

The Access Gap:

Why Financial Tools Alone Don't Build Wealth

Access to financial tools has expanded rapidly, but financial capability hasn't kept up. As a result, millions have the tools to build wealth, but not the knowledge or confidence to use them.

01

More Access. Limited Progress.

Financial tools are more accessible than ever, but financial knowledge and behavior are not improving at the same rate.

81% of Americans	48% on average	Only 27%...
with bank accounts use mobile banking tools	nationwide are financially literate	of adults can answer most financial knowledge questions correctly

Takeaway: Access is high. Understanding is not.

02

Who Can Turn Access Into Wealth

Turning access into wealth depends on income, education, and the financial flexibility to act.

	80% of college graduates have retirement accounts	VS	37% without a college degree	
Bachelor's Degree	\$132,700	Median Income	\$58,410	High School Diploma
	66%	Spending Habits	32%	
of high-income households spend less than they earn				of low-income households spend less than they earn

Takeaway: Access creates opportunity. Income, stability, and financial knowledge determine who can act on it.

03

The Real Barriers to Access

Most people aren't blocked from financial tools. They lack the awareness, understanding, and confidence to use them.



01	Awareness: 72% say they would be better off if they learned finance concepts earlier
02	Understanding: Average financial literacy score: 48%
03	Confidence: Low financial literacy individuals are... - 4x more likely to lack emergency savings - 3x more likely to lack retirement confidence

Takeaway: The barrier isn't access, it's readiness.

04

The Cost of the Access Gap

Without financial knowledge and confidence, access alone does not protect against financial instability.

Only 45% of Americans have emergency savings	Only 41% would use savings to cover a \$1,000 emergency
Lower financial literacy is associated with: Higher debt Lower savings Greater financial instability	

Takeaway: Without education, access doesn't translate to financial security.

05

Education Turns Access into Action

Financial education equips people to use the tools they already have and changes behavior over time.

Individuals who receive financial education have:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher credit scores • Lower delinquency rates 	
People with higher financial literacy are:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less likely to be debt-constrained • More likely to save and invest 	
When financial tools are paired with education:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence increases • Adoption rises • Long-term wealth outcomes improve 	

Takeaway: Education turns financial access into confidence, action, and long-term financial growth.

06

The Community Impact of Financial Security

Financial security doesn't just improve individual outcomes. It strengthens local economies, workforce stability, and long-term community resilience.

	When financial insecurity is high, communities experience:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater housing instability • Higher financial stress and workforce burnout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower economic mobility • Increased reliance on support systems
	When residents are financially secure, communities see:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher rates of saving and investing • Stronger local economies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater workforce productivity • Increased long-term stability for families

Takeaway: Financial security strengthens individuals, families, workplaces, and entire communities.

Financial Education Turns Access Into Action

Help individuals build the confidence and knowledge to make financial tools work for them.

[Learn how your organization can get started](#)