence. With this goal in mind, change in the number of students who reported they had experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months was examined at intake and follow-up. To capture a broad range of intimate partner violence experiences nine items were asked of participants in the intake and follow-up interviews. Items asked if a partner (e.g., boy/girlfriend, spouse) had perpetrated any of the following acts against the participant in the prior 12 months: verbal and emotional abuse, extreme jealousy/controlling behavior, threats of violence, physical assault, stalking behavior, destruction of property, sexually degrading or humiliating acts, and threatened/forced sexual acts. If a participant answered “yes” to at least one of these 9 items, then the participant was classified as having experienced IPV in the prior 12 months.

There was a significant decrease in the number of students who reported past-12-month intimate partner violence at follow-up (see Figure 15).

FIGURE 15. PAST-12-MONTH EXPERIENCE OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AT INTAKE AND FOLLOW-UP (N = 197)

* $p < .05$

---

22 A total of six individuals were excluded from this analysis because 3 had missing data at intake and 3 had missing data at follow-up about some or all of the intimate partner violence items.
Given that a little over one-fourth of KCTCS students in the Ready-to-Work program reported they had experienced intimate partner violence in the 12 months before follow-up it was important to examine if these students had different financial status and quality of life than individuals who did not report intimate partner violence at follow-up. Statistical tests were conducted to examine differences between students who experienced IPV and students who did not experience IPV in the 12-month-follow-up period for all of the targeted factors presented in Figures 4 -14. Several statistically significant differences were found and are presented in Figures 16a – 16b. When statistically significant differences were found between the two groups, students who reported IPV in the 12-month-follow-up period had worse financial status and quality of life.

“Most people in college just don’t know about finances. The staff went over everything: mortgages, budgeting, how to plan for the future, and credit. Information on how to access credit was the most useful and important to me during the process”
—Quote from participant

Specifically, significantly more individuals who reported IPV at follow-up had taken out a pawn shop loan in the 12 months before follow-up. Additionally, even though only a small minority of participants reported they were currently homeless at follow-up, significantly more individuals who reported IPV also reported being currently homeless when compared to individuals who did not report IPV in the follow-up period (see Figure 16a).
Individuals with IPV experiences in the 12-month follow-up period reported they had significantly more basic living needs and health care needs they had difficulty meeting at follow-up than individuals who did not report IPV experiences (see Figure 16b). Additionally, individuals with IPV experiences rated their quality of life lower and had worse feelings about their life when compared to individuals who did not have IPV experiences in the follow-up period.

Nonetheless, even though some differences in financial status and quality of life were found between individuals with IPV experiences in the follow-up period when compared to
individuals without IPV experiences, there were no significant differences in most of the examined targeted factors.

Article VI. SUMMARY

The outcome evaluation for the Economic Empowerment Project, which is a partnership between the Kentucky Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, includes client-level data collected when Ready-to-Work students enter the Economic Empowerment Project and 12-month follow-up data for 203 participants. Findings show substantial and positive changes in program participants’ lives from the time they enter the program to 12 months later. Program participants had high levels of satisfaction with the program and they showed significant improvements in their financial knowledge, financial practices, financial situation, and quality of life at the 12-month follow-up as compared to the intake interview.

Participants report high levels of satisfaction with the program. For example, 85.2% of participants rated their experience in the Economic Empowerment Project as 8 through 10 on a scale from 1 to 10 wherein 10 represents the highest rating. In addition, in the 12-month follow-up interview, the vast majority of participants agreed that program staff treated them with respect, they would recommend the program to a friend in a similar situation, they felt more capable of creating and sticking to a budget, they were more financially secure because of what they learned in the program, and they made more informed and better decisions about their household finances than they had when they entered the program. Furthermore, 95.6% of participants stated in the follow-up interview that they were somewhat or very successful at making progress on their financial goals in the past 12 months.

Participants’ financial literacy and knowledge of credit, financial services, and taxes increased significantly from intake to follow-up. Furthermore, compared to intake, at follow-up significantly more participants reported engaging in financially sound practices, such as seeing their credit score, making deposits into a savings account, making deposits into an education savings account, decreasing their household debts, and claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

Participants’ financial situation also improved in several meaningful ways. First, the number of basic living and health care needs participants reported having difficulty meeting in the past 12 months decreased significantly from intake to follow-up. Along the same lines, the number of
basic living and health care needs participants were concerned about meeting in the next 12 months also decreased significantly from intake to follow-up. Second, participants’ average monthly income from all sources increased significantly from intake to follow-up ($1,560 vs. $1,843). Third, the average amount of money participants had in savings increased significantly from $182 at intake to $418 at follow-up. Finally, the percentage of participants who reported they were somewhat or very satisfied with their current financial situation increased significantly from 41.6% at intake to 56.4% at follow-up.

Not only did participants’ financial situation improve in several ways, but also their ratings of their overall quality of life also improved from intake to follow-up. First, participants’ average ratings of their overall quality of life increased from 7.2 at intake to 7.7 at follow-up. Second, average scores on a scale that measure participants’ level of satisfaction with and their feelings about their quality of life increased from intake to follow-up.

Even though intimate partner violence is not a targeted factor of the Economic Empowerment Program in the KCTCS Ready-to-Work program, training of the KCTCS Coordinators by KCADV increased Coordinators’ capacity to provide information and referrals to community resources to students who report experiencing intimate partner violence. Thus, students’ reports of past-12-month and lifetime experiences with IPV were measured at intake, and then past-12-month IPV experiences were asked about in the follow-up interview. The majority of KCTCS students had experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime (72.0%) and only 28.0% of KCTCS students who were involved in the Economic Empowerment Program had not experienced partner violence in their lifetime. Furthermore, more than one-third of students reported they had experienced IPV in the 12 months before intake, and a little more than one-fourth of students reported they had experienced IPV in the 12 months before follow-up. The minority of students who reported IPV at follow-up had greater economic hardship and lower quality of life at follow-up when compared to the majority of students who did not report IPV in the 12-month follow-up period.

Section VI.01 STUDY LIMITATIONS

These preliminary study findings must be considered within the context of the outcome evaluation’s methodological limitations. First, the study design is a one-group pre-test and post-test evaluation. Randomly assigning individuals to receive financial education and counseling was not acceptable for ethical and programming reasons. Identifying and collecting intake and follow-up data from a comparable group of individuals who did not participate in
the financial education, counseling, or asset-building was originally considered as a strategy in the evaluation outcome study design. However, even though the study design initially aimed to complete intake interviews with a sample that included individuals who had not participated in the Economic Empowerment Project (33% of the sample), the number of individuals who had not participated in the program in any way after the KCADV team had conducted almost a year’s worth of intake interviews was in the single digits; thus, there was no comparison group.

Second, data includes self-reported information. There is reason to question the validity and reliability of self-reported data, particularly with regard to sensitive topics. However, recent research has supported findings about the reliability and accuracy of self-reported data.\textsuperscript{23} Earlier studies have found that the context of the interview influences reliability.\textsuperscript{24} The KCADV staff members who conducted the intake and follow-up interviews operate out of the central KCADV office and operate independently the KCTCS Ready to Work teams. All of this information is provided to participants when they are contacted and informed about the intake and follow-up interviews. Assurances of confidentiality are a key factor for increasing the reliability and validity of self-report data.

Third, not all individuals who completed an intake interview were followed up. However, analysis that compared individuals who completed a follow-up interview with individuals who did not complete a follow-up interview suggest that followed up individuals and those who were not followed up are similar on many key demographic and financial factors at intake.

Section VI.02 CONCLUSION

Data collected from 203 program participants who completed follow-up interviews from June 2015 to August 2016 show significant improvements in key factors of participants’ financial literacy, sound financial practices, financial situation, and quality of life. These findings are encouraging and bolster commitment to continue the evaluation of the Economic Empowerment Project in the KCTCS Ready to Work programs.


Article VII. APPENDIX A. STUDY METHOD

The KCADV outcome evaluation team for the Economic Empowerment Project works closely with the Coordinators of the Ready to Work programs to gather contact information and schedule appointments for face-to-face or telephone intake interviews with Economic Empowerment Project participants as they begin the program. An online survey, which is programmed and managed by the independent evaluator’s team, is used to guide the structured interview and to enter the participant’s responses and then submitted to the independent evaluator’s server. Identifying data are encrypted upon submission to the evaluator’s server. From June 2014 through July 2015, 400 intake interviews were conducted by the KCADV team with KCTCS Ready to Work/Ready to Learn students.

At the end of the intake interview, which takes, on average 40 minutes, the KCADV outcome evaluation interviewer explains the follow-up interview and procedures using a standardized script and asks participants if they agree to being contacted by the team approximately 12 months later for a follow-up interview. Of the 400 individuals with a completed intake interview, 98.5% of participants (n = 394) agreed to be contacted for the follow-up interview. Individuals who give consent to be contacted for the follow-up survey are asked to provide their mail and phone information, along with the contact information for two other individuals who will know how to get in touch with them in a year. This locator information is entered into the online survey and is encrypted upon submission to the evaluator’s server, where it is kept encrypted.

The independent evaluator selects individuals into the sample for the follow-up interviews, which are targeted for 12 months after intake interviews were conducted with the following eligibility criteria: (1) Only individuals who give consent to be contacted for the follow-up interview are included in the sample; and (2) Individuals are included in the follow-up sample only once. For example, if an individual participated in the Economic Empowerment Project at two separate times, completing two intake interviews, the person would be eligible to be included in the follow-up sample 12 months after the first intake interview, but not the second intake interview. Because smaller numbers of individuals are active participants in the IDA program and because a focus of the project is to evaluate outcomes by IDA participation, all individuals who sign up for the IDA program and make at least 4 monthly deposits out of a 6-month period are selected into the follow-up sample. For all other individuals with a
completed intake interview (i.e., those who do not actively participate in the IDA program), a randomly selected sample of 80% of the individuals with a target interview in a given month are selected into the follow-up sample. Once the follow-up sample is selected for a month, the independent evaluator shares the locator information with the KCADV outcome evaluation interviewers to begin their efforts to contact and complete the follow-up interviews with those individuals.

The window for completing a follow-up interview with an individual selected in the follow-up sample begins one month before the target month and spans until two months after the target month. For example, if the target month for an individual’s follow-up interview is July, then the KCADV evaluation interviewers attempt to contact participants beginning in June and end their efforts at the end of September or when the follow-up interview is completed, whichever comes first.

Incentives were given to the survey participants as a means of encouraging evaluation participation and increasing the overall follow-up rate. Participants were given $10 gift cards upon completion of their intake interviews, and $25 gift card upon completion of their 12-month follow-up survey. Wal-Mart gift cards were the best option for this project as participants were located all over the state and not all had access to convenient banks or similar store chains. Gift cards were mailed or hand-delivered to the participants within a week of completing their follow-up evaluation.

Of the 307 participants selected for follow-up evaluation (80% of the people randomly selected from the intake pool of participants), 203 participated in the follow-up survey. This left us with a follow-up rate of 66% for KCTCS for the outcome evaluation. The transitory nature of survivors receiving shelter services and parents receiving TANF presented somewhat of a challenge to achieving a higher rate of follow-up after the 12-month period. All follow-up surveys were conducted by KCADV evaluation staff specifically trained by the evaluation coordinator, with the majority of the participants being surveyed by the evaluation coordinator.

Section VII.01 REPORT DATA ANALYSIS

This report examines program participants’ self-reported changes from intake to follow-up in financial knowledge, practices and status, as well as quality of life and living conditions. To assess whether the change in a factor (e.g., scores on the financial knowledge scale) was statistically significant, paired t-tests were run for continuous variables and McNemar test (for
two correlated proportions) were run for categorical variables. Additionally, all analyses presented in the main text of the report examined differences between individuals who had experienced IPV in the 12 months before the follow-up interview and individuals who did not experience IPV on targeted factors at follow-up using t-test for continuous variables and chi square test of independence for categorical variables. All statistically significant (p < .05) differences by IPV experiences are reported in the section on secondary factors.
Article VIII. APPENDIX B. COMPARISON OF FOLLOWED-UP PARTICIPANTS WITH PARTICIPANTS WHO WERE NOT FOLLOWED UP

KCTCS Economic Empowerment Project participants who completed a follow-up interview are compared in this section with participants who did not complete a follow-up interview for any reason\textsuperscript{25} (e.g., did not agree to be contacted for the follow-up survey, ineligible for follow-up, and interviewers were unable to locate the client for the follow-up survey).

Section VIII.01 DEMOGRAPHICS

The majority of the sample of students who completed an intake survey when entering the KCTCS Economic Empowerment Project was female and White (see Table AB.1). The average client age was around 29 years old. There were no significant differences in age, gender, or race by follow-up status.

| TABLE AB.1. COMPARISON OF DEMOGRAPHICS FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS BY FOLLOW-UP STATUS |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
|                                  | FOLLOWED UP           |
|                                  | NO (n = 197)          | YES (n = 203)        |
| AGE                              | 29.3 years           | 29.9 years           |
| GENDER                           |                       |                      |
| Male                             | 8.6%                  | 5.4%                 |
| Female                           | 91.4%                 | 94.6%                |
| RACE\textsuperscript{26}         |                       |                      |
| White/Caucasian                  | 80.0%                 | 71.3%                |
| Black/African American           | 13.3%                 | 20.3%                |
| Other or multiracial             | 6.7%                  | 8.4%                 |

\textsuperscript{25} Significance is reported for $p < .05$.

\textsuperscript{26} Three participants had missing data for race: two participants who were not followed-up and one participant who completed a follow-up interview.
There were no significant differences between students who completed a follow-up interview and those who did not on parenting, living situation, and employment variables examined at intake (see Table AB.2).

**TABLE AB.2 PARENTING, LIVING SITUATION, AND CURRENT EMPLOYMENT OF PARTICIPANTS AT PROGRAM INTAKE BY FOLLOW-UP STATUS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOLLOWED UP</th>
<th>NO (n = 197)</th>
<th>YES (n = 203)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF CHILDREN HAD IN LIFETIME</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 WHO RESIDED WITH PARTICIPANT</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE NUMBER OF ADULTS IN HOUSEHOLD</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN (UNDER AGE 18) IN HOUSEHOLD</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME (FROM ALL SOURCES)</td>
<td>$1,505.33</td>
<td>$1,560.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHERE THE CLIENT LIVED IN THE 30 DAYS BEFORE ENTERING THE PROGRAM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own home or apartment</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone else’s home or apartment</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halfway house, homeless shelter</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURRENTLY HOMELESS</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURRENT LIVING SITUATION IS VERY OR FAIRLY SUITABLE</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF BASIC NEEDS HAD DIFFICULTY MEETING</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistical analysis of financial knowledge, financial practices and financial status showed that individuals who were followed up were very similar to individuals who did not complete a follow-up interview (see Table AB.3). A couple of statistically significant differences were found. First, followed-up individuals had a significantly higher score on the financial literacy scale at intake when compared to individuals who were not followed-up. Second, significantly more individuals who completed a follow-up interview reported they had claimed the Earned Income Tax Credit in the 12 months before intake when compared to individuals who did not complete the follow-up interview.
### TABLE AB.3 FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICES, AND STATUS AT PROGRAM INTAKE BY FOLLOW-UP STATUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOLLOWED UP</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n  = 197</td>
<td>n  = 203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE SCORE</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE FINANCIAL LITERACY SCORE*</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINANCIALLY SOUND PRACTICES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw credit score</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept a written budget</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made deposits into savings account</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased household debt</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made deposits into education savings account</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claimed Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOMEWHAT OR VERY SATISFIED WITH FINANCIAL SITUATION</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURRENT LIVING SITUATION IS VERY OR FAIRLY SUITABLE</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, **p < .01.