CAROLINAS CREDIT UNION FOUNDATION

# Vizo Financial Empowerment Grant Reports

## Acclaim FCU





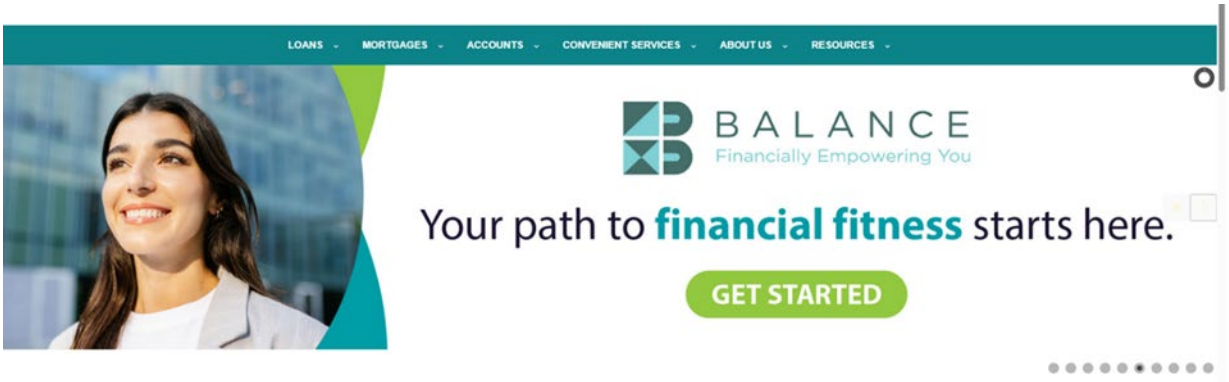


Thanks to the generous support of the grant funds, Acclaim FCU has made significant strides in promoting financial wellness within our community. The funds were used to launch our "Make It Make Cents" financial literacy podcast, which has been an exciting and impactful initiative. The podcast provides accessible, engaging, and valuable financial education.

Since its launch, we've received enthusiastic feedback from members, with many sharing how the podcast has helped them better understand budgeting, saving, and managing debt. One member shared, "The podcast opened my eyes to things I had never thought about when it comes to managing my money."

Additionally, the success of the podcast has helped strengthen our community's trust in Acclaim's commitment to their financial wellbeing. The positive response continues to grow, with many members expressing their excitement about how Acclaim is evolving to meet their needs. We're proud to see our members becoming more financially empowered, and we look forward to continuing this journey with them.

**HealthShare CU**




HealthShare Credit Union used the Vizo Financial Empowerment Grant to partner with Balance. Balance provides financial education through articles, videos, toolkits, worksheets, calculators, podcasts, booklets, checklists and live webinars. Our members have access to financial debt and budget counseling. Balance is a HUD-certified counseling organization. They offer first time homebuyer live workshops at difference times of the day and evening.

Balance cost $14,000 per year. Having this grant from Vizo, enabled us to offer the certified financial counselors to our members. We have been averaging 82 members going to our Balance site each month.

The positive feedback from our members has been amazing! The mission of HealthShare Credit Union is to help members gain financial confidence and experience more joy in life. Through the help and support of Vizo, the partnership with Balance aligns our mission and commitment to our member-owners! Thank you to Carolinas Credit Union Foundation and Vizo for making this possible!

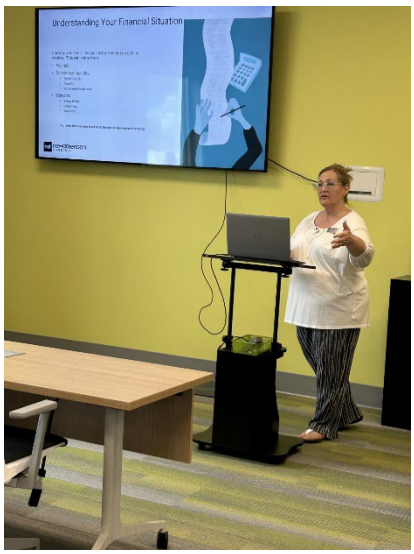
**Edisto FCU**




We want to thank Carolinas CU Foundation for accepting our application for the Vizo Financial Empowerment Grant. The grant has allowed the credit union to aid the passion to implement and enhance our financial literacy program. We empower our low-income and underserved community and local schools with financial information to equip them to become more efficient and aware of their financial needs. Through our financial literacy programs/workshops, we provide the following:

How to save money, how to make a budget, how to balance your budget, how to make economic decisions on your spending, know the importance of wants and needs, how to invest your money and most importantly, achieving your goal in the future.

We visit Felton Laboratory Charter School monthly to teach the students about various topics in finance. The students are very engaged with us and each other. They get a chance to show their skill in what they know and what they need. They are able to open a savings account at the credit union for $5.00. They have the opportunity to come over and make their deposits and watch it grow. To encourage them to save, we give the one with the most deposits for the month $25.00 and bragging rights. We also provide school supplies during the visits. Each quarter, we host the Parent Teacher Night at other elementary schools. The parents and teachers are keeping us updated on their progress. The feedback is evidence that we are impacting our community and members.




During our recent Financial Literacy Workshop, our presenter was Melinda Smith-Financial Literacy Instructor and Residential Mortgage Loan Officer. She was very knowledgeable in her field. She provided information on needed financial topics. The list started from budgets to how to buy a house. The audience was very impressed and learned a lot.

April is National Financial Literacy Month, and according to the stats, most of us can use a refresher in financial education. With that being said, we look forward to more opportunities to educate, equip and minimize financial literacy devastations.

Again, we thank you for your generous support.

**Greenville FCU**



This has been such a rewarding grant! We used the grant for matched savings and to start savings accounts for folks who attended multiple financial literacy classes. Classes were delivered in multipart series and we partnered with four groups to deliver to classes to their constituents.

- SHARE Head Start (serving 13 locations and hundreds of families)
- Greer Relief
- Serenity Place
- Parent Cafe

Most of the recipients had never had a savings account before. Often, they use fintech (Chime, Cashapp, etc) and really don't understand how banking works.

Hearing their success stories is amazing!

"I have never had a checking or saving account before. I am so proud!" – Audrey, Serenity Place resident.



At our Parent Café graduation event these testimonials were shared:

"I feel so much more in control of my money now that I have a budget and am tracking my spending. I have a savings account for the first time ever and my credit score went up to over 600, ya'll!" – Tiffany, Parent Café

"Budgeting works!"

"By tracking my budget, I found that last month I spend $50 on coins to play a game on my phone. I won't be spending that much again!"

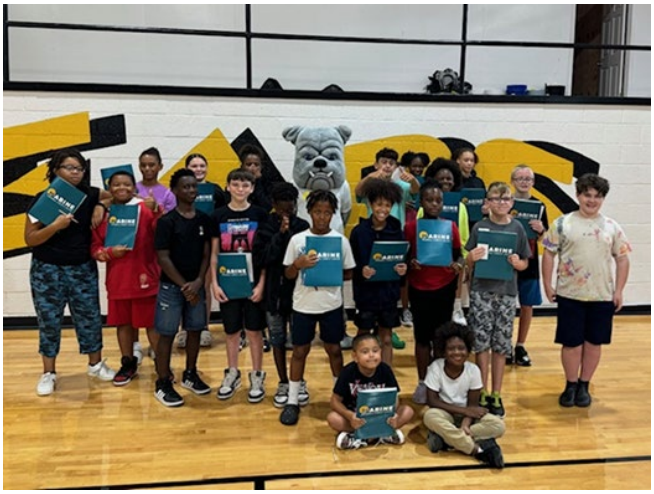
Four months after opening a saving account Stephanie had car troubles. She saw the CEO of Parent Café at a school concert and told her "I had a rough week; my car broke down. But because I had my savings, I was able to fix it and not miss paying my other bills;" She opened a savings account in January and has been adding to it each paycheck so she had the emergency savings she needed for her car repairs (for the first time ever!).



“Look at my account!  I have $500 in savings and $160 in checking!” Sanchasity from Head Start was so proud to show us her online banking (unprompted!) three months after opening her savings and checking accounts. She was adding to savings every paycheck and so excited to have the $500 emergency savings she planned.

We noticed that at Serenity Place 90% of the women who opened savings accounts, most for the first time, also had a high enough credit score to open a fee-free, rewards checking account. All but 1 person though used Cashapp or Chime instead of traditional banking because they did not understand the difference. Many opened checking accounts along with their savings to start earning yields and create a banking relationship for future lending needs.

**Marine FCU**



We used the grant funds to create two distinct financial education classes, which were requested by community groups.

The first class was an all-day seminar presented to a congregation of a local African American church. The attendees ranged from middle school age to over 80 years old, so we had a diverse curriculum ready for them. We were able to provide financial education on every topic they requested, which included the following:

- General finance

- Effective use of debit and credit cards

- Identifying and avoiding fraud and scams

- Mortgage loans

- Establishing your account ownership to protect your family

The engagement of this group was incredible, and we received excellent feedback. We had staff on hand who were available to open accounts or answer specific questions, and we had bilingual staff available also.

The second event was held at the Boys and Girls Club. We were asked to provide basic financial education to middle school students. This was an amazing event. Our teams spent several hours playing a Money Management game with the students. Each student was given a profile with family, career, and salary information, and they had to navigate real-life financial events using their resources, such as flat tires, vacations, insurance, new pets, medical expenses, etc. The kids (and instructors!) had a great time, and they learned a lot.

The value that this grant brought to these community groups was invaluable. Thank you for affording us this opportunity!

**NC Community FCU**



NC Community Credit Union was proud and honored to use the funds provided by the Vizo Financial Empowerment Grant to award deserving high school seniors with a scholarship to support their continuing education.

NCCFCU's 'Do More' Scholarship Program was established to support seniors in our community, as well as, promote financial literacy. To apply, each applicant was required to attend a ‘Financial Life Skills’ class taught by NCCFCU. Students learned about spending wisely, saving, loans, credit scores and more. Not only does this scholarship seek to provide students with financial advice, the essay portion of the contest offers an opportunity for them to express how they can use their unique gifts and talents to positively impact the community.

In 2024, we were honored to award the $750 ‘Do More’ Scholarship to four incredible Wayne County, NC students.




Xzorion Edmonson - he will be attending the University of Mount Olive and plans to pursue a career in Music Therapy by majoring in Psychology and Music Education.

Katelyn Jensen - she will be attending NC State University to study business.

Oliver Thomas - he will be attending Liberty University and plans to major in biomedical science and pursue a career in orthopedics.

Liliannah White - she will be attending UNC-Wilmington and is excited to study psychology.

**SPC CU**




With the VIZO Financial Empowerment Grant, we were able to launch our First Time Homebuyers Program with Down Payment Assistance for qualifying members. We spent time and resources in 2024 educating our staff and our community on the costs of home ownership. In December 2024, we officially launched the SPC Cares Foundation and Down Payment Assistance Program. Our first closing with DPA was completed in January 2025, a mother-daughter duo who went from renters to homeowners, a dream they did not think possible. See our Foundation and DPA information at https://spccu.org/spc-cares-foundation.

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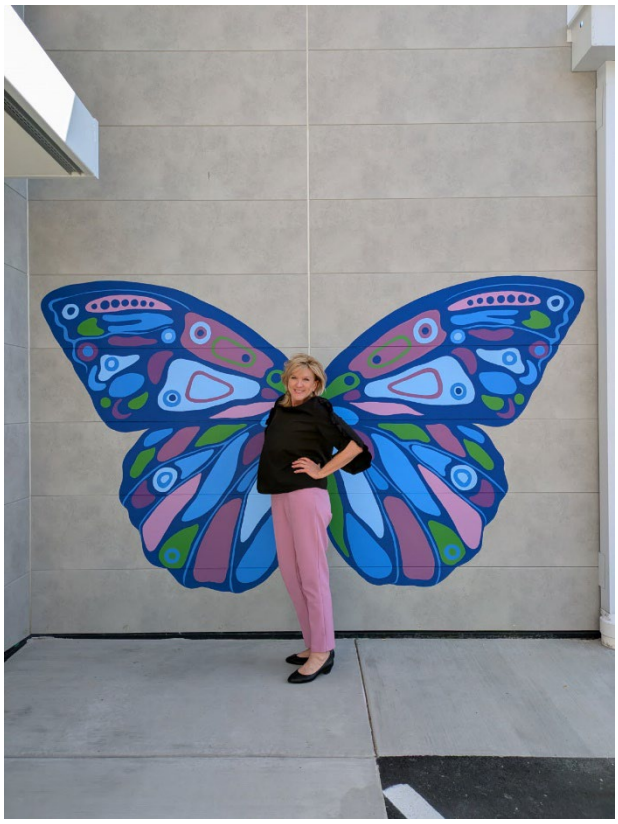
**Revity FCU**



Revity FCU received the Vizo Financial Empowerment Grant for a mural on its Greene Street headquarters building. The mural has a focus on financial empowerment. We want people to see the mural and be moved to come inside to see how they can achieve financial freedom.

The Revity Mural is complete and was unveiled on April 28 for Revity's Grand Opening.

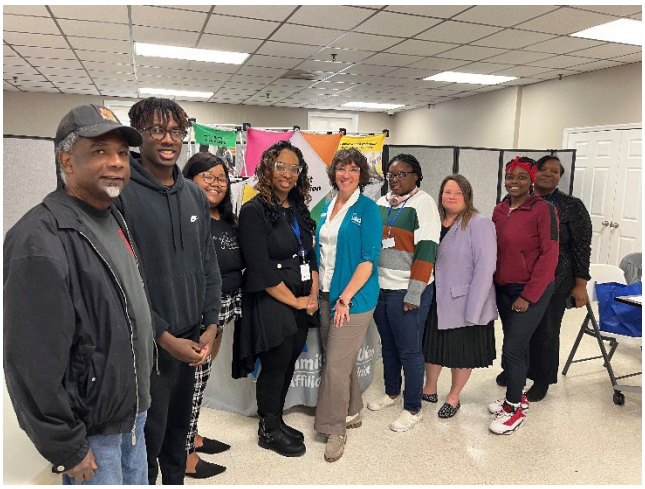







**Summit CU**



With our credit union recently reinventing its youth program, our Taste of Reality Fair has become more important than ever. This program immerses young adults (ages 13-22) in a month-long simulation of adult life, providing a fun, engaging, and unique way to teach financial literacy. Thanks to the Vizo Financial Empowerment Grant, we've been able to further invest in our youth program and Taste of Reality Fair events.

In 2024, we hosted two Taste of Reality Fairs. Our first event, held in March, marked our first-ever hybrid fair with our business partner, GenerationEd. Attendees quickly learned that "adulting" can be challenging—but with smart financial decisions and strategic saving, it's entirely manageable.

Using our interactive mobile app, participants were assigned a career, credit score, salary, and even a child. They navigated real-life expenses such as transportation, housing, and entertainment while striving to stay within budget. The event was a tremendous success, and we gained valuable insights from our attendees.

In November, we hosted a virtual Taste of Reality Fair open to all members via Zoom. This format provided a unique opportunity for participants to experience financial decision-making in a collaborative, online setting alongside their peers.

**TCP CU**




We are honored to have received the Vizo Financial Empowerment Grant. With this grant, TCP Credit Union was able to enhance our financial literacy program by providing additional exposure to our members through literature, flyers, banners, and postcards.

We are also proud to share that this grant allowed us to fully fund our Blessing Box Program for the entire year of 2024. The Blessing Box, located on-site, has enabled us to maintain a fully stocked pantry, offering food and financial literacy resources to support our community.

At TCP, we remain committed to empowering and uplifting our members and community, and we are grateful for this incredible opportunity made possible by Vizo Financial and the Carolinas Credit Union Foundation.