



An Evaluation of the Impacts and Implementation Approaches of Financial Coaching Programs

Brett Theodos April 15, 2015

Intervention

Programs: Financial coaching (one-on-one client-coach model) provided by Branches (Miami-Dade County) and The Financial Clinic (New York City)

Goals: Improving outcomes around credit, savings, existing debt, new loans, and other financial issues for low- and moderate-income individuals

Target population: Both programs target low- and moderate-income individuals

Evaluation

A **Randomized Controlled Trial** (RCT) evaluation of the impacts of two individualized financial coaching programs on financial behavior, knowledge, and well-being

Baseline survey administered at application

Program **administrative data**

Follow-up survey administered fall 2015 (on-line, telephone, in-person)

Credit bureau records

Process study featuring **observations** and **interviews** and **focus groups** with administrators, coaches, study participants

Funded by CFPB and Annie E. Casey Foundation

Study Participants at Baseline - Demographics

Variable	Branches	The Financial Clinic
Age (mean)	44	41
Male	53%	45%
Married	44%	15%
# adults in household	1.5	1.3
# children in household	1.1	0.5
Asian***	0%	4%
Black	61%	40%
Hispanic/Latino	35%	41%
White	2%	14%
Other	3%	9%

Study Participants at Baseline - Financials

Variable	Branches	The Financial Clinic
Employed full time or self-employed	89%	43%
Mean household income (post-tax)	\$39,417	\$22,110
Checking account	97%	78%
Savings account	86%	52%
Credit Score (Vantage 3.0, from 300 to 850)	597	587
Directly deposited paycheck	94%	47%
Holds a credit card	63%	47%
Percent of balance past due	14%	24%
Number of items in collections	2.3	1.3

Enrollment

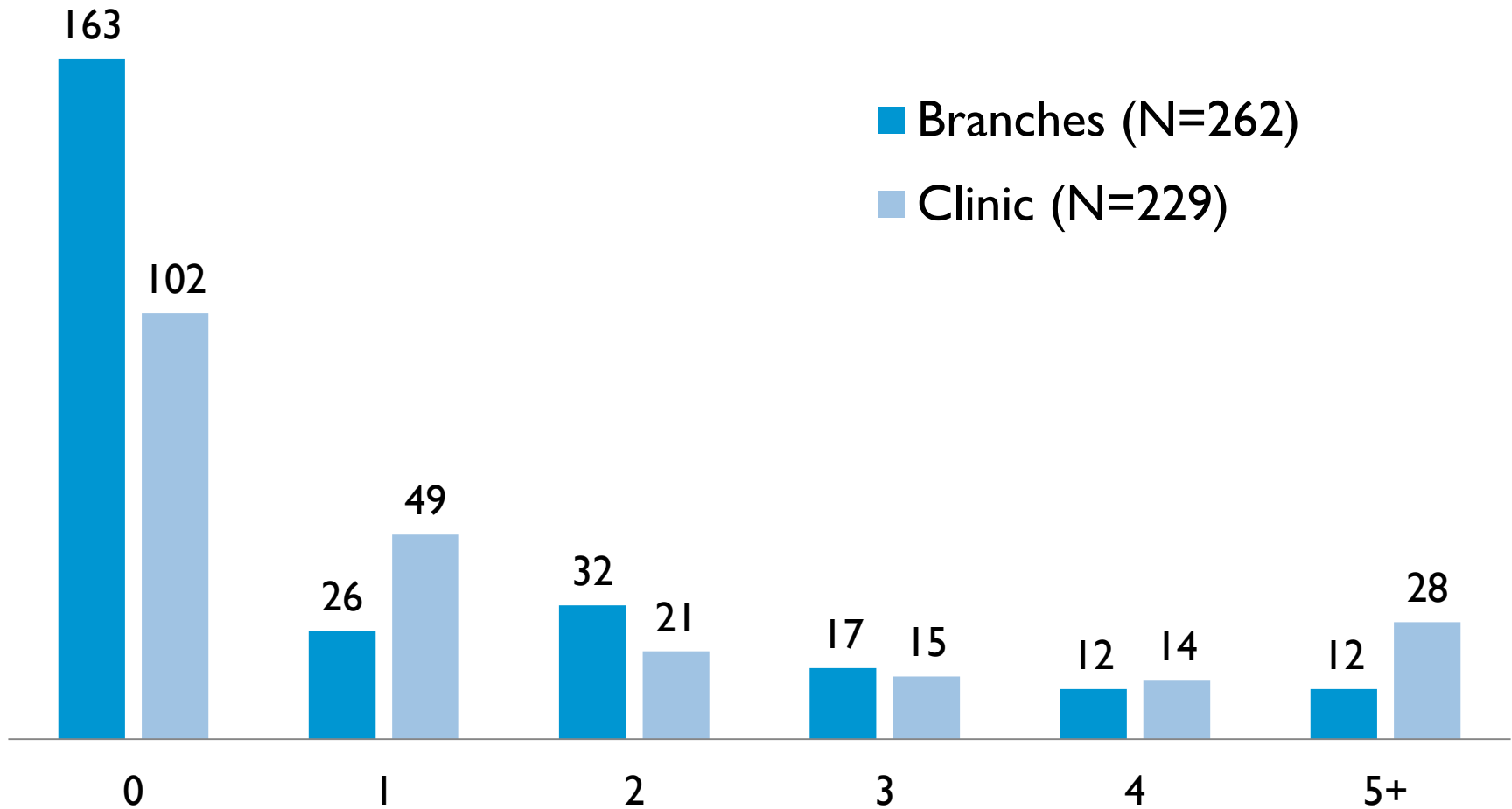
945 study applicants across both sites enrolled between early 2013 and March 31, 2014

- 479 assigned to treatment group, 466 to control

Branches enrollment: Miami-Dade **County government** departments, **housing partners**

The Financial Clinic enrollment: tax time at **VITA VITA sites**, financial education **workshops** at partner sites

Take-up (Treatment Group)



Positive effect on **number of savings deposits** since enrollment at both sites

Number of savings deposits	Control mean	Treatment mean	ITT (Reg. Adj.)	TOT (IV Reg. Adj.)
Branches	13.70	15.64	2.58*	5.32*
The Financial Clinic	6.67	8.95	2.14**	3.15**

Increase in **total account balance** for The Financial Clinic, but not for Branches

Total account balance balance	Control mean	Treatment mean	ITT (Reg. Adj.)	TOT (IV Reg. Adj.)
Branches	\$1,908	\$2,563	\$791.6	\$1,709
The Financial Clinic	\$1,316	\$2,190	\$1,187*	\$1,721**

Lower level of **total debt** at Branches, but not The Financial Clinic

Sum of all debts (credit bureau)	Control mean	Treatment mean	ITT (Reg. Adj.)	TOT (IV Reg. Adj.)
Branches	\$60,643	\$56,269	\$-10,644 **	\$-12,416
The Financial Clinic	\$13,884	\$13,300	\$-1,602	\$-1,009

Positive effect on **curing** for Branches and The Financial Clinic (TOT)

(Curing is the number of trades presently satisfactory that were ever 30 or more days delinquent /derogatory)

Curing (credit bureau)	Control mean	Treatment mean	ITT (Reg. Adj.)	TOT (IV Reg. Adj.)
Branches	0.84	1.32	0.64***	1.61***
The Financial Clinic	0.79	1.03	0.39**	0.70**

Effect at Branches on paying a **late fee on a loan or bill in the last two months**, not at The Financial Clinic

Late fee on loan or bill in last two months (Y/N)	Control mean	Treatment mean	ITT (Reg. Adj.)	TOT (IV Reg. Adj.)
Branches	0.43	0.33	-0.10*	-0.21*
The Financial Clinic	0.42	0.43	0.02	0.03

No effect on **income > household living expenses** at either site

No effect on used **any type of alternative financial service** at either site (but effect on **payday loan** usage for Branches, not The Financial Clinic)

Increase in **credit score** at The Financial Clinic; no improvement at Branches

Credit score (credit bureau)	Control mean	Treatment mean	ITT (Reg. Adj.)	TOT (IV Reg. Adj.)
Branches	606	617	3.07	6.95
The Financial Clinic	583	601	20.68***	33.10***

Positive effect at The Financial Clinic for whether or not the participant **has a budget**; no effect at Branches

Has a budget (Y/N)	Control mean	Treatment mean	ITT (Reg. Adj.)	TOT (IV Reg. Adj.)
Branches	0.51	0.55	0.05	0.10
The Financial Clinic	0.55	0.75	0.20***	0.31***

No effect at both sites on **sticking to a budget**

Effect on **level of financial stress** at Branches and The Financial Clinic (TOT)

Level of financial stress (1-7)	Control mean	Treatment mean	ITT (Reg. Adj.)	TOT (IV Reg. Adj.)
Branches	4.29	3.91	-0.50**	-1.11**
The Financial Clinic	4.72	4.42	-0.38	-0.60*

Effect on **satisfaction with present financial situation** at Branches, but not at The Financial Clinic

Satisfaction with present financial situation (1-7)	Control mean	Treatment mean	ITT (Reg. Adj.)	TOT (IV Reg. Adj.)
Branches	3.42	3.80	0.51**	1.11**
The Financial Clinic	3.03	3.14	0.23	0.36

No effect on **financial knowledge** at either site

Score on financial knowledge test (1-8)	Control mean	Treatment mean	ITT (Reg. Adj.)	TOT (IV Reg. Adj.)
Branches	6.19	6.18	-0.03	-0.07
The Financial Clinic	5.89	5.75	-0.17	-0.26

Key Implications

- Financial coaching, as practiced today, varies in many aspects of implementation
- Clients have differing financial situations, goals, and motivations
- Although it is clear that financial coaching is not the solution for all low- and moderate-income individuals, it generated notable outcomes for individuals in this study, indicating that the approach has promise
- Effects differed quite a bit between the two sites in this study, which provides caution about how well one site's results can be extrapolated to other populations and programs