

**Lebanon County Christian Ministries
upLIFT Program Impact Report
July 2024**



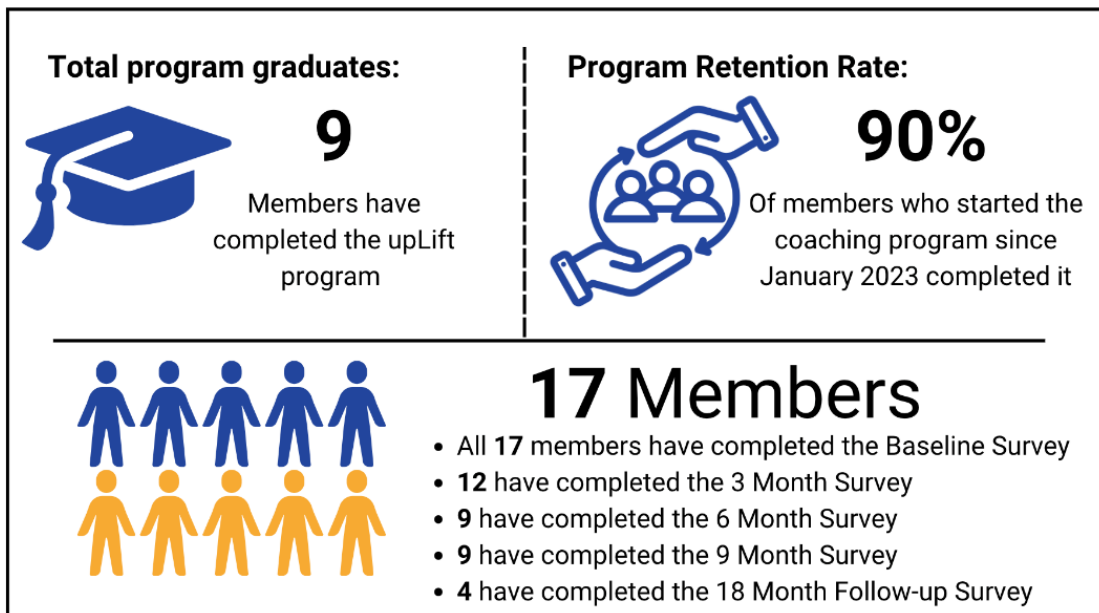
Executive Summary

In partnership with More Than Food Consulting and Urban Alliance, the upLIFT coaching program offered by Lebanon County Christian Ministries (LCCM) is designed to build the confidence, economic wellbeing, and overall life stability of those that participate. This report outlines the progress achieved through the upLIFT program since its launch in September 2022 through July 2024. Since January 2023, LCCM has enrolled and been working alongside 17 individuals. Nine people have now completed the upLIFT program over the course of nine months, and four people participated in follow-up surveys after 18 months of starting the program.

Program Overview

upLIFT utilizes the More Than Food framework of promoting a welcoming culture, healthy choice with dignity in the new Market on 7th, and connection to community resources to address the root causes of food insecurity. upLIFT is a structured coaching program aimed at helping individuals unlock their full potential. In this program, we refer to participants as “members”. The program combines coaching with motivational interviewing to empower members to identify a set of goals and create a sustainable plan for achieving them. The program’s impact is measured through validated survey tools, including food security, self-sufficiency, and financial wellbeing of members. upLIFT coaches collect information with members when they start the program (baseline), and then at three month intervals throughout the coaching program to measure progress. The program is intended to last nine months, and members graduate when they have made considerable progress in at least two goals.

upLIFT by the Numbers



Member Demographics and Health Information

Of the 17 members, the average age is 41 years with an average household size of three people. 76% of members described their ethnicity as White, 18% Hispanic and 6% Black. The majority (82%) of members identify as female, single (77%) and have children under the age of 18 in their household (77%). Three out of the 17 members have diabetes in their household (all of which are currently getting treatment or taking diabetes medication), and six out of 17 members have high blood pressure (only three are currently getting treatment or taking medication for their condition).

Key Outcomes

This section of the report highlights the personal advancements made by the nine upLIFT members that have completed nine months and have successfully graduated from the program and showcases progress from the four upLIFT members that have completed an 18 month follow up survey. The following sections document key program outcomes that focus on changes in food security, self-sufficiency, financial wellbeing, social support, and self-efficacy since engaging the program.

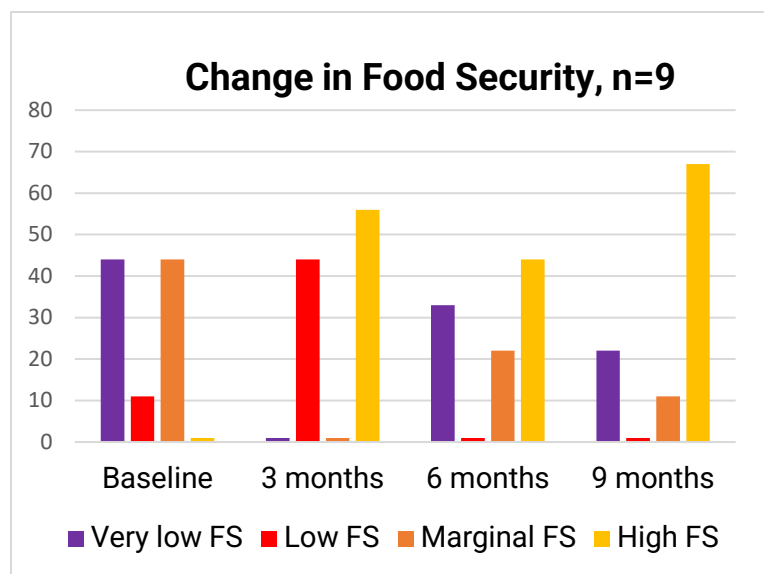
Food Security

According to the US Department of Agriculture, food security is classified into four levels:

- high food secure, and marginal food secure (which combined are considered food secure)
- low and very low food secure (which combined are considered food insecure)

At the initial baseline survey, almost half of the 17 members (47%) experienced very low food security, where families cut back on the quality *and* quantity of their food. Another four members (24%) experienced low food security, and five members (29%) were considered food secure.

The chart to the right is based on data for the nine members who completed all four surveys. After three months, half experienced low food security, and the other half experienced high food security.



After six months, three members (33%) experienced very low food security, and the other six members (67%) identified as food secure. At the nine month mark, two members (22%) remained at very low food security, and the remaining 78% of members experienced food security. Four members were surveyed at 18 months, and all of them were experiencing high food security.

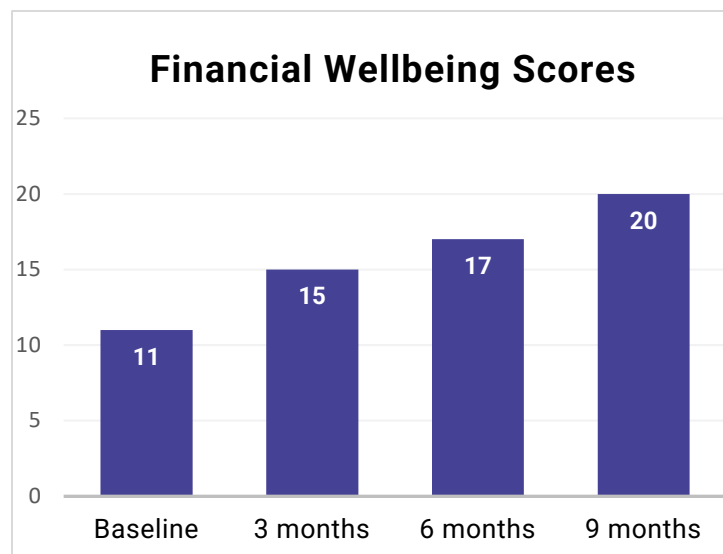
Contributing Factors

Several potential factors could contribute to the increase in overall food security of the members. At the beginning of the program, seven members (41%) had not visited a food pantry, food bank, or church to get free groceries over the past year, but by three months all members were receiving

food assistance from the pantry. Five members were receiving SNAP when they began upLIFT, and two additional members enrolled in SNAP by three months. However, the SNAP participation remained at five out of nine members for months six and nine. Additional support may be beneficial to help members enroll in federal and local food programs. Of the four members who completed follow-up surveys, all of them continued to utilize a free food program at a pantry as frequently as a few times per month, and half of them were receiving SNAP benefits.

Self-sufficiency is measured on a scale from 11 – 55 by asking about 11 key areas including education, employment, childcare, transportation, physical health, and others. Lower scores indicate more crisis and instability, whereas higher scores indicate more stability. From baseline to three months, self-sufficiency increased from 35 to 37. From three to six months, the average scores remained the same, and at nine months, the average score increased to 39. Of the four members who completed follow up surveys at 18 months, the average self-sufficiency score was 45.

Financial wellbeing measures a household’s control over their finances, their ability to handle a financial shock, and being able to make ends meet. Scores can range from 0 – 40. At baseline, scores were very low at 11. Over three months, average scores improved to 15. From month three to month six, the scores continued to increase to 17, and at month nine, scores increased to 20. Among the four members with surveys at 18 months, financial wellbeing increased dramatically, with an average score of 34.5 points.

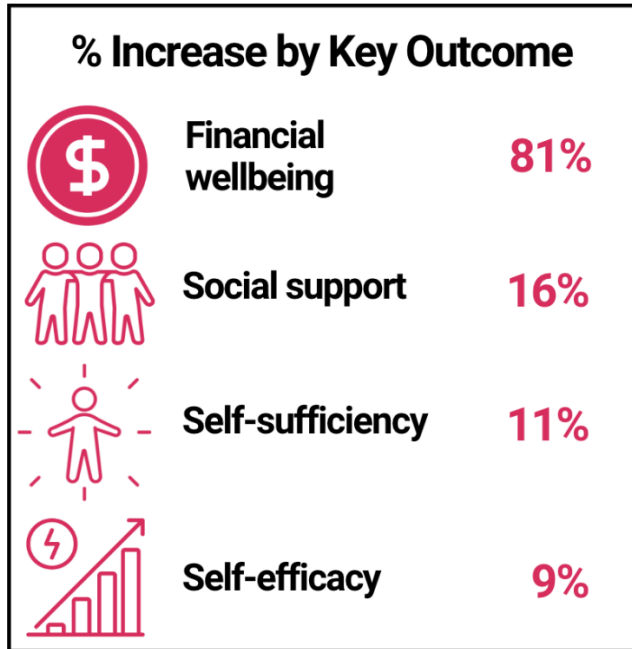


Social support measures a members’ perceived level of support with family, friends, and significant others. Scores range from 0 – 60. From baseline to three months, social support scores improved from 37 to 43. From month three to month six, scores decreased slightly to 41, and increased back to 43 at month nine. For the four members with 18 month data, the average score was 43.

Self-efficacy, a person’s belief in their ability to make changes in their life, was high at baseline (32 points out of 40) and increased slightly over time. At nine months, members’ perceptions of self-efficacy rose to 35 points out of 40. At 18 months, the average score was 37.5 for the four participating members.

Program Impact Summary

With nine month and 18 month data available to support the evaluation of the coaching program's impact over time, upLIFT has demonstrated steady progress in enhancing the livelihood and wellbeing of members during this reporting period. There were increases in all the measurable outcomes, especially in terms of financial wellbeing.



"With upLIFT, I was able to figure out how to reach my goals... Now we just get to come back here to visit instead of get services"

– upLIFT Graduate

"We're not just addressing today's need but tomorrow's need"

- Bryan Smith, Executive Director

Note. Percent increase is determined from baseline to month nine.

18 Month Follow Up

While it is a small sample size, it is notable that all four members who completed 18 month follow up surveys reported being permanently housed in non-subsidized housing and having health insurance. Half of the members reported that they have full time employment and are receiving a living wage with income to meet basic needs, emergency funds, and extra leftover for savings. The other half reported being unemployed or having never worked. Both reported that they are able to meet basic needs, but do not typically have enough left over to account for emergencies.

A Note of Caution

While promising, these results should be viewed with caution because they represent a very small sample and shouldn't be generalized to the larger population of people visiting the food pantry.

Recommendations and Future Directions

upLIFT program coaches will continue to conduct and submit surveys to measure changes and progress over time. As more members begin to graduate from the program, we anticipate the number of members and graduates to continue to increase. More Than Food Consulting looks forward to supporting LCCM as they continue to grow their coaching program and make positive impacts in Lebanon County. More Than Food Consulting will continue to monitor data collection and provide routine data evaluation and impact summaries on key outcomes.

LCCM is part of a cohort with several other food pantries around the country that are offering coaching with motivational interviewing using the More Than Food framework. As the pantry cohort grows, and pantries enroll more members and conduct surveys, we will aggregate the data to measure the collective impact of the programs over time.

For questions or more information about these results, please contact Katie Martin at kmartin@morethanfoodconsulting.com

