

American Center for Credit Education

111 St. Joseph Street
Rapid City, South Dakota 57701

Credit When Credit Is Due 2001 Program Evaluation

Executive Summary

The ***Credit When Credit Is Due Program*** is based on Paul Strassel's book by the same name. It was written to help individuals become knowledgeable and better personal finance managers. The program is a series of twelve lessons or sessions that covers a wide range of topics from talking about money to handling personal finances responsibly.

In order to determine if the program has made an impact on completers of the program, **American Center for Credit Education (ACCE)** commissioned an independent evaluation of the program. The ***Institute for Educational Leadership & Evaluation***, a project of the Chiesman Foundation and an independent program evaluation organization performed the study between January and May 2001. Three thousand ***Credit When Credit Is Due Program*** graduates were randomly selected from the ACCE database to complete a questionnaire regarding the program. Over 953 surveys were returned with a response rate of 31.7%.

The respondents were located in 31 states with an average age of 39.1 years and ranged from 16 to 74 years of age. Females made up the largest percentage of respondents at 67.9% which reflected the percentage of all the graduates. Sixty-nine percent (68.8%) of the

respondents had one or more years of college or technical education. Over eight percent (8.4%) had a masters or higher degree. The majority of respondents were Caucasian with 23.8% percent being of minority ethnicity.

Although the evaluation process asked many questions about the program, it focused on answering four major questions:

- (1) After completing the *Credit When Credit Is Due Program* did your payment history change?
- (2) Did your credit standing improve after completing the *Credit When Credit Is Due Program*?
- (3) Would you recommend this program to other individuals?
- (4) What would you change in the program?

In response to the first question, it was found that there was a statistically significant change in the way individuals pay bills on time after completing the *Credit When Is Credit Due Program*. There was a 96.2% increase by the program completers in paying their bills on time.

In response to the second question, the study found that there was a statistically significant change in the individuals'

credit standing. Over 37.3% of the respondents indicated a positive change in their credit rating from poor to an improved rating.

Over ninety-eight percent (98.7%) of the respondents would recommend *Credit When Credit Is Due* to another person. Only 7.8% of the positive responses would make any changes in the program. Among the changes recommended by the graduates included making the course more demanding, having more discussion time, and providing more information about credit reports.

Other significant findings in the ***Credit When Credit Is Due Evaluation Report*** are:

- 79.4% of the respondents completed the course through home study.
- The majority of the respondents took the course as part of a debt management program and to gain personal financial education and information.
- 91.2% of the male respondents are making progress or achieving their financial goals.
- 98.0% of the female respondents are making progress or achieving their financial goals.
- After completing *Credit When Credit Is Due*, 90.7% believe they have a better understanding of personal finances.
- 87.7% pay their bills on time now.

- 85.7% have developed more confidence about handling their money after completing the course.
- 43.0% of the respondents learned about the program from their credit counselor and 30.0% learned about the program from their insurance agent.
- 53.4% would like to take an advanced course on investing.

Overall, the evaluation results substantiated that the *Credit When Credit Is Due Program* is making a difference in the lives of the individuals who complete the course. The high percentage of graduates who would recommend this course to another person confirms the value graduates place on the program to help individuals become better managers of their personal finances.

**Achieving Financial Goals
By Gender**

