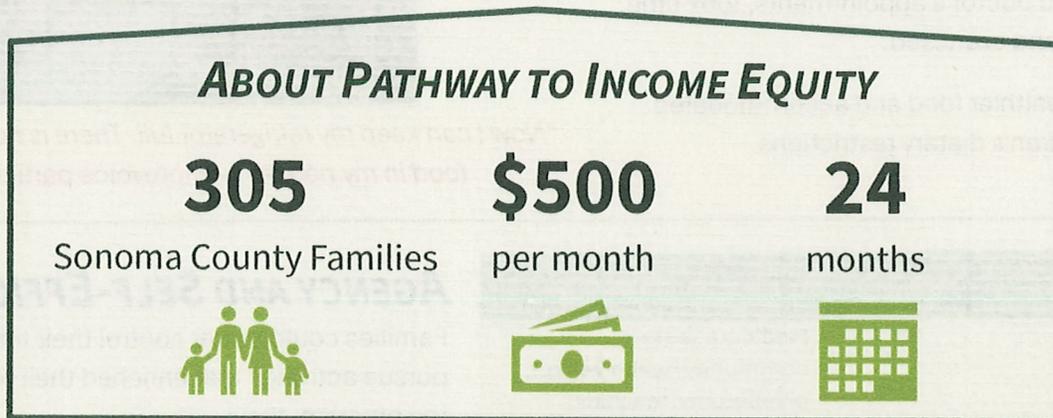


Pathway to Income Equity

Findings from Sonoma County's Guaranteed Income Program

In 2023, First 5 Sonoma County (F5) launched the *Pathway to Income Equity* (PIE) cash transfer program. The purpose of this program was to reduce financial stress for low-income families.



PIE gave 305 families with young children \$500 a month for 24 consecutive months.

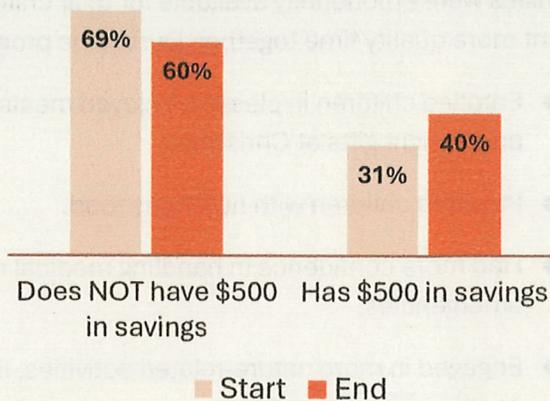
F5 partnered with Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) to understand the program's effects. SPR conducted participant surveys, interviews, and photovoice, and analyzed administrative data to surface learnings. The learnings are presented below in four areas: economic stability, health, self-efficacy, and parenting experiences.

BASIC NEEDS AND ECONOMIC STABILITY

Families were able to afford daily necessities and had strengthened their financial resilience. During the program, they:

- ◆ Spent cash funds on essential expenses like food, rent, utilities, and transportation.
- ◆ Paid down debt (e.g., past due rent, utility bills, and cable/internet bills) and saved money for future expenses.
- ◆ Secured reliable transportation to get to work, go to school, and attend social events.
- ◆ Had more housing security, including the ability to move out of unsafe conditions.

Saving increased from the start to the end of PIE



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The program's reliable financial support improved families' mental and physical well-being. During the program, they:

- ◆ Were less anxious about expenses, and as a result, felt "more relaxed, calmer, and less worried."
- ◆ Scheduled doctor's appointments, took time off work, and exercised.
- ◆ Bought healthier food and accommodated their children's dietary restrictions.



"Now I can keep my refrigerator full. There is no shortage of food in my house!" – Photovoice participant

Education or Training Program	# of Survey Respondents	Examples
Certificate Programs	15	Medical assistant, community health worker, phlebotomy, teaching certification, certified public accountant
College Courses	12	Community college courses
High School Diploma	10	General Education Diploma (GED)
Skill Building Courses	10	Computer courses, sales training course, professionalism program
English Language Courses	10	-

AGENCY AND SELF-EFFICACY

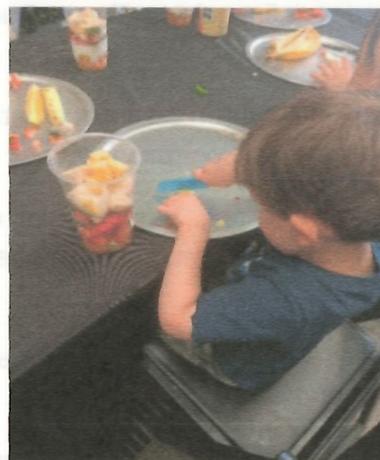
Families could better control their time and pursue activities that enriched their lives. During the program, they:

- ◆ Participated in educational courses and skill building opportunities.
- ◆ Had higher rates of employment, taking up part-time jobs or temporary work.
- ◆ Had a newfound freedom to focus on personal hobbies and self-care.

PARENTING EXPERIENCES

Families were emotionally available for their children and spent more quality time together. During the program, they:

- ◆ Enrolled children in classes, enjoyed meals out together, and bought gifts at Christmas.
- ◆ Provided children with nutritious food.
- ◆ Had more confidence in handling medical needs or emergencies.
- ◆ Engaged in more nature-related activities, like camping or enjoying state parks.



"I can afford my son's first cooking class and encourage him to pursue his passion for cooking." – Photovoice participant