

Marrea Walker-Smith: 2025 Kathy A. Possinger Housing Policy Fellowship Project Summary

The mixed-methods research study consisted of twenty-five women residing in low-income housing in the City of Chester to examine the role of financial literacy in breaking barriers associated with low-income housing. Over the course of one year, the study integrated quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture both measurable outcomes and lived experiences. Two resident-hosted focus groups provided in-depth insights into participants' perspectives, while structured data collection assessed the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) of participants related to financial literacy. The findings highlighted how varying levels of financial knowledge influenced decision-making around budgeting, credit use, housing stability, and long-term financial planning, illustrating the critical role financial literacy plays in empowering women to navigate and potentially overcome structural and economic barriers tied to low-income housing. After analyzing the data, an E-book was designed with workshop lessons that housing counselors, community groups, and housing authorities can use to support financial stability, reduce eviction, and increase homeownership within this population.