



EMPower: Breaking the cycle of gendered poverty

The Key Elements of the EMPower Program

Economic Mobility Power (EMPower) is Juno's flagship coaching program for financial independence and poverty reduction. Based on the Boston-based Economic Mobility Pathways model, it is purpose designed to support low-income women (trans and cis) and non-binary people to build strong, economically secure and thriving futures for themselves and their families. The approach is informed by the neuroscience of trauma and works to rebuild executive functioning skills for participants.

The program supports participants as they build skills and confidence for the future and achieve long-term goals. It involves:

1. Participant-centred and trauma-informed coaching for up to 24 months (central is the collaborative and trusting relationships with coach)
2. Goal setting across family stability, wellbeing, education and training, financial management, and employment and career management (called a Bridge to Self Sufficiency*)
3. SMART goals and incentives to help foster motivation and to monitor and celebrate progress
4. The strengthening of key executive functioning skills through setting and working towards smaller goals with ongoing support and recognition
5. Connection and peer support groups and skill-building workshops to reinforce coaching goals and create a positive network of social support

*The Bridge to Self-Sufficiency is an EMPower tool that helps participants plan, reach, and sustain their personal goals across the five interrelated pillars.

"I feel like I have achieved a lot, it's given me a lot of opportunities to do things. A year and a half ago I feel like there was no future, now I feel different."

History of EMPower

Since 2019, Juno has worked with local service providers and the global Economic Mobility Pathways (EMPath) to adapt the EMPower model to the Australian context.

- The EMPower Pilot is being delivered from February 2021- August 2023 with three cohorts of 38 total participants from across Victoria.
- For-Purpose Evaluations (FPE) have carried out a comprehensive evaluation of the outcomes for the three cohorts, with an end-line evaluation to be completed at the end of 2023.

Participant Outcomes

- The median income across all cohorts increased by 38% from \$986 to \$1,361 per fortnight.
- Most participants (75% in cohort 1, 63% in cohort 2) are living above the poverty line after twelve months in the program.
- Of participants who are able to work, 78% are currently employed in full- or part-time or regular casual employment or training, compared to 27% at intake.
- Overall, 92% of participants who have completed more than one Bridge have increased their score.
- 75% of clients who have completed at least two Personal Wellbeing Index scores increased their wellbeing. In addition to building personal economic security, they also report an improved sense of agency, self-determination, and confidence.
- 69% of participants (who have completed at least two Executive Functioning Skills Profiles) have increased or maintained their executive functioning skills.
- Most clients join the program with safe, affordable and secure housing as this reflects the eligibility criteria, though as the program continued, 100% of clients (who completed 2nd, 3rd or 4th Bridge) are in safe, affordable and secure housing.

EMPower at Scale

On a systems level, this program provides a new model to support women (trans and cis) and non-binary people post-crisis to reduce the risk of personal harm and also reduces the cost of repeat use of family violence crisis services, homelessness services, justice services and child and family services.

The program has significant direct impacts for low-income women and non-binary people who have experienced trauma, such as family violence. The benefits of participants building personal and economic resilience are intergenerational and significantly reduces the risk of them and their children returning to homelessness and family violence.

As leaders in this space, we invite partnerships across the sector and would love to work alongside organisations that express interest in piloting the EMPower program.

We will offer communities of practice alongside these organisations to ensure continued practice excellence and innovation within the remit and scope of the model.

Our long-term vision is, in collaboration, to drive national recognition and, therefore, potential implementation of the EMPower program across Australia.



"When I first joined Juno, I didn't have a house, now I've got my own unit."



Case Study: Louise's* Journey

Louise is a mother of two young children. She was forced to flee her family home due to family violence when she was pregnant with her second child. With less than 0.01% of rentals affordable to a single parent with two children*, Louise and her children were pushed into homelessness. She was later referred to Juno where we were able to help her find an affordable private rental for her family. From there, she heard about the EMPower program, joining in 2021. Over time, Louise explored study and work options and set a range of short-term and long-term goals with her EMPower Coach. She was referred to Jobs Victoria, and started work in an area she was interested in. Since mid-2021, Louise has been working part-time supporting people at court which she absolutely loves. Her goals centered around building her confidence with her financial literacy, balancing her work and caring responsibilities, and planning long-term career goals. More recently, her savings meant she was able to put a deposit on a house, and she and her children moved in in early 2023.

*Study by Anglicare Victoria (2023) which showed one property out of 11,687 available that were affordable for a single parent with two children on Parenting Payment Single Rental Snapshot 2023



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To learn more visit <https://juno.org.au/empower-coaching/>