



EMPOWERMENT TODAY

501(c)(3) Public Benefit Corporation

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Launched in 2008, Empowerment Today is an innovative, non-profit organization dedicated to advancing financial literacy for Americans families. Its mission is to empower low-income families seeking to enhance their financial literacy awareness through education. Empowerment Today implements its mission through a unique integration of program concepts that include participatory education, Accelerated Learning, and community partnerships.

Since the 1990s, the issue of financial education has risen on the agendas of educators, businesses, government agencies, community groups, and policymakers. It is now widely acknowledged that financial literacy matters. Financial literacy has assumed greater importance in society as a result of the increasing complexity of financial products, and the cutting of economic safety nets by government and employers. Yet, many Americans have a weak grasp of personal finance principles. Contributing to the 2008 credit crisis, the United States faces a financial literacy crisis as well — with millions of Americans lacking even the most basic money management skills.



WHO TAKES CLASSES?



36% Hispanic/
Latino
31% Black/
African-American
15% Asian
12% White
6% Other

Demographic Estimates:

Average class size is 17, 70% female, with 50% percent of the class born outside of US. Two-thirds of the participants are either Black/ African American and/ or Hispanic/ Latino. Over two thirds of participants are anticipated to be 25 - 54 years of age, with over half having dependents less than 18 years of age.

Recent research demonstrates that financial knowledge can be statistically linked to practices related to cash-flow management, credit management, saving, investing, and well-being. Further, the concurrent forces of globalization, technology, and industrial reorganization have heightened the urgency for a national initiative to promote financial education. Consequently, the Federal Reserve launched a directive to stimulate U.S. households to learn more about financial management. In response, Empowerment Today innovators reviewed the limits of existing resources and transcended those models to reflect the requirements of the modern family and economy.

Empowerment Today's novel program design integrates the techniques of Accelerated Learning; it trains community based organizations to service their own clients; and, it targets youth as well as parents of all cultures to break the cycle of poverty.



Empowering Americans to Empower Themselves - Becoming Financially Secure through Effective Financial Literacy.

THE ISSUE

ADVANCING FINANCIAL LITERACY AFFECTS EVERYONE

Empowerment Today addresses the challenges of the working poor trying to move into the economic mainstream. The ability of all consumers to make informed financial decisions is critical to developing sound personal finance, which contributes to efficient allocation of resources and financial stability in society. For Empowerment Today, financial literacy means the ability to understand financial terms and concepts and translate that knowledge skillfully into behavior. Consequently, greater financial literacy is an important component to increase saving rates and lending to the poorest and most vulnerable consumers.

COMMUNITY IMPACT: Beyond the significant impact on individuals and families (i.e. access to opportunity and less reliance on government), these issues have implications for everyone. The social fiber and vitality of communities suffer when all individuals cannot participate fairly in the economy. Financially secure families are better able to contribute to vital, thriving communities and thereby further foster economic development. Thus, financial education is important not only to households but to their entire neighborhood and community as well.

High school student scores in financial literacy are directly correlated to the number of bankruptcies in their states.

ECONOMIC IMPACT: Knowledgeable consumers who make informed choices are essential to an effective and efficient marketplace. In classical economics, informed consumers also provide the checks and balances that keep unscrupulous sellers out of the market. In general, consumers' inability to make self-beneficial financial decisions in key areas relating to consumer financing can have negative ramifications on the entire economy. It is a matter of significant concern that financial literacy deficiencies

are concentrated among particular population subgroups — those with low income and low education, minorities, and women — where being financially illiterate may render them most vulnerable to economic hardship in retirement.

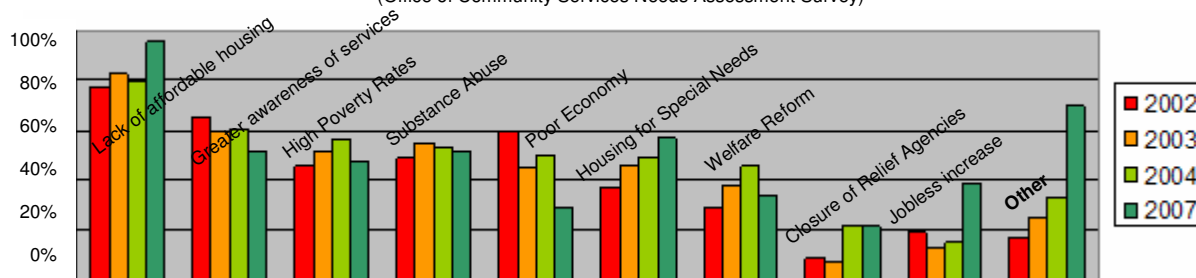
9% of high school graduates receive any financial education in school.

Financial education also contributes importantly to the unique aspect of human capital development by reinforcing the fundamental laws that underpin a market economy. Researchers also report that poor financial decisions hurt productivity in the workplace (Kim, Bagwell, & Garman, 2004).

Approximately 75% of Americans live financially month-to-month.

Experts agree that financial knowledge is directly correlated with self-beneficial financial behavior (Hilgert, Hogarth, & Beverly, 2003). Thus, Empowerment Today introduces financial principles and practices to empower families to gradually gain experiences upon which to draw throughout life and enter the mainstream middle class. The results can be profound, not just for the individuals involved but also for the nation's economic and financial systems.

Causes of Increases in Homelessness
(Office of Community Services Needs Assessment Survey)



THE PROGRAM

TAILORING ACCELERATED LEARNING WITH INNOVATION

Empowerment Today has researched, developed and piloted a financial literacy program for low-income families that addresses the main financial issues that they face. Focusing specifically on both youth and parents, Empowerment Today programs are an important way of helping to change attitudes and behavior in order to help them deal with pressures and make more effective decisions about finances. The program model combines classroom, community, web and research based activities while providing the essential understandings about managing money.

Full program development will include:

- ◆ **EDUCATION:** Delivery of financial education resources through facilitator training, non-profit licensing and collaboration, conferences, and workshops.
- ◆ **PRODUCTS:** Tangible and electronic items will promote learning and improved understanding of educational content and concepts. These may include items such as curriculum guides, booklets, fact sheets, educational games, lesson plans, CDs, and web-based materials.
- ◆ **FACILITATOR SERVICES:** Hotlines, digital education blasts, library assistance, and networking resources are being developed for facilitators.
- ◆ **OUTREACH:** Efforts will involve clients from community and faith-based organizations, in addition to educational institutions.
- ◆ **CAMPAIGNS:** Focused on raising national awareness on economic and personal finance issues, campaigns will galvanize community support.
- ◆ **COMPETITIONS:** Since youth respond robustly to educational initiatives when they come through competition, these can take many forms that result in performance-based assessments (rather than memory recall), typically having the most lasting impacts.

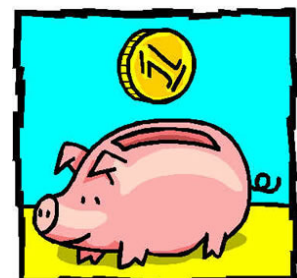
CURRICULUM: Empowerment Today programs were designed using Accelerated Teaching techniques that ensure a higher rate of comprehension and retention than traditional lecture-style instruction. Therefore, participants get involved and excited about the concepts and tools that change their lives. Based on the latest brain research, Accelerated Learning is a system for speeding and enhancing both the design and the learning processes. Research shows that accelerated learning techniques enhance performance and retention by 14%, making students more effective learners.

Creative Wealth International created the base curriculum utilized in instruction. Curricula strengths include adaptability to student needs and increased interaction.



HIGHLIGHTED CURRICULA TOPICS

- Psychology of Wealth and Poverty
- Creating a Financial Road Map
- Power of Planning
- Debt and Credit
- Banking and Investing
- Entrepreneurship vs. Salary



SUSTAINABILITY: Empowerment Today has several strengths, which contribute to its long-range sustainability. Growing to maintain an annual budget of \$300,000 by 2012, the organization will operate nationally, and co-locate its educational resources at non-profit and academic institutions across the United States. Empowerment Today's organizational model ensures that its programs will have the resources necessary to succeed by establishing earned income along with contributed income.

Launch and steady expansion of programs is supported by donors, a calendar of grant proposals to private and government agencies, workshop/conference events, and earned income initiatives. Empowerment Today is also in the process of preparing a 3-year Development Plan for long-range fundraising and program enhancement.

EARNED INCOME: Designing programs for earned income is an essential component of agency sustainability planning. Empowerment Today's program model establishes resources through two "Learn to Fish" earned income initiatives:

- Model 1 is a licensing program for community-based-organizations to educate their client base. In this model, Empowerment Today also offers classes as direct services and trains instructors for fees.
- Model 2 involves co-production of educational workshops at client service locations for shared revenue.

Either of these models can also be underwritten via collaborative development projects with partner agencies. As a coordinating agency, because of the number of partnerships, Empowerment Today is able to leverage resources through joint fundraising projects.

EMPOWERMENT TODAY
Organizational Budget 2009/2010

EXPENSE	AMOUNT
Personnel	\$146,050
College Internships	\$5,000
Contractors	\$22,200
Operations	
▪ Administrative	\$33,150
▪ Marketing	\$15,600
▪ Telecom	\$3,000
Total	\$225,000

FOUNDER: Jessica Johnson, Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Empowerment Today, is a California native who obtained her Bachelor of Arts from Claremont McKenna College and her Master in Business Administration from Cal Poly Pomona. Ms. Johnson worked for 7 years as a Technology Management Consultant with Kerry Consulting Group, and for 10 years as a Special Agent with the United States Secret Service. She can be contacted as follows:

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Empowerment Today maintains a five-member Board of Directors.

