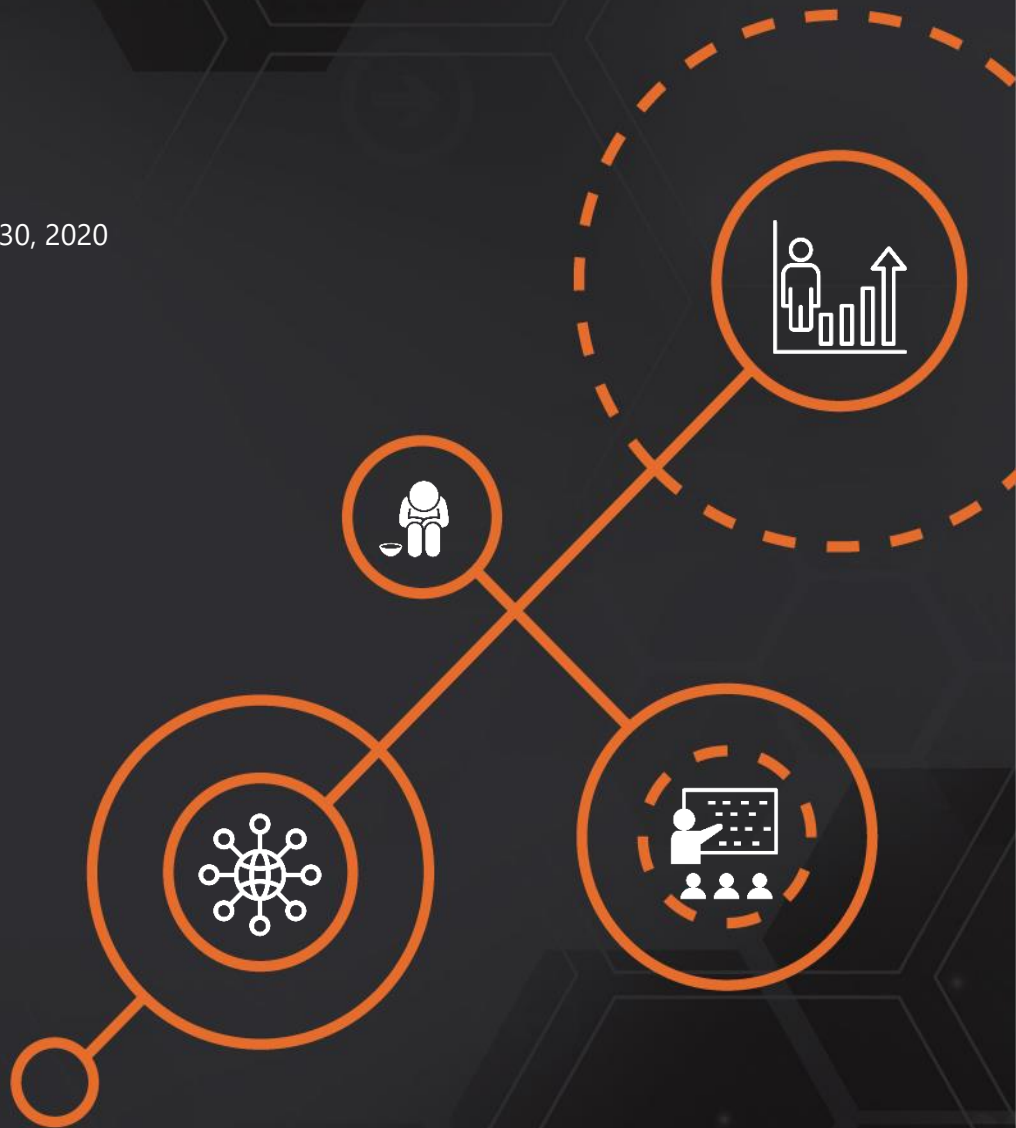


EVALUATION OF GETTING AHEAD: FINAL EVALUATION

SUBMITTED BY: P DUE DATE: November 30, 2020





*Before the Getting Ahead program, I was a **single mom staying at my parents** with no job and a four-year-old boy. I was starting to take my son's father to court and was **going through a really hard time**.*

*I chose the program to help me get back into a routine. They paid for daycare so I could attend class each day. I had a great time; the group was very nice. [...] My favorite part was making our **own self assessments and our discussions** we were all able to talk about problems and try to work it all out together. [...]*

*The program had a **larger impact on me than I thought it would**. It got me and my son out of the house before nine. I got on a better routine and felt a bit of accomplishment when I left each day. I learnt I can be a morning person and that I have more resources to use than I thought. Since the program I have acquired a **part time job at Giant Tiger Warehouse** and now am an SLC **online student for office administrator**. Also finished court with my son's father and everything went well. The program really did help me with my goals, just that three weeks of full routine **helped me get out of my slump that I really wanted out of**.*

- Participant



TABLE OF CONTENT

Executive Summary	4
Background.....	4
Key Findings	5
Recommendations	6
1.0 Background	8
1.1 United Counties of Leeds and Grenville	8
1.2 Local Poverty Reduction Fund (LPRF).....	8
1.3 Getting Ahead Program.....	10
1.4 Evaluation Context.....	12
2.0 Overview of Evaluation Methodology	13
2.1 Participant Survey	18
2.2 Focus Groups	19
2.3 Key Informant Interviews.....	19
2.4 Admin Data.....	19
2.5 Document Review	19
2.6 Literature Review, Environment Scan and Secondary Data.....	20
2.7 Methodological Limitations.....	20
3.0 Findings	21
3.1 Relevance	21
3.2 Design and Delivery	23
3.3 Outcomes.....	27
4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations	36
Appendix A: Data Collection Tools	40
Appendix B: Survey Results	78



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The counties of Leeds and Grenville are comprised of thirteen mostly rural municipalities in eastern Ontario with a population of 104,722 in 2019, with 1% (1,178) of their population on Ontario Works (OW), and, according to the last federal census in 2016, 12.9% of their residents were considered to low income.¹ In attempts to better support this population, the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville (UCLG) applied and was successful in securing funding from the Local Poverty Reduction Fund (LPRF). Established by the Government of Ontario in 2015, LPRF is designed to support innovative, local, community driven solutions aimed at improving the lives of those in poverty. To ensure projects targeted key initiatives, LPRF funded projects under four strategic pillars:

- Ending Homelessness
- Employment and Income Security
- Breaking the Cycle of Poverty for Children and Youth
- Indigenous Stream

In 2017, the UCLG, in partnership with the Leeds Grenville Poverty Reduction Alliance, was successful in securing \$111,300 in funding from the third round of Local Poverty Reduction Fund to administer the Getting Ahead program. The Getting Ahead program, created by Philip E. DeVol, is a previously established program designed to help people in poverty build resources and tools to help move themselves and their family out of poverty through a 45-hour workshop. Through the funding the Counties' wanted to test whether the program:

- Increased ability to maintain safe, stable housing
- Decreased rate of reliance on income supports
- Improved mental health and self esteem

In addition to its overarching objective, the program aimed to address the following Poverty Reduction Strategy Indicators including increases in:

- Depth of Poverty LIM-40
- Poverty Rates of Vulnerable Populations

¹<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=HR&Code1=3543&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&SearchText=Leeds,%20Grenville%20and%20Lanark%20District%20Health%20Unit&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=3543&TABID=1&type=0>



KEY FINDINGS

Relevance

The Getting Ahead program was seen to be very relevant to the primary target population (individuals living in poverty, focusing on youth and those experiencing, or at-risk, of homelessness) as 12.9% of all residents in Leeds Grenville were identified as low income according to the federal government's classification in 2016, and there was high enrollment and engagement in the program with 83 participants enrolled over two and a half years. Participants in the program also supported this by sharing the transformative impact this program had on their lives.

The Getting Ahead program was also well-aligned with the objectives of the LPRF. The program focused on providing individuals with skills and knowledge to help them assess their own resources, and how to build their resources and supports to help them move towards self-sufficiency. These motives directly aligned with the Fund's focus of improving employment and income security.

Design and Delivery

The original design of the Getting Ahead program included a 45-hour program where participants learned about poverty and its impact on them and their community, identified the necessary resources to help improve their situation, and developed long-term goals through group discussion and activity. This was seen to be effective in helping the program meet its intended objectives as many were able to establish relationships, gain confidence and direction for the next stage of their life.

Prior to COVID, the Getting Ahead program was delivered as intended with 12 cohorts delivered across the counties of Leeds and Grenville in Brockville, Elgin, Kemptville, and Prescott. Through these cohorts, 83 participants in poverty were engaged in the program, with 73 (88%) participants successfully completing the program. To best meet participants' needs and give them flexibility to attend, the program occurred across three weeks daily, as well as three evenings a week for seven weeks. There was strong engagement in both offerings of the program. Unfortunately, due to the restrictions and health concerns of COVID, the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville canceled their remaining cohorts and therefore did not reach their target of 104 participants. Moving the program online was considered but due multiple reasons, including the virtual delivery not being within the comfort zone of the Learning Facilitators, internet access and affordability being a barrier for people living in poverty and rural areas, and the reluctance to commit to smaller groups and then having to cancel due a second wave of the virus, Leeds Grenville, in consultation with OTF deemed it not ideal for the program,

Through delivering the program, the Counties was seen to effectively meet participants' needs as they worked with case managers and referring agency partners to recruit ideal participants who were not in crisis to participate in the program. Through providing gift cards and a safe space for



sharing their own experiences and learnings, the program helped participants become more vocal, creating a network of trust. While the lack of Canadian context and poor training provided by the organization for facilitators was seen to impact the delivery of the program, the collaboration amongst facilitators helped to connect the program to its participants.

While participants were satisfied with the program, and the modifications made by learning facilitators, an increased focus on current Canadian material and the ability to create a network of support was recommended to further support its delivery going forward.

Outcomes

While the Getting Ahead program was not a traditional employment program (e.g., job searching), it is positive to see that the program showed some improvement on the Poverty Reduction indicators, depth of poverty LIM- 40. At the post survey, only 94% of individuals earned less than the LIM-40 as compared to 99% at intake (depth of poverty LIM- 40). While there was no movement amongst the second indicator, poverty rates of vulnerable populations, there was an increase in participants' average income from \$1,161.74 to \$1,436.00 at post survey.

In addition to the Poverty Reduction indicators, the Getting Ahead program also aimed to increase participants' ability to maintain safe and stable housing, decrease their reliance on income support and improve their mental health and self-esteem. The program was seen to be effective in almost all of these areas. For example, 17% of participants at the six-month survey noticed an improvement in their housing situation. The program was also seen to be effective in improving participants' self-confidence and view of self with increased agreeance at post survey on the following statements: that your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it (28% increase in agreeance); you are satisfied with life (22% increase in agreeance); and that you belong to a community (like a social group or your neighbourhood) (15% increase in agreeance).

While the self-reported usage of income support did not decrease after the program, it is important to note that there was a 12% increase in the number of participants reporting they earned an income through employment six months after completing the program (17% at six months, compared to 5% at intake).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the report, the following considerations have been developed for communities of Leeds and Grenville to direct the design and delivery of the program moving forward and/or other initiatives for this population.



Recommendation #1: Seeing the success of the program and the participants' and stakeholder's positive perception of the program, it is recommended that the Counties and its partners explore opportunities and partnerships to continue to deliver the program.

Recommendation #2: Aware that the program is not provided in a Canadian edition, it is recommended that a database be created with recent and Canadian tools related to the counties of Leeds and Grenville including the poverty rate, household wealth and taxing in Canada. By creating an updated and consistent data base, learning facilitators will be better able to tailor the programming to participants as well as reduce their time looking for resources that are relevant, as even those identified by facilitators were seen to be outdated.

Recommendation #3: Networking and establishing relationships amongst participants were key assets to the success of the program, and often something participants will miss after the program. Additionally, the Getting Ahead program is seen as a starting point for participants to explore new opportunities and programming that meets their needs. To further support participants after the program, the communities of Leeds Grenville should explore other programming or opportunities to allow participants to continue to share and learn from each other – whether this be the Circle program or another program/resource already offered (e.g., event at the local library).

Recommendation #4: As mentioned earlier, Getting Ahead was a foundational program to support individuals in developing their sense of self, confidence, and resources to help them overcome poverty. For some participants who were closer to the labour market, this was sufficient for them to secure employment. However, the communities of Leeds Grenville should explore a pathway or referral process for those further away from the labour market to help them develop the key employability skills (hard or soft) needed to secure employment, should that be a part of their future plan.

Recommendation #5: Aware of the impact and success the program had on participants engaged in the program, and the continuous uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is recommended that the communities of Leeds Grenville explore alternative delivery models (e.g., hybrid) or opportunities to support individuals going forward including a single session on a specific topic.



1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 UNITED COUNTIES OF LEEDS AND GRENVILLE

Located on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River in Ontario, the counties of Leeds and Grenville is comprised of ten member municipalities and three separated municipalities:

- Township of Athens
- Township of Augusta
- Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal
- Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley
- Township of Front of Yonge
- Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands
- Village of Merrickville-Wolford
- Municipality of North Grenville
- Township of Rideau Lakes
- Village of Westport
- City of Brockville
- Town of Gananoque
- Town of Prescott

According to the recent 2016 census, 100,546 individuals live in the counties² with medium household income \$68,305. At the time of the census, 12.9% of individuals were considered low income according to the federal governments' classification – 50% of median adjusted after tax income of private households.³

1.2 LOCAL POVERTY REDUCTION FUND (LPRF)

In April 2015, the Government of Ontario announced the establishment of the Local Poverty Reduction Fund (LPRF) designed to support innovative, local, community-driven solutions that measurably improve the lives of those most affected by poverty.⁴ This was created in response to *Realizing Our Potential: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2014-2019*, which committed to expanding the province's poverty reduction effort and use this fund to "help good ideas get a head start," to build evidence, reward existing solutions and expand upon them to help achieve the goal of cutting the child poverty level by 25% based on 2008 base data.

² https://invest.leedsgrenville.com/en/business-profile/fast-facts.aspx?_mid_=14791

³ [https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-](https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=HR&Code1=3543&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&SearchText=Leeds,%20Grenville%20and%20La)

[pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=HR&Code1=3543&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&SearchText=Leeds,%20Grenville%20and%20La](https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=HR&Code1=3543&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&SearchText=Leeds,%20Grenville%20and%20La)

[mark%20District%20Health%20Unit&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=3543&TABID=1&type=0](https://otf.ca/what-we-fund/other-programs/local-poverty-reduction-fund)

⁴ <https://otf.ca/what-we-fund/other-programs/local-poverty-reduction-fund>



Administered by the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), this \$50 million investment over six years was designed to support and evaluate poverty reduction initiatives, create partnerships and build a body of evidence-based programming that adds to the effectiveness of reducing, removing or eradicating poverty for Ontarians living in poverty. To address key areas of concern identified in the Poverty Reduction Strategy funding was provided under four strategic pillars:

- Ending Homelessness
- Employment and Income Security
- Breaking the Cycle of Poverty for Children and Youth
- Indigenous Stream

Projects funded under each stream had to also identify at least two of the 11 poverty reduction strategy indicators that their project would address.⁵ These indicators are used to determine the state of poverty in Ontario, or proven risk factors that increase a person's chances of experiencing poverty later in life. These indicators include:

1. **Child Poverty Target** (PRS Fixed Low Income Measure 50 or "LIM-50")
 - a. The percentage of children living in households where income is below 50% of medium income adjusted for family size.
2. **Depth of Poverty** (PRS Fixed Low Income Measure 40 or "LIM-40")
 - a. The percentage of children living in households where income is below 40% of median income, adjusted for family size. Fixed to a base year of 2008 and adjusted for inflation.
3. **Birth Weight**
 - a. Percentage of newborns born at what is considered to be a healthy weight.
4. **School Readiness**
 - a. The Early Development Instrument (EDI) measures the percentage of children aged five to six who demonstrate they are on track across five domains of child development and are ready to learn at school.
5. **Educational Progress**
 - a. Percentage of students in Grades 3 and 6 who score in the highest two levels on province-wide reading, writing and math tests.
6. **High School Graduation Rates**
 - a. Percentage of students entering high school at the same time who graduate within five years of having started Grade 9.
7. **Ontario Housing Measure**
 - a. Percentage of households with children under 18 that have incomes below 40 percent of the median household income and spend more than 40 percent of their income on housing.
8. **Youth Not in Education, Employment or Training**

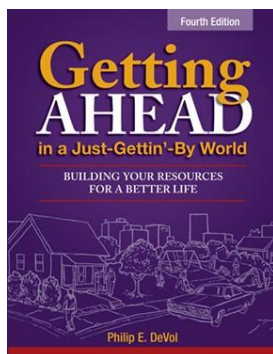
⁵ https://otf.ca/sites/default/files/lprf_prs_indicators_en.pdf



- a. Percentage of young people aged 15-29 who are not in education, employment or training.
9. **Long-Term Unemployment**
 - a. Percentage of adults in the labour force aged 25-64 who have been unemployed for 27 weeks or more.
10. **Poverty Rates of Vulnerable Populations**
 - a. Percentage of adults in five populations considered to be vulnerable who have a household income of less than half the median. The vulnerable groups include newcomers, persons with disabilities, female lone parents, unattached individuals aged 45 to 64 and Indigenous people living off-reserve
11. **Homeless Indicator**
 - a. Rate of chronic homelessness per 10,000 people.

Over the course of the grant, three rounds of funding were provided in 2015, 2016, and 2017. Funded projects included one-, two- and three-year program funding for non-profit organizations across the province of Ontario.

1.3 GETTING AHEAD PROGRAM



During the third and final round of funding (2017) the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville (UCLG), in partnership with the Local Poverty Reduction Fund, was successful in receiving \$111,300 to implement the Getting Ahead program over a 36-month period. Written by Philip E. DeVol, the *Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin' by World* program guides participants through self-discovery to help build the life that they want by identifying the resources necessary to help them improve their economic situation and develop long term goals. Over the 45-hour program, participants are challenged to reflect on and acknowledge their present reality, as well as look more objectively at their situation and determine what they need (e.g., resources) to help build their future.⁶

With the funding received from the LPRF, the UCLG aimed to build on the success of their pilot implementation of the Getting Ahead through the development a community of practice among agency partners to support community members break the cycle of poverty. In particular, the UCLG wanted to determine whether the Getting Ahead program would result in:

- Increased ability to maintain safe, stable housing
- Decreased rate of reliance on income supports
- Improved mental health and self esteem

⁶ <https://circlescanada.com/getting-ahead/>



In addition to its overarching objective, the program aimed to address the following **Poverty Reduction Strategy indicators** as noted in DDSB’s application to OTF:

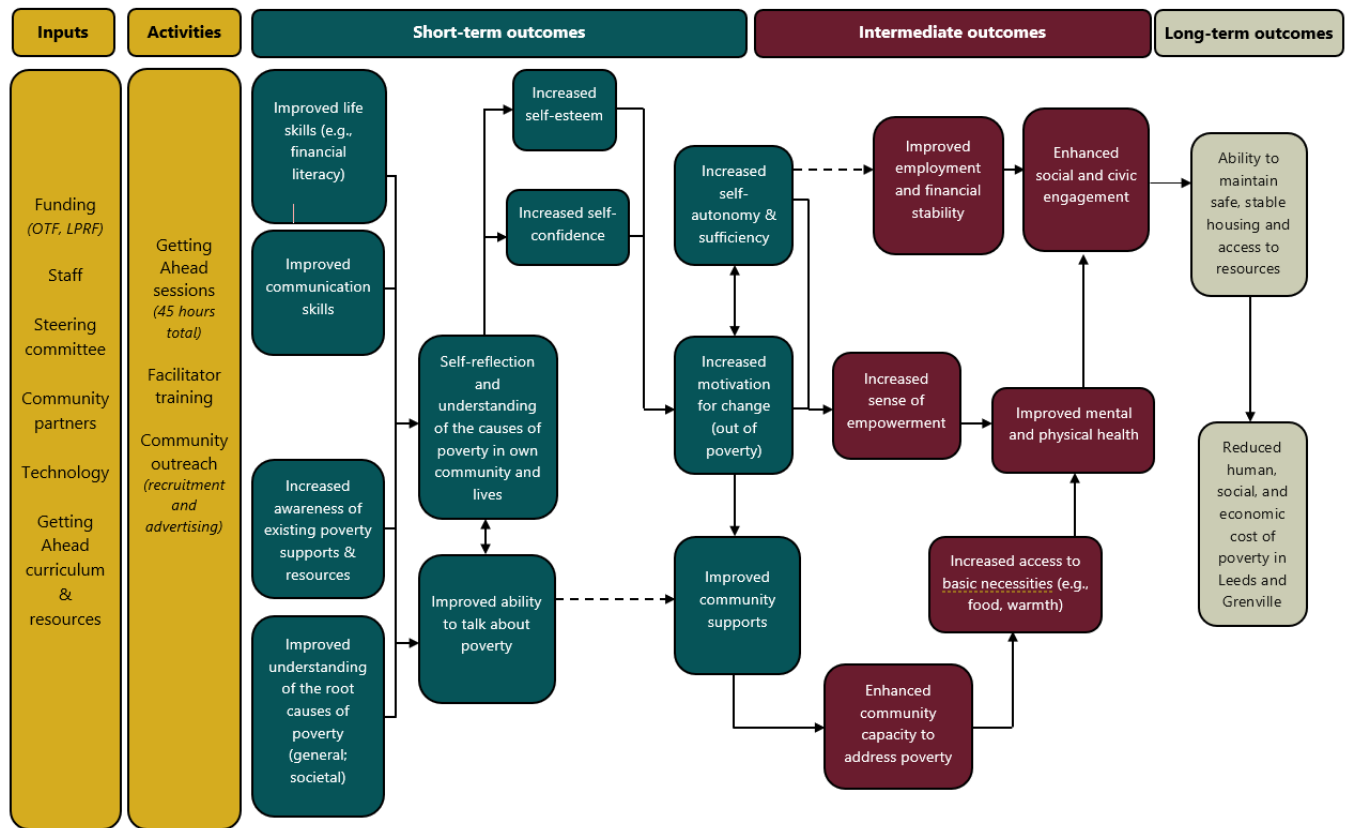
- Poverty Rates of Vulnerable Populations
- Depth of Poverty (LIM-40)

The program also aimed to support the following **Poverty Reduction Strategy target populations**:

- Homeless or at risk of being homeless
- Youth

To achieve this, it was anticipated that **104 participants living in poverty** from across Leeds Grenville would enroll and complete this 45-hour program across three years. Through engaging this population and providing tailored programming, it was believed that the Getting Ahead program would result in participants becoming more empowered and equipped to improve their financial situation, physical and mental health, and maintain safe and stable housing as seen in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Logic model





1.4 EVALUATION CONTEXT

In order to better understand how well the Getting Ahead program worked in Leeds Grenville, and as per requirement by OTF, UCLG hired Dig Insights Inc. (Dig) to conduct the three-year evaluation of the program. The evaluation sought to answer the following questions:

Relevance

- To what extent does the Getting Ahead program align with Local Poverty Reduction Fund's priorities and objectives?
- To what extent is the Getting Ahead program relevant to the needs of the Counties, their participants, and their partners?

Design and Delivery

- To what extent do the elements of the Getting Ahead program design enable effective delivery of the program (e.g., location of sessions, transportation available, time available, etc.)?
- Has the program been delivered as intended?⁷
- How can service delivery be improved for future programming?
- Is the Getting Ahead program the best means of providing workshop-based poverty reduction programs? What are the best practices associated with similar programs?

Performance

- Did the Getting Ahead program address the identified Poverty Reduction Strategy indicators?
- Did the Getting Ahead program increase participants' ability to maintain safe and stable housing?
- Did the Getting Ahead program decrease participants' reliance on income support?
- Did the Getting Ahead program impact participants' mental health and self-esteem?

⁷ Please note that this question will also be used in the contribution analysis portion of this evaluation.



2.0 OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The team at Dig worked closely with UCLG to develop a participatory approach to complete the evaluation. Acknowledging that the program was delivered in previous regions, Dig conducted an **impact evaluation** to assess the relevance, design and delivery, and achievement of longer-term outcomes of the project. The evaluation also identified strengths and weaknesses and provided recommendations for program sustainability at the end of the LPRF funding.

To ensure the evaluations were comprehensive and addressed the key evaluation questions (section 1.4), Dig worked with UCLG to create an evaluation framework (table 1). The framework clearly identifies the research questions, specific performance indicators and tailored methodology that was used to complete the evaluation. For the Getting Ahead program, this included a participant survey, focus groups, key informant interviews, admin data, document review, literature review, environmental scan, and secondary data review.



Table 1: Evaluation Framework

Performance indicators	Data source							
	Participant Surveys	Focus Groups	Key Informant Interviews	Admin Data	Document Review	Lit Review	Environmental Scan	Secondary data
Relevance								
Alignment between program and the Local Poverty Reduction Fund's objectives			X			X	X	
Alignment of the program with the needs of the Counties, their participants, and their partners	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Design and Delivery								
Perceived effectiveness of program design	X		X	X				
Alignment with best practices and lessons learned			X	X		X	X	
Actual vs. intended delivery			X		X	X		
Congruence with complementary or duplicate programs			X	X		X	X	
Number of programs/sessions delivered					X			
Satisfaction with programs delivered	X	X		X				
Number of participants enrolled in programs/sessions					X			
Number of outreach activities					X			
Inquiries from outreach activities					X			
Number of community partners engaged					X			
Number of facilitators trained to deliver the program					X			
Barriers to program success	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Enablers for program success	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Participant attendance rates in Getting Ahead			X		X			
Program completion rates			X		X			
Performance								
Immediate Outcomes								
Improved understanding of the root causes of poverty (general, societal)								
Number of participants with a better understanding of the factors that contribute to poverty	X	X	X					
Improved life skills (e.g., financial literacy)								
Number of participants who have developed a budget	X	X		X				
Number of participants with a plan to reduce debt	X	X		X				
Number of participants who have made a step to reduce debt	X	X						



Performance indicators	Data source							
	Participant Surveys	Focus Groups	Key Informant Interviews	Admin Data	Document Review	Lit Review	Environmental Scan	Secondary data
Change in participant understanding of personal financial situation	X	X	X					
Participant & staff self-report of increased knowledge of relevant life skills	X	X	X					
Increased awareness of existing supports and resources								
Number of (and times accessed) resources available at the community agency within counties for participants				X				
Change in the number and type of organizations and/or community resources participants know about and/or are connected with	X	X						
Number of referrals made to internal and external programs	X		X	X				
Improved communication skills								
Change in participant understanding of the power of language to resolve conflict	X	X	X					
Number of participants who are better able to negotiate	X	X	X					
Number of participants reporting increased communication skills	X	X	X					
Self-reflection and understanding of the causes of poverty in own community and lives								
Number of participants reporting increased understanding of the causes of poverty in their own lives	X	X	X					
Number of participants self-reflecting on poverty in their own lives	X	X	X					
Participant demonstration of use of new poverty knowledge to inform their own context	X	X	X					
Improved ability to talk about poverty								
Identification and reduction of communication barriers identified by participants	X	X	X					
Change in participant confidence in advocating for themselves	X	X						
Change in participant confidence to transition into work or further education	X	X						
Participant self-report of decreased instances of poverty stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination	X	X	X					
Increased self-confidence & self-esteem								
Number of participants reporting increased confidence & self-esteem to handle their poverty situation due to knowledge gained in Getting Ahead	X	X	X					
Staff & community partner assessment of participant self-confidence & self-esteem			X					
Number & examples of participants reporting they have realistic and achievable poverty action plans	X	X	X	X				
Increased autonomy & self-sufficiency								
Number of participants reporting increased autonomy & self-sufficiency	X	X	X					
Staff & community partner assessment of participant increased autonomy & self-sufficiency			X					



Performance indicators	Data source							
	Participant Surveys	Focus Groups	Key Informant Interviews	Admin Data	Document Review	Lit Review	Environmental Scan	Secondary data
Decreased dependence on financial support systems & community partners	X	X	X	X				
Increased motivation for change (out of poverty)								
Identification and reduction of motivation barriers identified by participants	X	X	X					
Rate of completion of program components (e.g., worksheets, charts, plans, asset mapping, future stories)	X			X				
Number & examples of participants reporting increased personal motivation	X	X	X					
Progress on personal poverty action plans at end of program	X	X	X	X				
Staff & community agency report of increases in participant motivation			X					
Intermediate Outcomes								
Enhanced community capacity to address poverty								
Number of facilitators/community partners trained			X					
Number of times the program is offered				X				
Increased sense of empowerment								
Number & examples of participants reporting increased empowerment	X	X	X					
Staff & community partner assessment of participant empowerment			X					
Improved employment and financial stability								
Change in sources of income (year to year)	X	X						
Number of participants accessing income supports			X					X
Participant self-report of increased financial stability	X	X	X					
% of participants with disposable income; change in income		X	X	X				X
Change in participant employment status	X	X	X					
Sustained employment (employed 6 months post program)	X	X		X				
Number & examples of participants reporting better employment	X	X	X					
Sustained income (6 months post program)	X	X		X				
Number of children living in the participant families (for "depth of poverty LIM40" measure)	X							
Demographics of participants (for "poverty rates of vulnerable populations" measure)	X			X				X
Increased access to basic necessities (e.g., food, warmth)								
Participant self-report of being better able to afford basic necessities	X	X	X					
Participant food consumption (vegetables)	X	X	X					
Enhanced social and civic engagement in community								
Change in participants interested in education and training	X	X	X					



Performance indicators	Data source							
	Participant Surveys	Focus Groups	Key Informant Interviews	Admin Data	Document Review	Lit Review	Environmental Scan	Secondary data
Type of training sought (education, type, short courses/certifications/college)	X	X	X					
Change in participants enrolled in education	X	X	X					
Number of participants completed education or training 6 months post program	X	X	X					
Willingness to be a peer mentor or facilitator in Getting Ahead program	X	X	X					
Change in paid and/or volunteer roles	X	X	X					
Sustained paid and/or volunteer roles (6 months post program)	X	X	X					
Improved paid and/or volunteer roles	X	X	X					
Improved mental and physical health								
Change in level of confidence	X	X	X					
Change in level of stress	X	X	X					
Change in level of self-worth	X	X	X					
Change in life satisfaction levels	X	X	X					
Change in activity levels	X	X	X					
Changes in participant sleep patterns	X	X	X					
Changes in support networks	X	X	X					
Changes in participant role models	X	X	X	X				
Long-term Outcomes								
Ability to maintain safe, stable housing and access to resources								
Change in participant perceptions of housing safety and stability	X	X	X					
Reduced human, social, and economic cost of poverty in Leeds and Grenville								
Comparison of social return of investment to other similar programs	X			X	X	X	X	X
Overall								
Total expenditure (per program)				X				
Perceptions of unintended outcomes (e.g., unintended impacts on community and individuals)	X	X	X					



This report combines the findings and data collected across all three years of the program to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the program and recommendations to direct future decision making.

2.1 PARTICIPANT SURVEY

As mentioned earlier, the evaluation of the Getting Ahead program was designed to see how effective this program was to participants in Leeds Grenville in relation to mental health, housing, and addressing poverty.

As a result, surveys were completed with each group at three times throughout the program:

- **Baseline survey:** at the beginning of the program;
- **Post program survey:** administered at the end of the program; and
- **Six-month survey:** administered six months post completing the program.

A copy of all participant surveys can be found in Appendix A, with the results found in appendix B.

The surveys were effectively completed in class with support of the facilitator to ensure high completion rate, with a \$25 gift card incentive provided (table 2). Please note, that as the pre and post survey were completed on paper in-class the n for question numbers fluctuates throughout the report. Additionally, cohort 7 was canceled in its delivery and therefore no surveys were collected for this group.

Table 2: Survey Completion

Cohort	Pre-Survey (N)	Post Survey (N)	Follow up Survey (N)
1	7	5	2
2	6	5	3
3	12	10	8
4	6	6	5
5	4	3	-
6	11	10	1
7	-	-	-
8	7	6	4
9	3	3	-
10	9	8	-
11	7	7	5
12	5	6	1
13	6	4	-
TOTAL	83	73 (88%)	29 (40%)



2.2 FOCUS GROUPS

To increase participants' engagement in the evaluation process and to collect feedback on the strengths and areas of opportunity for the program's implementation and outcomes achieved, focus groups were conducted with participants from cohort 2 and 3 on December 17th, 2018. Focus groups were intended to be implemented in 2020 at the end of the grant, however due to COVID, this was transitioned to key informant interviews with five participants to better understand the longer-term outcomes of the project.

2.3 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Key informant interviews were conducted to gather a deeper understanding of the design and delivery of the program and outcomes achieved to date and to explore any questions that emerged upon analysis of findings. In total, 7 key informant interviews were conducted at the end of the program with learning facilitators, Steering Committee members and Case Managers.

All interviews were conducted over the phone and lasted between 30-minutes and one hour in length.

Detailed interview guides can be found in Appendix A.

2.4 ADMIN DATA

The administrative data was provided to Dig to analyze the effectiveness of the program's design, implementation, and preliminary achievement of outcomes. Dig was provided data regarding the number of participants who signed up and completed the program.

2.5 DOCUMENT REVIEW

Dig conducted a document review to gain an understanding of the objectives of the Getting Ahead program, its alignment to OTF priorities, its intended design, and the resources and advertisements sent to program participants.

Documents reviewed included:

- Program description documents
- Steering Committee agenda / minutes
- Steering Committee Press Release
- Getting Ahead advertisements (e.g., flyers, advertisements to clients)
- Press release of Getting Ahead program



2.6 LITERATURE REVIEW, ENVIRONMENT SCAN AND SECONDARY DATA

To better understand the implementation of the Getting Ahead program in other jurisdictions, its alignment with the LPRF and its relevance to Leeds Grenville, a literature review, environmental scan and review of secondary data were conducted.

Below are some of the sources used as part of the evaluation:

- United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Economic Development
- Census Profile, 2016 Statistics Canada
- Local Poverty Reduction Fund, Ontario Trillium Fund
- Getting Ahead, Circles Canada

2.7 METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

The following were the limitations to the evaluation methodology. Please note, where possible, mitigation strategies such as triangulating evidence across multiple lines of evidence were used to address these limitations.

COVID: Due to COVID, the UCLG and its partners could not continue to deliver the program as usual to achieve their target of 104 participants. For multiple reasons including internet access and affordability being a barrier for people living in poverty and rural areas, virtual delivery being outside facilitator comfort level, and the reluctance to commit to smaller groups and then having to cancel due a second wave of the virus causing further restrictions, UCLG, in consultation with OTF, deemed online delivery not suitable.

Stopping the delivery of the program prematurely prevented the UCLG from implementing the learnings identified and planned for in the final year of the evaluation (e.g., increasing rural administration) as well as limiting the additional data collection including surveys and focus groups.

Survey Completion: As mentioned in the methodology section, the pre- and post-survey were completed in person on paper to support participants through the questions and to reduce barriers. While this was beneficial and helped participants complete the survey, not all questions were completed on every survey causing the n value of the survey to fluctuate.

Additionally, while a 40% response rate for the 6-month follow up survey is slightly higher than expected for this population, the impact the program had on the remaining 60% of participants is unknown.



3.0 FINDINGS

This section presents the findings and supporting evidence from the evaluation of the Getting Ahead program.

3.1 RELEVANCE

Finding: The Getting Ahead program was seen to be very relevant to the primary target population (individuals living in living in poverty, focusing on those experiencing or at-risk of homeless and youth) as 12.9% of all residents in Leeds Grenville are identified as low income according to the federal government’s classification in 2016, and the high enrollment and engagement in the program with 83 participants enrolled over two and a half years. Participants in the program also supported this by sharing the transformative impact this program had on their lives.

The Getting Ahead program was also well-aligned with the objectives of the LPRF. The program focused on providing individuals with skills and knowledge to help them assess their own resources, and how to build their resources and supports to help them move towards self-sufficiency, which directly aligned with the Fund’s focus of improving employment and income security

3.1.1 Relevance to the Target Audience

As stated earlier in section 1.3, the Getting Ahead program was designed to support individuals living in poverty, with a focus on youth and individual experiencing or at risk of being homeless. Through collaborative work across Case Managers, partner agencies and UCLG, 37% of participants enrolled in the program were homeless or at risk of homelessness and 11% were youth.

The Getting Ahead program was very relevant to this population as 12.9% of all residents in Leeds Grenville were identified as being low income according to the federal governments’ classification – 50% of median adjusted after tax income of private households in 2016.⁸ Even present day, the need for programs to help participants overcome poverty is needed with 1,178 people in Leeds Grenville receiving Ontario Works (OW).⁹

Its relevance was further illustrated by participant uptake and engagement with the program. Through the 12 cohorts delivered through the grant, 83 participants engaged in the program, with

⁸<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=HR&Code1=3543&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&SearchText=Leeds,%20Grenville%20and%20Lanark%20District%20Health%20Unit&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=3543&TABID=1&type=0>

⁹ MCCSS, *Social Assistance Operations Performance Report*, Ontario Works, October 2020, Leeds & Grenville CMSM.



an 88% completion rate. This high completion rate further supports the importance of the program with participants echoing its importance to them in the key informant interviews.

"I've never taken a program like this before. Talking about poverty is not an easy thing to do. But talking with others was helpful to understand you are not alone and figure out ways to over come it."
- Participant

"I signed up for this program because I needed a kick in the butt – I needed the motivation to get up and do something. Other programs just didn't work."
- Participant

Learning Facilitators, Case Managers and Steering Committee members further echoed the importance of this program as it provides participants with a safe space to begin to explore the root causes of their poverty, and strategies and resources to begin to overcome it. Case Managers further supported this sentiment; acknowledging that this program was unique for many of their clients as its supportive and empowering environment encouraged some of their clients to begin to make transformative change in their lives, something that has not been achieved in other programs.

"I had one client who has been stuck for a long time. He wasn't actively looking for a job or really doing anything. He had tried every program, but nothing got him passionate for the next step. Because of this program he is now going for job interviews and believes in himself."
- Case Manager

3.1.2 Alignment with the Local Poverty Reduction Fund

The Getting Ahead program was seen to be well-aligned with the objectives of the LPRF. The program focuses on providing individuals with skills and knowledge to help them assess their own resources, and how to build their resources and supports to help them move towards self-sufficiency, which directly aligned with the Fund's focus of improving employment and income security.

"The fund is a \$50 million, 6-year initiative created to support innovative, community-driven projects that measurably improve the lives of those most affected by poverty."
- Government of Ontario

In addition, the evaluation did focus on two of the eleven indicators listed above including: Poverty Rates of Vulnerable Populations and Dept of Poverty (LIM-40). The achievements of these indicators are provided in section 3.3.



3.2 DESIGN AND DELIVERY

Finding The original design of the Getting Ahead program included a 45-hour program where participants learned about poverty and its impact on them and their community, identified the necessary resources to help improve their situation, and developed long-term goals through group discussion and activity. This was seen to be effective in helping the program meet its intended objectives as many were able to establish relationships, and gain confidence and direction for the next stage of their life.

Prior to COVID, the Getting Ahead program was delivered as intended with 12 cohorts delivered across the counties of Leeds and Grenville in Brockville, Elgin, Kemptville, and Prescott. Through these cohorts, 83 participants in poverty were engaged in the program, with 73 (88%) participants successfully completing the program. To best meet participants' needs and give them flexibility to attend, the program occurred across three weeks daily, as well as three evenings a week for seven weeks. There was strong engagement in both offerings of the program. Unfortunately, due to the restrictions and health concerns of COVID, the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville canceled their remaining cohorts and therefore did not reach their target of 104 participants. For multiple reasons including internet access and affordability being a barrier for people living in poverty and rural areas, virtual delivery being outside the skills of facilitators, and the reluctance to commit to smaller groups and then having to cancel due a second wave of the virus, UCLG, in consultation with OTF deemed online delivery not suitable.

Through delivering the program, the Counties was seen to effectively meet participants needs as they worked with case managers and referring agency partners to recruit ideal participants who were not in crisis to participate in the program. Through providing gift cards and a safe space for sharing their own experiences and learnings, the program helped participants become more vocal, creating a network of trust. While the lack of Canadian context and poor training provided by the certifying organization for facilitators was seen to impact the delivery of the program, the collaboration amongst facilitators helped to connect the program to its participants.

While participants were satisfied with the program and the modifications made by learning facilitators, an increased focus on current Canadian material and the ability to create a network of support was recommended to further support its delivery going forward.



3.2.1 Program Design

The Getting Ahead program, designed by Philip E. DeVol, is a workshop series designed to help individuals living in poverty build their resources for a more prosperous life. This is to occur over multiple sessions (total 45 hours), during which time participants receive a \$25 gift card for each session as a thank you for their time. Participants and stakeholders both acknowledged the importance of gift cards for attendance as an initial buy in for participants to attend the program and to highlight to participants that their time is of value. The regular session (daily or a couple times of week) was also seen to help facilitate a schedule and routine, something many participants had previously been lacking.

In order to enhance the design of the program, stakeholders acknowledged the importance of providing Canadian and updated material and wished there were a database or service that would provide more relevant information. Below are some of the examples of material utilized to replace the material in the workbook:

- Creation Middle Class module 3
 - o <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/working-class-history/>
 - o <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/social-history/>
- Income Inequality pages 53 to 58 module 3
 - o <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/provincial/society/income-inequality.aspx>
 - o <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/search.aspx#q=income%20inequality&sort=relevancy>

Additionally, with the onset of COVID and the importance of the program to participants, some stakeholders recommended exploring a hybrid model knowing the importance of in-person programming, especially considering the duration it may be until regular programming can be resumed.

"This is a really beneficial program to people in our community. I agree it is best to be delivered in person – but how long will that take? I don't know if it is possible, but I think we need to explore other options."
- Stakeholder

3.2.2 Program Delivery

Prior to COVID, the Getting Ahead program was delivered as intended with 12 cohorts delivered across the counties of Leeds and Grenville in Brockville, Elgin, Kemptville, and Prescott. Through these cohorts, 83 participants living in poverty were engaged in the program with 73 (88%) participants successfully completing the program. To best meet participants' needs, the program was either run

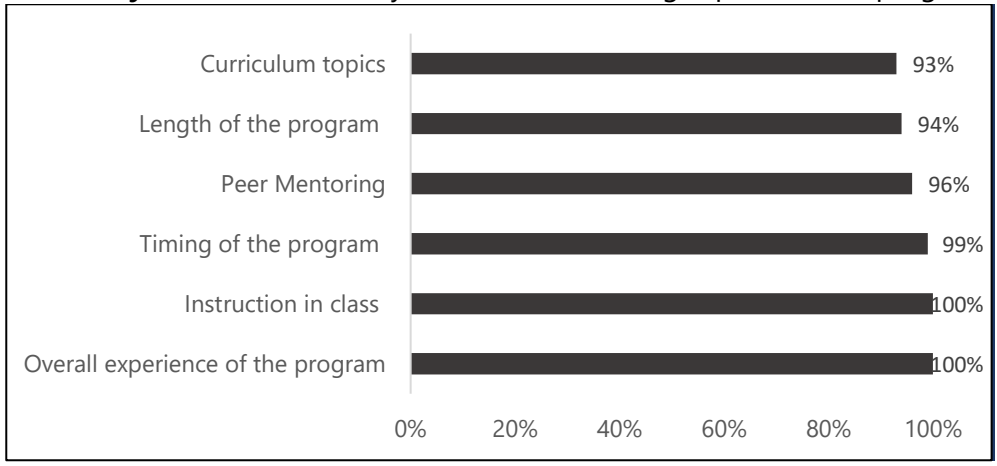


across three weeks daily or three evenings a week for seven weeks with strong engagement in the programs.

Unfortunately, due to the restrictions and health concerns of COVID, the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, in partnership with OTF, decided to not continue to offer the program. While online programming was considered, it was seen to be not appropriate for multiple reasons including, internet access and affordability being a barrier for people living in poverty and rural areas, virtual being outside the skills of facilitators and the reluctance to commit to smaller groups and then having to cancel due a second wave of the virus causing further restrictions.

Despite the reduced delivery, the program was seen to be a success by participants as almost all participants were satisfied with every aspect of the program as seen in figure 2. To better understand the effectiveness of the delivery of the program, the following key aspects are explained below: learning facilitator training, the recruitment process, the facilitation and activities and the budget.

Figure 2: Post Survey: How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the program? (N=70-73)

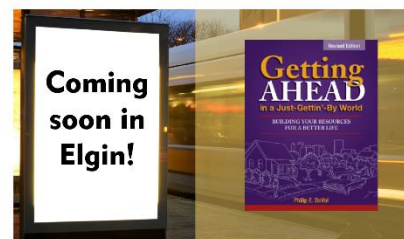


Learning Facilitator Training: As required by the program, facilitators participated in a mandated online training that introduced them to the program. While the learning facilitators found the training to be ineffective as it simply provided overall insights about the program and did not provide facilitators the opportunity to explore with the material, the sharing of information amongst each other was seen to be especially effective as it helped to leverage insights and ensured a consistency of delivery.

"After the training, I didn't feel equipped to deliver the programming. The online training just gave me an overall view of the program. It didn't let me dive into the material and get familiar with it."
- Learning Facilitator



Recruitment Process: Through delivering the program across three years, the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville staff were able to leverage existing partnerships and relationships amongst service delivery organizations to help recruit eligible participants through a two phased recruitment process. In this process, Case Managers and agency partners were able to recommend the program to potential individuals who they felt would benefit from the program to see if they were interested. Then a learning facilitator met with each of the interested participants to provide additional information and complete the enrollment process. Once this approach was established, it was seen to be effective as referring partners were able to ensure the appropriate participants were referred to the program (e.g., not in crisis) and helped to increase community awareness of the program as they were able to leverage personal relationships with their clients.



A program proven to assist individuals in poverty.

Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World is a series of workshops that helps individuals living in poverty to build their resources for a more prosperous life for themselves, their families and their communities.

\$25 daily participation incentive

To sign up:

Location: Guthrie House - 10 Perth Street, Elgin, ON

April 29, 2019 to May 16, 2019

Monday to Thursday

9:30 am to 2:30 pm

Contact: Jo-Anne Dwyer

Phone: 613-342-3840 ext. 2353

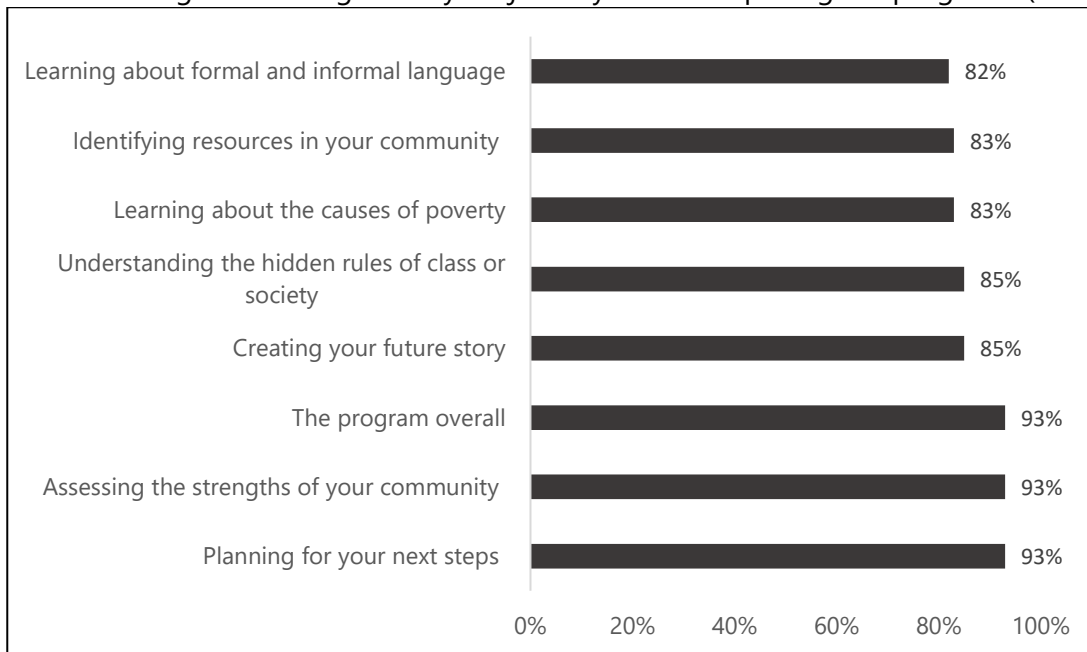
Email: jo-anne.dwyer@uclg.on.ca



Facilitation and Activities: The program was seen to be effectively delivered with all participants being satisfied with their overall experience of the program and the instruction in class. Participants especially found the group discussion and facilitations to be beneficial as they were able to learn from each other and share their own experience as they began to establish their own networks and resources to overcome poverty. Additionally, the resource mapping was continuously highlighted as a strength of the program as participants were better able to understand the resources provided, and for some, this even impacted their perception of their community. The impact of this activity was further supported at the 6-month survey, where 83% of participants found this component of the program important to their journey since the program (figure 3).



Figure 3: Six-month Survey: Thinking back to the course, how important were the following aspects of the Getting Ahead Program in your journey since completing the program? (N=28-29)



As forming relationships and connections was a key benefit of the program, participants also appreciated when a past program participant co-facilitated the program as it allowed them to see the benefit and impact the program can have on an individual, as well as help the co-facilitator further develop their skills.

Budget: The original grant was approved for \$111,300 for the three-year period. With the onset of the pandemic, program delivery was halted. In July 2020, when the economy and our communities began “reopening” continued delivery of the Getting Ahead program was reviewed given the prevailing environment, continued state of emergency and associated public health measures. It was determined that resuming program delivery was not practical. Program evaluation continued as planned, with interviews and surveys of past participants and other key informants. With confirmation the outcomes and evaluation would remain statistically significant despite a smaller sample size, the grant was approved to conclude on October 31st – two months earlier than originally proposed and approved. The approved budget was correspondingly reduced to \$100,785. Final financial reconciliation confirms total expenditures of \$94,800.

3.3 OUTCOMES

Finding: While the Getting Ahead program was not a traditional employment program (e.g., job searching), it is positive to see that the program showed some improvement on the Poverty Reduction indicators, depth of poverty LIM- 40. At the post survey, only 94% of individuals earned less than the LIM-40 as compared to 99% at intake (depth of poverty LIM- 40). While



there was no movement, amongst the second indicator, poverty rates of vulnerable populations, there was an increase in participants' average income from \$1,161.74 to \$1,436.00 at post survey.

In addition to the Poverty Reduction indicators, the Getting Ahead program also aimed to increase participants' ability to maintain safe and stable housing, decrease their reliance on income support and improve their mental health and self-esteem. The program was seen to be effective in almost all of these areas. For example, 17% of participants at the six-month survey noticed an improvement in their housing situation. The program was also seen to be effective in improving participants' self-confidence and view of self with increased agreeance at post survey on the following statements: that your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it (28% increase in agreeance); you are satisfied with life (22% increase in agreeance); and that you belong to a community (like a social group or your neighbourhood) (15% increase in agreeance).

While the self-reported usage of income support did not decrease after the program, it is important to note that there was a 12% increase in the number of participants reporting they earned an income through employment six months after completing the program (17% at six months, compared to 5% at intake).

4.3.1 Impact on Depth of Poverty (LMI-40)

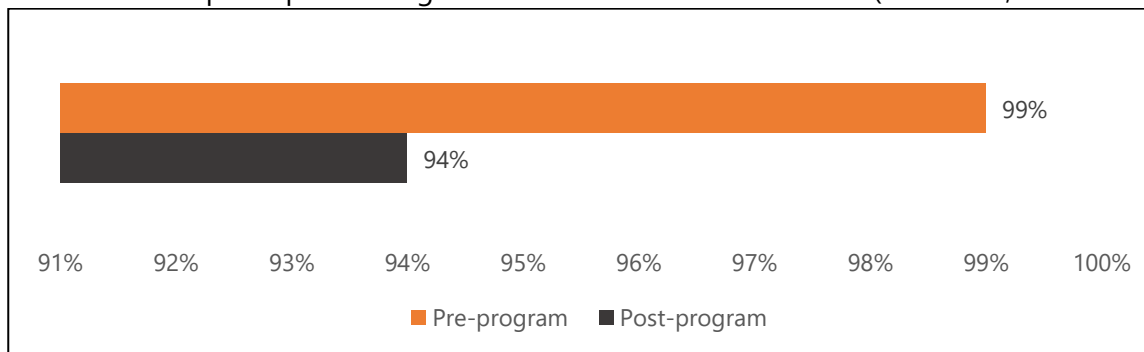
As stated in section 1.3, the primary Poverty Reduction Indicator that the Getting Ahead program was designed to address the Depth of Poverty indicator (LMI-40). This indicator looks at the percentage of children living in households where income is below 40% of median income¹⁰, adjusted for family size.

As the Getting Ahead program was designed to help individuals living in poverty build resources and tools to help them begin to move out of poverty, instead of being a direct employment program, it is positive to see that the program showed some improvement on the Poverty Reduction indicators, depth of poverty LIM- 40. At time of intake, 99% of all the participants who self-disclosed their income earned or received less than the LIM 40 (average income \$1,185.12). This decreased to 94% at the post survey (average income was \$1,298.88), showcasing an improvement of 5% of participants (figure 4).

¹⁰ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1110001301>



Figure 4: Percent of participants living in households below the LIM-40. (Pre N=75, Post N=62)



The LMI-40 indicator is highly dependent upon income levels of parents; table 3 shows the average monthly income of the participants.

Table 3: Average self-reported monthly income

Pre-program	Post-program	Percentage Increase
\$1,185.12 (N=75)	\$1,298.88 (N=62)	9.6%

4.3.2 Impact on Poverty Rates of Vulnerable Populations

The Getting Ahead program’s secondary Poverty Reduction indicator was to address the Depth of Poverty. This indicator looks at percentage of adults from five vulnerable groups (newcomers, persons with disabilities, female lone parents, unattached individuals aged 45 to 64 and Indigenous people living off-reserve) who have a household income of less than half the median¹¹.

At time of intake, all participants who self-disclosed being a vulnerable population earned or received less than half the median household income (average income \$1,161.74). At the point of the post survey, no participant had earned over 50% of the median household income. Despite no participants earning or receiving more than the 50% of the median income, there was increase of participant household income to an average of \$1,436.00 (table 4).

Table 1: Average self-reported monthly income

Pre-program	Post-program	Percentage Increase
\$1,161.74 (N=31)	\$1,436.00 (N=25)	23.6%

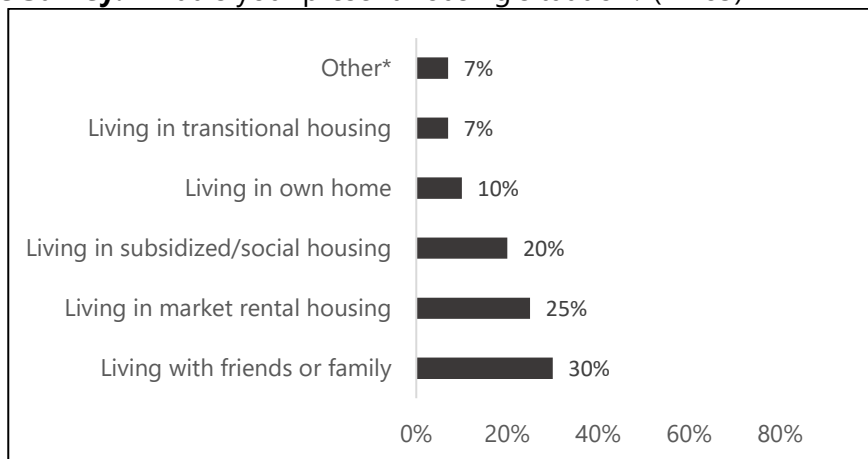
¹¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1110001301>



4.3.3 Ability to Maintain Safe and Stable Housing

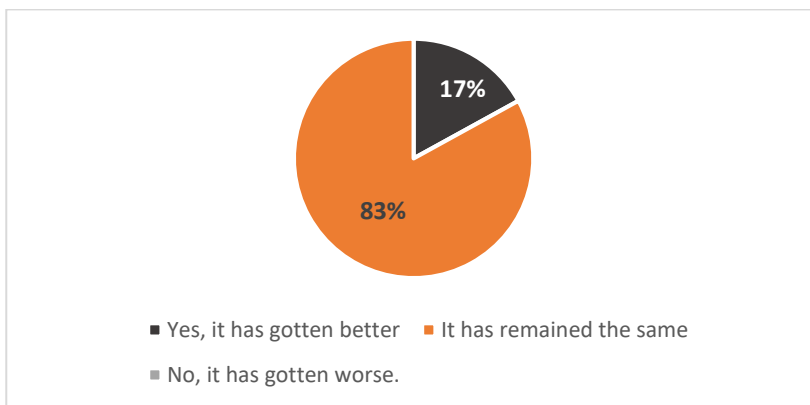
At the beginning of the program, 37% of participants were living with a friend or family or in transitional housing (figure 5). When asked at the six-month survey, 17% of all respondents noted that their housing had gotten better (figure 6) due to a larger space, more affordable rent, securing the necessary repairs or by securing employment. Additionally, no participant at the six-month survey noted a negative change in their housing situation.

Figure 5: Intake Survey: What is your present housing situation? (N=83)



* Other: renting a room, renting a house, not want to say, mental institute

Figure 6: Six-Month Survey: Has your housing situation changed since completing the program? (N=29)



4.3.4 Decrease Reliance on Income Support

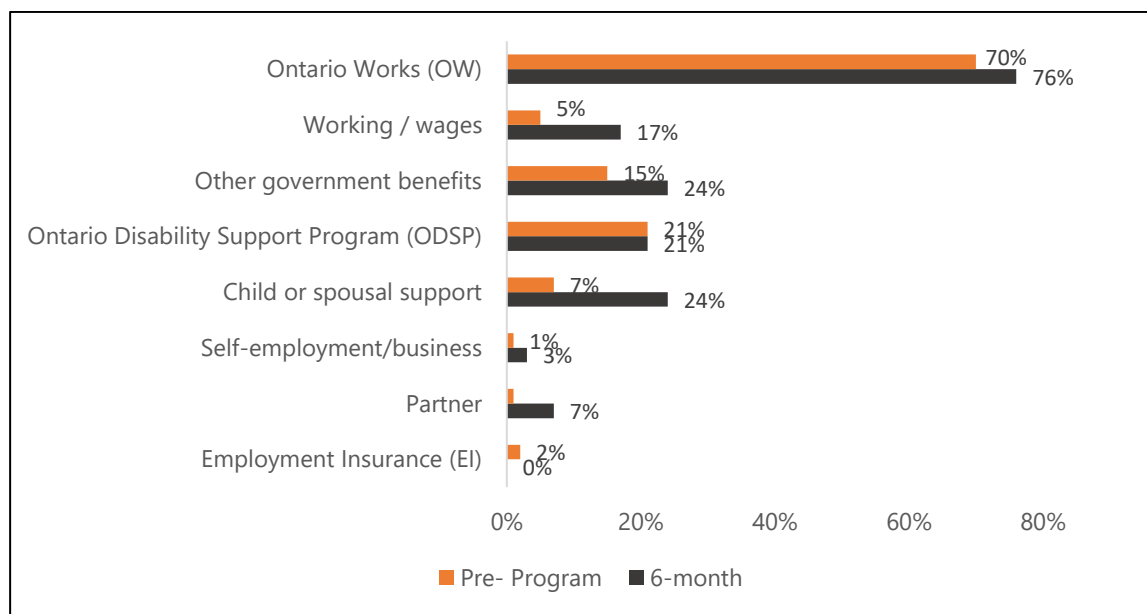
At the beginning of the program, 70% of participants were receiving Ontario Works (OW) and 21% were receiving Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). While six months after the program, there was an increased access of OW by participants and no change in their access to ODSP, it is important



to note that there was an increase of 12% of the number of people now earning money through working/wages (figure 7).

It is important to note that the sample size for the six month survey is only a subset of those who originally completed the pre-survey and may not account for the full impact the program has had on all participants. For example, participant 2 in the case studies in section 4.3.6 shared their account of how through this program they were able to gain the motivation needed to secure employment and get off OW.

Figure 7: Pre and -6-month Survey: What are your current sources of income? (Pre n= 82, 6-month n=29)



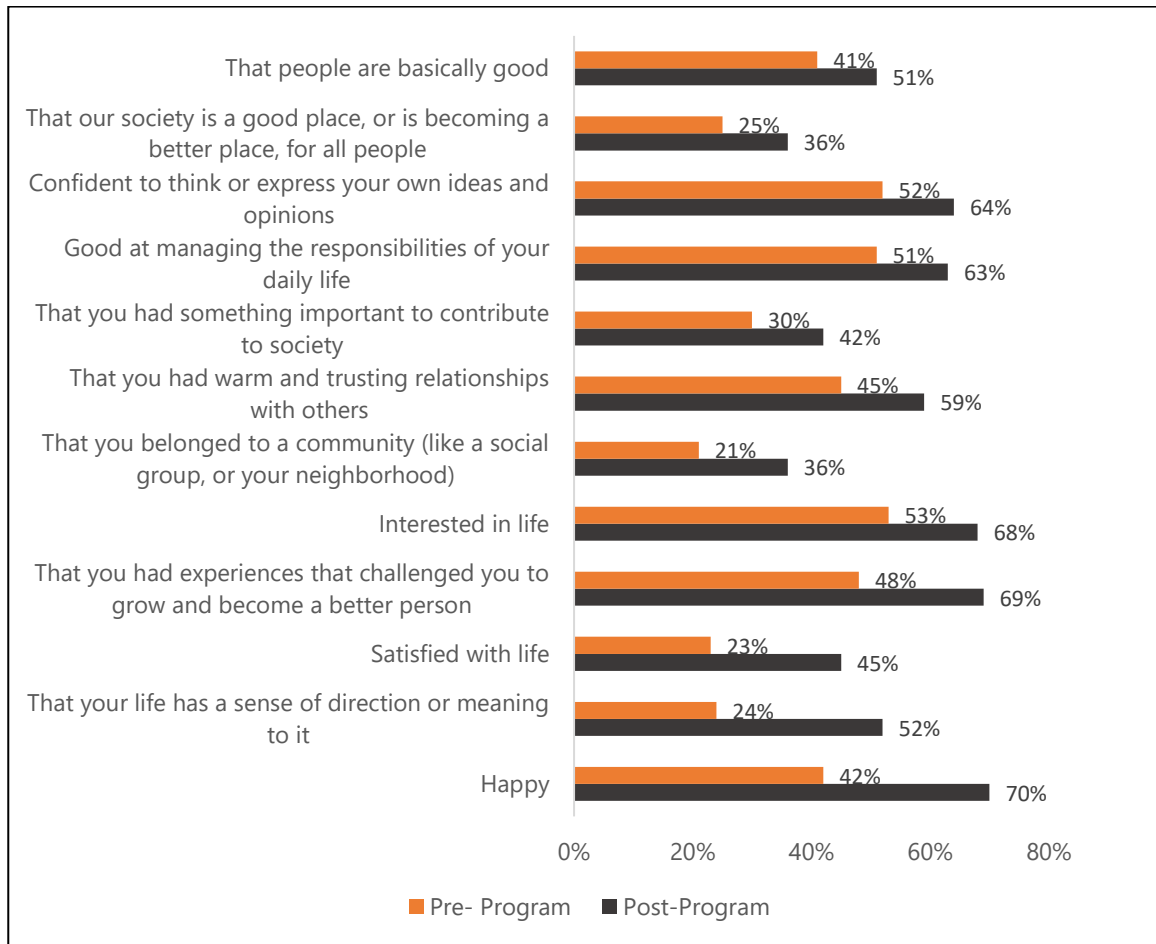
4.3.5 Improved Mental Health and Self-Esteem

Through learning more about poverty and creating relationships with other participants in the program, participants noted improved self-esteem and mental health with increased agreement on various statements (figure 8) at post survey including:

- That your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it (28% increase agreement at post);
- I am satisfied with my life (22% increase agreement at post); and
- I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities (19% increase agreement at post).



Figure 8: Pre and Post Survey: During the past month, how often did you feel....? (Pre N= 80-83, Post N=67-73)



Stakeholders and participants echoed this sentiment with one participant sharing that the coping skills that she has developed as part of the program and their connection with their peers in their community has helped them especially during the COVID pandemic.

"I am just in a better mind space now since the program. COVID has been hard, but I have no idea where I would be now if I didn't have this program. It wouldn't be good."
- Participant

4.3.6 Case Studies

To better understand the impact of the program, below are examples of participants' successes since participating in the program.



Participant 1:

Prior to joining the program, she shared she had no employment and was struggling with money and staying engaged and motivated to work. Through encouragement from their case worker, she joined the program hoping that it would help them figure out their next steps. Once in the program the participant loved the group activities and hearing from other participant's experiences.

"I really liked the group activities. It got everyone involved and sharing. The future planning activities was also really helpful as it helped me to plan my next steps properly. I'd be lost without that."
- Participant

In addition to gaining direction and future direction, she became more aware of community resources. She had shared that despite living in Brockville for her entire life, she did not realize how many supports and resources were available to her. For example, she recalled that Kings Kitchen provides free meals and that a taxi service in town provides free transportation to and from the food bank.

"I've lived here all my life. I didn't know what this city had to offer. There are so many different things in town. [...] Since the program I have even taken a taxi for free to the food bank – I didn't even know that existed".
- Participant

The participant also noted an increase in their own confidence and were now better able to manage their time. These skills have been especially important as they have now entered a hairstyling program in Brockville that they anticipate graduating from in August.

"So many skills I have learned from the program have helped me stay on track and engaged in the program. I would have been insane by now without it."
- Participant

Seeing herself succeed in schooling has also given her the confidence to plan for the future with the goal to graduate from her present hairstyling course and enroll in additional certifications in colouring and men's cut.

"I really like hairstyling and can't wait to start working in it. [...] After I graduate, I want to take extra courses in colouring and men's cut so I can do that too."
- Participant

The participant is also looking to move out of her parents' house into their own apartment with their boyfriend in the next couple of months.



Participant 2:

Prior to enrolling in the Getting Ahead program, the participant self-identified himself as lazy and lacking motivation to get a job. They often spent their days at home playing video games and watching TV.

Through being notified of the program from their Case Manager, the participant was excited for this program to give them the push they needed to get a job.

"Before this program, I was lazy about getting a job. I just didn't see the point. [...] I was hoping that this program would push me to get a job."

- Participant

While it had been a while since the participant joined the program, they did remember that the program had never felt like a burden as they were able to learn something new each day.

The participant noted that the program forced them to be social and encouraged them to interact with new people, something they would have previously avoided.

"This program forced me to be social and interact with new people. Before this program I would have never done that."

- Participant

Leveraging their newfound confidence and willingness to interact with new people, the participant has since secured employment. While he had previously tried two positions (at Shoppers Drug Mart and Terra Nova Trust) before landing on his current job at Giant Tiger as an Order Picker, he is grateful for their present employment and relationship with their colleagues. He also had no intention of leaving this role as he feels it is "exactly what I need".

"The program helped me to be social. I would have never been as successful in interviews or work as well with my colleagues if I had not taken this program."

- Participant

Since securing full time employment, the participant has been taken off OW and had no plans to returning.

"As soon as I started working at Shopper, I lost OW. I was told I was making too much money. [...] I have no plans of going back on OW now."

- Participant



Participant 3:

After the death of her husband five years ago, participant three had become a homebody using the little funds she received from OW to support her and her two children. With lack of confidence in herself and a fear of the unknown, the participant was nervous to commit to the program for three weeks.

"The three week commitment was scary. I hadn't done something like that in a long time, but the facilitator made me feel comfortable. She was compassionate and understood my barriers. She let me know that I could call in if something came up and I couldn't go – having the "out" was nice."
- Participant

In spite of her fear, she enrolled in the program and did not miss a day across the three weeks. The participant shared that having perfect attendance was a big accomplishment and confidence boost for her as she was able to prove to herself that she is able to commit to programs like this.

"When I signed up, I never expected I was going to attend every day but I did. I didn't miss a single day. It was a huge boost in confidence to be able to say that."
- Participant

When asked what encouraged her to consistently attend the program, the participant shared that she really enjoyed connecting with like minded people. She learned that she was not alone, and it gave her a safe place to visit outside of her home. The \$25 gift card to attend the program was also key to the participant as it made her feel that her time and experience was valuable – something she had never experienced in another program.

"A \$25 gift card to show up – that is unheard of in my world. [...] To be valued for my time, that is big. To be honest it isn't so much about the actual amount of money that was given, but for them to tell me that they value my time to be there – it was huge."
- Participant

Through attending the program, the participant shared that she learned that you should not feel guilty accessing supports to help better yourself, as she previously felt that the foodbank is only for people with no income and therefore she had previously not accessed it.

"We previously needed permission to access resources. I always felt guilty or there was this stigma that only those desperate should access the foodbank. But I learned that this shouldn't stand in the way – if you need support to better yourself, you should access it."
- Participant



Since taking part in the program, the participant has been able to improve her financial situation, teaching her how to budget better. As a result, she has purchased a car for her family, has not needed to use the foodbank in the past five months and has taught her children how to better budget money – making her optimistic that they will be more successful in their life.

"The program taught me how to save money. As a result I have purchased my own car. [...] I also haven't been to the foodbank in 5 months because we don't need to access the extra support. I have to say life is pretty good right now."
- Participant

The participant also noted that without the increased confidence and more positive view of self, her time during COVID may have been less positive and in a worse financial situation. As a result, the participant recommended that anyone who is feeling stuck in what to do next to enroll in the program as it had a transformative impact on her life.

"This is a great program. It has a big impact on me and my kids lives. [...] I think it could be very helpful for people who are stuck and don't know what to do. Hopefully it will have the same impact on them as it did for me."
- Participant

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2017, the UCLG, in partnership with the Leeds Grenville Poverty Reduction Alliance, was successful in receiving \$111,300 to implement the Getting Ahead program over a 36-month period. The funding was provided to determine whether the Getting Ahead program was beneficial in improving the lives of people living in poverty in Leeds Grenville.

Despite changes to the program delivery as a result of COVID, the program was able to engage **83 participants with 73 successfully completing the program**. Through the opportunity to share experiences, lead discussions and identify the drivers for their present condition and how to improve it going forward, participants were very positive about the design and delivery of the Getting Ahead program.

The Getting Ahead program was designed to address two of LPRF's poverty reduction strategy indicators, **Depth of Poverty** and **Poverty Rates of Vulnerable Populations**.

As the Getting Ahead program was a foundational program designed to help individuals living in poverty build resources and tools to help them begin to move out of poverty, instead of being a direct employment program, it is **positive to see that the program showed some improvement** on the Poverty Reduction indicators, depth of poverty LIM- 40. By the end of the



program only 94% of participants earned less than the LIM-40 as compared to 99% at intake; a reduction of 5%.

While there was **no movement**, amongst the second indicator, poverty rates of vulnerable populations, as all participants are still making less than 50% of the median household income, there was an increase in participants average income from \$1,161.74 to \$1,436.00 at post survey (23% increase).

Finding #1: The Getting Ahead program was seen to be very relevant to the primary target population of individuals living in poverty in Leeds Grenville. With approximately as 12.9% of all residents in Leeds Grenville identified as low income in 2016, with 1,178 individuals presently receiving Ontario Works the need for additional supports to help individuals develop the skills and resources to return to work is needed, especially considering the high enrollment in the program (83 participants for 12 cohorts).

The program's focus on supporting individuals experiencing poverty to develop the skills needed to be able to reduce the reliance on income supports also directly aligns with the objectives of the Local Poverty Reduction Fund (LPRF).

Recommendation #1: Seeing the success of the program and participants' and stakeholder's positive perception of the program, it is recommended that the Counties and its partners explore opportunities and partnerships to continue to deliver the program.

Finding #2: Leveraging the Case Managers and partnerships across social services agencies in Leeds Grenville was seen to be extremely helpful in the recruitment as it helped ensure the correct participants were attending the program and that a diversity of people were aware of the program. Unlike other programs that rely on flyers, social media or email correspondences to increase enrollment, leveraging the personal relationship between referring staff and individuals to make them aware of the program was seen to be extremely effective. The follow up by the learning facilitator was also seen to be equally important to ensure participants were aware of the program and to help to establish relationships between the participant and facilitator.

Finding #3: The original design of the Getting Ahead program was seen to effectively meet the needs of participants through the group discussion, identification of resources and the ability to connect with other individuals in their community. For many participants, the program provided them a safe space to express their challenges and concerns and learn from each other the best way to overcome these situations through access to resources or simply encouragement. In many cases, participants in the follow up interview shared that they have remained in contact with others from the program strengthening their connection in the community.



The program also helped to facilitate improved sense of self as they were rewarded for their time through gift cards and provided them a platform to share their own knowledge and experience.

Recommendation #2: Aware that the program is not provided in a Canadian edition, it is recommended that a database be created with recent and Canadian tools related to the United Countries of Leeds and Grenville including the poverty rate, household wealth and taxing in Canada. By creating an updated and consistent data base, learning facilitators will be better able to tailor the programming to participants as well as reduce their time looking for resources that are relevant as even those identified by facilitators were seen to be outdated.

Recommendation #3: Networking and establishing relationships amongst participants were key assets to the success of the program, and often something participants will miss after the program. Additionally, the Getting Ahead program is seen as a starting point for participants to explore new opportunities and programming that meets their needs. To further support participants after the program, the communities of Leeds Grenville should explore other programming or opportunities to allow participants to continue to share and learn from each other – whether this be the Circle program or another program/ resource already offered (e.g., event at the local library).

Key Lesson #4: As the Getting Ahead program was designed to help individuals living in poverty build resources and tools to help them begin to move out of poverty, instead of being a direct employment program, it is positive to see that the program showed some improvement on the Poverty Reduction indicators, depth of poverty LIM- 40, with some participants securing employment at the end of the program.

In addition to the Poverty Reduction indicators, the Getting Ahead program also aimed to improve participants' ability to maintain stable housing, decrease reliance on income support and improve their mental health and self-esteem. As shown earlier, the program was effective in achieving improvements across almost all of the indicators.

Recommendation #4: As mentioned earlier, Getting Ahead was a foundational program to support individuals in developing their sense of self, confidence, and resources to help them overcome poverty. For some participants who were closer to the labour market, this was sufficient for them to secure employment. However, the communities of Leeds Grenville should explore a pathway or referral process for those further away from the labour market to help them develop the key employability skills (hard or soft) needed to secure employment, should that be a part of their future plan.



Recommendation #5: Aware of the impact and success the program has had on participants engaged in the program, and the continuous uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is recommended that the communities of Leeds Grenville explore alternative delivery models (e.g., hybrid) or opportunities to support individuals going forward including a single session on a specific topic.



APPENDIX A: DATA COLLECTION TOOLS



Pre-Program Survey

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Getting Ahead Program!

As a component of this program we will be conducting pre- and post- surveys to help inform the delivery of the program, to identify its impact on participants and how the program could be improved in the future. Please be assured that all your information will be kept completely confidential.

Thank you for your honesty and time completing the survey.

Contact Information

1. First Name: _____
2. Last Name: _____
3. Phone number: _____
4. Email address: _____

Program Goals

5. What are your goals for participating in the Getting Ahead Program? **(select all that apply)**
 - a. Improve my life skills (e.g., financial literacy, decision making, conflict resolution)
 - b. Improve my communication skills
 - c. Increase my self-esteem
 - d. Increase my confidence
 - e. Become more independent
 - f. To learn about the root causes of poverty
 - g. To make a plan to get out of debt
 - h. To go back to school
 - i. To find out more about available resources in my community
 - j. To find a job
 - k. To get a better job than I currently have
 - l. Meet new people
 - m. Improve the quality of my relationships
 - n. Other (please specify): _____



6. What is your top goal for participating in the Getting Ahead Program?
- a. Improve my life skills (e.g., financial literacy, decision making, conflict resolution)
 - b. Improve my communication skills
 - c. Increase my self-esteem
 - d. Increase my confidence
 - e. Become more independent
 - f. To learn about the root causes of poverty
 - g. To make a plan to get out of debt
 - h. To go back to school
 - i. To find out more about available resources in my community
 - j. To find a job
 - k. To get a better job than I currently have
 - l. Meet new people
 - m. Improve the quality of my relationships
 - n. Other (please specify): _____

Course Knowledge

7. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I know what has caused me to be living in poverty					
I know how much debt I have					
I have a plan to reduce my debt					
I know how to develop a budget					
I regularly budget my finances					
I know what I want to do for work in the future					
I know what tools and resources to access to achieve my work goals					
I know how much rent I can afford based on my income					
With the right tools and resources, I am confident that I can move to an improved living situation					
I am actively engaged in my community					



	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I know where to go when I am having a difficult time					
I sent in my tax return last year					
I have a savings account					
I have access to regular transportation (e.g., bus, car)					
I can explain how the economy affects my daily life					
I can manage my time well					

8. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel comfortable talking to others in a social environment					
I feel comfortable talking to people at work					
I know how to talk through a conflict with others					
I feel comfortable negotiating with others					
I regularly stand up for myself					
I feel comfortable talking about poverty with others					

9. Are you aware of resources and supports available to you in your community?

- a. Not at all
- b. Aware of some resources and supports
- c. Aware of many resources and supports

10. What organizations are you currently accessing resources or support? (please list)

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. I have not accessed any resources or support



11. What do you feel are your barriers to becoming more economically secure?

(select all that apply)

- a. Bad credit
- b. Unemployment
- c. Difficulty with transportation
- d. Lack of affordable housing
- e. High debt
- f. Physical health problem
- g. Mental health problem
- h. Isolation
- i. Underemployment
- j. No access to computer
- k. Addictions
- l. Learning disability or challenges
- m. Criminal Record
- n. Unstable work environment
- o. Lack of affordable childcare
- p. Domestic violence
- q. Other (please specify): _____

Stress, Well-being and Self-Efficacy

Next are some questions about your thoughts and feelings during the last month. Please indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way.

12. In the last month, how often have you...?

	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly					
Felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life					
Felt nervous and/or stressed					
Felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems					
Felt that things were going your way					
Been able to control irritations in your life					
Felt that you were on top of things					



	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Been angered because of things that were outside of your control					
Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them					

13. During the past month, how often did you feel....?

	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Happy					
Interested in life					
Satisfied with life					
That you had something important to contribute to society					
That you belonged to a community (like a social group, or your neighborhood)					
That our society is a good place, or is becoming a better place, for all people					
That people are basically good					
That the way our society works makes sense to you					
That you liked most parts of your personality					
Good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life					
That you had warm and trusting relationships with others					
That you had experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person					
Confident to think or express your own ideas and opinions					
That your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it					



14. Please indicate how true the following statements are to you:

	Not at all true	Hardly true	Somewhat true	Exactly true
I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough				
If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want				
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals				
I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events				
Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations				
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary time and effort				
I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities				
When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions				
If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution				
I can usually handle whatever comes my way				

15. Below are some statements about your lifestyle. How often do you...?

	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
Have enough money to buy healthy food (e.g., vegetables, fruit, whole grains, lean meat)				
Cook at home instead of eating out or eating processed foods				
Exercise 3 times a week				
Take time to enjoy nature and explore the outdoors				
Keep screen time (e.g., computer and TV) to a minimum				



	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
Focus on your positive qualities rather than your physical appearance.				
Sleep 7-9 hours				
Utilize strategies to handle your stress				
Regularly visit the dentist				
Complete your annual checkup with your doctor				

Housing and Employment

16. What is your present housing situation?

- a. No fixed address / couch surfing / street
- b. Living with friends or family
- c. Living in an emergency shelter
- d. Living in transitional housing
- e. Living in foster care
- f. Living in subsidized/social housing
- g. Living in market rental housing
- h. Living in own home
- i. Other (please specify): _____

17. Which of the follow best describes your current employment situation? (select all that apply)

- a. Working for an employer (full-time)
- b. Working for an employer (part-time)
- c. Working (for cash)
- d. Self-employed/running a business
- e. Starting a business
- f. Volunteering/doing an unpaid internship
- g. In school
- h. Unemployed and actively looking for work
- i. Unemployed and not looking for work
- j. Unemployed and not in a position to work
- k. Other: _____

*Skip to question 20 if you are **unemployed, in school, or volunteering.***

18. How many hours do you usually work per week? _____

19. How long have you worked for your current employer? _____ years/_____ months



20. Are you currently looking for work?

- a. Yes
- b. No

21. What are your current sources of income? (select all that apply)

- a. No income
- b. Partner
- c. Ontario Works (OW)
- d. Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- e. Employment Insurance (EI)
- f. Child or spousal support
- g. Other government benefits
- h. Working / wages
- i. Self-employment/business
- j. Other: _____

22. What is your current income per month after tax deductions (e.g., how much money comes into your bank account on a monthly basis)?

Amount: _____

23. What is your household income a month?

- a. Same as above
- b. Total household income (if different from above) _____

24. How many jobs have you held in the last 6 months? _____ jobs

25. **If you held a job in the last 6 months**, how many of these were you paid in cash?

- a. All
- b. Some (Number of jobs: _____)
- c. None

26. **If you held a job in the last 6 months**, what is the longest time you have held a job?

Months: _____

27. Do you have enough income to pay for your basic needs (i.e., healthy food, housing, heat/hydro, transportation, healthcare, medication, clothes for you and your family)?

- a. No, I don't have enough and need additional supports to meet my basic needs (e.g., food banks, goodwill, other meal or support program, local charities)
- b. No, I don't have enough but I get by **without** using additional supports
- c. Yes, I have just enough for what I need
- d. Yes, and I have some left over to spend or save



Demographics

28. Date of Birth: _____

29. Gender:

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Transgender
- d. Other: _____
- e. Prefer not to say

30. Marital Status:

- a. Single/Never married
- b. Married/Partnered
- c. Divorced
- d. Separated
- e. Widowed
- f. Other (please specify): _____

31. Highest level of education that you have completed:

- a. Less than high school
- b. Some high school
- c. Completed high school
- d. Some college/university
- e. Completed university/college
- f. Other (please specify): _____

32. Do you have a disability?

- a. Yes
- b. No

33. Number of people in household: _____

34. Where do you live?

- a. Township of Athens
- b. Township of Augusta
- c. City of Brockville
- d. Township of Edwardsburgh/ Cardinal
- e. Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley
- f. Township of Front of Yonge
- g. Town of Gananoque



- h. Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands
- i. Township of Merrickville-Wolford
- j. Municipality of North Grenville
- k. Town of Prescott
- l. Township of Rideau Lakes
- m. Village of Westport

Thank you for completing this survey.

Post-Program Survey

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on completing the Getting Ahead Program!

In order to make the program better, we ask that you complete this survey. This will help us better understand your experience in the program, the impact the program had on you and how to improve it.

This survey should take about 15 minutes to complete. Your responses will not be reported on individually. They will be grouped with the other participants in the program for confidentiality.

Thank you for your honesty and time completing the survey.

Participants Information and Goals

1. First Name: _____
2. Last Name: _____
3. Below are some of the goals of the Getting Ahead Program. How much progress did you make on these goals during the program?

	None	A little	A lot	This was not a goal for me
Improve my life skills (e.g., financial literacy, decision making, conflict resolution)				
Improve my communication skills				
Increase my self-esteem				
Increase my confidence				
Become more independent				
Learn about the root causes of poverty				
Make a plan to get out of debt				



	None	A little	A lot	This was not a goal for me
Go back to school				
Find out more about available resources in my community				
Find a job				
Get a better job than I currently have				
Meet new people				
Improve the quality of my relationships				

4. Are there any other goals that the Getting Ahead Program helped you achieve?

Course Knowledge

5. How much do you feel the Getting Ahead Program helped you...?

	Not at all	A little	A lot	I already knew this
Identify what has caused you to be living in poverty				
Know how much debt you have				
Create a plan to reduce your debt				
Know how to develop a budget				
Identify what you want to do for work in the future				
Know what tools and resources to access to achieve your work goals				
Know how much rent you can afford based on your income				
Know where to go when you are having a difficult time				
Explain how the economy affects your daily life				
Manage your time well				
Become empowered to overcome poverty				

6. How much do you think you improved on these skills during the program?

	Not at all	A little	A lot	I already had this skill
Talking to others in a social environment				



Talking to people at work				
Talking through a conflict with others				
Negotiating with others				
Standing up for yourself				
Talking about poverty with others				

7. Do you...?

	Yes	No
Regularly budget your finance		
Feel confident that you can move to an improved living situation		
Actively engage in your community		
Have a savings account		
Have access to regular transportation (e.g., bus, car)		

Stress, Well-being and Self-Efficacy

Next are some questions about your thoughts and feelings during the last month. Please indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way.

8. In the last month, how often have you...?

	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly					
Felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life					
Felt nervous and/or stressed					
Felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems					
Felt that things were going your way					
Been able to control irritations in your life					
Felt that you were on top of things					
Been angered because of things that were outside of your control					
Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them					

9. During the past month, how often did you feel....?



	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Happy					
Interested in life					
Satisfied with life					
That you had something important to contribute to society					
That you belonged to a community (like a social group, or your neighborhood)					
That our society is a good place, or is becoming a better place, for all people					
That people are basically good					
That the way our society works makes sense to you					
That you liked most parts of your personality					
Good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life					
That you had warm and trusting relationships with others					
That you had experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person					
Confident to think or express your own ideas and opinions					
That your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it					

10. Please indicate how true the following statements are to you:

	Not at all	Hardly	Somewhat	Exactly
I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough				
If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want				
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals				
I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events				
Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations				



	Not at all	Hardly	Somewhat	Exactly
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary time and effort				
I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities				
When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions				
If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution				
I can usually handle whatever comes my way				

11. Below are some statements about your lifestyle. How often do you...?

	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
Have enough money to buy healthy food (e.g., vegetables, fruit, whole grains, lean meat)				
Cook at home instead of eating out or eating processed foods				
Exercise 3 times a week				
Take time to enjoy nature and explore the outdoors				
Keep screen time (e.g., computer and TV) to a minimum				
Focus on your positive qualities rather than your physical appearance.				
Sleep 7-9 hours				
Utilize strategies to handle your stress				
Regularly visit the dentist				
Complete your annual checkup with your doctor				



Course Design

12. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the program?

	Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Completely
Curriculum topics (e.g., causes of poverty, importance of language, community resources)				
Instruction in class				
Peer Mentoring				
Length of the program				
Timing of the program				
Overall experience of the program				

13. Have you made progress on your Poverty Action Plan that you developed early in the program?

- Not at all
- A little
- A lot
- I have completed my action plan
- I didn't do an action plan

14. What do you feel was most valuable about the Getting Ahead Program?

15. What do you feel was the least valuable about the Getting Ahead Program?

Employment

16. Which of the following best describes your employment change over the course of the program?

- I still have the same job I did when I started
- I am still unemployed
- I found new work
- I had a job but lost it
- I am still in school
- I started school
- I started volunteering/doing an unpaid internship



- Other: _____

17. **[IF STILL WORKING/FOUND WORK]** What best describes your current job?

- Casual (on-call, day labour)
- Temporary/short-term contract (less than a year)
- Seasonal
- Fixed term contract, one year or more
- Self-employed-no employees
- Self-employed-others work for me
- Permanent part-time-less than 30 hours per week
- Permanent full-time- hours vary from week to week and could sometimes be less than 30
- Permanent full time-30 hours or more a per week

18. To what extent do you feel that participating in the Getting Ahead Program helped you become more economically secure?

- Very much
- Somewhat
- A little
- Not at all

19. What challenges do you feel the Getting Ahead Program helped you overcome in relation to becoming more economically secure? **(select all that apply)**

- Bad credit
- Unemployment
- Difficulty with transportation
- Lack of affordable housing
- High debt
- Physical health problem
- Mental health problem
- Isolation
- Underemployment
- No access to computer
- Addictions
- Learning disability or challenges
- Criminal Record
- Unstable work environment
- Lack of affordable childcare
- Domestic violence
- None
- Other (please specify): _____

20. What challenges do you still face in becoming more economically secure? **(select all that apply)**



- Bad credit
- Unemployment
- Difficulty with transportation
- Lack of affordable housing
- High debt
- Physical health problem
- Mental health problem
- Isolation
- Underemployment
- No access to computer
- Addictions
- Learning disability or challenges
- Criminal Record
- Unstable work environment
- Lack of affordable childcare
- Domestic violence
- I no longer have any challenges
- Other (please specify): _____

Housing

21. Has your housing situation changed since participating in the program?
- Yes, it has gotten better
 - It has remained the same
 - No, it has gotten worse

Income

22. What are your current sources of income? (select all that apply)

- No income
- Partner
- Ontario Works (OW)
- Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- Employment Insurance (EI)
- Child or spousal support
- Other government benefits
- Working / wages
- Self-employment/business
- Other: _____

23. What is your current income per month after tax deductions (e.g., how much money comes into your bank account on a monthly basis)?



Amount: _____

24. What is your household income a month?

- Same as above
- Total household income (if different from above): _____

25. Has your household income changed since you started the Getting Ahead Program?

- Yes, it has increased
- No, it has stayed the same
- Yes, it has decreased

26. Do you have enough income to pay for your basic needs (i.e., food, housing, hydro, clothes for you and your family)?

- No, I don't have enough and need additional supports to meet my basic needs (e.g., food banks, goodwill, other meal or support program, local charities)
- No, I don't have enough but I get by **without** using additional supports
- Yes, I have just enough for what I need
- Yes, and I have some left over to spend or save

27. Are you more aware of community resources since the beginning of the program (e.g., YMCA, foodbank)?

- Yes
- No

28. **[IF MORE AWARE]** What resources are you more aware of?

29. Are you accessing any of the new resources that you have been made aware of?

- None
- A few
- Some of them
- All of them

Other comments

30. Are you interested in being a peer mentor for the Getting Ahead Program?

- Yes
- No

31. Do you have any other comments?



Thank you for completing this survey.



-
1. Select any of the following options that explain your journey since you left the Getting Ahead program? **(select all that apply)**
 - a. Worked towards earning my high school diploma, i.e. Grade 12, GED
 - b. Completed my high school diploma, i.e. Grade 12, GED
 - c. Started a college/university program
 - d. Searched for a job
 - e. Secured a job
 - f. Continued working in the job I previously had
 - g. Started a business
 - h. Continued operating an existing business
 - i. Started a volunteer position
 - j. Continued an existing volunteer position
 - k. Connected with a new community organization
 - l. Continued to access previous community organizations or supports
 - m. Joined a mentoring program
 - n. I am still unemployed
 - o. I did not participate in any of these activities
 - p. Other (please specify): _____

 2. **[if 3 = e, f]** What best describes your current job?
 - a. Casual (on-call, day labour)
 - b. Temporary/short-term contract (less than a year)
 - c. Seasonal
 - d. Fixed term contract, one year or more
 - e. Self-employed (no employees)
 - f. Self-employed (and others work for me)
 - g. Permanent part-time (less than 30 hours per week)
 - h. Permanent full-time (hours vary from week to week and could sometimes be less than 30)
 - i. Permanent full time (30 hours or more a per week)

 3. **[if 3 = e]** How many jobs have you held in the last 6 months? _____ jobs

 4. **[if 3 = e]** How many of these jobs were paid in cash?
 - a. All
 - b. Some
 - c. None

 5. **[if 3 = e]** What is the longest period of time you have been employed since leaving the Getting Ahead program? Months _____



6. [if 3 = e] To what extent do you feel that the Getting Ahead program has helped you to secure your job?
 - a. A lot
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. A little
 - d. Not at all
 - e. Unsure

7. [if 8 = a-c] How did attending the Getting Ahead program help you secure your job? _____

8. [if 3 = c] What college/university program have you enrolled in? _____

9. [if 3 = k] What community organization(s) are you now connected with? _____

Course Design

10. Thinking back to the course, how important were the following aspects of the Getting Ahead Program in your journey since completing the program?

	Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Very
Learning about the causes of poverty				
Creating your future story				
Understanding the hidden rules of class or society				
Learning about formal and informal language				
Identifying resources in your community				
Assessing the strengths of your community				
Planning for your next steps				
Peer mentoring				
The program overall				



11. Have you made progress on fulfilling your "Future Story", goals or action plan since you left the program?
- a. I am living my Future Story
 - b. A lot
 - c. A little
 - d. Not at all
 - e. I didn't develop a Future Story or plan

12. Now that you have been out of the program for six months, what aspects of the program have helped you succeed or were important to the success you've had since completing the program?

13. Based on your experience since completing the program, is there other information you wish you had learned in the Getting Ahead Program?

Stress, Well-being and Self-Efficacy

Next are some questions about your thoughts and feelings during the last month. Please indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way.

14. In the last month, how often have you¹²...?

	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly					
Felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life					
Felt nervous and/or stressed					
Felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems					
Felt that things were going your way					
Been able to control irritations in your life					
Felt that you were on top of things					

¹² Perceived Stress Scale, By Sheldon Cohen. Retried From: <http://www.Mindgarden.Com/Documents/Perceivedstressscale.Pdf>



	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Been angered because of things that were outside of your control					
Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them					

15. During the past month, how often did you feel¹³....?

	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Happy					
Interested in life					
Satisfied with life					
That you had something important to contribute to society					
That you belonged to a community (like a social group, or your neighborhood)					
That our society is a good place, or is becoming a better place, for all people					
That people are basically good					
That the way our society works makes sense to you					
That you liked most parts of your personality					
Good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life					
That you had warm and trusting relationships with others					
That you had experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person					
Confident to think or express your own ideas and opinions					
That your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it					

16. Please indicate how true the following statements are to you¹⁴:

¹³ Mental Health Continuum Short Form, by Dr. C. L. M Keyes. Retried From: <https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/MHC-SFEnglish.pdf>

¹⁴ General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE). Retried From: [https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/26768/1/General_Self-Efficacy_Scale%20\(GSE\).pdf](https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/26768/1/General_Self-Efficacy_Scale%20(GSE).pdf)



	Not at all	Hardly	Somewhat	Exactly
I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough				
If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want				
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals				
I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events				
Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations				
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary time and effort				
I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities				
When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions				
If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution				
I can usually handle whatever comes my way				

17. Below are some statements about your lifestyle. How often do you...?

	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
Have enough money to buy healthy food (e.g., vegetables, fruit, whole grains, protein foods)				
Cook at home instead of eating out or eating processed foods				
Enjoy a variety of physical activity opportunities at least three times during the week				
Take time to enjoy nature and explore the outdoors				
Keep screen time (e.g., computer and TV) to a minimum				
Sleep 7-9 hours				
Utilize strategies to handle your stress				
Regularly visit the dentist				
Complete your annual checkup with your doctor				



Housing

18. Has your housing situation changed since completing the program?
- Yes, it has gotten better
 - It has remained the same
 - No, it has gotten worse.
19. [If it has gotten better] How has it gotten better?
- Got a larger apartment
 - Rent/mortgage is more affordable
 - Home/Apartment got the repairs it needed
 - Live in a safe neighbourhood
 - Have better access to transit
 - Other (please specify): _____
20. [If it has gotten worse] How has it gotten worse?
- Got evicted from apartment
 - Worried about foreclosures/not being able to pay the mortgage
 - Moved into a smaller apartment
 - Rent/mortgage has increased in price
 - Home/Apartment needs repairs that I cannot afford
 - Feel neighbourhood is not safe
 - Live far away from transit
 - Other (please specify): _____

Income

21. Since completing the program, do you feel you are more economically secure?
- Yes, a lot more secure
 - Yes, a little more secure
 - No, my economic stability has not changed
 - No, I am now less secure
22. [If 23 = a and b] To what extent did participating in the Getting Ahead Program help you become more economically secure?
- Very much
 - Somewhat
 - A little
 - Not at all



23. What challenges did the Getting Ahead Program help you overcome in relation to becoming more economically secure? (select all that apply)

- a. Bad credit
- b. Unemployment
- c. Difficulty with transportation
- d. Lack of affordable housing
- e. High debt
- f. Physical health problem
- g. Mental health problem
- h. Isolation
- i. Underemployment
- j. No access to computer
- k. Addictions
- l. Learning disability or challenges
- m. Criminal Record
- n. Unstable work environment
- o. Lack of affordable childcare
- p. Domestic violence
- q. None
- r. Other (please specify): _____

24. What challenges do you still face in becoming more economically secure? (select all that apply)

- a. Bad credit
- b. Unemployment
- c. Difficulty with transportation
- d. Lack of affordable housing
- e. High debt
- f. Physical health problem
- g. Mental health problem
- h. Isolation
- i. Underemployment
- j. No access to computer
- k. Addictions
- l. Learning disability or challenges
- m. Criminal Record
- n. Unstable work environment
- o. Lack of affordable childcare
- p. Domestic violence
- q. I no longer have any challenges
- r. Other (please specify): _____

25. What are your current sources of income? (select all that apply)

- a. No income



- b. Partner
- c. Ontario Works (OW)
- d. Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- e. Employment Insurance (EI)
- f. Child or spousal support
- g. Other government benefits
- h. Working / wages
- i. Self-employment/business
- j. Other: _____

26. What is **your current income** per month after tax deductions (e.g., how much money comes into your bank account on a monthly basis)?

Amount: _____

27. What is your **household** income a month?

- a. Same as above
- b. Total household income (if different from above): _____

28. Has your household income changed since you left the Getting Ahead Program?

- a. Yes, it has increased
- b. No, it has stayed the same
- c. Yes, it has decreased

29. Do you have enough income to pay for your basic needs (i.e., food, housing, hydro, clothes for you and your family)?

- a. Yes, and I have some left over to spend or save
- b. Yes, I have just enough for what I need
- c. No, I don't have enough and need additional supports to meet my basic needs (e.g., food banks, goodwill, other meal or support program, local charities)
- d. No, I don't have enough but I get by **without** using additional supports

30. Would you or have you recommended the Getting Ahead program to others?

- a. Yes, I have
- b. Yes, I would
- c. I am not sure
- d. No, I have not and do not plan to

31. [if 32 = d] Why would you not recommend the program? _____

32. To receive the \$25 gift card, please provide your address below. The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville will send you a gift card after completing the survey.



Address: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

33. Do you have any other comments?

Thank you for completing the survey.



Focus Group Guide

Begin by going around the circle and introduce each other and tell an interesting fact or some ice breaker.

Design and outcomes of program

1. First off tell me a little about your experience in the program?
 - a. What did you enjoy the most?
 - b. What did you enjoy the least?

2. Thinking back to when you first signed up for the program, how did you think this program would help you?

Prompts: better understanding my situation, improved access to community resources, learning how to manage my finances, develop life skills, improve self-esteem /confidence, improve physical/ mental health, achieve financial stability,

3. *Based on the previous responses,* did the program help you achieve these goals?
 - a. Why or why not?
 - b. If you did not achieve your goals, what could have been done to further support you?

4. Did you achieve other goals through this program that you did not expect?
 - a. What were these?

5. The primary outcome of the program is to help you develop a network of resources and knowledge for you to create a better life for yourself, your family and community.
 - a. What component of the program do you think helped prepared you the most (e.g., specific topics, mentoring)? Why?
 - b. What component do you feel was the least useful? Why?
 - c. Was there anything else that you wish you had learned about? Or was there something that could have helped you more?

6. Did you encounter any challenges in the program?
 - a. What were these?
 - b. How did you overcome them?

7. Is there anything about the program that you would change for the next cohort?



Next steps

8. What is the next step in your journey after leaving this program? (*e.g., securing employment, accessing additional resources*)
 - a. Do you have a plan to achieve these things?
 - b. Did this program help you identify these next steps?

Closing/Advice

9. What advice would you give people who are considering participating in the Getting Ahead program and or people who have just enrolled?
10. Any last comments or questions?

Thank you!



Getting Ahead: Preliminary Program Staff Interview Guide

1. Please describe your role with the Getting Ahead program. How long have you been in this role?

Design and Delivery

2. Was the program delivered as originally planned?
 - a. If no, what changes were made and why?
3. In your opinion, is the program being delivered effectively?
 - a. Is the program meeting the needs of the target audience (people in poverty)?
 - b. What works well in the delivery?
 - c. Is there anything that would help the program better meet needs of the participants/target audience?
4. In your opinion, are there programs similar to Getting Ahead in your community?
 - a. Does Getting Ahead complement /duplicate the other programs or services?
 - b. If yes, please explain the duplication/complementarity.
 - c. If duplication: Are there any changes that can be made to the program that would help to reduce this duplication.

Outcomes

5. Based on what you have observed, is the program on the right path and/or achieving its objectives? For example:
 - a. **Immediate outcomes:** improved life skills, improved communication, increased awareness of existing poverty supports and resources, improved understanding of the root cause of poverty, increased self esteem, increased self-confidence, improved ability to talk about poverty, increased self-autonomy and sufficient, increased motivation for change, improved community sense
 - b. **Intermediate outcomes:** increased sense of empowerment, improved employment and financial stability, enhanced community capacity to address poverty, increased access to basic necessities, improved mental and physical health, enhanced social and civic engagement
6. Have you observed any unexpected outcomes (positive or negative) that you did not expect?



7. Going forward, are there any other changes you would recommend to the program to improve the effectiveness?

8. Is there anything else that we should be made aware of for the evaluation?

Thank you.



Getting Ahead: Preliminary Case Manager Interview Guide

1. Please describe your relationship with the Getting Ahead program. How long have you been in this role?

Relevance:

2. Why have you decided to refer clients to the Getting Ahead program?
 - a. What benefit did you feel that the program would provide your clients?
 - b. Is the program better design for a specific segment?

Design and Delivery

3. In your opinion, is the program being delivered effectively?
 - a. Is the program meeting the needs of the target audience (people in poverty)?
 - b. What works well in the delivery?
 - c. Is there anything that would help the program better meet needs of the participants/target audience?
4. In your opinion, are there programs similar to Getting Ahead in your community?
 - a. Does Getting Ahead complement /duplicate the other programs or services?
 - b. If yes, please explain the duplication/complementarity.
 - c. If duplication: Are there any changes that can be made to the program that would help to reduce this duplication.

Outcomes

5. Based on what you have observed, what impact has the program had on your clients in relation to the following objectives:
 - a. **Immediate outcomes:** improved life skills, improved communication, increased awareness of existing poverty supports and resources, improved understanding of the root cause of poverty, increased self esteem, increased self-confidence, improved ability to talk about poverty, increased self-autonomy and sufficient, increased motivation for change, improved community sense
 - b. **Intermediate outcomes:** increased sense of empowerment, improved employment and financial stability, enhanced community capacity to address poverty, increased access to basic necessities, improved mental and physical health, enhanced social and civic engagement
6. Have you observed any unexpected outcomes (positive or negative) that you did not expect?
Probe on outcomes with clients and in the community setting



7. Going forward, are there any other changes you would recommend to the program to improve the effectiveness?

8. Is there anything else that we should be made aware of for the evaluation?

Thank you.



Getting Ahead: Final Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. As you know we are reaching the end of the 3-year Getting Ahead Program and as part of the final evaluation, we wanted to capture your insights and experience coordinating the program.

The information you provide is for evaluation purposes only. Whatever you share will remain anonymous and will be reported collectively in the final report.

I also want to acknowledge that the program has evolved a great deal over the past three years, so feel free to speak to your own experiences, and how your experience is different than your peers - we are not looking for consensus.

Relevance

1. To start off- tell me a little bit about yourself and your engagement with the Getting Ahead program?
2. In your opinion, how relevant do you think the Getting Ahead Program is for people living in poverty in the Counties?
 - a. Why do you think this?
3. In your opinion, how relevant do you think the Getting Ahead Program is for the Counties?
 - a. Why do you think this?
4. Do you think the program was effective in reaching its target audience (people living in poverty)?
 - a. Was it more effective reaching one population (e.g., municipality, people) than another?
 - b. How about by location? Or age groups?
5. The Getting Ahead Program is designed to address two of the Local Poverty Reduction Fund indicators Depth of Poverty indicator (Fixed LIM-40) and addressing poverty rates of vulnerability. How well do you think Getting Ahead Program aligns with these priorities?



Program Design and Delivery

6. How effective do you think the design of the Getting Ahead Program was in respect to program deliver?
 - a. Recruitment
 - b. Delivery of the workshops
 - c. Post program resources
 - d. Sustainability planning
 - e. Administrative structure (e.g., board, data tracking and entry)

7. Thinking about the delivery of the program, what do you think was effective or key aspects to the delivery in reaching its intended outcomes?
 - a. Was this originally planned or maintained throughout the program?
 - b. Why do you think this was effective?

8. What challenges or barriers did the program experience when delivering the program?
 - a. How, if at all, were you able to address this?
 - b. How do you think this could be addressed if this program was to be delivered again?

9. What parts of the design and delivery of the program really helped to achieve the outcomes of the program?
 - a. Which were best practices of the program?

Achievement of Outcomes

10. Thinking about the intended outcomes of the program, how effective do you think the program was in increasing participants...
 - a. Life skills (e.g., financial literacy)
 - b. Communication skills
 - c. Understanding the root causes of poverty in general and their own life
 - d. Ability to talk about poverty
 - e. Self-esteem
 - f. Self-confidence to handle one's own poverty situation
 - g. Motivation for change out of poverty
 - h. Increase self-autonomy and self-sufficiency
 - i. Access to basic necessities
 - j. Employment and financial stability
 - k. Mental and physical health



I. Housing

How do you know this? How do you think the program could have better reached these outcomes?

11. Are there any other changes you have seen in participants who participated in the program?
12. Thinking about the intended outcomes of the program, how effective do you think the program was in increasing the communities ...
 - a. Awareness of resources and supports
 - b. Improved community supports
 - c. Better able to support people in poverty
 - d. Reduced human, social, and economic cost of poverty in Leeds and Grenville

How do you know this? How do you think the program could have better reached these outcomes?

13. Are there any other changes you have seen in community as a result of the program?
14. Thinking back on the program over the three years, aspects of the program do you think were key in facilitating this success?
 - a. What changes do you think should be made if this program was to be delivered again to help strengthen the program?

Closing

15. In your opinion, is a program like Getting Ahead Program still needed going forward?
16. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for your input in this evaluation process.



APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESULTS



Survey Frame

The data included in this appendix is for all 12 cohorts delivered over the course of the grant (note there was no cohort 7).

Cohort	Pre Survey (N)	Post Survey (N)	Follow up Survey (N)
1	7	5	2
2	6	5	3
3	12	10	8
4	6	6	5
5	4	3	-
6	11	10	1
7	-	-	-
8	7	6	4
9	3	3	-
10	9	8	-
11	7	7	5
12	5	6	1
13	6	4	-
TOTAL	83	73	29



Program Goals

1. What are your goals for participating in the Getting Ahead Program? (N=82)

Goals	% (N)
Improve my life skills (e.g., financial literacy, decision making, conflict resolution)	84% (69)
Improve my communication skills	51% (42)
Increase my self-esteem	57% (47)
Increase my confidence	57% (47)
Become more independent	56% (46)
To learn about the root causes of poverty	35% (29)
To make a plan to get out of debt	57% (47)
To go back to school	33% (27)
To find out more about available resources in my community	63% (52)
To find a job	66% (54)
To get a better job than I currently have	16% (13)
Meet new people	50% (41)
Improve the quality of my relationships	33% (27)
Other*	5% (4)

*For my child, to figure out new career, explore potential possibilities

2. What is your top goal for participating in the Getting Ahead Program? (N=69)

Goals	% (N)
Improve my life skills (e.g., financial literacy, decision making, conflict resolution)	32% (33)
Improve my communication skills	3% (2)
Increase my self-esteem	1% (1)
Increase my confidence	4% (3)
Become more independent	6% (4)
To learn about the root causes of poverty	1% (1)
To make a plan to get out of debt	9% (6)
To go back to school	3% (2)
To find out more about available resources in my community	7% (5)
To find a job	28% (19)



Goals	% (N)
To get a better job than I currently have	3% (2)
Meet new people	-
Improve the quality of my relationships	1% (1)
For my child	1% (1)

Course Knowledge

3. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements (N=75-83)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I know what has caused me to be living in poverty	1% (1)	4% (3)	19% (15)	53% (43)	23% (19)
I know how much debt I have	4% (3)	9% (7)	19% (15)	48% (39)	21% (17)
I have a plan to reduce my debt	9% (7)	13% (10)	44% (35)	28% (22)	8% (6)
I know how to develop a budget	5% (4)	17% (14)	23% (19)	43% (35)	11% (9)
I regularly budget my finances	10% (8)	25% (20)	20% (16)	33% (26)	13% (10)
I know what I want to do for work in the future	6% (5)	17% (14)	37% (30)	33% (27)	6% (5)
I know what tools and resources to access to achieve my work goals	6% (5)	20% (16)	42% (34)	32% (26)	1% (1)
I know how much rent I can afford based on my income	2% (2)	5% (4)	23% (19)	59% (48)	11% (9)
With the right tools and resources, I am confident that I can move to an improved living situation	2% (2)	5% (4)	15% (12)	53% (43)	25% (20)
I am actively engaged in my community	9% (7)	26% (21)	32% (26)	27% (22)	6% (5)
I know where to go when I am having a difficult time	4% (3)	11% (9)	30% (25)	43% (36)	12% (10)
I sent in my tax return last year	5% (4)	16% (13)	1% (1)	30% (25)	48% (40)
I have a savings account	23% (19)	24% (20)	15% (12)	27% (22)	11% (9)
I have access to regular transportation (e.g., bus, car)	6% (5)	11% (9)	19% (15)	43% (35)	21% (17)
I can explain how the economy affects my daily life	4% (3)	21% (17)	35% (29)	34% (28)	6% (5)
I can manage my time well	5% (4)	12% (10)	31% (26)	42% (35)	10% (8)



4. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: (N=82-83)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel comfortable talking to others in a social environment	5% (4)	19% (16)	29% (24)	37% (31)	10% (8)
I feel comfortable talking to people at work	-	8% (7)	24% (20)	49% (41)	18% (15)
I know how to talk through a conflict with others	2% (2)	13% (11)	32% (26)	39% (32)	13% (11)
I feel comfortable negotiating with others	2% (2)	15% (12)	32% (26)	40% (33)	11% (9)
I regularly stand up for myself	2% (2)	13% (11)	29% (24)	30% (25)	24% (20)
I feel comfortable talking about poverty with others	4% (3)	20% (17)	29% (24)	36% (30)	11% (9)

5. Are you aware of resources and supports available to you in your community? (N=79)

Response	% (N)
Not at all	8% (6)
Aware of some resources and supports	78% (62)
Aware of many resources and supports	14% (11)



6. What do you feel are your barriers to becoming more economically secure? (N=82)

Response	% (N)
Bad credit	49% (40)
Unemployment	73% (60)
Difficulty with transportation	48% (39)
Lack of affordable housing	29% (24)
High debt	32% (26)
Physical health problem	32% (26)
Mental health problem	61% (50)
Isolation	13% (11)
Underemployment	24% (20)
No access to computer	12% (10)
Addictions	16% (13)
Learning disability or challenges	16% (13)
Criminal Record	20% (16)
Unstable work environment	6% (5)
Lack of affordable childcare	4% (3)
Domestic violence	9% (7)
Other*	9% (7)

*family commitments, bad budgeting, spousal communication, keeping a job

Stress, Well-being and Self-Efficacy

Next are some questions about your thoughts and feelings during the last month. Please indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way.

7. In the last month, how often have you...? (N=77-83)

	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly	2% (2)	8% (7)	53% (44)	22% (18)	14% (12)
Felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life	5% (4)	4% (3)	47% (39)	29% (24)	16% (13)
Felt nervous and/or stressed	-	6% (5)	31% (26)	23% (19)	40% (33)
Felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems	3% (2)	6% (5)	59% (47)	25% (20)	8% (6)
Felt that things were going your way	10% (8)	21% (17)	60% (49)	7% (6)	2% (2)



	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Been able to control irritations in your life	1% (1)	16% (13)	59% (48)	20% (16)	5% (4)
Felt that you were on top of things	7% (6)	20% (16)	57% (46)	11% (9)	5% (4)
Been angered because of things that were outside of your control	8% (7)	7% (6)	43% (36)	25% (21)	16% (13)
Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them	6% (5)	16% (13)	45% (37)	18% (15)	16% (13)

8. During the past month, how often did you feel....? (N=80-83)

	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Happy	6% (5)	1% (1)	51% (42)	35% (29)	7% (6)
Interested in life	2% (2)	11% (9)	34% (28)	40% (33)	13% (11)
Satisfied with life	7% (6)	17% (14)	52% (43)	18% (15)	5% (4)
That you had something important to contribute to society	13% (11)	22% (18)	35% (29)	20% (16)	10% (8)
That you belonged to a community (like a social group, or your neighborhood)	18% (15)	22% (18)	40% (33)	16% (13)	5% (4)
That our society is a good place, or is becoming a better place, for all people	10% (8)	27% (22)	38% (31)	23% (19)	2% (2)
That people are basically good	2% (2)	8% (7)	48% (40)	33% (27)	8% (7)
That the way our society works makes sense to you	7% (6)	25% (21)	51% (42)	16% (13)	1% (1)
That you liked most parts of your personality	1% (!)	10% (8)	23% (19)	52% (43)	14% (12)
Good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life	5% (4)	10% (8)	35% (29)	41% (34)	10% (8)
That you had warm and trusting relationships with others	-	14% (12)	41% (34)	35% (29)	10% (8)
That you had experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person	1% (1)	10% (8)	41% (34)	34% (28)	14% (12)
Confident to think or express your own ideas and opinions	1% (1)	11% (9)	36% (30)	39% (32)	13% (11)



	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
That your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it	8% (7)	19% (16)	48% (40)	19% (16)	5% (4)

9. Please indicate how true the following statements are to you: (N=81-83)

	Not at all true	Hardly true	Somewhat true	Exactly true
I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough	1% (1)	5% (4)	70% (58)	24% (20)
If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want	8% (7)	27% (22)	61% (51)	4% (3)
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals	4% (3)	25% (21)	64% (53)	7% (6)
I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events	4% (3)	16% (13)	69% (57)	12% (10)
Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations	4% (3)	18% (15)	73% (60)	5% (4)
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary time and effort	1% (1)	12% (10)	63% (52)	24% (20)
I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities	5% (4)	27% (22)	49% (40)	20% (16)
When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions	4% (3)	18% (15)	64% (53)	14% (12)
If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution	2% (2)	6% (5)	82% (68)	10% (8)
I can usually handle whatever comes my way	2% (2)	10% (8)	75% (62)	13% (11)

10. Below are some statements about your lifestyle. How often do you...? (N=70-83)

	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
Have enough money to buy healthy food (e.g., vegetables, fruit, whole grains, lean meat)	12% (10)	54% (44)	30% (25)	4% (3)
Cook at home instead of eating out or eating processed foods	-	16% (13)	54% (44)	30% (25)



	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
Exercise 3 times a week	23% (19)	32% (26)	28% (23)	17% (14)
Take time to enjoy nature and explore the outdoors	9% (7)	26% (21)	45% (37)	21% (17)
Keep screen time (e.g., computer and TV) to a minimum	17% (14)	38% (31)	41% (33)	4% (3)
Focus on your positive qualities rather than your physical appearance.	7% (3)	24% (10)	59% (24)	10% (4)
Sleep 7-9 hours	7% (6)	42% (34)	36% (29)	15% (12)
Utilize strategies to handle your stress	10% (8)	36% (30)	48% (40)	6% (6)
Regularly visit the dentist	21% (17)	41% (34)	24% (20)	13% (11)
Complete your annual checkup with your doctor	11% (9)	22% (18)	45% (37)	23% (19)

Housing and Employment

11. What is your present housing situation? (N=83)

Response	% (N)
No fixed address / couch surfing / street	-
Living with friends or family	30% (25)
Living in an emergency shelter	-
Living in transitional housing	7% (6)
Living in foster care	-
Living in subsidized/social housing	20% (17)
Living in market rental housing	25% (21)
Living in own home	10% (8)
Other*	7% (6)

* renting a room, renting a house, not want to say, mental institute

12. Which of the follow best describes your current employment situation? (N=81)

Response	% (N)
Working for an employer (full-time)	1% (1)
Working for an employer (part-time)	6% (5)
Working (for cash)	4% (3)
Self-employed/running a business	1% (1)
Starting a business	1% (1)
Volunteering/doing an unpaid internship	9% (7)



Response	% (N)
In school	6% (5)
Unemployed and actively looking for work	57% (46)
Unemployed and not looking for work	10% (8)
Unemployed and not in a position to work	14% (11)
Other*	14% (11)

*ODSP, taking care of family, driving people to run errands, hopefully school, disability, intermittent

13. How many hours do you usually work per week? (N=7)

Response	% (N)
5-10	14% (1)
8	14% (1)
12-15	14% (1)
10-20	14% (1)
25	14% (1)
35-50	14% (1)
60	14% (1)



14. How long have you worked for your current employer? (N=5)

Response	% (N)
7 months	20% (1)
2 years 3 months	20% (1)
3 years 2 months	20% (1)
4 years	20% (1)
4 years 7 months	20% (1)

15. Are you currently looking for work? (N=77)

	Yes	No
% (N)	69% (53)	31% (24)

16. What are your current sources of income? (N= 82)

Response	% (N)
No income	2% (2)
Partner	1% (1)
Ontario Works (OW)	70% (57)
Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)	21% (17)
Employment Insurance (EI)	2% (2)
Child or spousal support	7% (6)
Other government benefits	15% (12)
Working / wages	5% (4)
Self-employment/business	1% (1)
Other*	15% (12)

*Housing allowance, WSIB Pension, CPP disability, ACSID, CPD, Vacation incentive, line of credit, profit earning under the table

17. How many jobs have you held in the last 6 months? (N=25)

Response	% (N)
1	60% (15)
2	8% (2)
3	8% (2)
4	8% (2)
10	4% (1)
Unsure	12% (3)



18. If you held a job in the last 6 months, how many of these were you paid in cash? (N=21)

Response	% (N)
All	24% (5)
Some	-
None	76% (16)

19. Do you have enough income to pay for your basic needs (i.e., healthy food, housing, heat/hydro, transportation, healthcare, medication, clothes for you and your family)? (N=79)

Response	% (N)
No, I don't have enough and need additional supports to meet my basic needs (e.g., food banks, goodwill, other meal or support program, local charities)	44% (35)
No, I don't have enough but I get by without using additional supports	29% (23)
Yes, I have just enough for what I need	22% (17)
Yes, and I have some left over to spend or save	5% (4)

Demographics

20. Gender: (N=83)

Response	% (N)
Female	64% (53)
Male	33% (27)
Transgender	2% (2)
Other	-
Prefer not to say	1% (1)



21. Marital Status: (N=82)

Response	% (N)
Single/Never married	56% (46)
Married/Partnered	11% (9)
Divorced	13% (11)
Separated	15% (12)
Widowed	1% (1)
Poly relationship	4% (3)

22. Highest level of education that you have completed: (N=83)

Response	% (N)
Less than high school	-
Some high school	16% (13)
Completed high school	36% (30)
Some college/university	20% (17)
Completed university/college	19% (16)
Other*	8% (7)

*private hair school, 2 credits to go, 2 college degrees, associates degree, PSW

23. Do you have a disability? (N=82)

	Yes	No
N (%)	43% (35)	57% (47)

24. Number of people in household: (N=81)

Response	% (N)
1	23% (19)
2	23% (19)
3	21% (17)
4	17% (14)
5	6% (5)
6	2% (2)
7	2% (2)
9	1% (1)
11	1% (1)



25. Where do you live? (N=83)

Response	% (N)
Township of Athens	1% (1)
Township of Augusta	2% (2)
City of Brockville	64% (53)
Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal	2% (2)
Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley	1% (1)
Township of Front of Yonge	2% (2)
Town of Gananoque	-
Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands	1% (1)
Township of Merrickville-Wolford	1% (1)
Municipality of North Grenville	7% (6)
Town of Prescott	12% (10)
Township of Rideau Lakes	5% (4)
Village of Westport	-



1. Below are some of the goals of the Getting Ahead Program. How much progress did you make on these goals during the program? (N=73)

	None	A little	A lot	This was not a goal for me
Improve my life skills (e.g., financial literacy, decision making, conflict resolution)	-	36% (26)	64% (46)	-
Improve my communication skills	3% (2)	42% (31)	45% (33)	10% (7)
Increase my self-esteem	3% (2)	36% (26)	55% (40)	7% (5)
Increase my confidence	1% (1)	27% (20)	67% (49)	4% (3)
Become more independent	1% (1)	40% (29)	50% (36)	8% (6)
Learn about the root causes of poverty	4% (3)	18% (13)	75% (55)	3% (2)
Make a plan to get out of debt	7% (5)	23% (17)	63% (46)	7% (5)
Go back to school	11% (8)	20% (14)	40% (28)	29% (20)
Find out more about available resources in my community	-	15% (11)	84% (61)	1% (1)
Find a job	14% (10)	30% (21)	45% (32)	11% (8)
Get a better job than I currently have	21% (15)	23% (16)	33% (23)	23% (16)
Meet new people	-	15% (11)	83% (59)	1% (1)
Improve the quality of my relationships	6% (4)	35% (25)	49% (35)	10% (7)

2. Are there any other goals that the Getting Ahead Program helped you achieve? (N=49)

Response	% (N)
Learn about resources in community	14% (7)
Be prepared for a job/secure employment	10% (5)
Improve financial situation	8% (4)
Make friends	4% (2)
Become more comfortable in a group	2% (1)
Gain structure / routine	20% (10)
Plan for next steps	10% (5)
Be a better parent	2% (1)
Achieve personal goals	10% (5)
Establish healthy boundaries	2% (1)
Believe in myself	8% (4)



Response	% (N)
None	8% (4)

Course Knowledge

3. How much do you feel the Getting Ahead Program helped you...? (N=70-73)

	Not at all	A little	A lot	I already knew this
Identify what has caused you to be living in poverty	3% (2)	29% (21)	45% (33)	23% (17)
Know how much debt you have	10% (7)	26% (19)	31% (22)	33% (24)
Create a plan to reduce your debt	10% (7)	32% (23)	46% (33)	13% (9)
Know how to develop a budget	3% (2)	32% (23)	49% (35)	17% (12)
Identify what you want to do for work in the future	11% (8)	35% (25)	45% (32)	8% (6)
Know what tools and resources to access to achieve your work goals	-	13% (9)	86% (62)	1% (1)
Know how much rent you can afford based on your income	3% (2)	19% (14)	60% (44)	18% (13)
Know where to go when you are having a difficult time	-	32% (23)	58% (42)	10% (7)
Explain how the economy affects your daily life	1% (1)	31% (22)	60% (43)	8% (6)
Manage your time well	-	44% (32)	50% (36)	6% (4)
Become empowered to overcome poverty	1% (1)	18% (13)	79% (57)	1% (1)

4. How much do you think you improved on these skills during the program? (N=64-69)

	Not at all	A little	A lot	I already had this skill
Talking to others in a social environment	-	33% (22)	55% (37)	12% (8)
Talking to people at work	11% (7)	27% (18)	32% (21)	30% (20)
Talking through a conflict with others	-	41% (27)	41% (27)	18% (12)
Negotiating with others	-	42% (28)	45% (30)	13% (9)
Standing up for yourself	2% (1)	36% (24)	29% (19)	3% (2)
Talking about poverty with others	3% (2)	22% (15)	70% (48)	6% (4)

5. Do you...? (N=70-73)



	Yes	No
Regularly budget your finance	63% (46)	37% (27)
Feel confident that you can move to an improved living situation	73% (52)	27% (19)
Actively engage in your community	51% (37)	49% (35)
Have a savings account	43% (31)	57% (41)
Have access to regular transportation (e.g., bus, car)	72% (52)	28% (20)

Stress, Well-being and Self-Efficacy

Next are some questions about your thoughts and feelings during the last month. Please indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way.

6. In the last month, how often have you...? (N=69-73)

	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly	10% (7)	22% (16)	49% (36)	14% (10)	5% (4)
Felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life	11% (8)	19% (14)	45% (33)	21% (15)	4% (3)
Felt nervous and/or stressed	5% (4)	12% (9)	40% (29)	30% (22)	12% (9)
Felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems	-	7% (5)	42% (31)	33% (24)	18% (13)
Felt that things were going your way	3% (2)	17% (12)	50% (36)	25% (18)	6% (4)
Been able to control irritations in your life	1% (1)	10% (7)	53% (37)	29% (20)	7% (5)
Felt that you were on top of things	4% (3)	14% (10)	40% (29)	37% (27)	5% (4)
Been angered because of things that were outside of your control	4% (3)	32% (23)	38% (28)	21% (15)	5% (4)
Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them	12% (9)	27% (20)	37% (27)	16% (12)	7% (5)

7. During the past month, how often did you feel....? (N=67-73)



	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Happy	3% (2)	6% (4)	22% (16)	53% (38)	17% (12)
Interested in life	3% (2)	3% (2)	27% (19)	41% (29)	27% (19)
Satisfied with life	4% (3)	10% (7)	41% (30)	33% (24)	12% (9)
That you had something important to contribute to society	7% (5)	14% (10)	38% (27)	25% (18)	17% (12)
That you belonged to a community (like a social group, or your neighborhood)	14% (10)	15% (11)	35% (25)	28% (20)	8% (6)
That our society is a good place, or is becoming a better place, for all people	3% (2)	16% (12)	45% (33)	33% (24)	3% (2)
That people are basically good	1% (1)	8% (6)	40% (29)	36% (26)	15% (11)
That the way our society works makes sense to you	7% (5)	15% (11)	60% (44)	16% (12)	1% (1)
That you liked most parts of your personality	1% (1)	1% (1)	32% (23)	44% (32)	22% (16)
Good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life	3% (2)	4% (3)	31% (22)	46% (33)	17% (12)
That you had warm and trusting relationships with others	4% (3)	1% (1)	36% (26)	44% (32)	15% (11)
That you had experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person	-	8% (6)	23% (17)	51% (37)	18% (13)
Confident to think or express your own ideas and opinions	1% (1)	1% (1)	33% (24)	42% (31)	22% (16)
That your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it	3% (2)	11% (8)	35% (25)	42% (30)	10% (7)

8. Please indicate how true the following statements are to you: (N=68-73)

	Not at all	Hardly	Somewhat	Exactly
I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough	1% (1)	5% (4)	53% (39)	40% (29)
If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want	7% (5)	15% (11)	71% (51)	7% (5)
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals	7% (5)	15% (11)	64% (47)	14% (10)



	Not at all	Hardly	Somewhat	Exactly
I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events	3% (2)	10% (7)	68% (49)	19% (14)
Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations	3% (2)	13% (9)	57% (41)	28% (20)
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary time and effort	3% (2)	1% (1)	48% (35)	48% (35)
I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities	3% (2)	10% (7)	53% (38)	35% (25)
When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions	1% (1)	14% (10)	53% (39)	32% (23)
If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution	1% (1)	8% (6)	58% (42)	33% (24)
I can usually handle whatever comes my way	1% (1)	8% (6)	61% (44)	29% (21)

9. Below are some statements about your lifestyle. How often do you...? (N=32-73)

	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
Have enough money to buy healthy food (e.g., vegetables, fruit, whole grains, lean meat)	7% (5)	59% (43)	32% (23)	3% (2)
Cook at home instead of eating out or eating processed foods	1% (1)	11% (8)	65% (47)	22% (16)
Exercise 3 times a week	22% (16)	30% (22)	33% (24)	15% (11)
Take time to enjoy nature and explore the outdoors	10% (7)	29% (20)	39% (27)	23% (16)
Keep screen time (e.g., computer and TV) to a minimum	17% (12)	37% (26)	34% (24)	13% (9)
Focus on your positive qualities rather than your physical appearance.	6% (2)	34% (12)	51% (18)	9% (3)
Sleep 7-9 hours	10% (7)	36% (26)	36% (26)	18% (13)
Utilize strategies to handle your stress	10% (7)	30% (21)	45% (32)	15% (11)
Regularly visit the dentist	24% (17)	34% (24)	24% (17)	18% (13)
Complete your annual checkup with your doctor	13% (9)	28% (20)	29% (21)	31% (22)

Course Design



10. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the program? (N=70-73)

	Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Completely
Curriculum topics (e.g., causes of poverty, importance of language, community resources)	1% (1)	6% (4)	23% (16)	70% (50)
Instruction in class	-	-	24% (17)	76% (55)
Peer Mentoring	-	4% (3)	32% (23)	64% (47)
Length of the program	1% (1)	4% (3)	26% (19)	68% (49)
Timing of the program	-	1% (1)	29% (21)	70% (51)
Overall experience of the program	-	-	22% (16)	78% (57)

11. Have you made progress on your "Future Story" that you developed early in the program? (N=68)

Response	% (N)
Not at all	4% (3)
A little	62% (42)
A lot	25% (17)
I have completed my action plan	7% (5)
I didn't do an action plan	1% (1)

Employment

12. Which of the following best describes your employment change over the course of the program? (N=73)

Response	% (N)
I still have the same job I did when I started	8% (6)
I am still unemployed	63% (46)
I found new work	4% (3)
I had a job but lost it	1% (1)
I am still in school	3% (2)
I started school	1% (1)
I started volunteering/doing an unpaid internship	1% (1)
Other*	16% (12)



*N/A, starting a new job soon, off work due to injury at work, registered for school, waiting to hear back from a job application, completing surveys, have a vocational placement

13. What best describes your current job? (N=16)

Response	% (N)
Casual (on-call, day labour)	31% (5)
Temporary/short-term contract (less than a year)	13% (2)
Seasonal	-
Fixed term contract, one year or more	-
Self-employed-no employees	13% (2)
Self-employed others work for me	-
Permanent part-time-less than 30 hours per week	38% (6)
Permanent full-time- hours vary from week to week and could sometimes be less than 30	6% (1)
Permanent full time-30 hours or more a per week	-

14. To what extent do you feel that participating in the Getting Ahead Program helped you become more economically secure? (N=73)

Response	% (N)
Very much	33% (24)
Somewhat	44% (32)
A little	19% (14)
Not at all	4% (3)

15. What challenges do you feel the Getting Ahead Program helped you overcome in relation to becoming more economically secure? (N= 71)

Response	% (N)
Bad credit	37% (26)
Unemployment	41% (29)
Difficulty with transportation	18% (13)
Lack of affordable housing	18% (13)
High debt	30% (21)
Physical health problem	20% (14)
Mental health problem	25% (18)
Isolation	44% (31)
Underemployment	20% (14)



Response	% (N)
No access to computer	11% (8)
Addictions	15% (11)
Learning disability or challenges	14% (10)
Criminal Record	11% (8)
Unstable work environment	7% (5)
Lack of affordable childcare	7% (5)
Domestic violence	6% (4)
None	8% (6)
Other*	15% (11)

*Networking, internet, setting goals, community resources



16. What challenges do you still face in becoming more economically secure? (N= 67)

Response	% (N)
Bad credit	42% (28)
Unemployment	76% (51)
Difficulty with transportation	33% (22)
Lack of affordable housing	33% (22)
High debt	34% (23)
Physical health problem	30% (20)
Mental health problem	40% (27)
Isolation	13% (9)
Underemployment	15% (10)
No access to computer	7% (5)
Addictions	13% (9)
Learning disability or challenges	12% (8)
Criminal Record	15% (10)
Unstable work environment	3% (2)
Lack of affordable childcare	4% (3)
Domestic violence	3% (2)
None	-
Other*	7% (5)

Housing

17. Has your housing situation changed since participating in the program? (N=73)

Response	% (N)
Yes, it has gotten better	8% (6)
It has remained the same	86% (63)
No, it has gotten worse	5% (4)



Income

18. What are your current sources of income? (N=73)

Response	% (N)
No income	3% (2)
Partner	4% (3)
Ontario Works (OW)	70% (51)
Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)	23% (17)
Employment Insurance (EI)	3% (2)
Child or spousal support	11% (8)
Other government benefits	21% (15)
Working / wages	10% (7)
Self-employment/business	3% (2)
Other*	18% (13)

*parent, CPP, CTB, odd jobs, Getting Ahead, Cohabitation helps with living expense

19. Has your household income changed since you started the Getting Ahead Program? (N=73)

Response	% (N)
Yes, it has increased	7% (5)
No, it has stayed the same	90% (66)
Yes, it has decreased	3% (2)

20. Do you have enough income to pay for your basic needs (i.e., food, housing, hydro, clothes for you and your family)? (N=72)

Response	% (N)
No, I don't have enough and need additional supports to meet my basic needs (e.g., food banks, goodwill, other meal or support program, local charities)	43% (31)
No, I don't have enough but I get by without using additional supports	13% (9)
Yes, I have just enough for what I need	39% (28)
Yes, and I have some left over to spend or save	6% (4)

21. Are you more aware of community resources since the beginning of the program (e.g., YMCA, foodbank)? (N= 71)



Response	% (N)
Yes	96% (68)
No	4% (3)

22. What resources are you more aware of?

- Salvation Army
- OW
- ODSP
- Foodbank
- BDACI
- EEC
- CSE
- TR Leger
- Employment Centre
- Guthrie
- House
- YMCA
- Mental Health Centre
- IE
- Mental Health Court diversion
- Key's

29. Are you accessing any of the new resources that you have been made aware of? (N=71)

Response	% (N)
None	25% (18)
A few	37% (26)
Some of them	35% (25)
All of them	3% (2)



Other comments

30. Are you interested in being a peer mentor for the Getting Ahead Program? (N=67)

Response	% (N)
Yes	61% (41)
No	39% (26)



1. Select any of the following options that explain your journey since you left the Getting Ahead program? (N=29)

Response	% (N)
Worked towards earning my high school diploma, i.e. Grade 12, GED	7% (2)
Completed my high school diploma, i.e. Grade 12, GED	7% (2)
Started a college/university program	3% (1)
Searched for a job	52% (15)
Secured a job	28% (8)
Continued working in the job I previously had	3% (1)
Started a business	7% (2)
Continued operating an existing business	3% (1)
Started a volunteer position	10% (3)
Continued an existing volunteer position	3% (1)
Connected with a new community organization	10% (3)
Continued to access previous community organizations or supports	38% (11)
Joined a mentoring program	3% (1)
I am still unemployed	41% (12)
I did not participate in any of these activities	10% (3)
Other (please specify)*	14% (4)

*earned certifications, upgraded high school diploma, completed Homeward Bound -Employment Readiness Program, dealt with mental health challenges

2. What best describes your current job? (N=9)

Response	% (N)
Casual (on-call, day labour)	11% (1)
Temporary/short-term contract (less than a year)	33% (3)
Seasonal	-
Fixed term contract, one year or more	-
Self-employed (no employees)	11% (1)
Self-employed (and others work for me)	-
Permanent part-time (less than 30 hours per week)	33% (3)
Permanent full-time (hours vary from week to week and could sometimes be less than 30)	11% (1)
Permanent full time (30 hours or more a per week)	-



3. How many jobs have you held in the last 6 months? (N=7)

Response	1	2
N (%)	71% (5)	29% (2)

4. How many of these jobs were paid in cash? (N=8)

Response	% (N)
All	25% (2)
Some	13% (1)
None	63% (5)

5. What is the longest period of time you have been employed since leaving the Getting Ahead program? (N=8)

Response	% (N)
Less than a month	13% (1)
2 months	13% (1)
4 months	25% (2)
5 months	25% (2)
6 months	13% (1)
9 months	13% (1)

6. To what extent do you feel that the Getting Ahead program has helped you to secure your job? (N=8)

Response	% (N)
A lot	25% (2)
Somewhat	75% (6)
A little	-
Not at all	-
Unsure	-

7. How did attending the Getting Ahead program help you secure your job? (N=8)

- Confidence (38%)
- Developing my language skills (13%)
- Self reflection on skills and desires (13%)
- Community supports (13%)
- Increased my motivation to get a job (13%)



8. What college/university program have you enrolled in? (N=1)
 - Office Administration -Health Services at Loyalist College

9. What community organization(s) are you now connected with? (N=3)
 - Employment and Education Centre Mental Health and Addictions Leeds & Grenville
 - Children's mental health of Leeds and Grenville and Ontario Works.
 - Career services and Eec

Course Design

10. Thinking back to the course, how important were the following aspects of the Getting Ahead Program in your journey since completing the program? (N=28-29)

	Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Very
Learning about the causes of poverty	4% (1)	14% (4)	29% (8)	54% (15)
Creating your future story	-	14% (4)	46% (13)	39% (11)
Understanding the hidden rules of class or society	-	14% (4)	39% (11)	46% (13)
Learning about formal and informal language	4% (1)	14% (4)	50% (14)	32% (9)
Identifying resources in your community	-	17% (5)	21% (6)	62% (18)
Assessing the strengths of your community	4% (1)	4% (1)	43% (12)	50% (14)
Planning for your next steps	-	7% (2)	55% (16)	38% (11)
Peer mentoring	4% (1)	14% (4)	50% (14)	32% (9)
The program overall	-	7% (2)	21% (6)	72% (21)

11. Have you made progress on fulfilling your "Future Story", goals or action plan since you left the program? (N=29)

Response	% (N)
I am living my Future Story	7% (2)
A lot	14% (4)
A little	69% (20)
Not at all	10% (3)
I didn't develop a Future Story or plan	-

Stress, Well-being and Self-Efficacy



Next are some questions about your thoughts and feelings during the last month. Please indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way.

12. In the last month, how often have you...? (28-29)

	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly	7% (2)	21% (6)	41% (12)	24% (7)	7% (2)
Felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life	14% (4)	24% (7)	38% (11)	14% (4)	10% (3)
Felt nervous and/or stressed	3% (1)	17% (5)	55% (16)	17% (5)	7% (2)
Felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems	-	-	41% (12)	31% (9)	28% (8)
Felt that things were going your way	4% (1)	14% (4)	46% (13)	25% (7)	11% (3)
Been able to control irritations in your life	3% (1)	10% (3)	41% (12)	31% (9)	14% (4)
Felt that you were on top of things	-	10% (3)	38% (11)	28% (8)	24% (7)
Been angered because of things that were outside of your control	14% (4)	28% (8)	45% (13)	7% (2)	7% (2)
Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them	21% (6)	17% (5)	45% (13)	14% (4)	3% (1)



13. During the past month, how often did you feel....? (N=29)

	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Happy	-	10% (3)	34% (10)	41% (12)	14% (4)
Interested in life	3% (1)	7% (2)	28% (8)	38% (11)	24% (7)
Satisfied with life	3% (1)	17% (5)	28% (8)	34% (10)	17% (5)
That you had something important to contribute to society	7% (2)	10% (3)	31% (9)	34% (10)	17% (5)
That you belonged to a community (like a social group, or your neighborhood)	10% (3)	21% (6)	45% (13)	17% (5)	7% (2)
That our society is a good place, or is becoming a better place, for all people	3% (1)	21% (6)	48% (14)	21% (6)	7% (2)
That people are basically good	3% (1)	17% (5)	31% (9)	38% (11)	10% (3)
That the way our society works makes sense to you	14% (4)	10% (2)	45% (13)	31% (9)	-
That you liked most parts of your personality	-	3% (1)	28% (5)	48% (14)	21% (6)
Good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life	-	7% (2)	24% (7)	41% (12)	28% (8)
That you had warm and trusting relationships with others	3% (1)	7% (2)	45% (13)	21% (6)	24% (7)
That you had experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person	-	3% (1)	28% (8)	38% (11)	31% (9)
Confident to think or express your own ideas and opinions	-	3% (1)	38% (11)	34% (10)	24% (7)
That your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it	3% (1)	14% (4)	24% (7)	31% (9)	28% (8)



14. Please indicate how true the following statements are to you: (N=29)

	Not at all	Hardly	Somewhat	Exactly
I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough	-	7% (2)	52% (15)	41% (12)
If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want	3% (1)	17% (5)	72% (21)	7% (2)
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals	3% (1)	14% (4)	55% (16)	28% (8)
I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events	-	3% (1)	62% (18)	34% (10)
Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations	3% (1)	3% (1)	48% (14)	45% (13)
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary time and effort	-	-	52% (15)	48% (14)
I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities	-	10% (3)	48% (14)	41% (12)
When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions	-	7% (2)	34% (10)	59% (17)
If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution	-	3% (1)	55% (16)	41% (12)
I can usually handle whatever comes my way	-	10% (3)	45% (13)	45% (13)

15. Below are some statements about your lifestyle. How often do you...? (N=29)

	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
Have enough money to buy healthy food (e.g., vegetables, fruit, whole grains, protein foods)	10% (3)	38% (11)	41% (12)	10% (3)
Cook at home instead of eating out or eating processed foods	3% (1)	15% (4)	55% (16)	28% (8)
Enjoy a variety of physical activity opportunities at least three times during the week	14% (4)	31% (9)	31% (9)	24% (7)



	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
Take time to enjoy nature and explore the outdoors	7% (2)	31% (9)	38% (11)	24% (7)
Keep screen time (e.g., computer and TV) to a minimum	7% (2)	52% (15)	31% (9)	10% (3)
Sleep 7-9 hours	-	31% (9)	45% (13)	24% (7)
Utilize strategies to handle your stress	3% (1)	28% (8)	52% (15)	17% (5)
Regularly visit the dentist	21% (6)	38% (11)	28% (8)	14% (4)
Complete your annual checkup with your doctor	14% (4)	15% (5)	38% (11)	31% (9)

Housing

16. Has your housing situation changed since completing the program? (N=29)

Response	% (N)
Yes, it has gotten better	17% (5)
It has remained the same	83% (24)
No, it has gotten worse.	-

17. How has it gotten better? (N=5)

Response	% (N)
Got a larger apartment	20% (1)
Rent/mortgage is more affordable	20% (1)
Home/Apartment got the repairs it needed	20% (1)
Live in a safe neighbourhood	-
Have better access to transit	-
Secured employment	20% (1)



Income

18. Since completing the program, do you feel you are more economically secure? (N=29)

Response	% (N)
Yes, a lot more secure	3% (1)
Yes, a little more secure	48% (14)
No, my economic stability has not changed	48% (14)
No, I am now less secure	-

19. To what extent did participating in the Getting Ahead Program help you become more economically secure? (N=15)

Response	% (N)
Very much	7% (1)
Somewhat	73% (11)
A little	20% (3)
Not at all	-

20. What challenges did the Getting Ahead Program help you overcome in relation to becoming more economically secure? (N= 29)

Response	% (N)
Bad credit	29% (5)
Unemployment	41% (7)
Difficulty with transportation	10% (3)
Lack of affordable housing	10% (3)
High debt	21% (6)
Physical health problem	24% (7)
Mental health problem	24% (7)
Isolation	45% (13)
Underemployment	7% (2)
No access to computer	14% (4)
Addictions	7% (2)
Learning disability or challenges	3% (1)
Criminal Record	7% (2)
Unstable work environment	7% (2)
Lack of affordable childcare	-
Domestic violence	-



Response	% (N)
None	14% (4)
Other (please specify)*	3% (1)

*dental work, connected me with Homeward Bound program

21. What challenges do you still face in becoming more economically secure? (N=29)

Response	% (N)
Bad credit	31% (5)
Unemployment	38% (6)
Difficulty with transportation	34% (10)
Lack of affordable housing	7% (2)
High debt	24% (7)
Physical health problem	31% (6)
Mental health problem	41% (12)
Isolation	17% (5)
Underemployment	10% (3)
No access to computer	7% (2)
Addictions	7% (2)
Learning disability or challenges	14% (4)
Criminal Record	14% (4)
Unstable work environment	3% (1)
Lack of affordable childcare	3% (1)
Domestic violence	-
I no long have any challenges	-
Other (please specify)*	7% (2)

*Child with mental health challenges

22. What are your current sources of income? (N=29)

Response	% (N)
No income	3% (1)
Partner	7% (2)
Ontario Works (OW)	76% (22)
Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)	21% (6)
Employment Insurance (EI)	-
Child or spousal support	24% (7)
Other government benefits	24% (7)
Working / wages	17% (5)



Response	% (N)
Self-employment/business	3% (1)
Other *	7% (2)

* Pension, WSIB

23. Has your household income changed since you left the Getting Ahead Program? (N=29)

Response	% (N)
Yes, it has increased	24% (7)
No, it has stayed the same	66% (19)
Yes, it has decreased	10% (3)

24. Do you have enough income to pay for your basic needs (i.e., food, housing, hydro, clothes for you and your family)? (N=29)

Response	% (N)
Yes, and I have some left over to spend or save	21% (6)
Yes, I have just enough for what I need	34% (10)
No, I don't have enough and need additional supports to meet my basic needs (e.g., food banks, goodwill, other meal or support program, local charities)	34% (10)
No, I don't have enough but I get by without using additional supports	10% (3)

25. Would you or have you recommended the Getting Ahead program to others? (N=29)

Response	% (N)
Yes, I have	52% (15)
Yes, I would	45% (13)
I am not sure	3% (1)
No, I have not and do not plan to	-

Thank you for completing the survey.

