



The Citi Financial Capability Demonstration Project was developed through a partnership between Citi Foundation and NeighborWorks® America to expand financial coaching programs targeting low-to moderate-income individuals.

## 1. Citi Financial Capability Demonstration Project

The project aimed to increase financial knowledge, change financial behavior, and ultimately improve the financial well-being of participants. It involved a cohort of 30 nonprofit organizations providing training, technical assistance, and evaluation tools to practitioners working directly with clients. The findings of the project highlight the value of financial coaching in helping consumers adopt new financial behaviors and attitudes, which lead to long-term financial security.

### 1. Reasons for Reduced Retention

- **Time and Travel Commitments:** Many low-income participants had difficulty maintaining consistent involvement due to transportation, childcare, or work obligations
- **Limited Understanding of Program Requirements:** Participants who did not fully understand the commitment required for financial coaching were more likely to drop out
- **Immediate Crises:** Clients experiencing financial emergencies or severe life disruptions often prioritized short-term needs over ongoing coaching commitments

### 2. Elements for Keeping Retention

- **Integrating Coaching into Other Services:** Financial coaching was embedded into broader services (e.g., housing or employment programs), making it easier for participants to stay engaged.
- **Flexible Delivery Methods:** Offering remote coaching options, such as phone or online sessions, helped participants with limited mobility or transportation challenges
- **Personalized, Ongoing Support:** Participants who received individualized attention and continuous follow-ups from coaches were more likely to remain committed

### 3. Strategies and Best Practice Recommendations

#### Successful Strategies

- **Embedding Coaching into Existing Programs:** By integrating financial coaching with programs like homeownership or workforce development, organizations saw higher retention and improved outcomes
- **Use of Technology:** Web-based scheduling and other digital tools helped streamline service delivery, making it easier for participants to stay involved

#### Unsuccessful Strategies

- **Stand-alone Financial Coaching Programs:** Programs offered without integration into other services faced higher dropout rates, as participants had fewer connections to keep them engaged
- **Insufficient Client Preparedness:** Targeting clients without first assessing their readiness for coaching

#### Prioritizing the Findings

The most valuable insights for retention in financial coaching, particularly for low-income Canadians, are:

1. **Integration of Financial Coaching with Broader Services:** Embedding coaching into existing programs such as housing, employment, or education ensures participants engage through familiar, accessible entry points. This holistic approach allows participants to see direct benefits in their lives, increasing retention
2. **Flexible and Remote Coaching Options:** Offering various methods of coaching, including online or phone-based services, accommodates participants with barriers like transportation, work schedules, or childcare needs. This flexibility is crucial for community organizations dealing with underserved populations
3. **Ongoing Personal Support:** Coaches who provided regular follow-ups and personalized attention were able to retain participants longer. Clients who feel a personal connection to their coach and are actively supported in meeting their goals are more likely to complete programs

#### Best Practices Context

- **Integration and Flexibility:** The success of integrated programs shows that participants are more likely to stay engaged when financial coaching is part of a broader service model. This integration ensures that financial coaching complements and reinforces other areas of participants' lives, such as housing stability or job security
- **Client Preparedness:** Assessing a client's readiness for financial coaching before starting the program is critical. When participants were unprepared or unable to dedicate time to the process, retention suffered. Tailoring the program to their needs and readiness level helps them engage meaningfully