



Fresh Start Debt Forgiveness Program at City Colleges of Chicago

October 2021



City Colleges of Chicago
Fresh Start Program
Opens The Door to
**Educational Opportunity,
Financial Empowerment**
and
Economic Mobility
for Former Students





Launched in Fall 2020, Fresh Start allowed former students to return and “learn off” their debt.

Eligibility



- Former City Colleges students who left within the last ten years
- Left in good academic standing

Academics



- **Debt is forgiven as student progresses**
- Half of their outstanding debt forgiven upon successful completion of first new term (in good standing).
- The remaining half of their balance forgiven upon completion of a credential (associate degree or certificate)

Supports



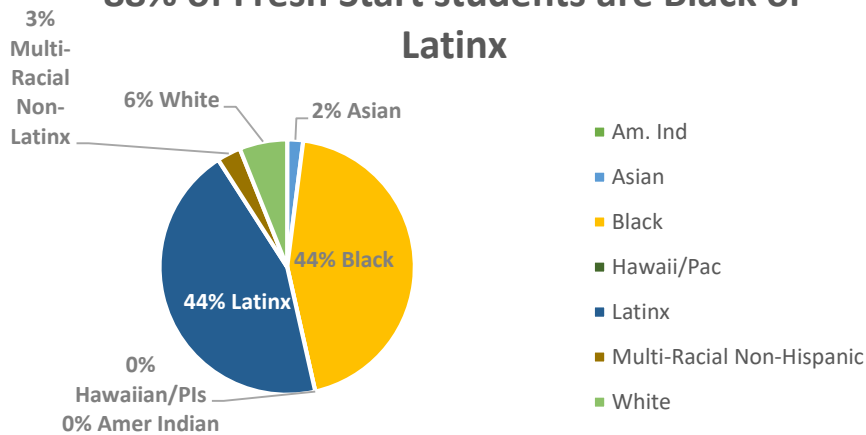
- **Academic Advising:** Student commits to academic advising to support their academic goals
- **Financial Empowerment:** Confidential financial counseling session provided by City Colleges’ non-profit partner, **Working Credit NFP**, to support financial goals



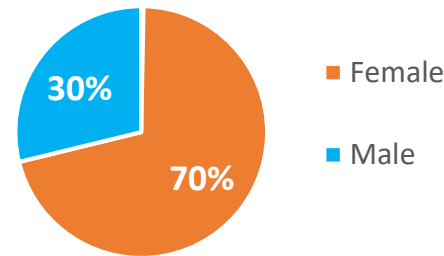
The Fresh Start debt forgiveness program has served 910 students, overwhelmingly Black, Latinx, and female, in its first year



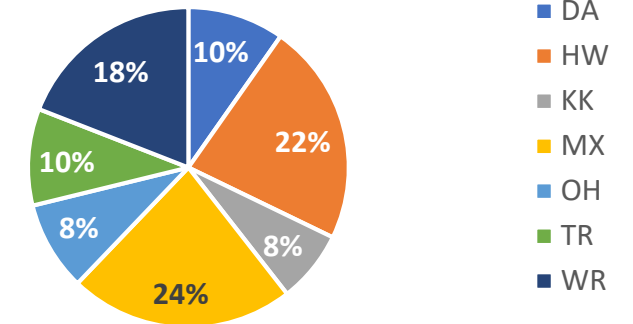
88% of Fresh Start students are Black or Latinx



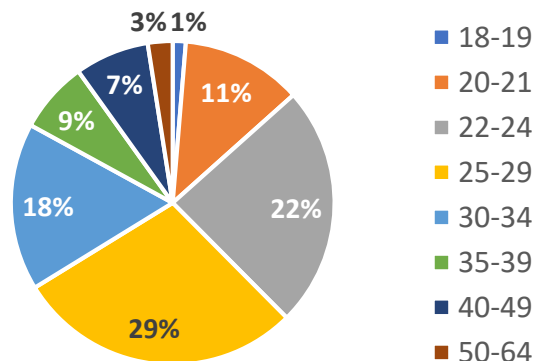
70% of Fresh Start students are women



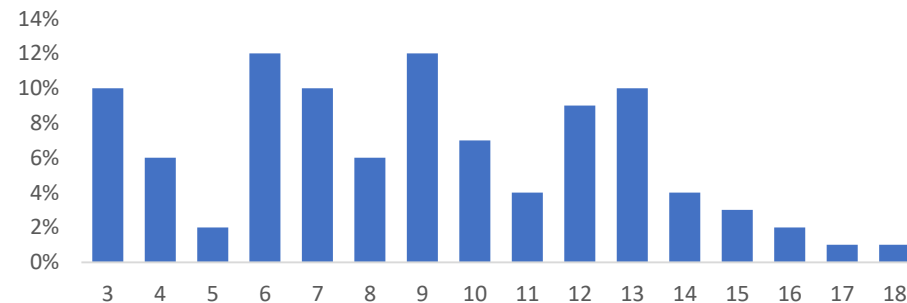
Fresh Start students are attending every City College



More than half of students are aged 22-29



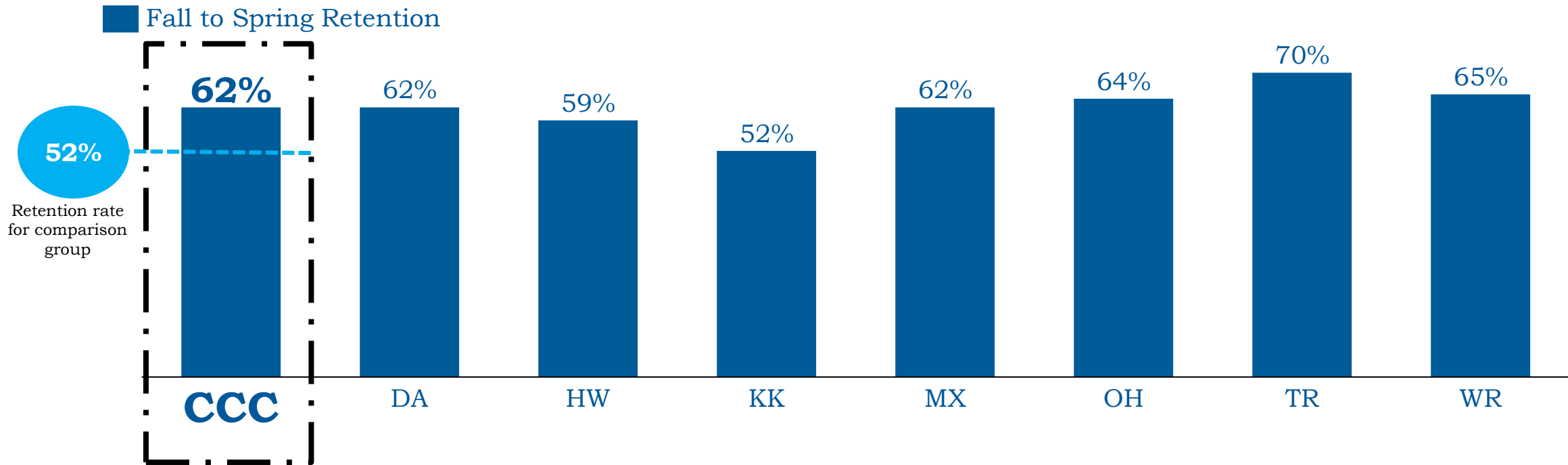
69% of students attend part-time (less than 12 credits)



Fresh Start Outcomes

Fresh Start Student Retention Rates, Fall 2020 Cohort

- 62% of Fall Fresh Start students were retained to Spring with Truman College retaining 70% of Fresh Start students; **compared to a retention of comparable Stop-in students at CCC of 52%**



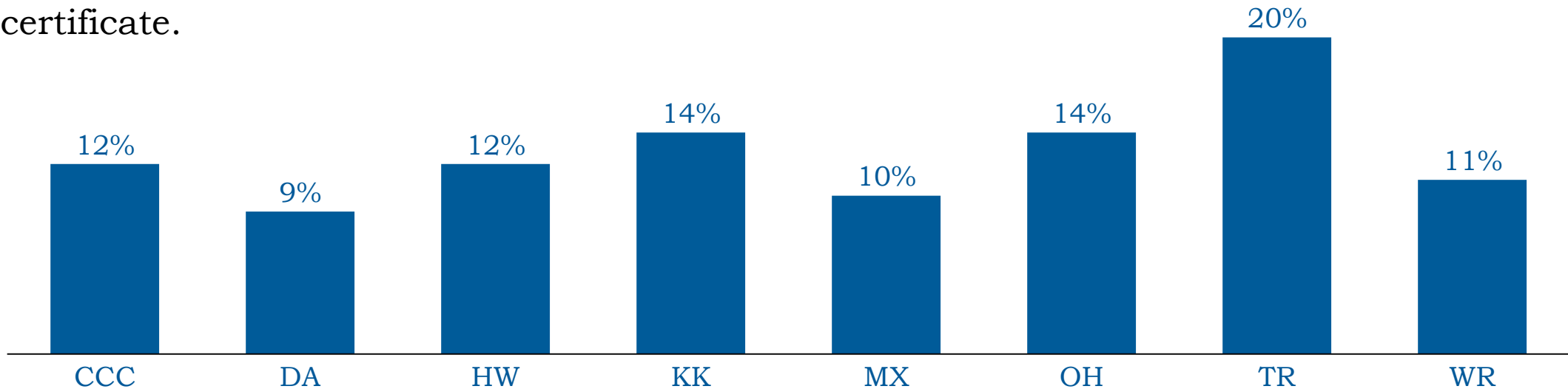
* In progress

(Overall CCC retention rate is 68.5%.)

★ Fresh Start One Year Completion Outcomes

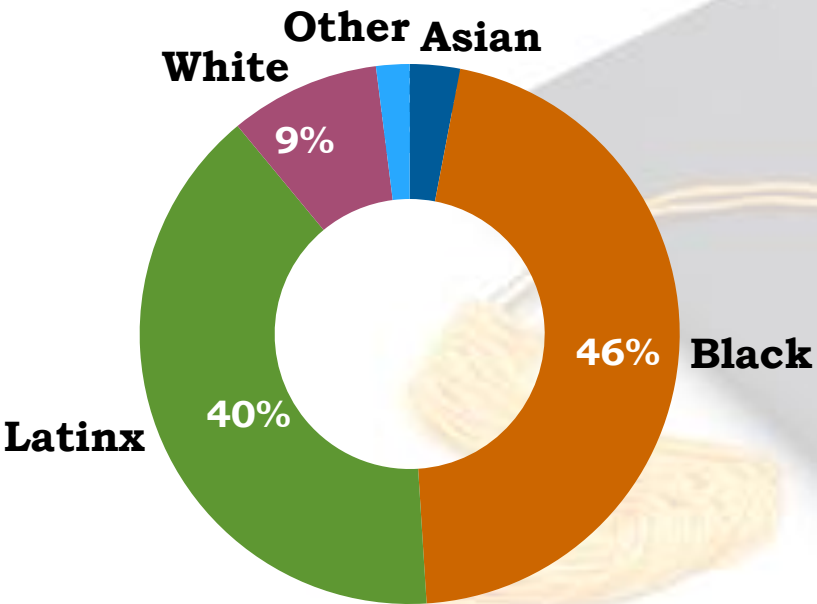
Fresh Start Student Completion Rates

- **118 students** completed studies at CCC since the implementation of Fresh Start
- These students account for 12% of the student population participating in the Fresh Start program
- 79% of students earned an associate degree while 21% earned an advanced or basic certificate.

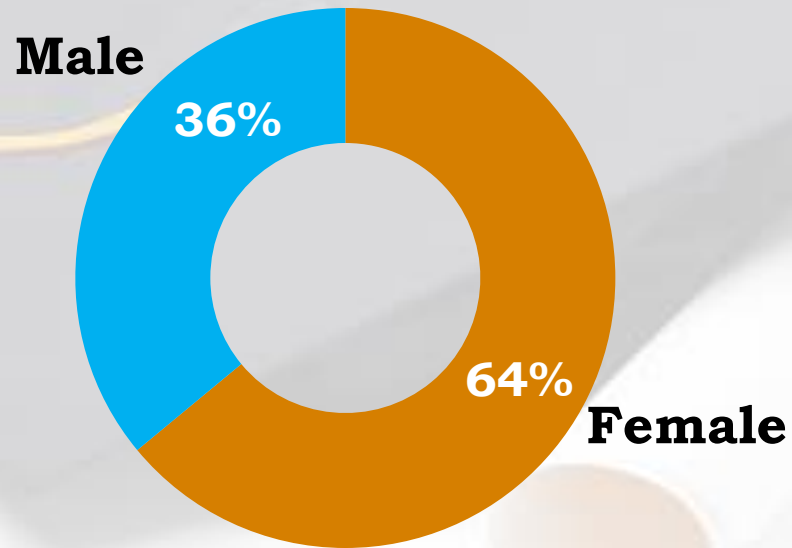


Fresh Start One Year Completer Demographics

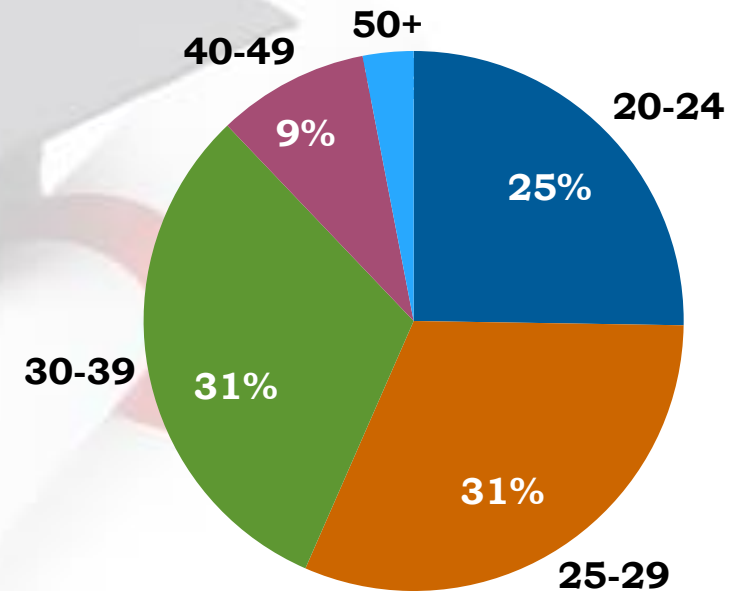
Fresh Start Student Completers



86% of completers are Black or Latinx



64% of completers are women



62% of completers are 25-39 years old

★ CCC Student Financial Outcomes



- **350** students have had 50% of their debt waived
- **105** students have had 100% of their debt waived

= **\$318,000** in debt waived





Financial Empowerment Support

Working Credit NFP provides Fresh Start Participants with the following three key supports:

- **Credit Building Education**

A 45-minute online workshop on how the credit scoring systems work and the rules of credit building.

- **One-on-One Credit Building Appointment**

Counselors work with students to

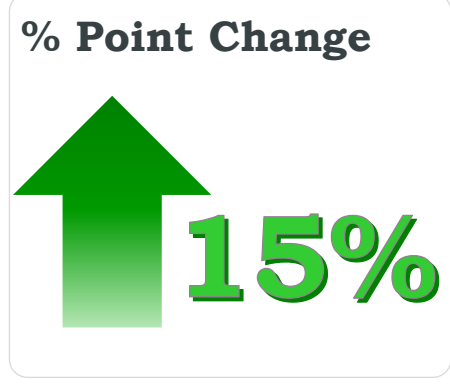
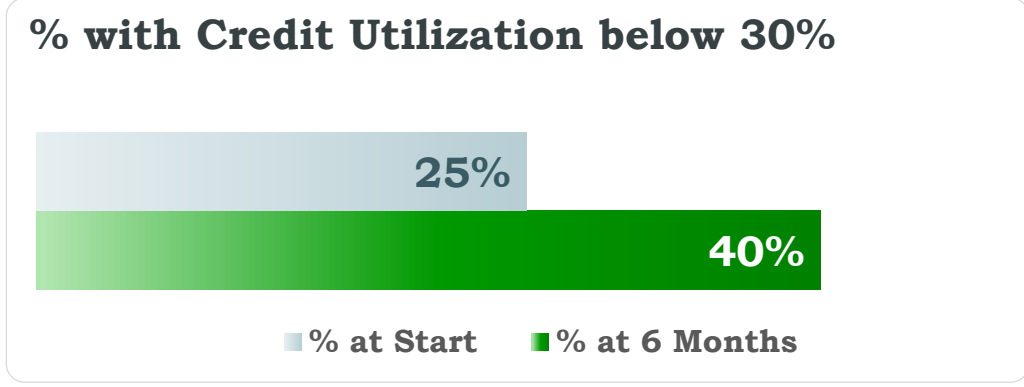
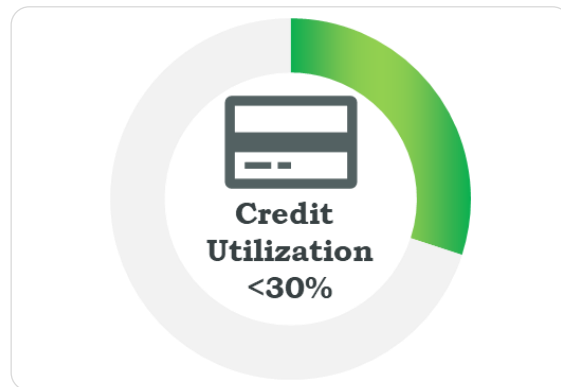
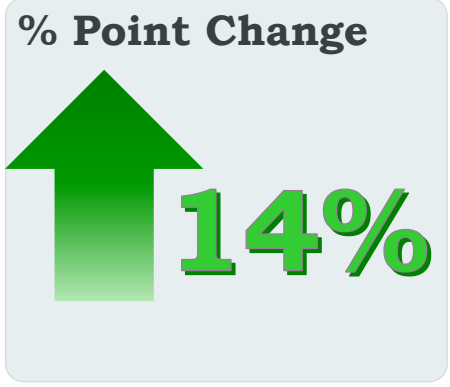
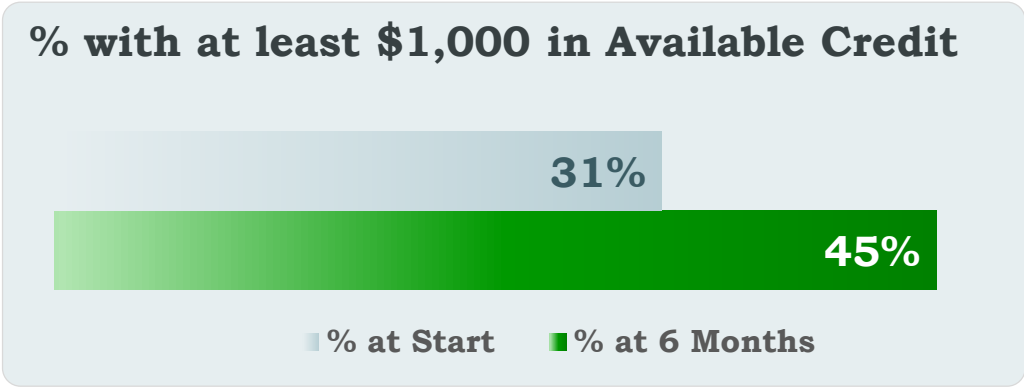
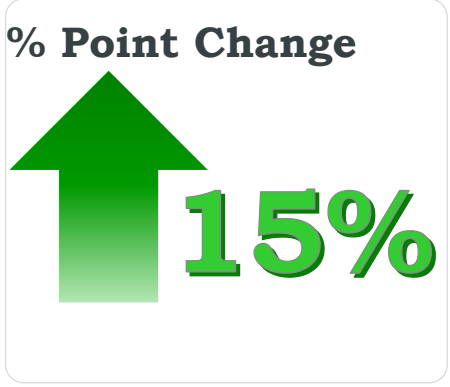
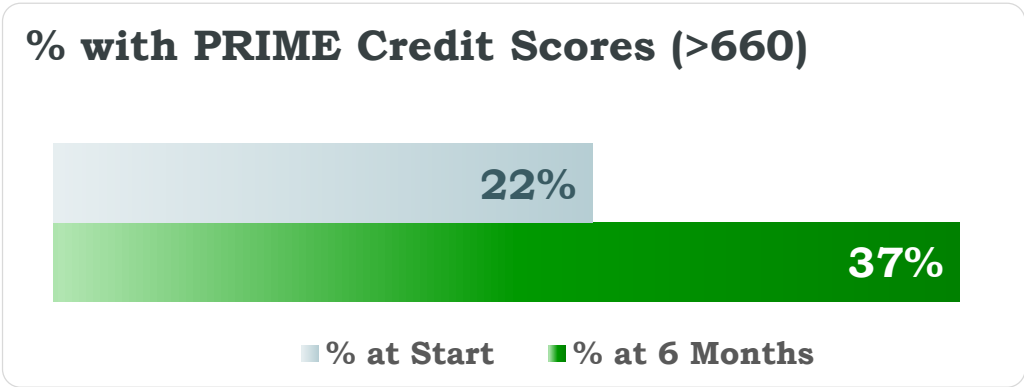
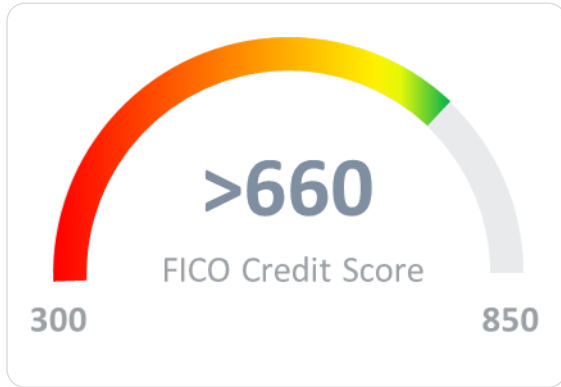
- Discuss the student's financial situation & goals
- Build a budget that reflects the student's current circumstances
- Review the student's credit report & FICO score
- Build a personalized financial plan

- **Ongoing Support**

(optional, as requested by student)



Financial Empowerment Impact



N=130



★ Impacting Student Lives: Student Voice



Steven Bahena
Truman College



**Maryam (Mari-am)
Muhammad**
Malcolm X & Harold Washington
College



**Abner Gutierrez-
Herrera**
Daley College



Tamika Powell
Harold
Washington
College