

**Thank you for joining us for today's webinar:**

**Exploring Financial Capability for Refugee  
Populations: A Webinar of Study Findings  
and Insights**

**The webinar will begin promptly at 12pm CT  
(1pm ET, 11am MT, 10am PT)**



# Exploring Financial Capability for Refugee Populations: A Webinar of Study Findings and Insights



October 10, 2017

12pm-1pm CST

Brought to you by:

Center for Financial Security

at the University of Wisconsin- Madison



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Outreach Specialist  
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# Exploring Financial Capability for Refugee Populations: A Webinar of Study Findings and Insights

- Welcome
- Presentations
  - Context Setting by Jewish Social Services
  - International Rescue Committee Study Overview and Findings
  - Implications and Insights from UW-Madison Expert
- Q & A
- Sign off

## Our Presenters



**Becca Schwartz**  
Resettlement Coordinator  
Jewish Social Services of Madison



**Jon Vosper**  
Technical Advisor  
Economic Empowerment  
International Rescue Committee



**Erica Bouris**  
Technical Advisor  
Economic Empowerment  
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**Kasra Movahedi**  
Technical Advisor  
Economic Empowerment  
International Rescue Committee



**Sara Mckinnon**  
Associate Professor  
Department of Communication Arts  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

# **U.S. Refugee Resettlement *An Introduction***

# Define Refugee:

An individual who has a well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, ***who has fled their country of origin and cannot safely return.*** In the context of the United States, all refugees arriving in the U.S. have been vetted and approved prior to arrival in the country.

# Define Special Immigrant Visa (SIV):

A special, expedited resettlement process category for ***Iraqi or Afghan nationals who worked with the US Armed Forces*** or under Chief of Mission authority as a translator or interpreter, and Iraqi nationals who worked for or on behalf of the U.S. Government in Iraq.

# **U.S. Refugee Admissions Program:** *Overview*



# U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP)



UNHCR



U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration



U.S. Department of Homeland Security



U.S. Intelligence Agencies



1 of 9 Resettlement Agencies (HIAS, LIRS, IRC, etc)



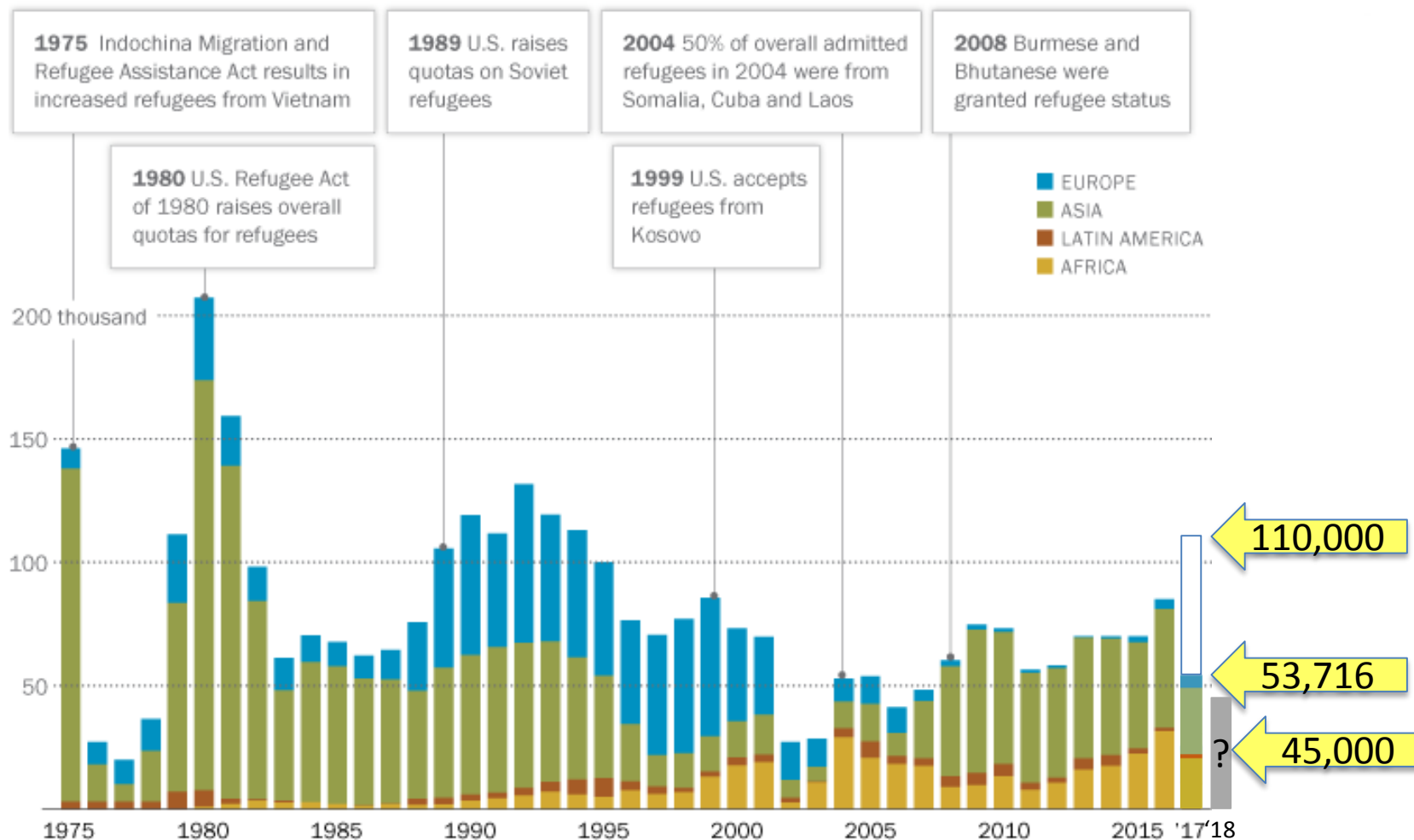
Local Resettlement Affiliates (~350 across the US)



Thousands of private citizens who volunteer for to help refugees

# The shifting origins of refugees to the U.S. over time

Number of refugees admitted to the U.S., by region of origin of principal applicant and fiscal year



Source: Refugee Processing Center, 1975-2016.

Note: Data do not include special immigrant visas and certain humanitarian parole entrants. Does not include refugees admitted under the Private Sector Initiative. Europe includes former Soviet Union states. Asia includes Middle Eastern and North African countries. Africa includes sub-Saharan Africa, but also Sudan and South Sudan. Latin America includes Caribbean. Data for fiscal 2017 are through Dec. 31, 2016; fiscal 2017 began Oct. 1, 2016.

# Reception and Placement (R&P)

# Program objective:

The ultimate objective of any U.S. R&P Program is to assist clients to become self sufficient in the shortest time possible.

# The Cooperative Agreement

A contract with the US State Department and the Resettlement Agency that requires Local Resettlement Agencies to:

1. Perform &
2. Document

30 – 36 time-bound steps in the first 90 days

# Including (but not limited to)...

- Procuring and setting up housing
- Meeting on arrival
- Food and a warm meal when families arrive
- Seasonally appropriate clothing
- Assistance with compliance with US law
- Applying for Social Security cards and various benefits
- **Cultural orientation**
- School and ESL enrollment
- Linking to employment services
- Ongoing social services (employment, medical, etc)

# Refugee Financials:

- Like any population, refugees vary in financial skill level on arrival
- Each case receives a one-time disbursement of ~\$1,125/person from the State Department
- Refugees are eligible for benefits including SNAP, cash assistance, and Medicaid
- Travel to the U.S. is to be repaid, interest free, starting in the 6<sup>th</sup> month after arrival
- Refugees are authorized to work upon arrival

# Specific Financial Challenges

- Being poor in America
- Foreign culture/language
- Disjointed lives
- Sense of obligation/responsibility for family overseas





# Financial Capability for New Americans: Lessons from Early Interventions with Refugees

# Overview

- ❖ Early Financial Lives of Refugees
- ❖ Financial Capability for New Americans
- ❖ Learnings and Recommendations

# Method

- 2,410 household budgets analyzed
- Baseline within first six months in US
- 33 countries of origin across 10 US cities
- Practitioner input and client case studies

# Early Financial Lives of Refugees



# Early Financial Lives of Refugees

Working Families



Low Income

Volatile Income

No Credit Score

In Debt

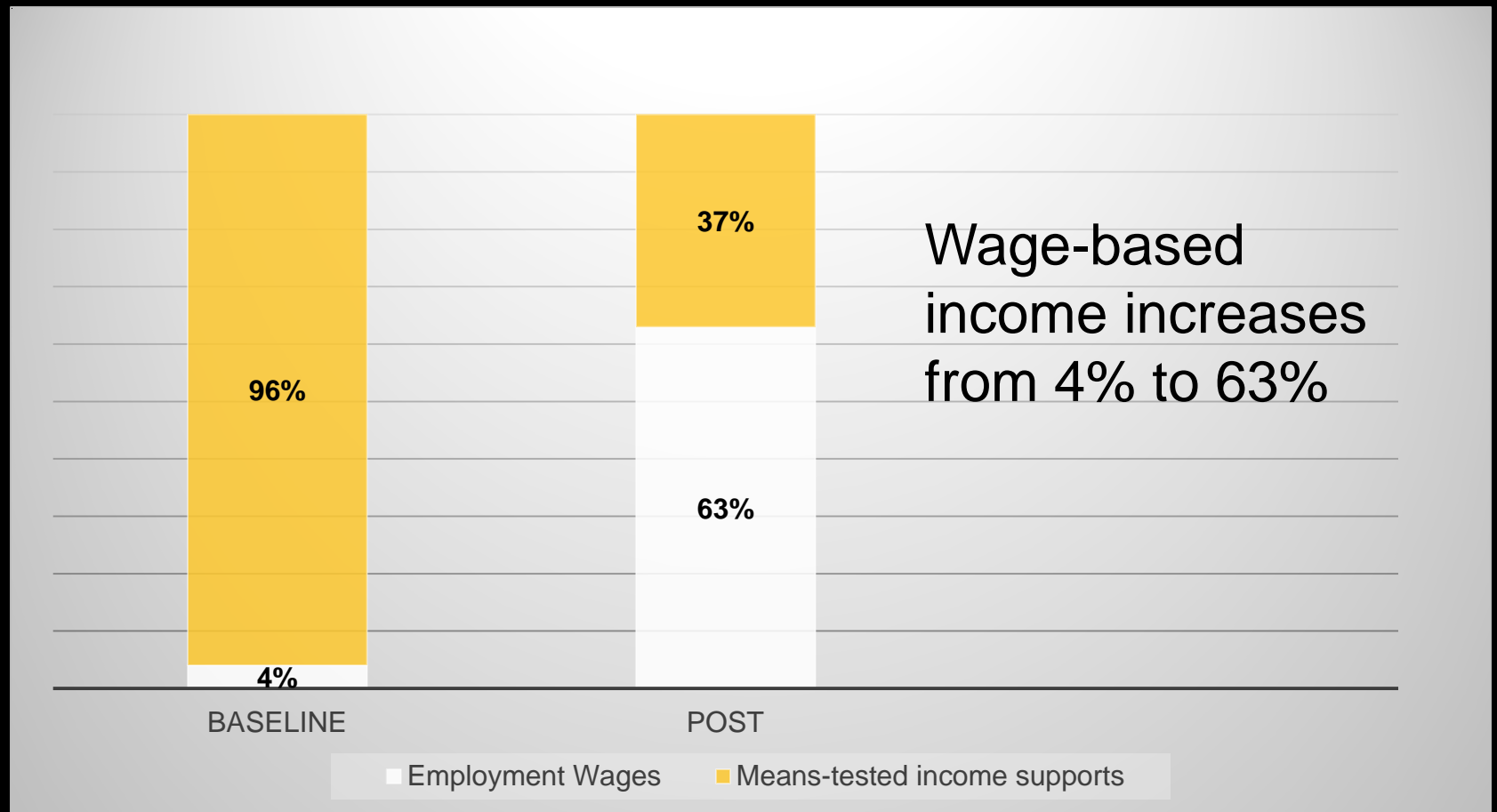


# Early Financial Lives of Refugees

## Typical Household Budget: Family of Four

Income		Expenses	
Wages	\$1,240	Rent	\$900
SNAP	\$560	Bus pass	\$75
		Food	\$600
		Utilities and Phone	\$100
		Household Supplies	\$25
		Clothes	\$25
		Travel Loan Payment	\$70
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,800</b>	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1795</b>

# Early Financial Lives of Refugees





# Early Financial Lives of Refugees

Monthly Net Income  
increases by \$392





# Early Financial Lives of Refugees

Net Worth  
increases to \$150



# Early Financial Lives of Refugees

Established Credit Scores  
average 664



# Financial Capability for New Americans



# Financial Capability for New Americans

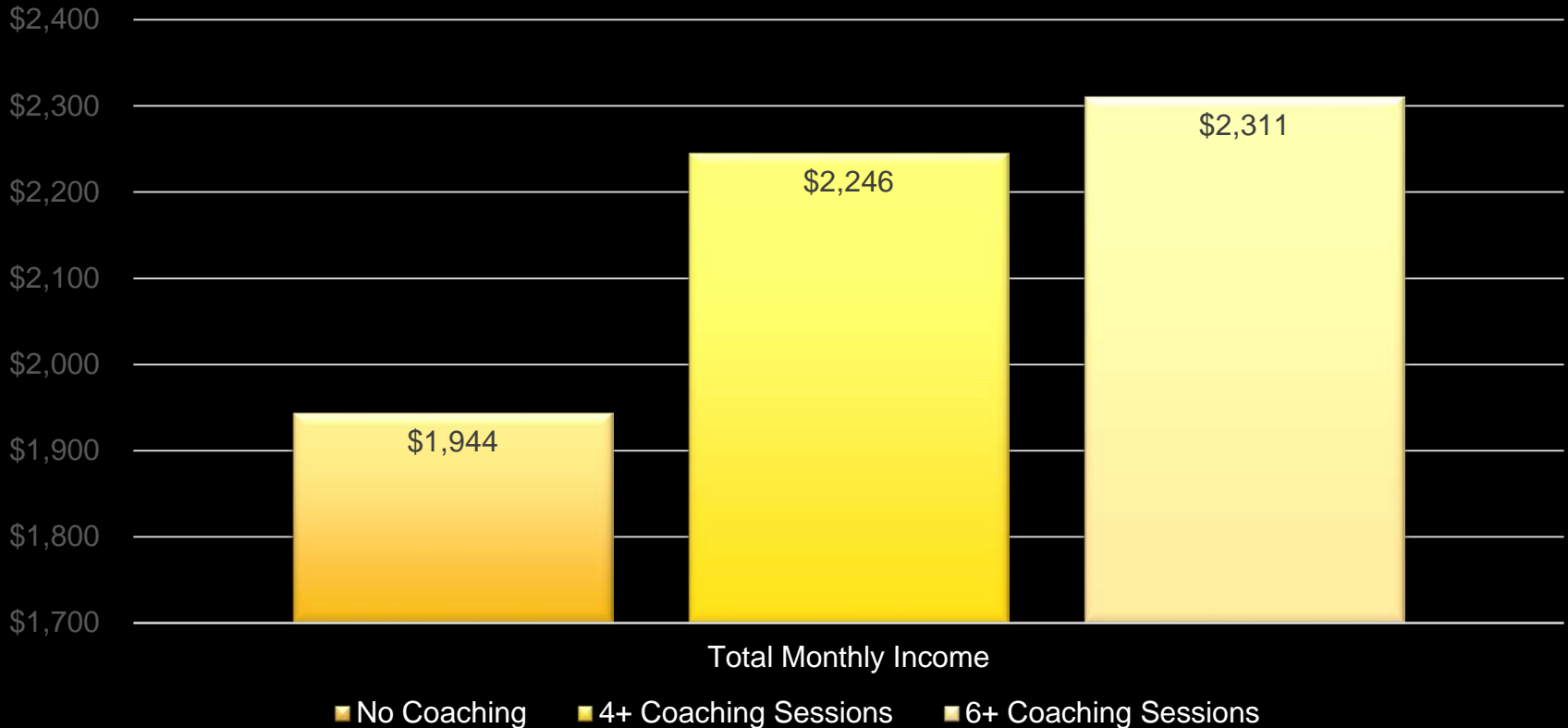
## *Highlights of IRC's Approach*

- ❖ Bundled Services
- ❖ Financial Education & Coaching
- ❖ Integrated Financial Products



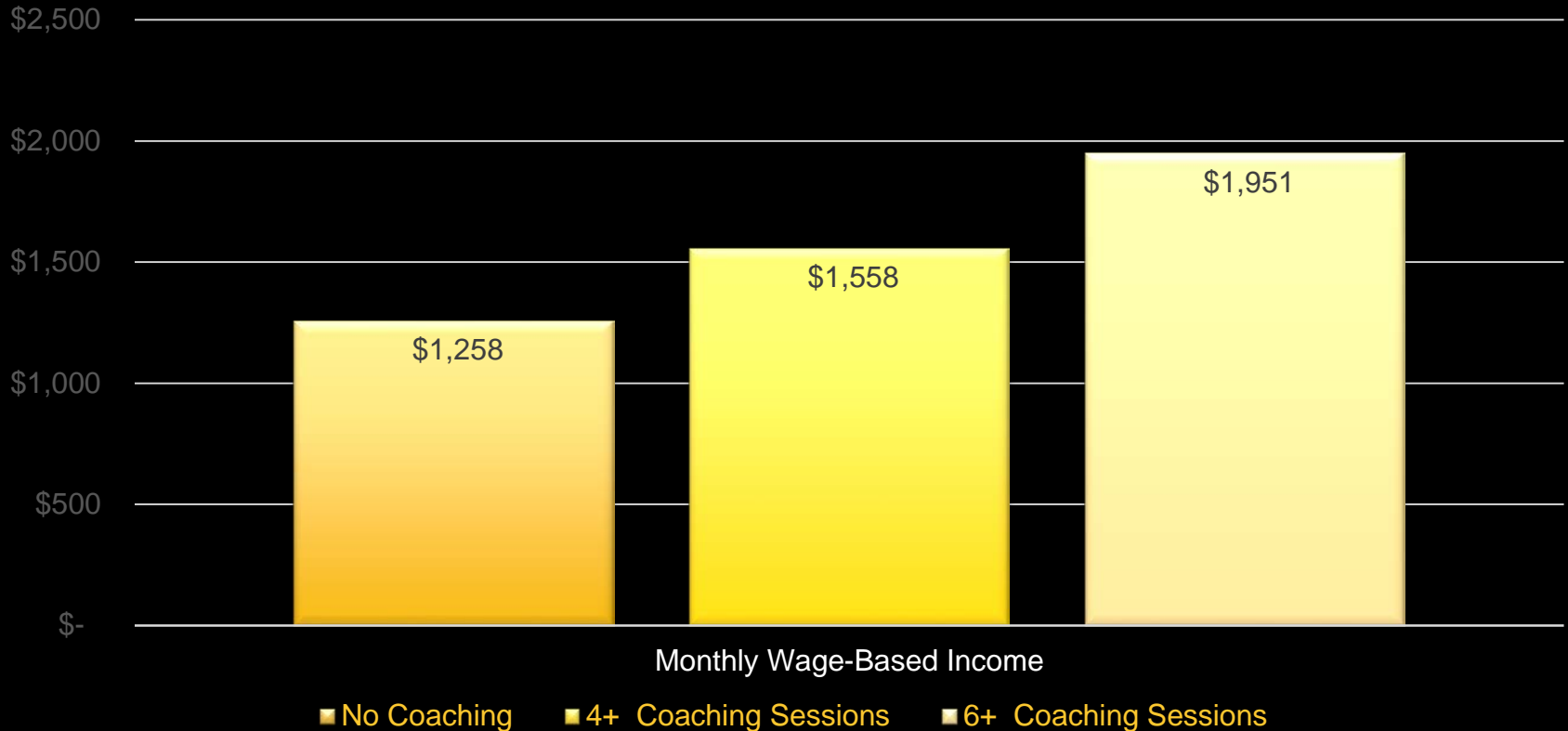
# Financial Capability for New Americans

## Financial Coaching and Household Income



# Financial Capability for New Americans

## Financial Coaching and Wage-Based Income



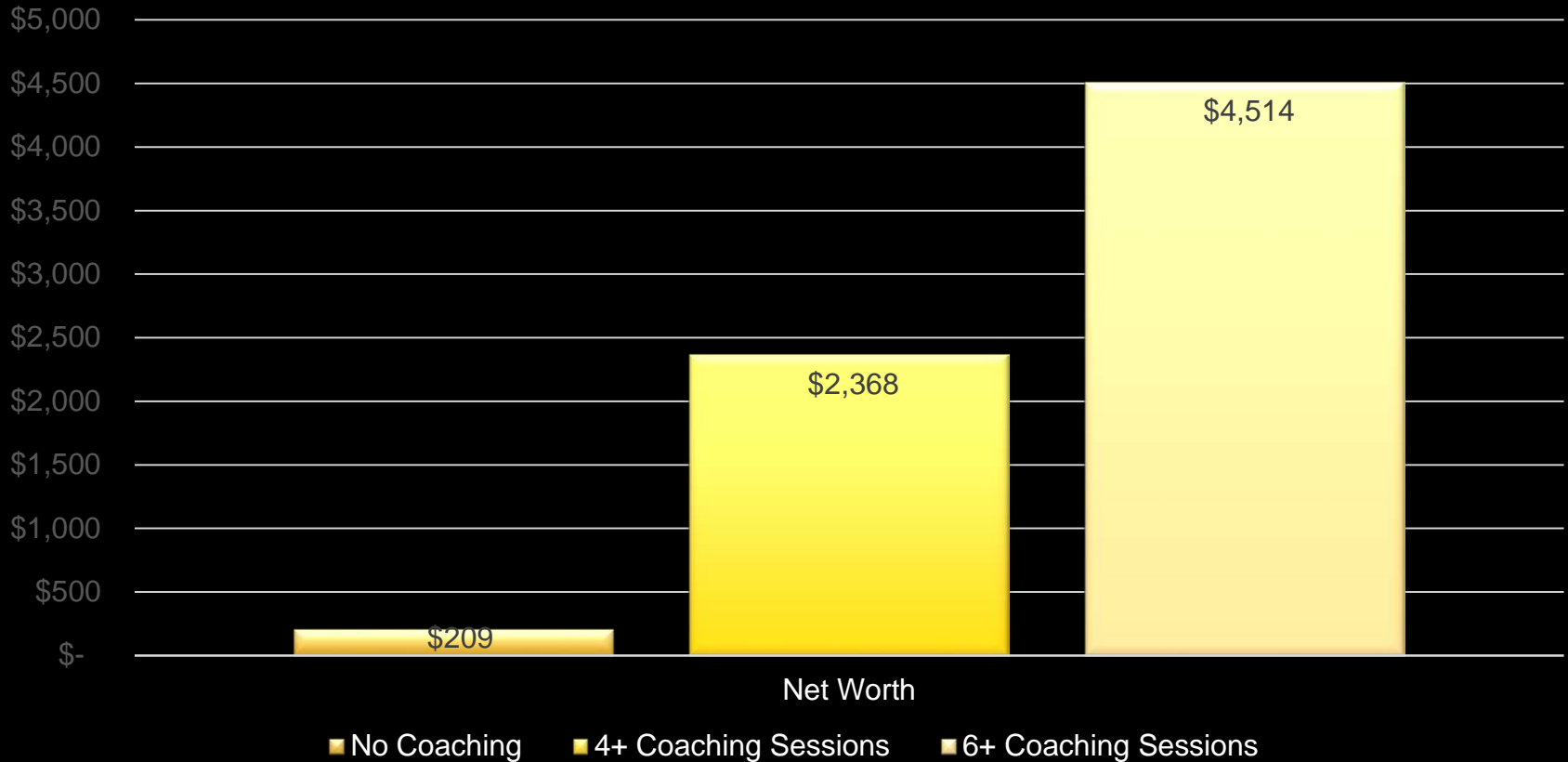
# Financial Capability for New Americans

## Financial Coaching and Monthly Net Income



# Financial Capability for New Americans

## Financial Coaching and Net Worth





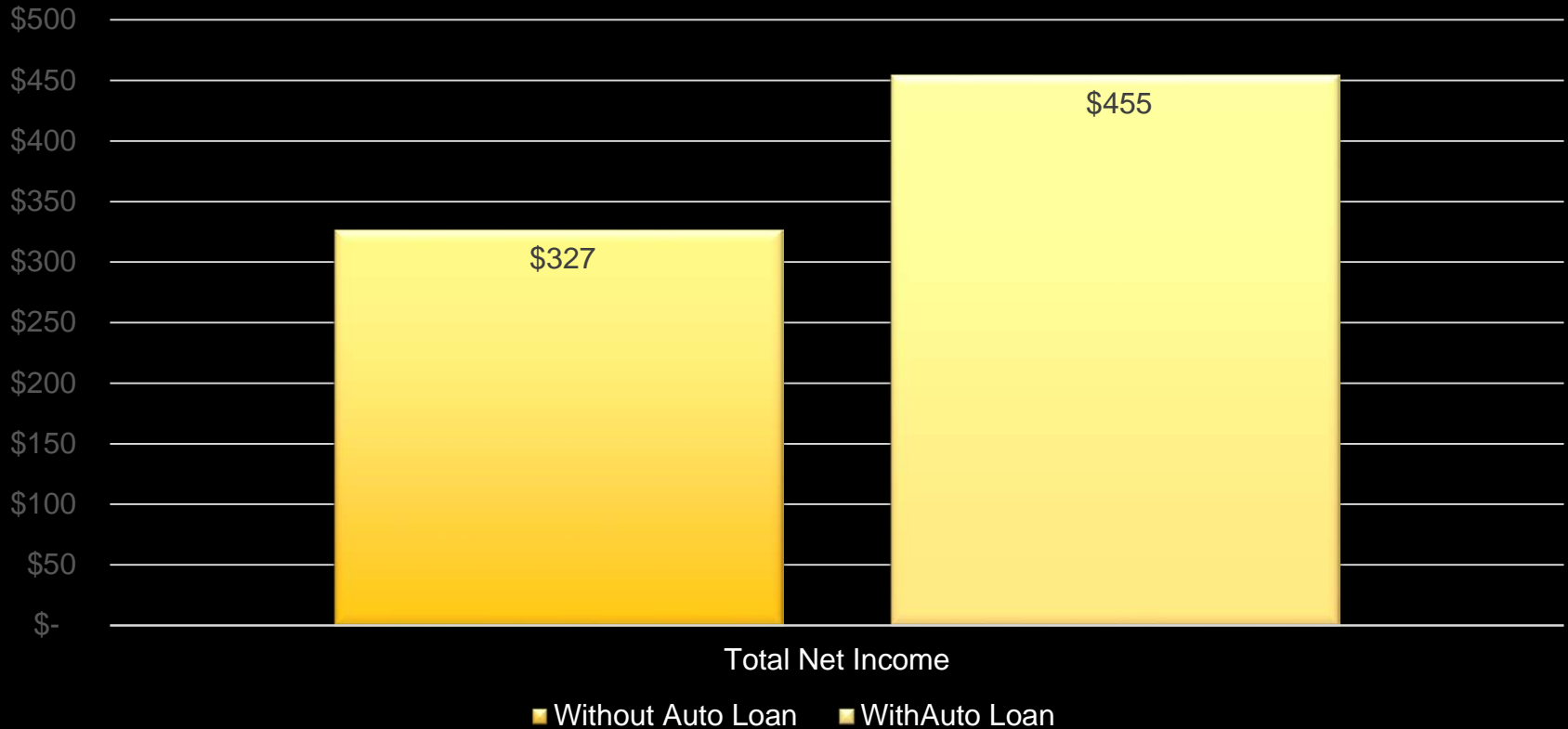
# Financial Capability for New Americans

## Integrated Products: Auto Loans and Wage-Based Income



# Financial Capability for New Americans

## Integrated Products: Auto Loans and Net Income



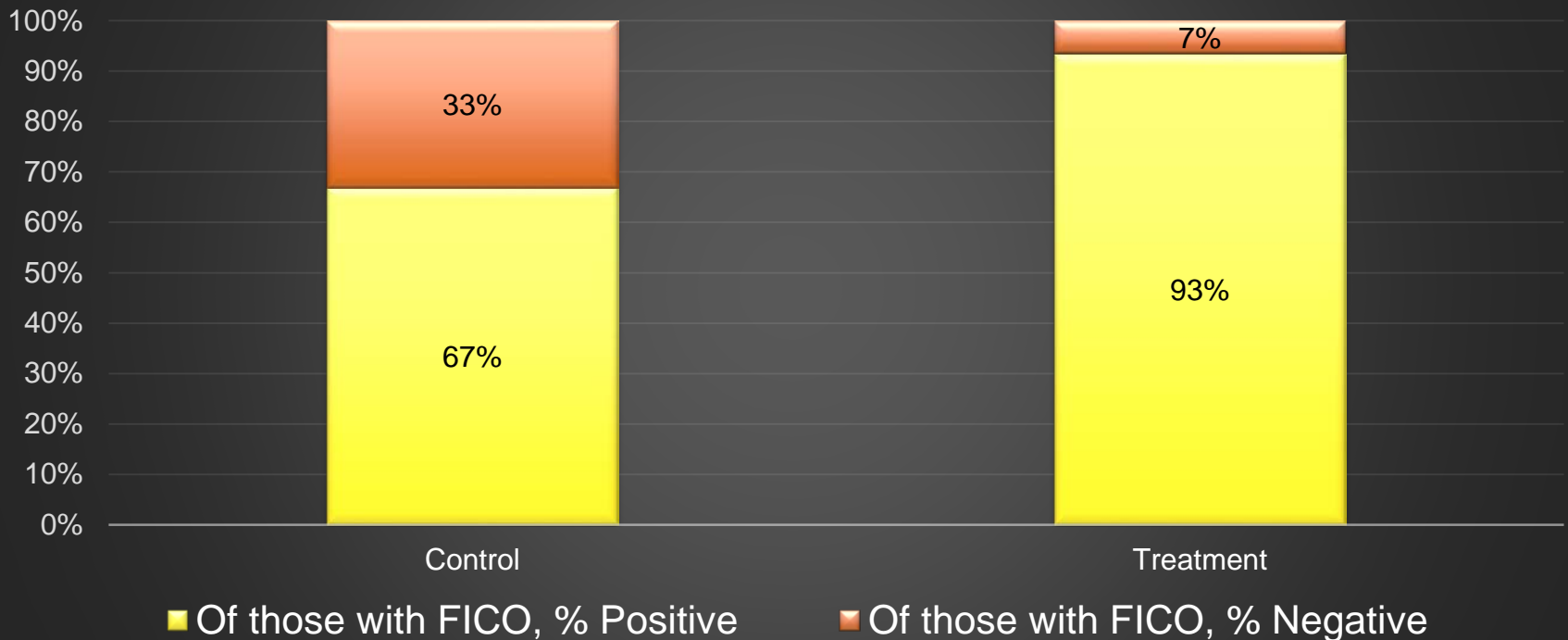
# Financial Capability for New Americans

## Establishing a FICO score



# Financial Capability for New Americans

## Credit Quality within FICO group



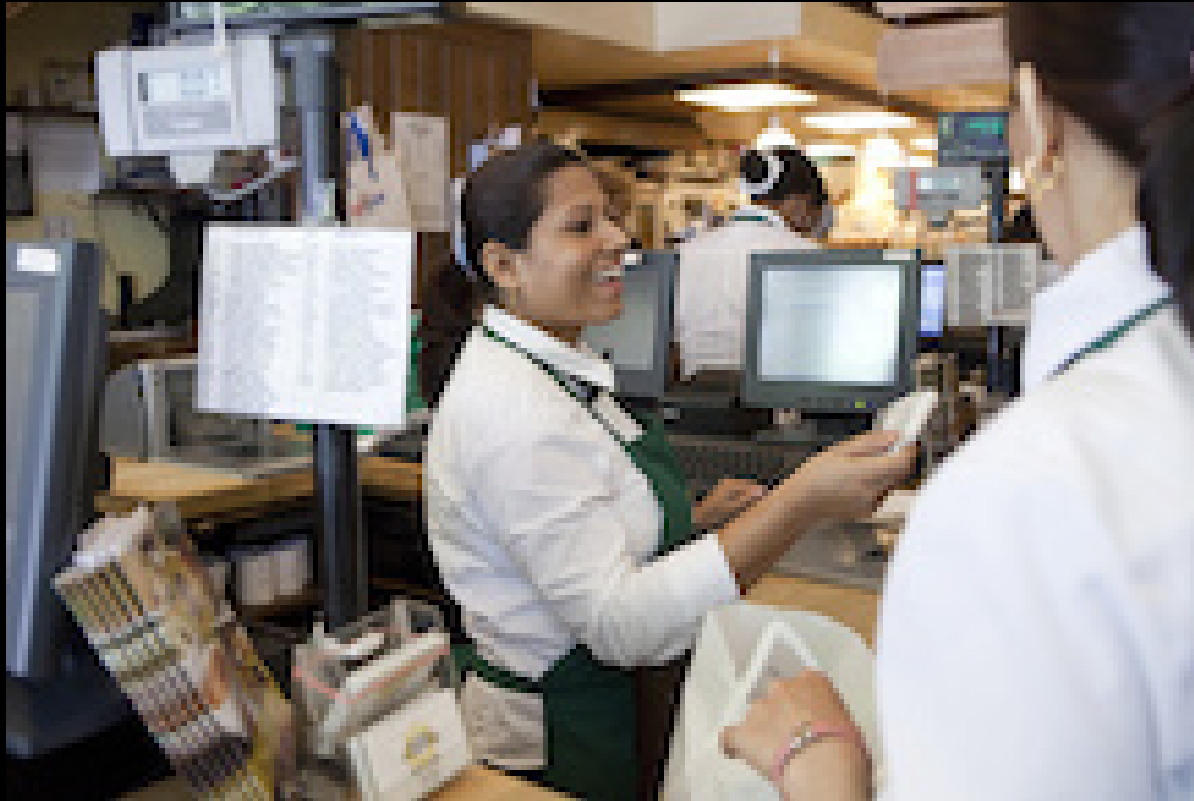
# Financial Capability for New Americans

## *with a Gender Lens*

- Women access coaching far less often
- Women served among most vulnerable
  - < \$100 in earned income
  - Negative net worth
- 3+ coaching sessions improved
  - net worth
  - household incomes
  - wage-based income



# Learnings and Recommendations



# Learnings and Recommendations

## *Key Service Strategies*

- ✓ Relationship building
- ✓ Intentional on-ramps
- ✓ Just-in-time engagement
- ✓ Hybrid coaching
- ✓ Language access
- ✓ Home visits



# Learnings and Recommendations

## *Promising Practices*

- Intervene early
- Intervene frequently
- Integrate financial products
- Serve women's needs
- Keep goals realistic
- Use data





# Learnings and Recommendations

## *Directions for Future Research*

- Transition from counseling to coaching
- Smoothing income support transitions
- Longitudinal credit questions
- More effective coaching for women





# QUESTIONS

# Reflections on the Financial Capability and Challenges of US Refugees

- The context that refugees enter into
  - Perception & reality of refugees
  - Importance of financial history
  - Neoliberal political-economic context
- Responding responsibly to the situation
  - Building interpersonal relationships
  - Offering refugee-sensitive products
  - Bundling services to address compound issues
  - Integrating a gender analysis
- Questions that remain
  - Financial coaches
  - Timing challenges
  - Expanding an intersectional analysis



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# Q & A



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Please remember that today's webinar was recorded and will be  
posted on our website: [cfs.wisc.edu](http://cfs.wisc.edu)  
within two business days.



Please contact Hallie Lienhardt with questions:

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