

Starting Off in Financial Empowerment – An Introduction to the Financial Empowerment Center Model

A Self-Guided Orientation
for New Financial Counselors



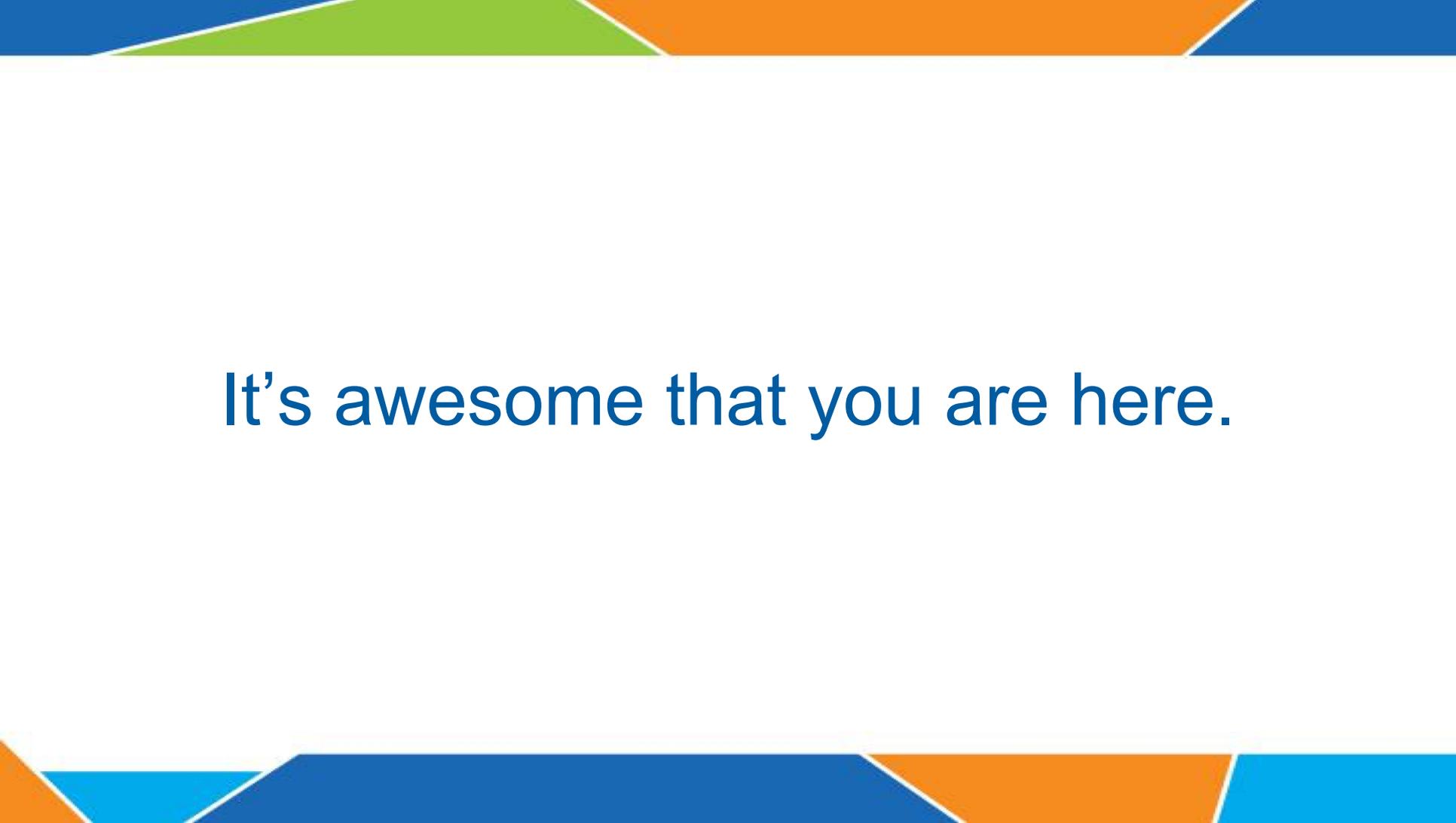
Version 1, February 2020



Hi.



Welcome to this
self-guided training.



It's awesome that you are here.



We'd like to share a bit
about what to expect.



This training is
entirely in PowerPoint.

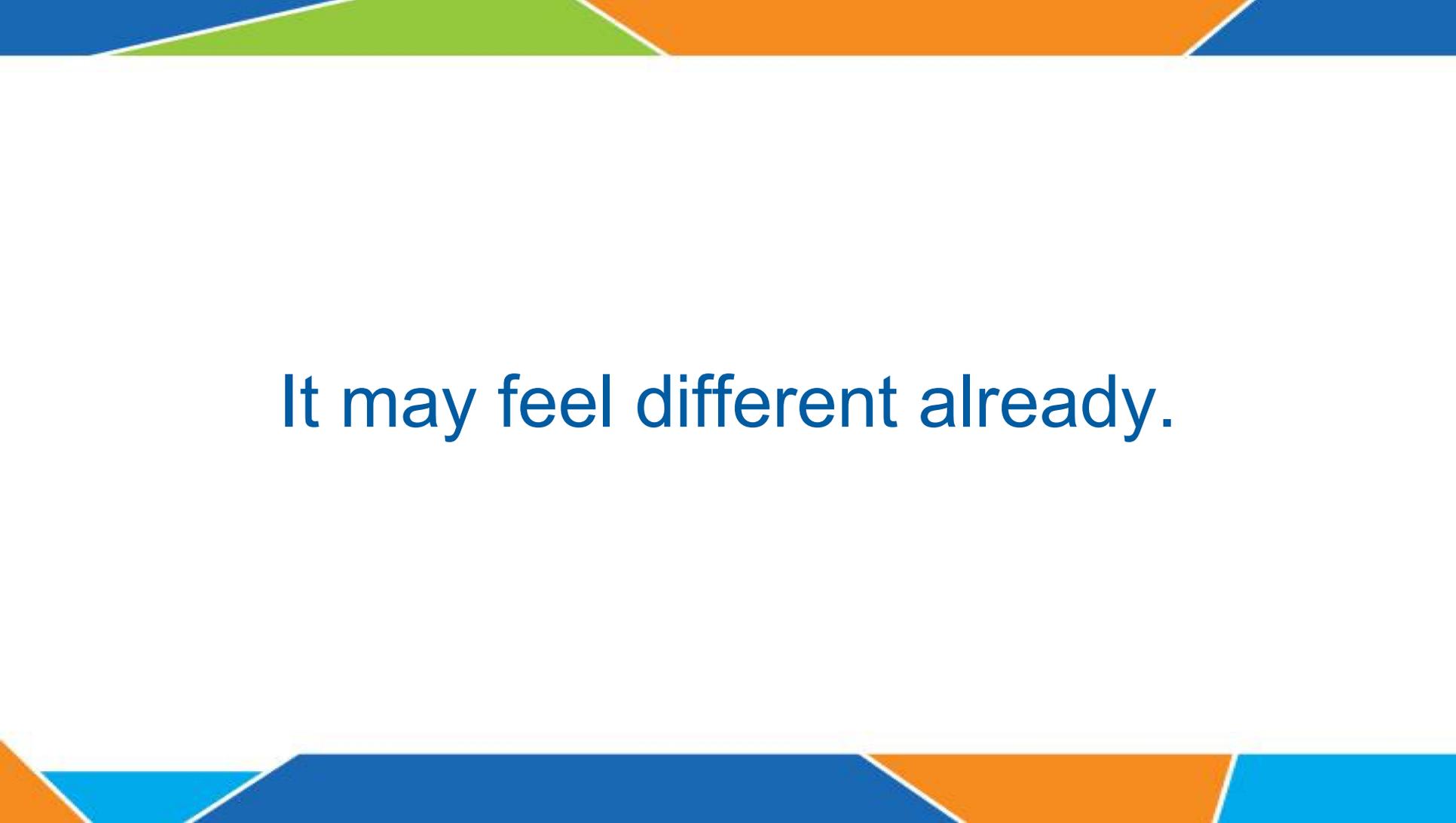


PowerPoint?



Yes.

But it has been designed to feel
different.



It may feel different already.

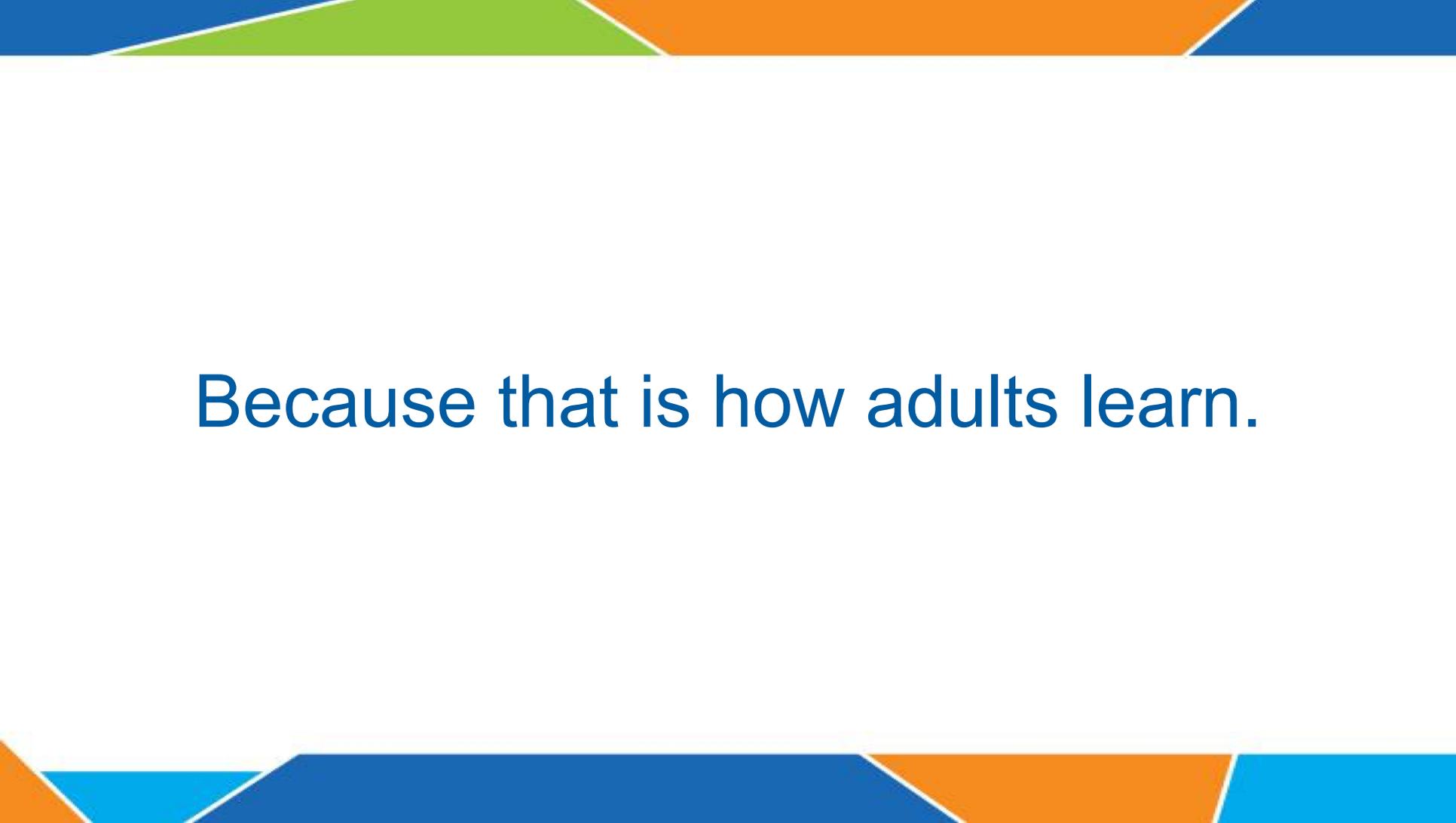
That's good.
:)

It will take about
90 minutes to complete.



It has 4 parts.

In each part we will ask you
to ***do*** something.



Because that is how adults learn.



Before you get started...

You will need a copy of the
Training Workbook and the Financial
Empowerment Center Manual.

Your manager will provide them to you.

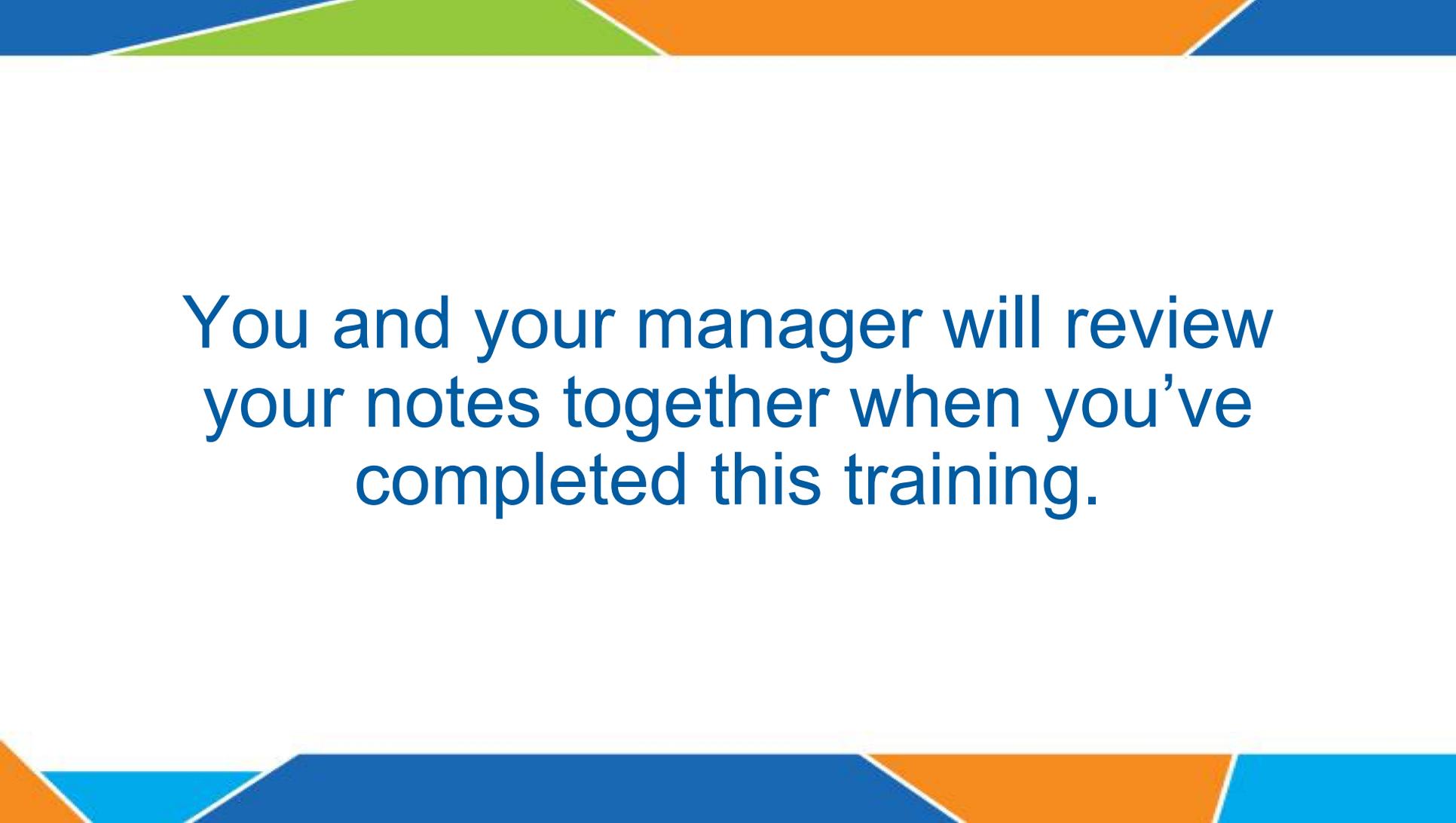




You'll want a hard copy of each.

You'll start using the workbook now,
and the Manual in a little while.





You and your manager will review your notes together when you've completed this training.



Thank you so much
for being part of the Financial
Empowerment Community!



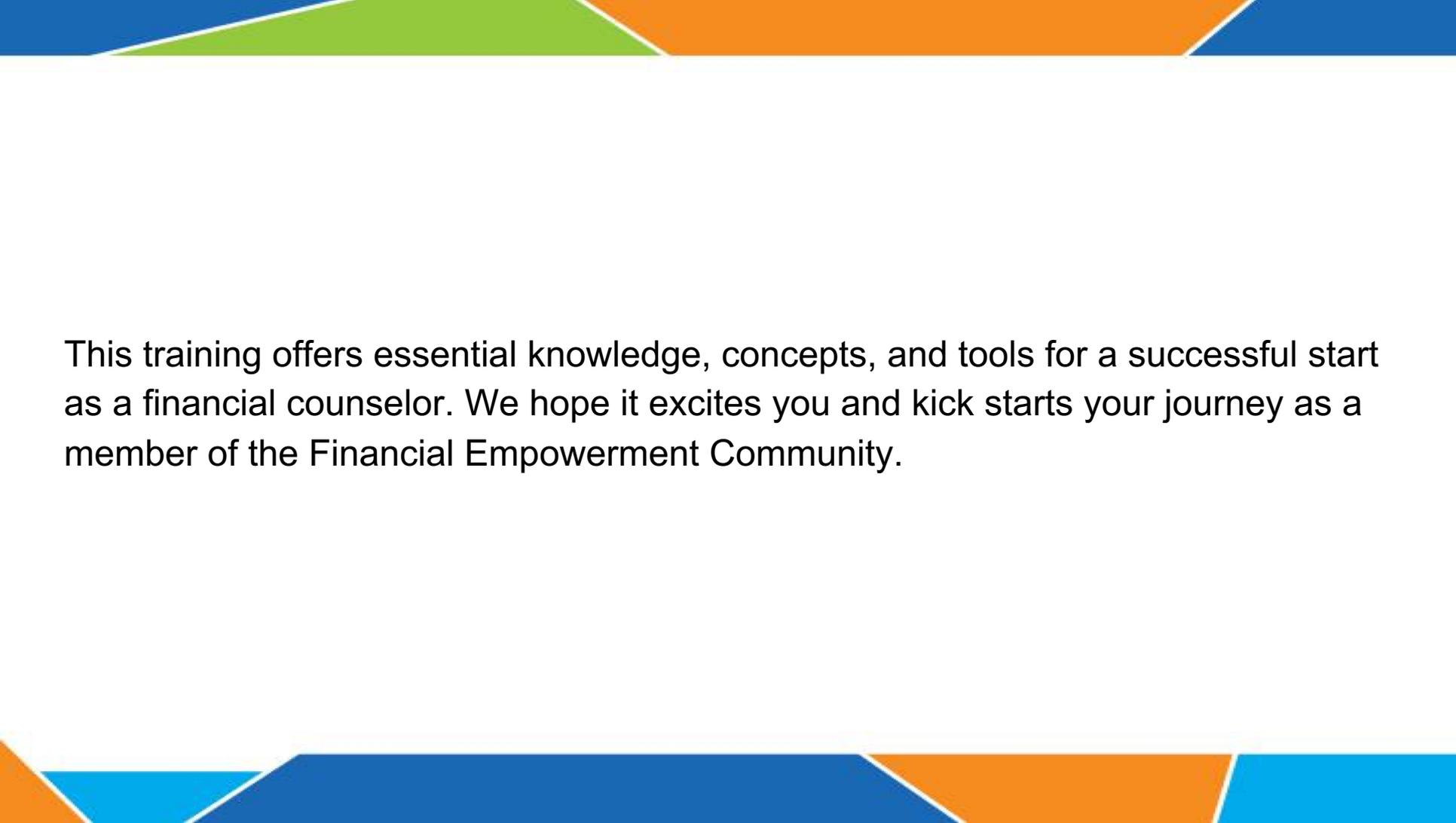
OK!

Let's begin.





Introduction



This training offers essential knowledge, concepts, and tools for a successful start as a financial counselor. We hope it excites you and kick starts your journey as a member of the Financial Empowerment Community.

Financial Counselor Onboarding

We recommend completing this training first during your onboarding. The table below shows all the required parts of your onboarding.

TRAINING ITEM	OFFERED BY	DELIVERY
1. Complete <i>An Introduction to the Financial Empowerment Center Model</i>	OFE	Self-Study via PowerPoint
2. Complete Your Organization's Training	Your Organization	Determined by your manager
3. Read the <i>Financial Empowerment Center Manual</i>	OFE	PDF
4. Complete the <i>Consumer and Personal Finance Training</i> course and pass the final exam	City University of New York (CUNY)	Course is in-person and exam is take-home
5. Complete the <i>FEMS Basic and FEMS Counseling Flow Trainings</i>	OFE	Self-Study and with your manager
6. Complete the <i>Code of Ethics Training</i>	OFE	Self-Study via Ruzuku

Let's look at the 4 parts of this training and what you will do in each.

In Part 1, you will (virtually) **connect with the Office of Financial Empowerment.**

In Part 2, you will explore the **Manual** and **counselor resources.**

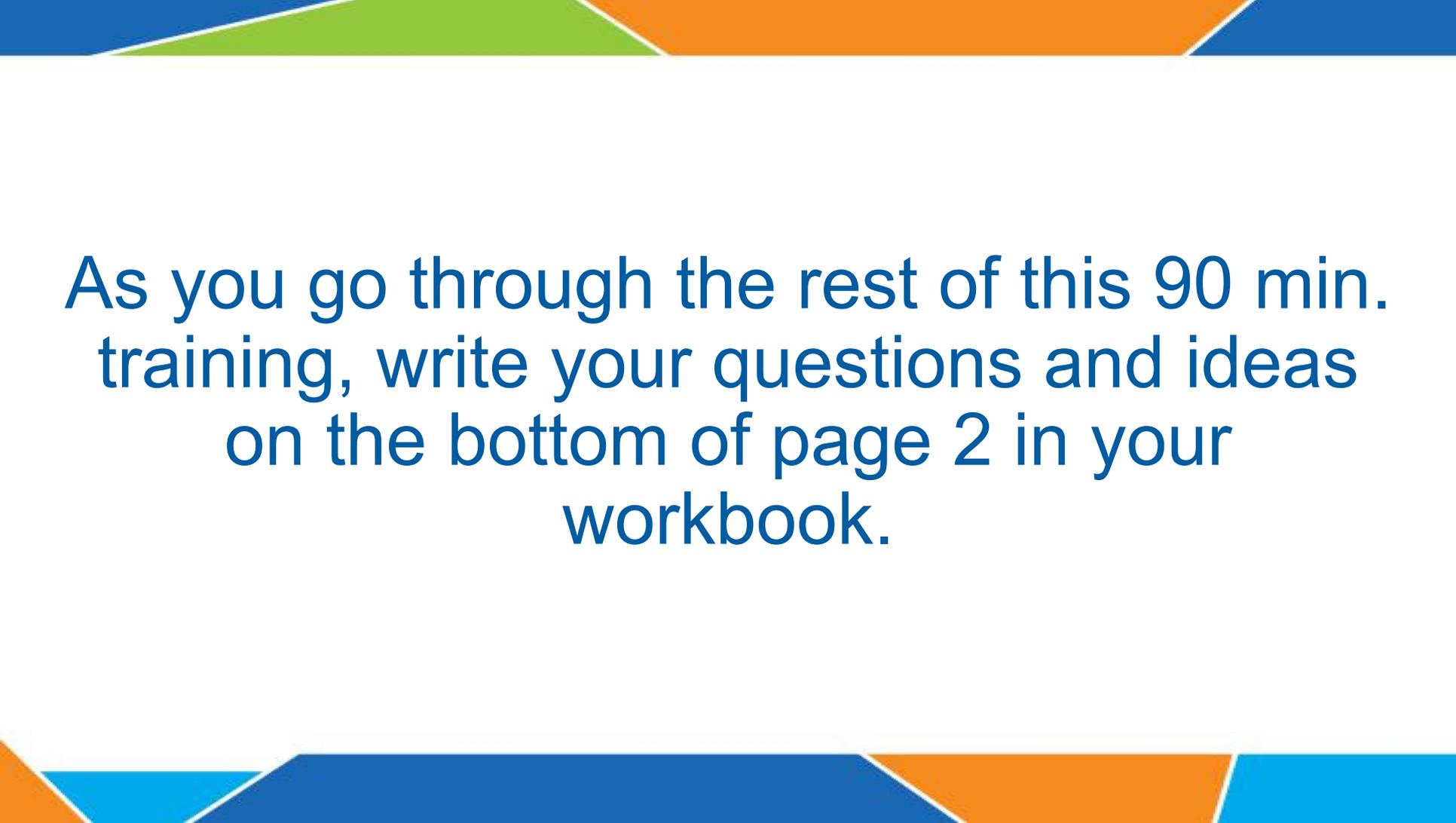
In Part 3, you will analyze the **Financial Empowerment Center Model** and **Client Journey.**

In Part 4, you will practice describing **positive client outcomes.**



In your workbook, write down 3 curiosities you have about your onboarding as a Financial Counselor – and about this training so far.





As you go through the rest of this 90 min. training, write your questions and ideas on the bottom of page 2 in your workbook.



Part 1

Meet the Team

A Warm-Up

To start, please watch this brief video to give you a feel of the incredible work we do at the Financial Empowerment Centers.

As you watch, consider these questions and jot down your responses in your workbook.

- *What helped **engage** these clients from the start?*
- *What do they seem to appreciate most about the **service**?*
- *What **retains** them and keeps them coming back?*

We will touch more on the Engage, Serve, Retain framework later. Now, let's see who's behind all this great work.





Financial Empowerment Centers are run by
the Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE).

OFE is a division within the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP)

OFE Mission Statement

The Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) works to educate, empower, and protect New Yorkers and their communities so they can improve their financial health and build assets.

DCWP is a government agency in the City of New York.

DCWP Mission Statement

The **Department of Consumer and Worker Protection** works to protect and enhance the daily economic lives of New Yorkers to create thriving communities.



OK!

Now that you've got the big picture,
let's meet the team.



Welcome to the NYC Financial Empowerment Community!



Hi, I'm [Jess Brooks](#), the **Assistant Director of Financial Counseling and Coaching Programs** at the Office of Financial Empowerment. The Financial Empowerment Centers are our flagship financial counseling program, and I'm so excited you're on the team! I used to be a program manager and financial counselor so I know what it's like to walk in your shoes. You'll see me at the quarterly meetings and once in a while at your sites. Welcome!

Hi, I'm [Max Goldberger](#). I'm a **Program Officer** and in charge of the day to day operations of the Financial Empowerment Centers. I check in with your managers regularly to hear how things are going and help support where needed. Like Jess, I also used to be a financial counselor!



A Few Other Faces from Our Team



Nichole Davis

Director of Programs



Elina Tatis

**Senior Program Officer,
Entrepreneurship and
Financial Empowerment**



William Ow

**Senior Program Officer,
Financial Counseling and
Coaching Programs**

Although, you won't have as much interaction with these folks they are working hard behind the scenes to help make the Financial Empowerment Center program successful.

Please say hi when you cross paths with them!



It's not often that you'll need to reach out to the OFE team directly.

When you have questions or issues, reaching out to your manager is the best move.

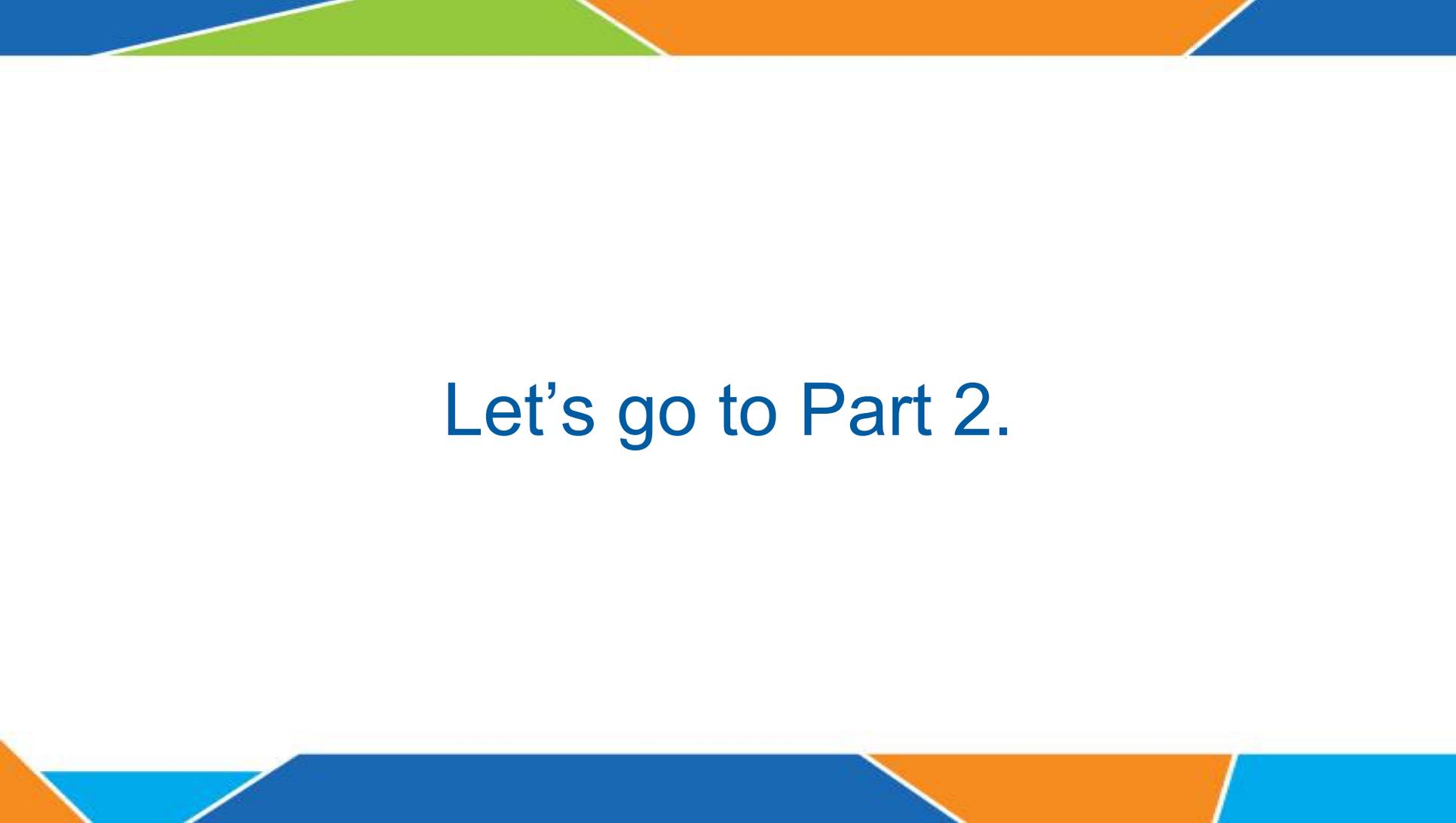
That said, we would like to hear from you as you are starting out.



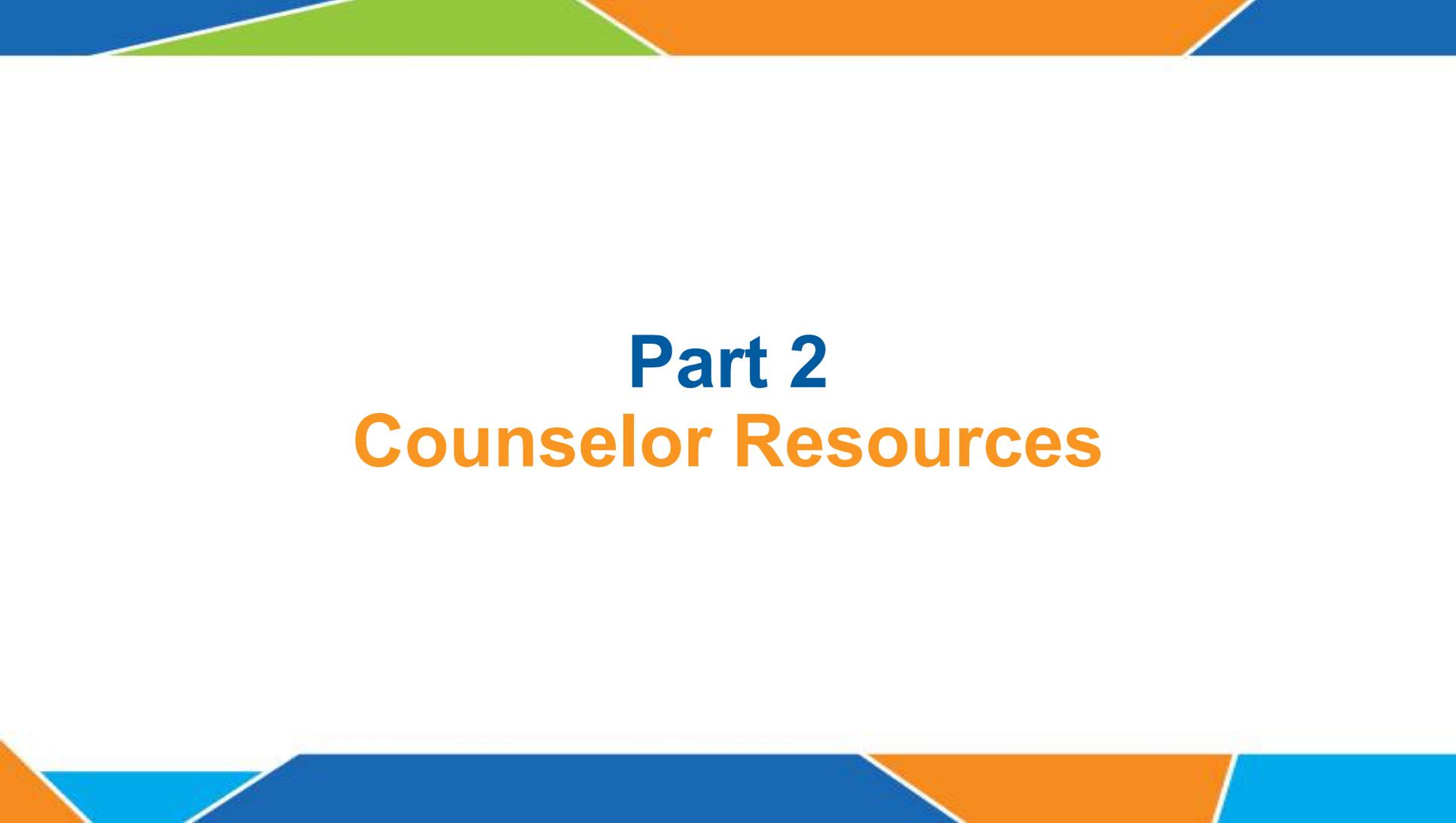
Take a moment now and **send Max an email:**
mgoldberger@dca.nyc.gov, with your

- work phone number(s)
- preferred name/nickname
 - preferred pronouns,
- and if you have any dietary restrictions

(so we can provide the best types of snacks at our gatherings!)

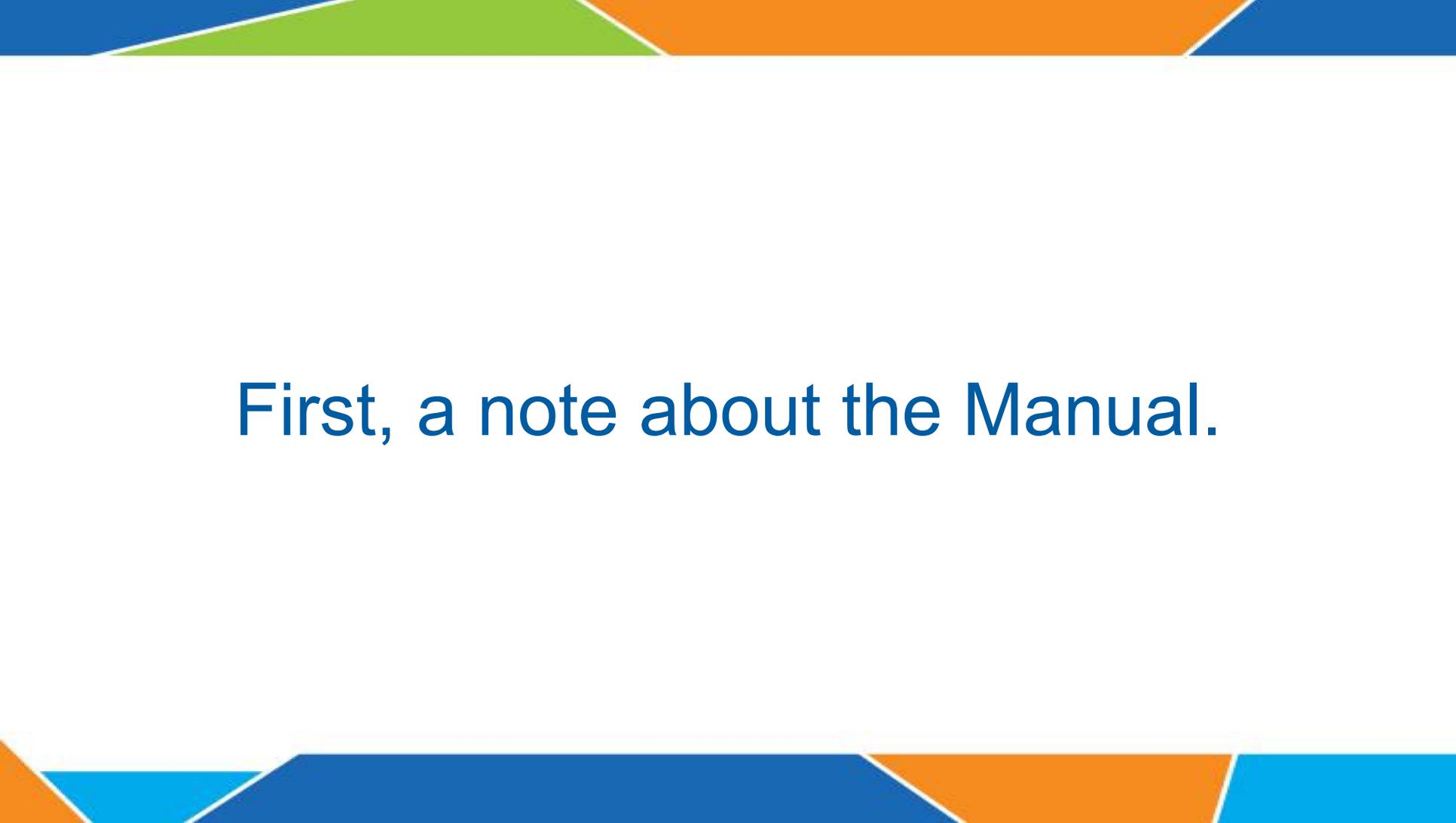


Let's go to Part 2.



Part 2

Counselor Resources



First, a note about the Manual.

The Financial Empowerment Center Manual.

A central focus of this training is the Financial Empowerment Center Manual (known as the Manual throughout this training).

You do not have to read the entire Manual ahead of this training. Instead, you'll be invited to read or scan sections and make notes throughout.

Before you begin working with clients, please ensure you have thoroughly reviewed the Manual.

Your manager will provide you a copy.

The Financial Empowerment Center Manual

The Manual is full of counselor resources, explanations of client outcomes, and other information relevant to your job responsibilities.

For now please take a few moments to **read** the Introduction and Table of Contents on pages **XX** and **scan** the rest of the manual. Jot your responses to the questions below on page 4 of your workbook.

- *What calls your attention as you read through these pages?*
- *As you start out on the job, which section do you anticipate needing first?*

Ok.

Now we are ready for the resources.

Your Toolbox - Counselor Resources

Any occupation requires tools to get the job done right. Being a Financial Counselor is no different.

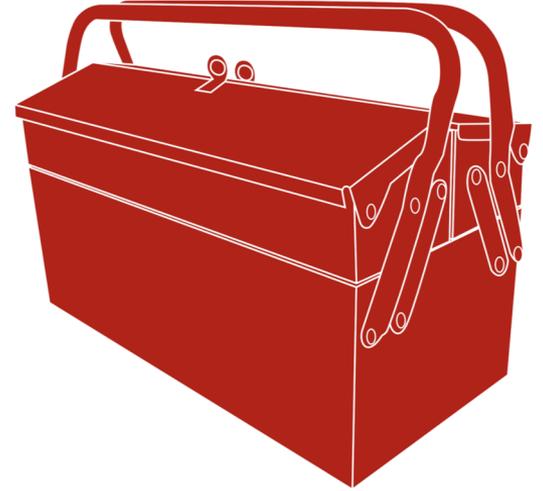
On page **XX** of the Manual, there is a table of all the Financial Counselor Resources currently available to you. There you will see the name of the resource, what it is used for, and where it lives.

Take a few moments to explore this list. As you explore,

- Put a checkmark next to the resources you want to use right away.
- Put a question mark next to those you are curious about.

Then, in your workbook on page 5, respond to these questions:

- *How do you see these resources supporting your work?*
- *What other questions are emerging for you?*



We hope that these Counselor Resources will support you in your work. If at any point you have questions or feedback about these items, please communicate with your manager.

Let's continue to Part 3...



You are halfway finished.

Friendly reminder:

Jot down your questions +
ideas on page 2 of this workbook.





Nice work.



Part 3

The Financial Empowerment Center Model and the Client Journey



Our Model: An Overview

Read the description below of the Financial Empowerment Center Model:

The Financial Empowerment Center Model is a publicly-funded city-wide network of Financial Empowerment Centers which serve adults who live and work in New York City. The model employs a unique approach to offering free, confidential and unbiased financial counseling with the goal of improving their financial health and achieving research-based program outcomes. Centers are typically housed within other social service programs and City agencies.





Let's break it down.

Our Model: Publicly-Funded

The Financial Empowerment Centers are publicly-funded.

That means that you, as a Financial Empowerment Center counselor, are an extension of the City, and are therefore held to high standards and expectations.

Be mindful of this as you work with your clients.

An Example

It's very important that you always offer at least three options when discussing financial products with your clients.

Counselors may not endorse any particular financial institution.

An Example

Carefully consider when and to which services and organizations you are referring clients.

Referrals are made to trusted organizations that offer services at no cost.

Please reach out to your manager to discuss social service referral partners.

Our Model: Open to the Public

As **Financial Empowerment Centers** are required to be open and **available to the public**, this means you'll come across a variety of different client scenarios and that the Centers are available to anyone who lives or works in New York City.

We can and must help anyone who visits a Financial Empowerment Center.

Our Model: Research-Based Outcomes

The outcomes we assist clients achieve are based in research. They are outcomes which are proven to make a difference in our clients' lives.

An Example

Our credit improvement outcome uses a 35-point threshold because research suggests that a 35-point increase in credit score indicates a measurable step towards a move from one credit score grade to the next, e.g. from Fair to Good.

Our Model: Integration with Social Services

Many Centers are located within host sites that have other social service programs. Our model of connecting financial counseling to other social services can help boost the outcomes of the host program, resulting in a [Supervitamin](#) effect through host site partnerships.

An Example

Clients in a workforce development program who have received financial counseling have been found to become employed faster and retain their jobs for longer than those who did not receive financial.

Our Model: Network of Financial Empowerment Centers

OFE analyzes financial health data to strategically place Financial Empowerment Centers in high-need communities across the five boroughs of New York City.

Our Model: Network of Financial Empowerment Centers

Let's take a moment to reflect on our city-wide network.

Click on the map to find your site(s) and those close to you. Jot down in your workbook:

- *What type of financial challenges do you predict clients at this site will have?*
- *What do you know about these challenges that will help your counseling?*



Our Model: Service Delivery

One of the hallmarks of being an effective financial counselor is the ability to build relationships and empathize with your clients.

Watch this video and listen to Gio's story.

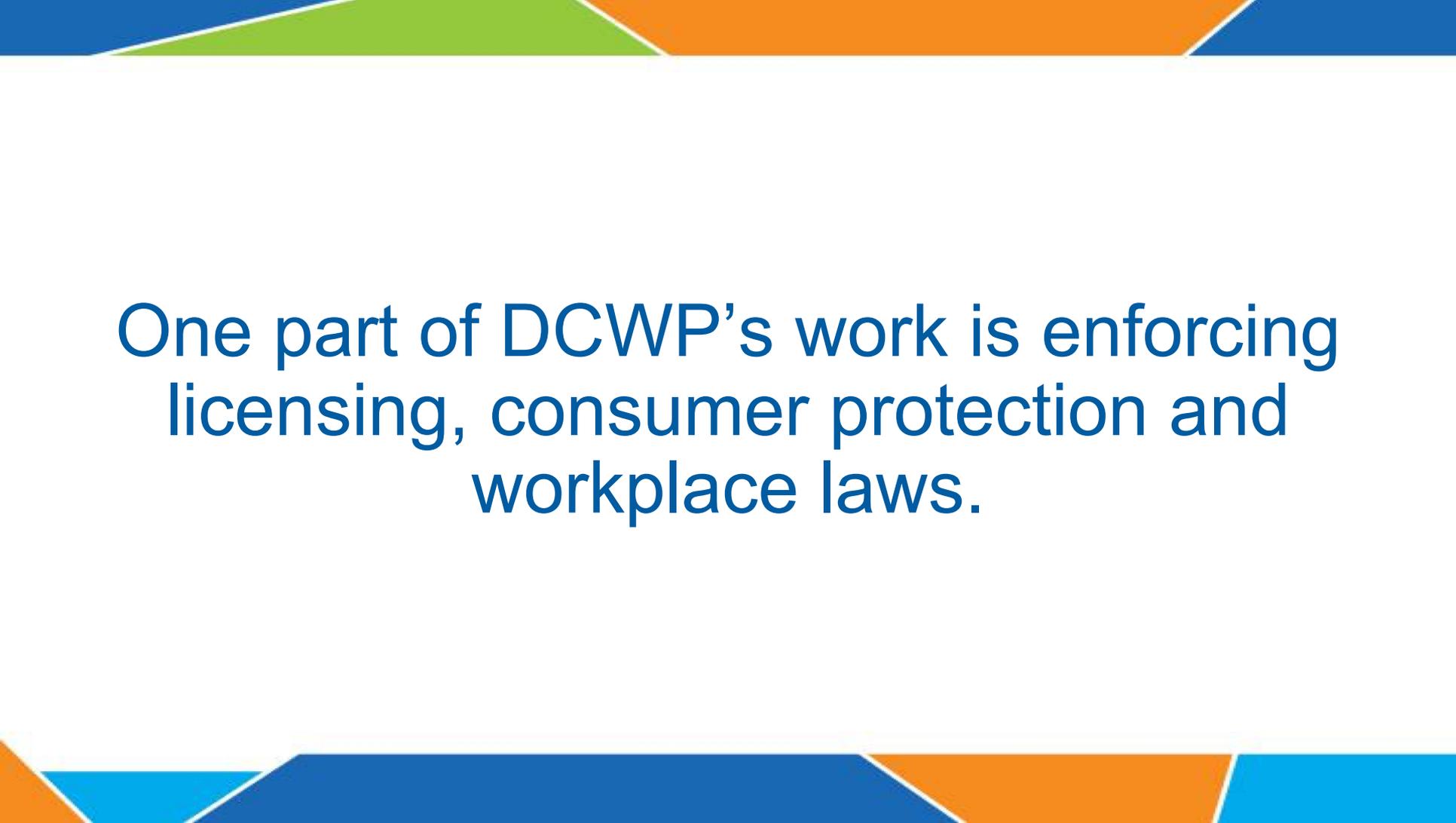
Pretend you are Gio's counselor and answer these questions in your workbook.

- *How would you empathize with his current situation and tie it to his goals?*
- *How would you respond to his trepidation about it being a government service?*
- *What advice would you seek from an experienced financial counselor?*

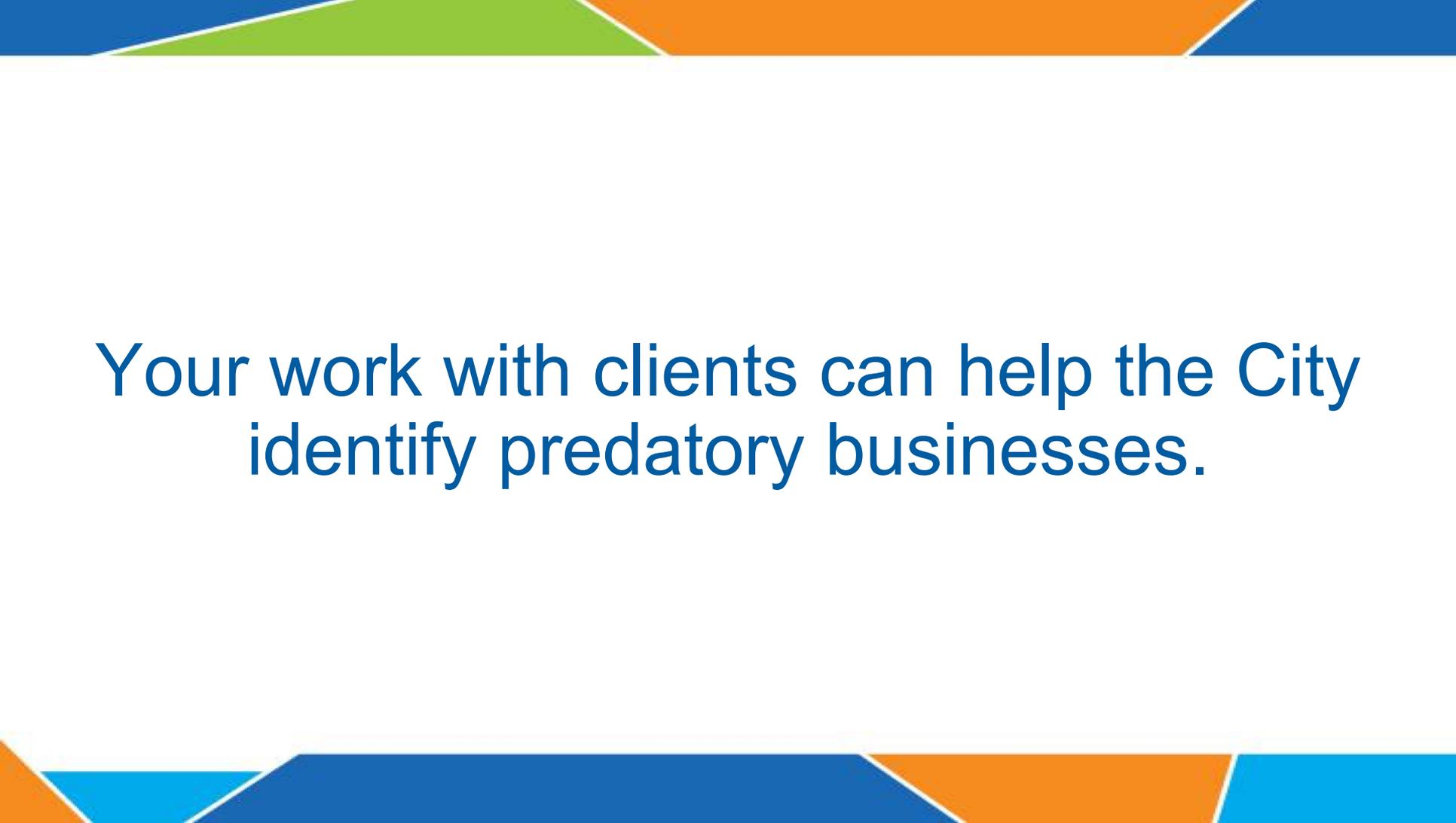




One more important thing
about our model....



One part of DCWP's work is enforcing
licensing, consumer protection and
workplace laws.



Your work with clients can help the City
identify predatory businesses.



For example...

An Example

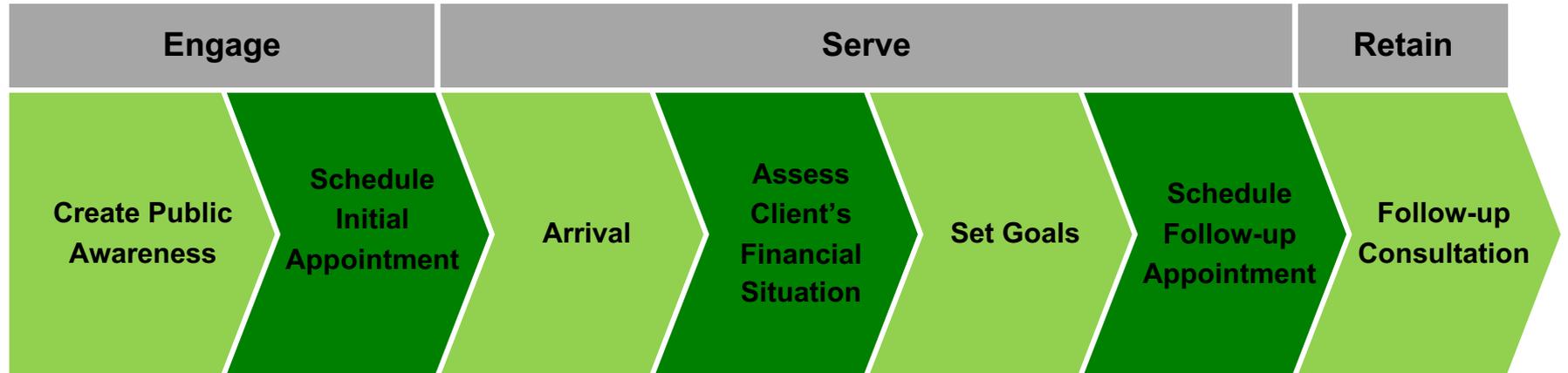
In 2017, a Financial Empowerment Center client helped DCWP build its recent lawsuit against Major World.

The used car dealership company was found guilty of deceptive financing and sales practices and ordered to pay millions of dollars in fines and restitution.



Next we will look at
the Client Journey.

The Client Journey

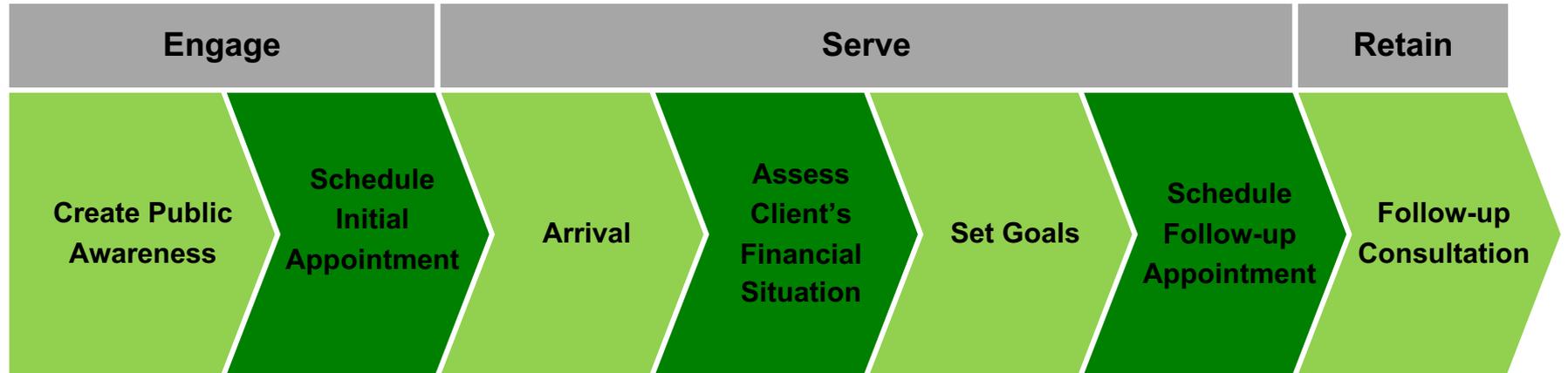


Counselors have found the Client Journey to be a great way to visualize the whole client experience.

The Client Journey provides a high-level view of the client's experience - and allows us to see the flow from their perspective.

You will notice the 3 phases of the client journey are Engage, Serve, and Retain. This framework is also used to structure the Manual.

The Client Journey



In your workbook, write your responses to the following questions:

- *Which phase do you think clients are most comfortable with?*
- *Which phases are the most challenging for them?*

The Client Journey

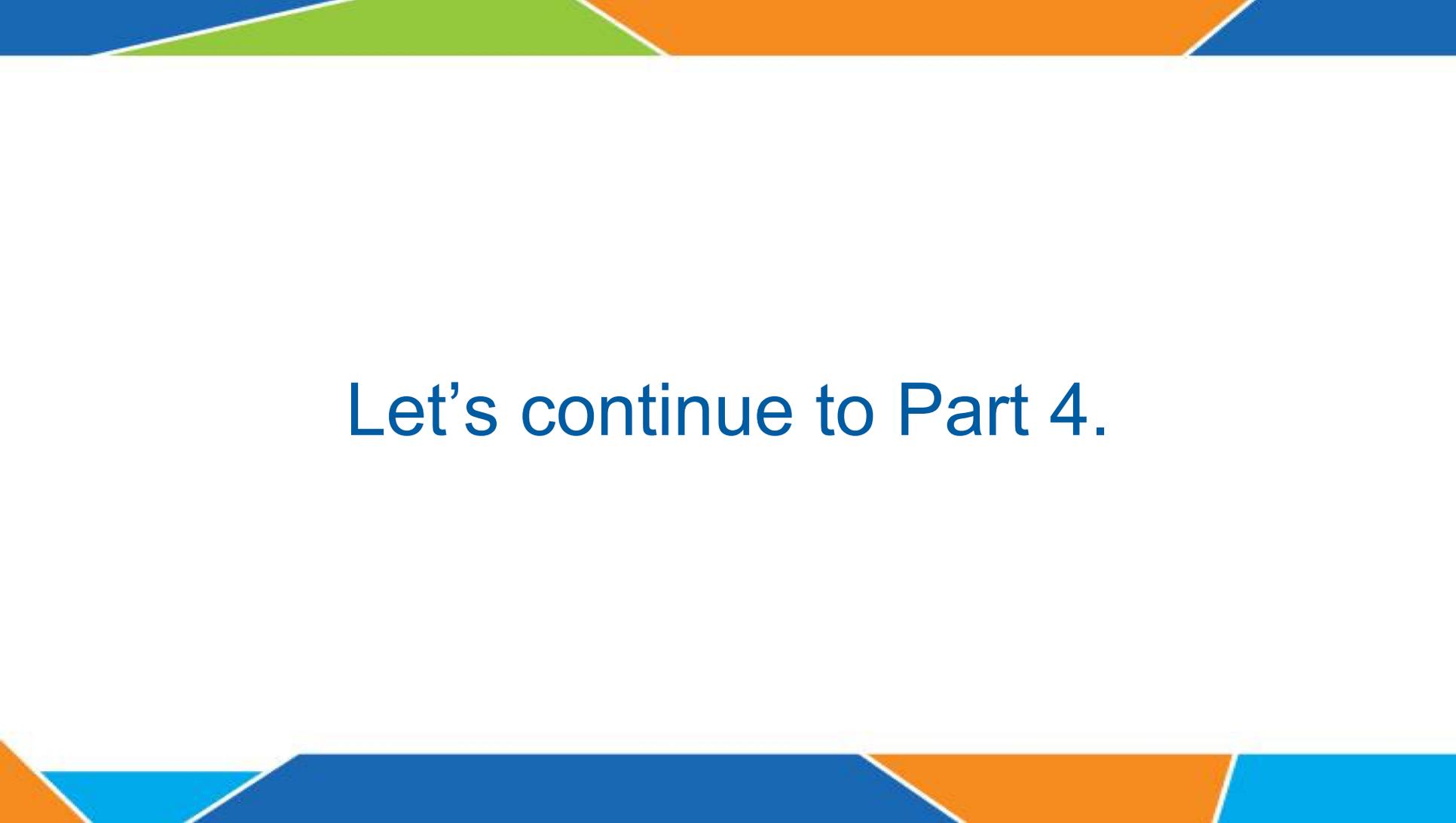
For this next task, please find the Client Journey in your Manual on page **XX**. You will notice more text at the bottom of the visual. Take a few moments to read what the **counselor** is expected to do at each phase.

It is also important to see things from the **client** perspective. Now, go back and read what the client is expected to do at each phase.

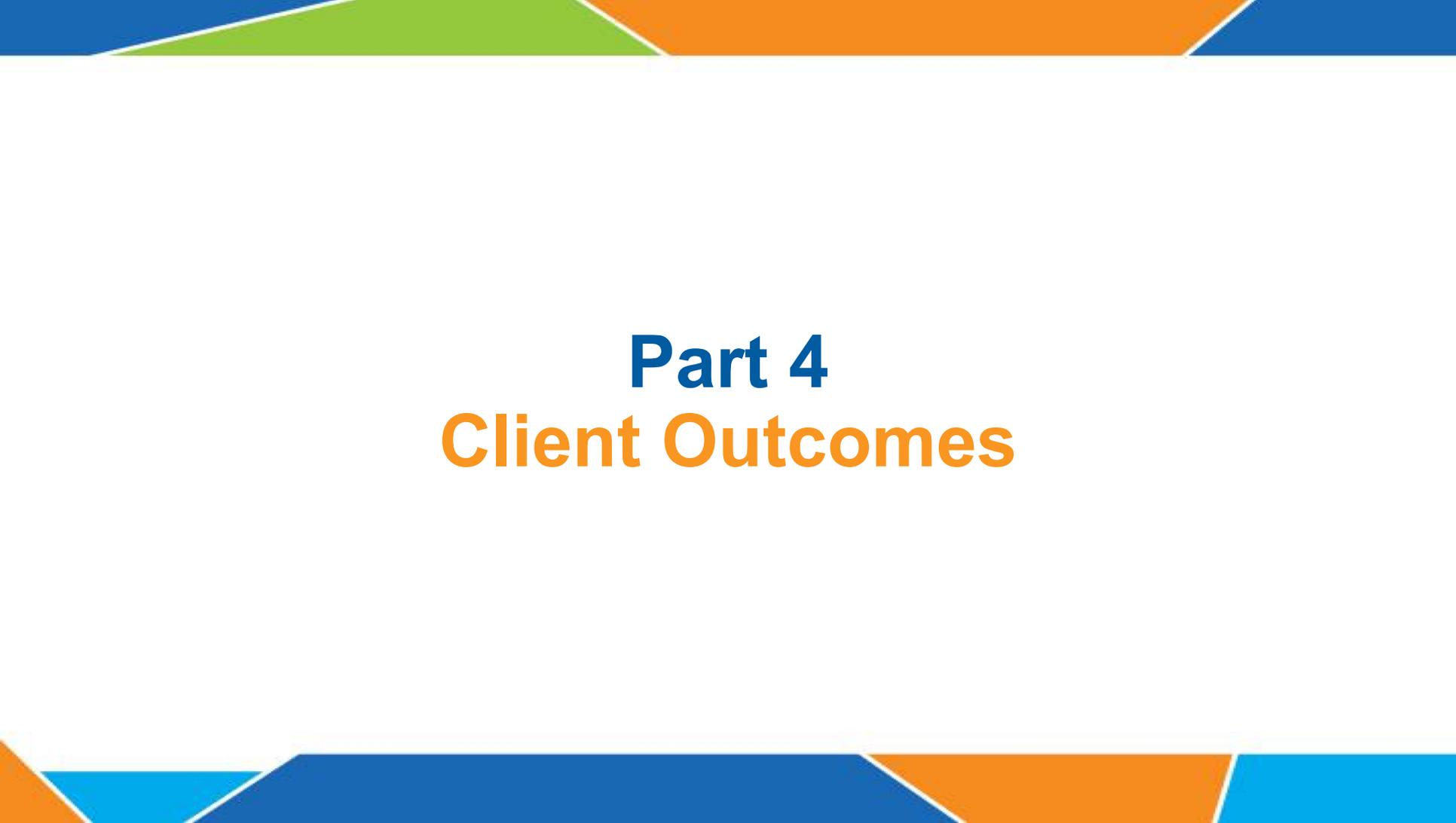
Take a moment to reflect:

- *Where do you feel like you have the most to offer?*
- *Where will your strengths best serve client needs? Where are you feeling confident?*

Strike up a conversation, in-person or via chat, with another new counselor at your organization, if available. Compare your thinking around your strengths and confidence areas.



Let's continue to Part 4.



Part 4

Client Outcomes

Client Outcomes

Perhaps one of the biggest differentiators of our Financial Empowerment Center Model is our **specific research-based outcomes and how we collect them**. You are essential in working with clients to improve their financial health. Documenting achieved outcomes helps track client progress.

On page **xx** of your Manual you will see the table of outcomes.

Take a few moments to read this table – and reflect on your own (personal) financial journey.

- *In which of these areas have you personally experienced positive outcomes?*
- *What helped you to get there?*

Client Outcomes	
Service Area	Outcome
Banking	Client opens a safe and affordable bank account (for clients with no bank account).
	Client transitions to a safe and affordable bank account (for clients with a bank account).
	Client actively uses a safe and affordable bank account for at least six consecutive months (for all clients).
Credit	Client establishes a credit score (for clients with no credit score).
	Client increases their credit score by at least 35 points (for clients looking to improve their credit score).
Debt	Client decreases their debt by at least 10%.
Savings	Client increases their savings by the equivalent of at least one week's net income.
	Client actively maintains a new savings behavior for at least three months.
Goal Achievement	Client achieves a client-selected goal (Client Financial Goal), which could be identified in an initial counseling session or in follow-up counseling sessions. This outcome is tracked separately from the other Outcomes metrics, and could include, but is not limited to a client: <ul style="list-style-type: none">i Paying off a credit card bill in full;ii Resolving identity theft; and/oriii Using savings towards a goal.

Client Outcomes

There is hard work and complexity involved with achieving each of our client outcomes. This video highlights a real client case. Please take a moment to watch it.

As you watch the video, jot down what outcomes you think Elmer might have achieved.

Think beyond financial outcomes (e.g. reduced student debt) to other types of positive factors (e.g. increased confidence).



Another Look at Client Outcomes

Take a moment to re-watch this video.

As you watch, keep these questions in mind:

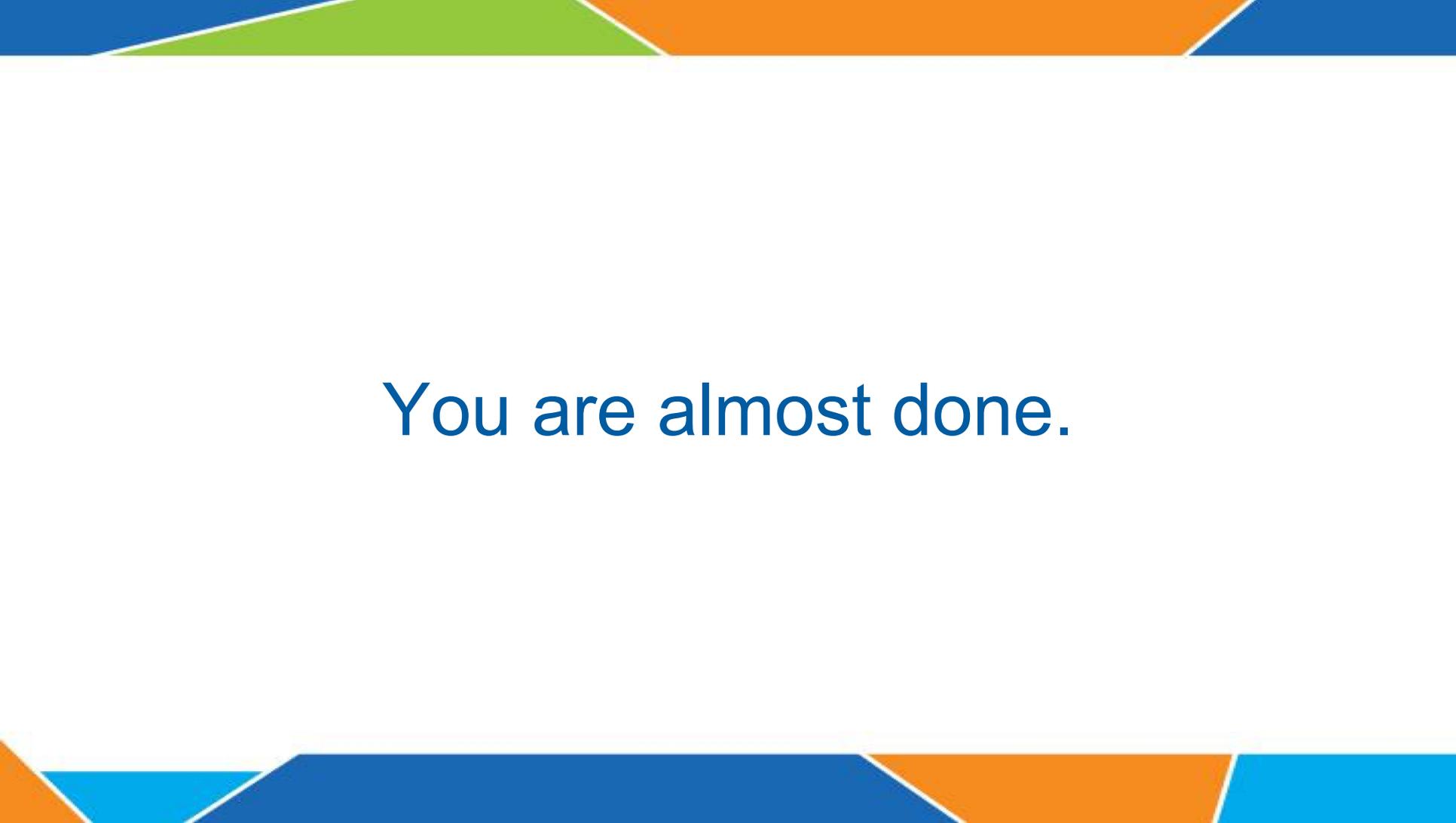
- *What have Alba and Vincent achieved as far as outcomes?*
- *What else was achieved in the session that don't fall into the definition of an outcome?*
- *What are you noticing now that you did not notice before?*

Write down your answers in your workbook.

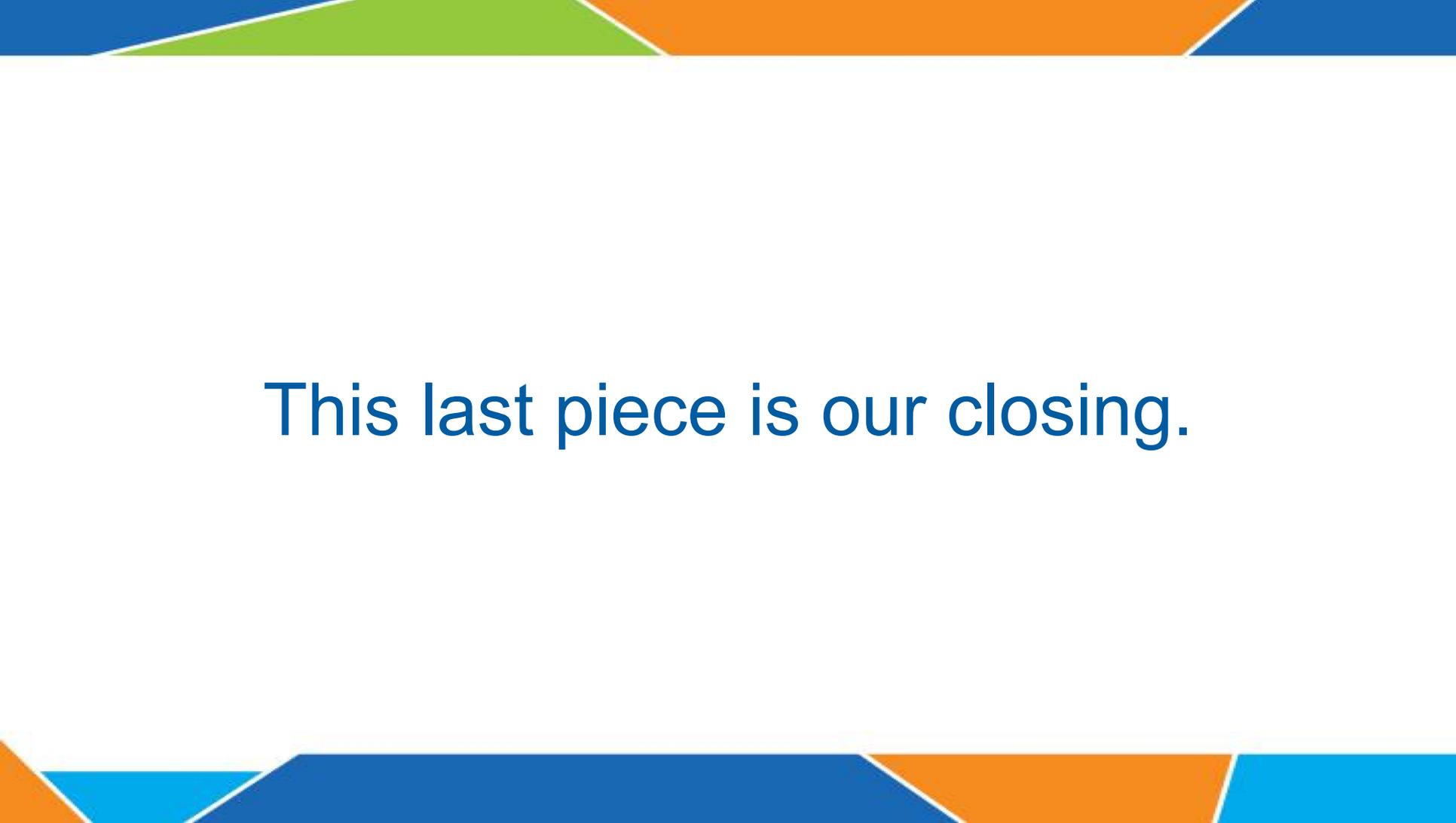




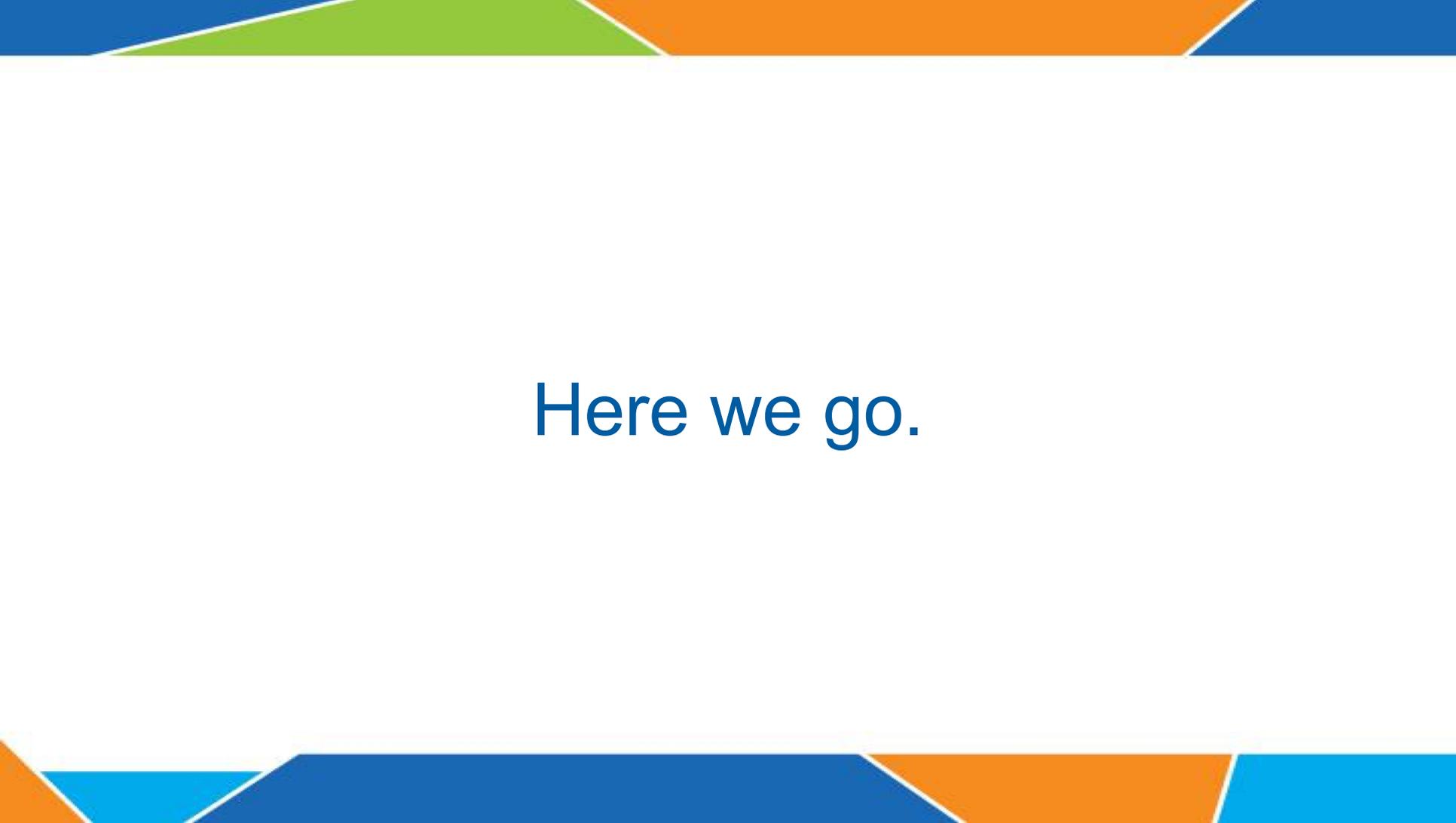
Ok! Awesome work.



You are almost done.



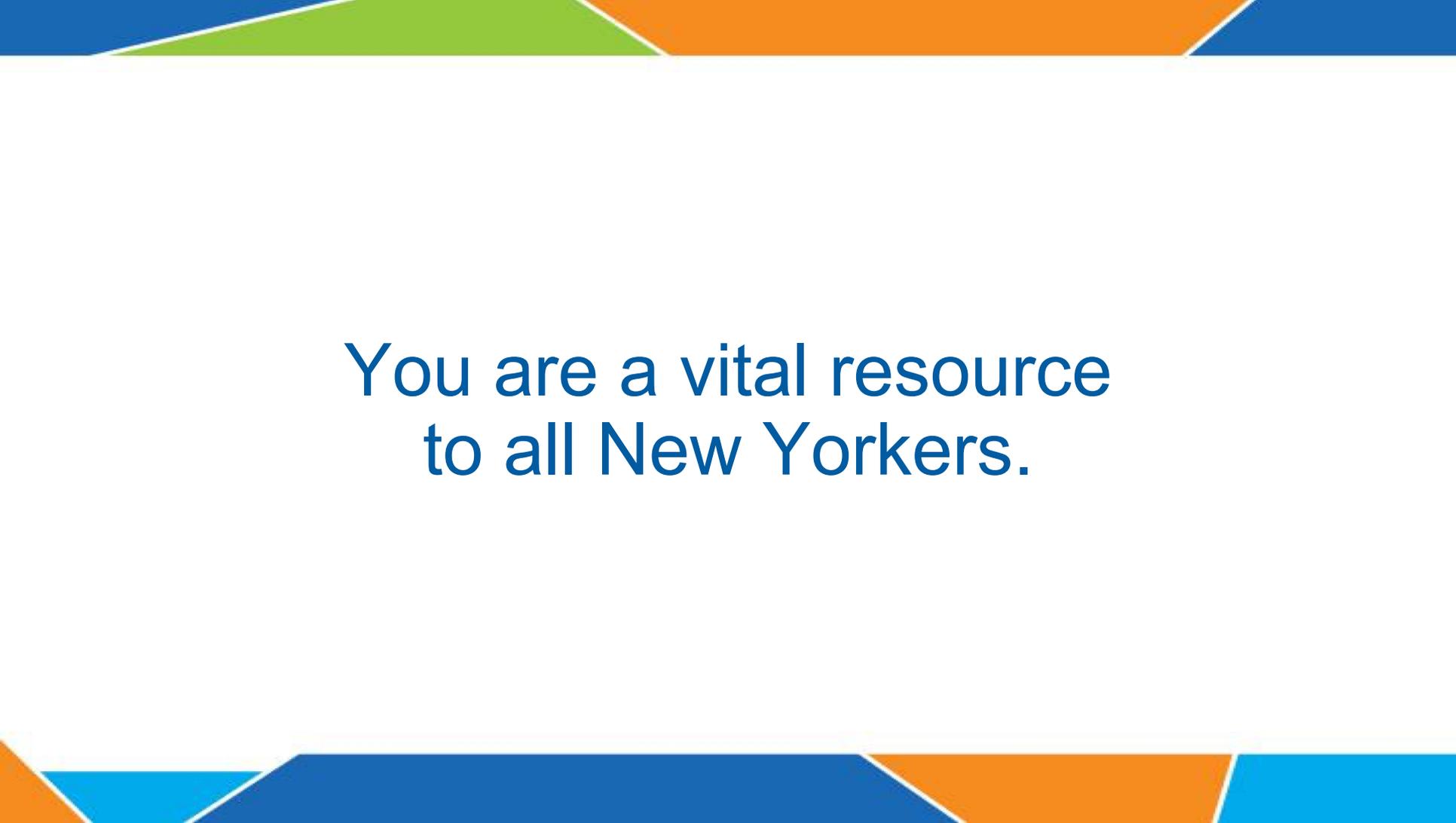
This last piece is our closing.



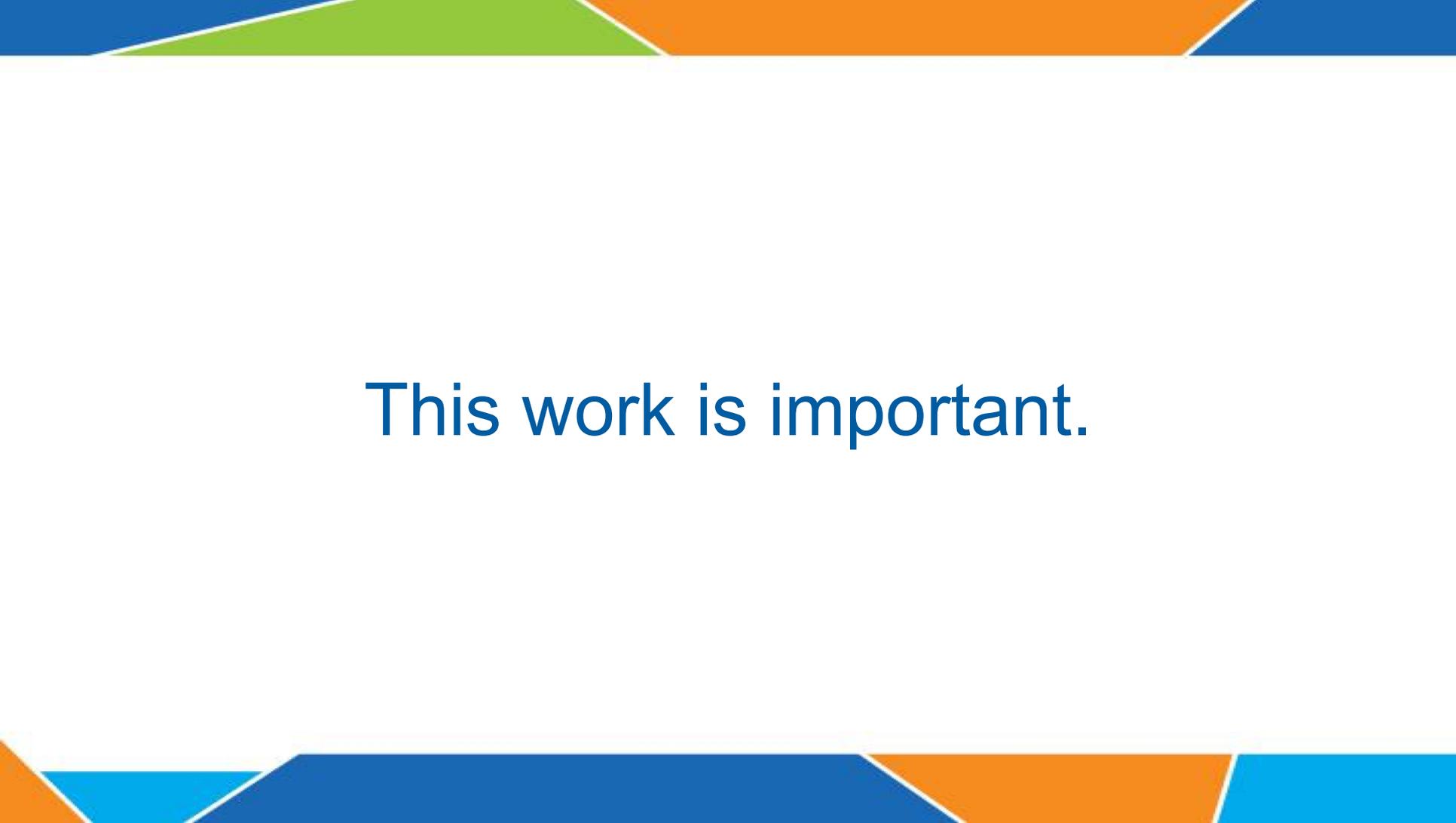
Here we go.



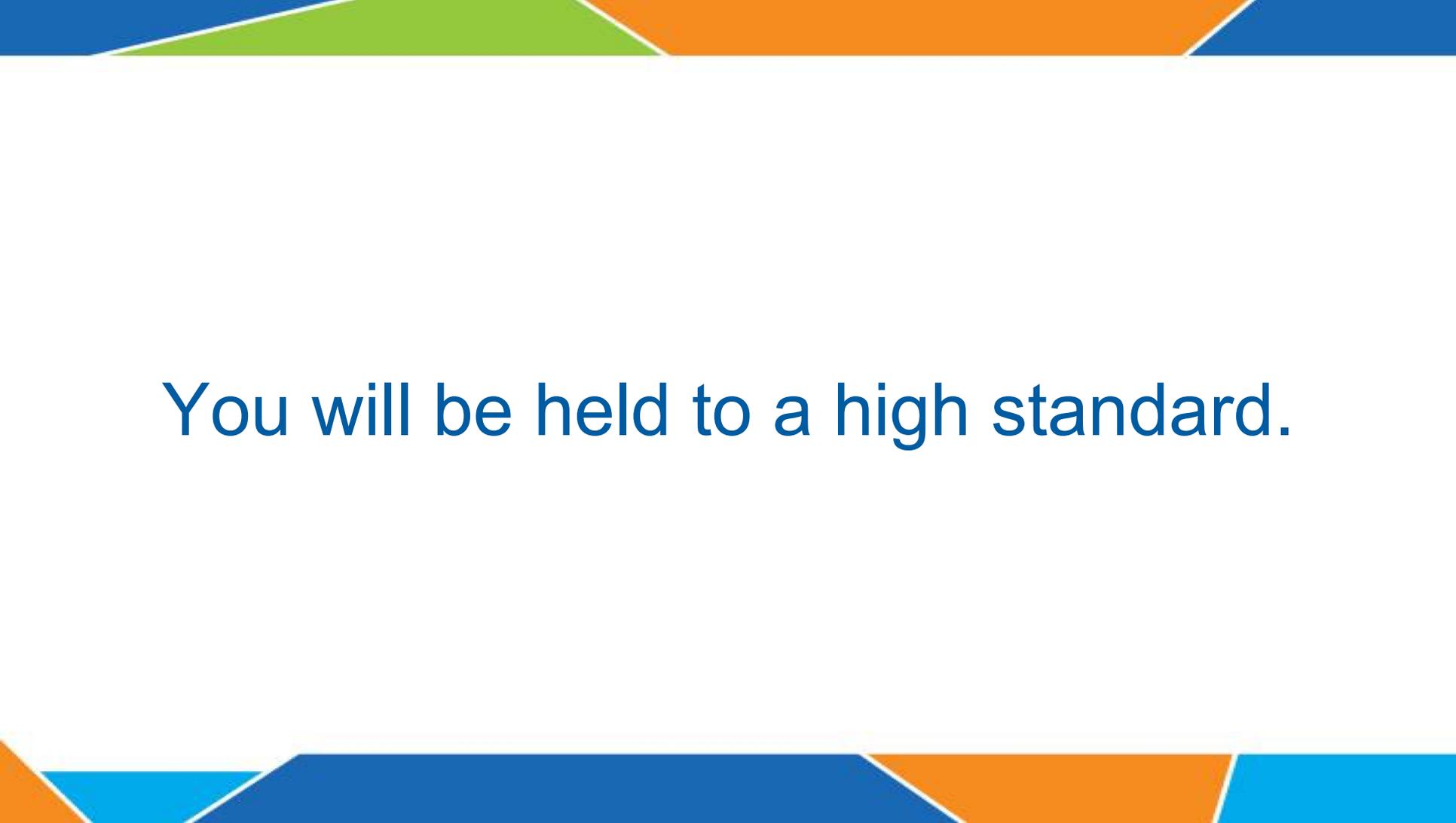
You are now part of the largest and longest running network of Financial Empowerment Centers in the country.



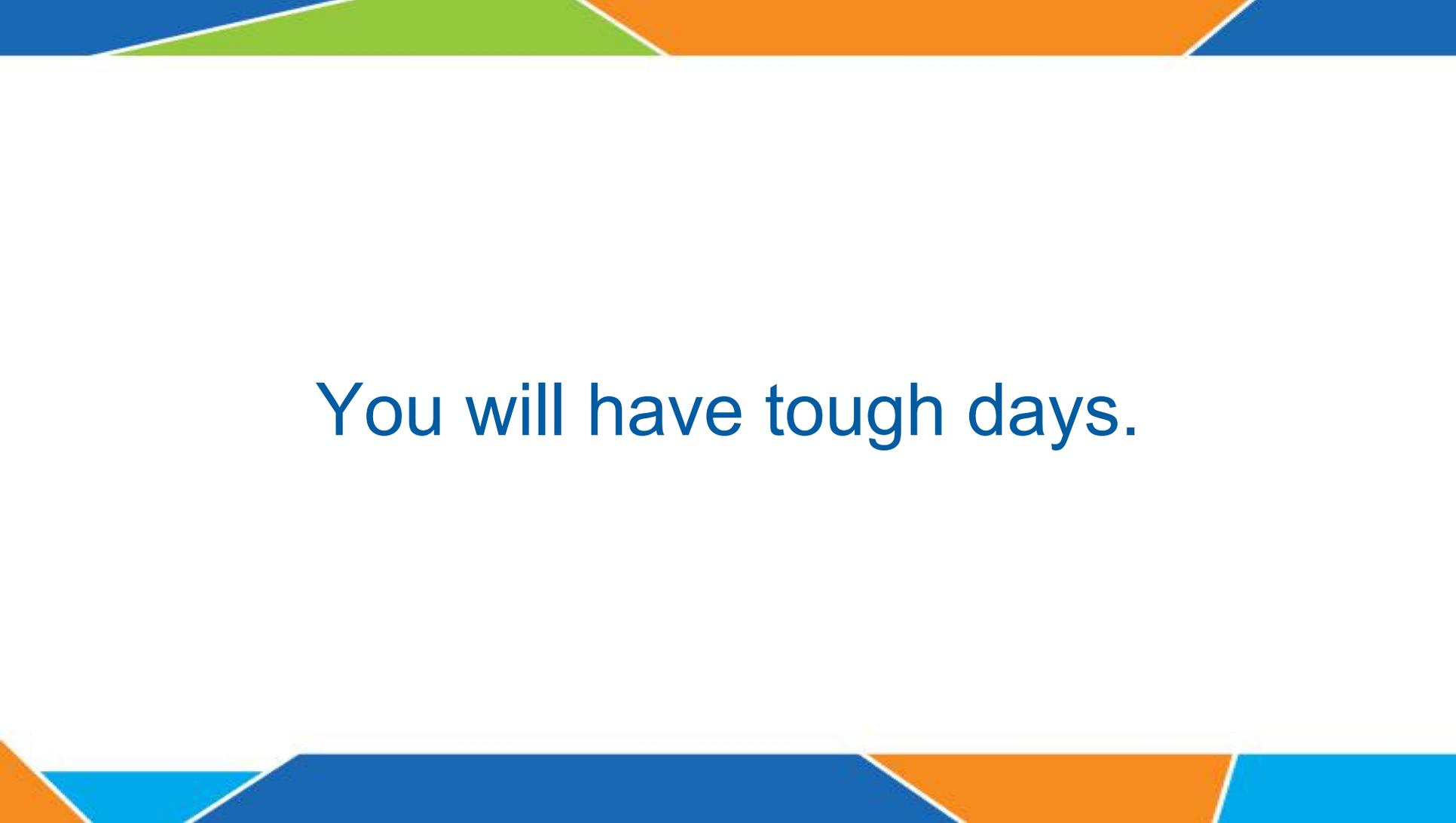
You are a vital resource
to all New Yorkers.



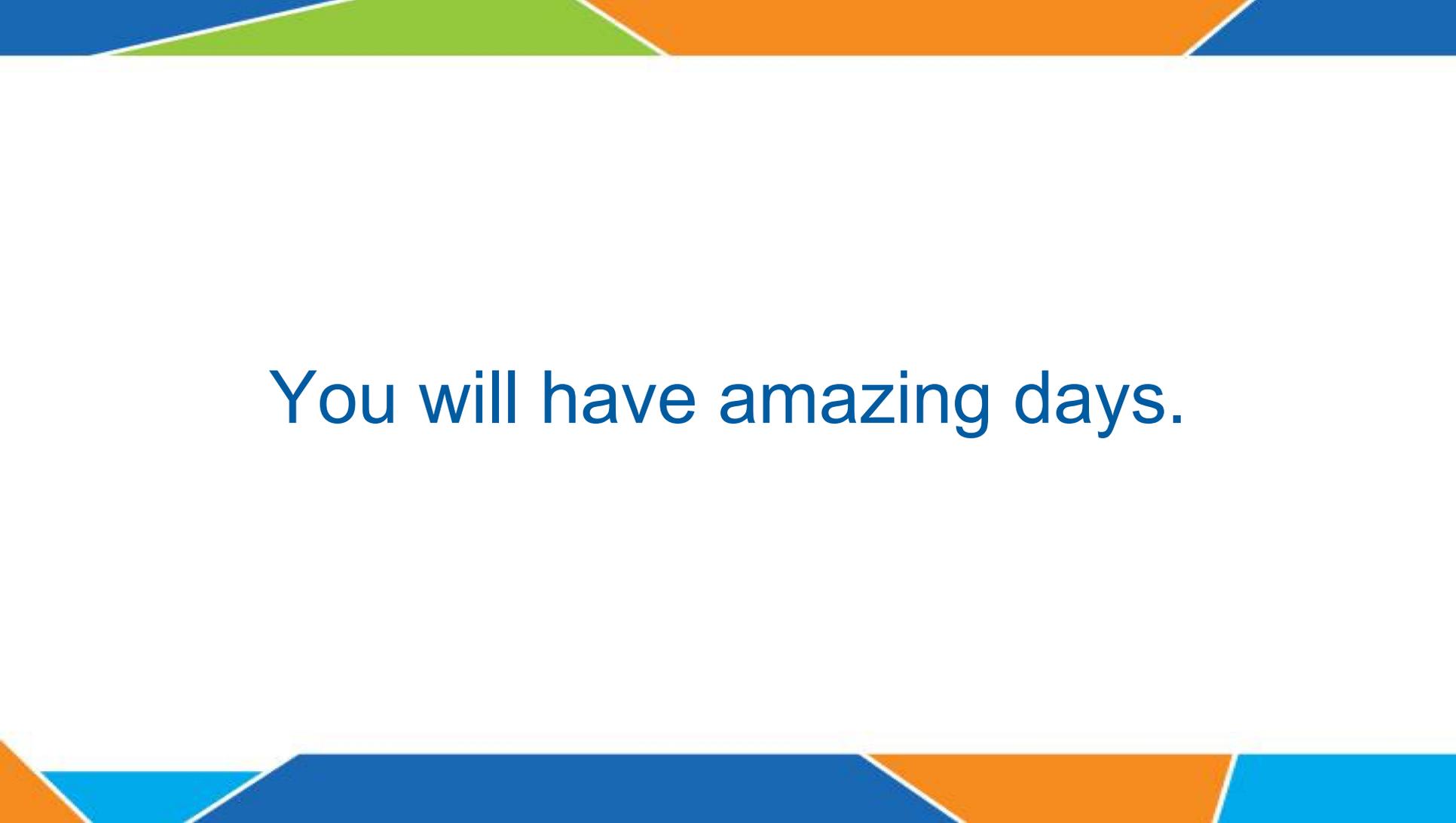
This work is important.



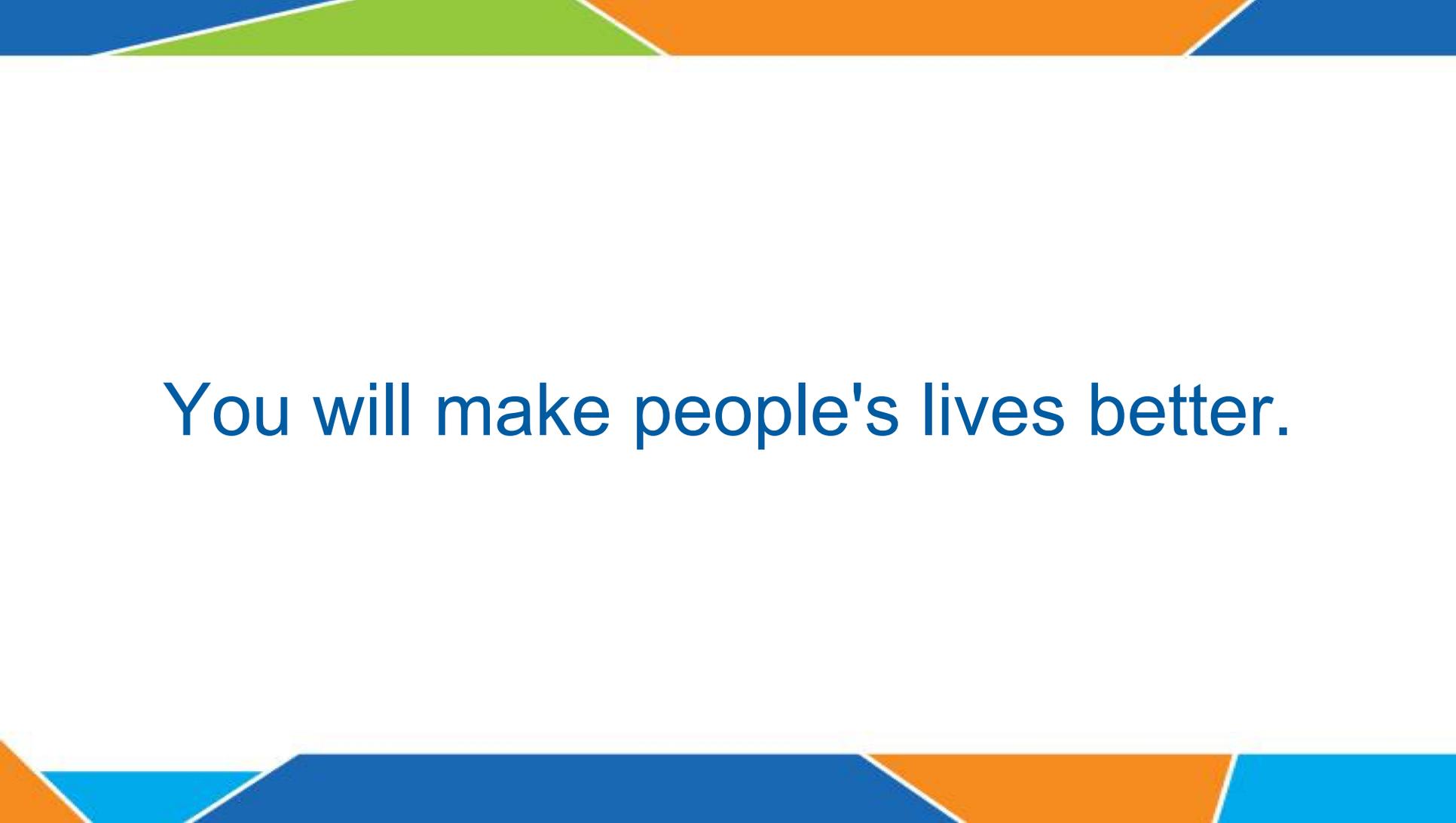
You will be held to a high standard.



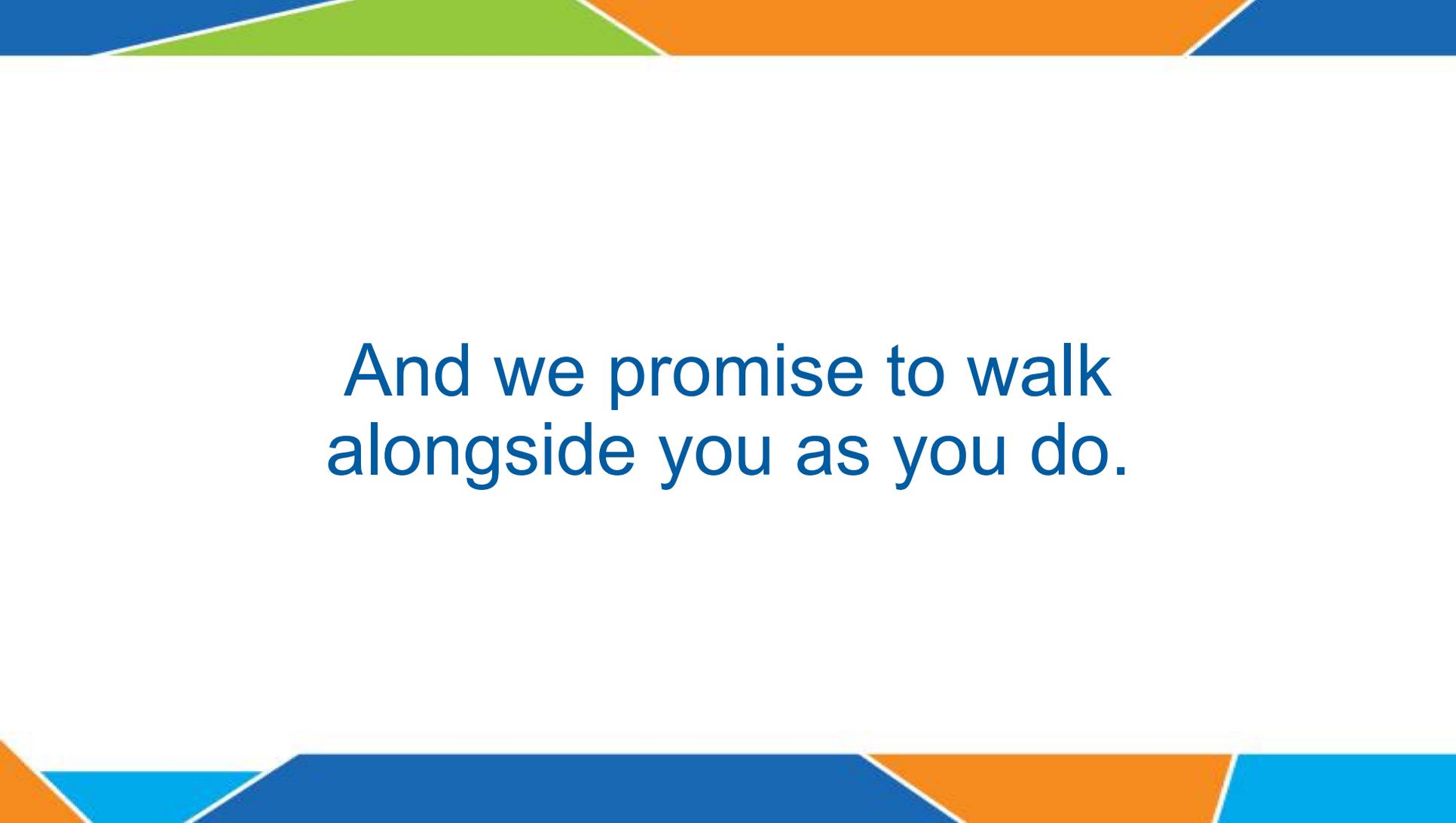
You will have tough days.



You will have amazing days.



You will make people's lives better.

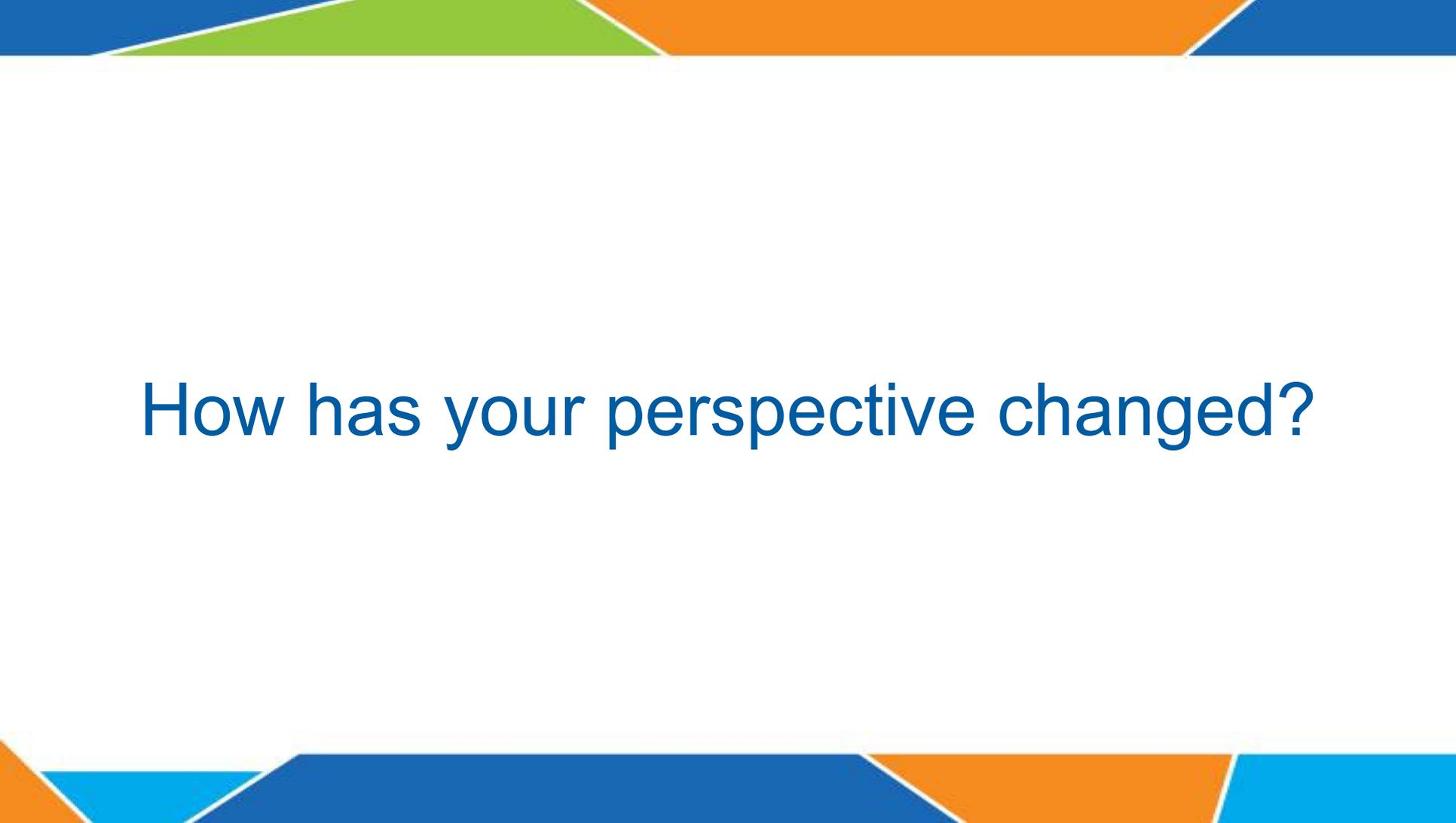


And we promise to walk
alongside you as you do.

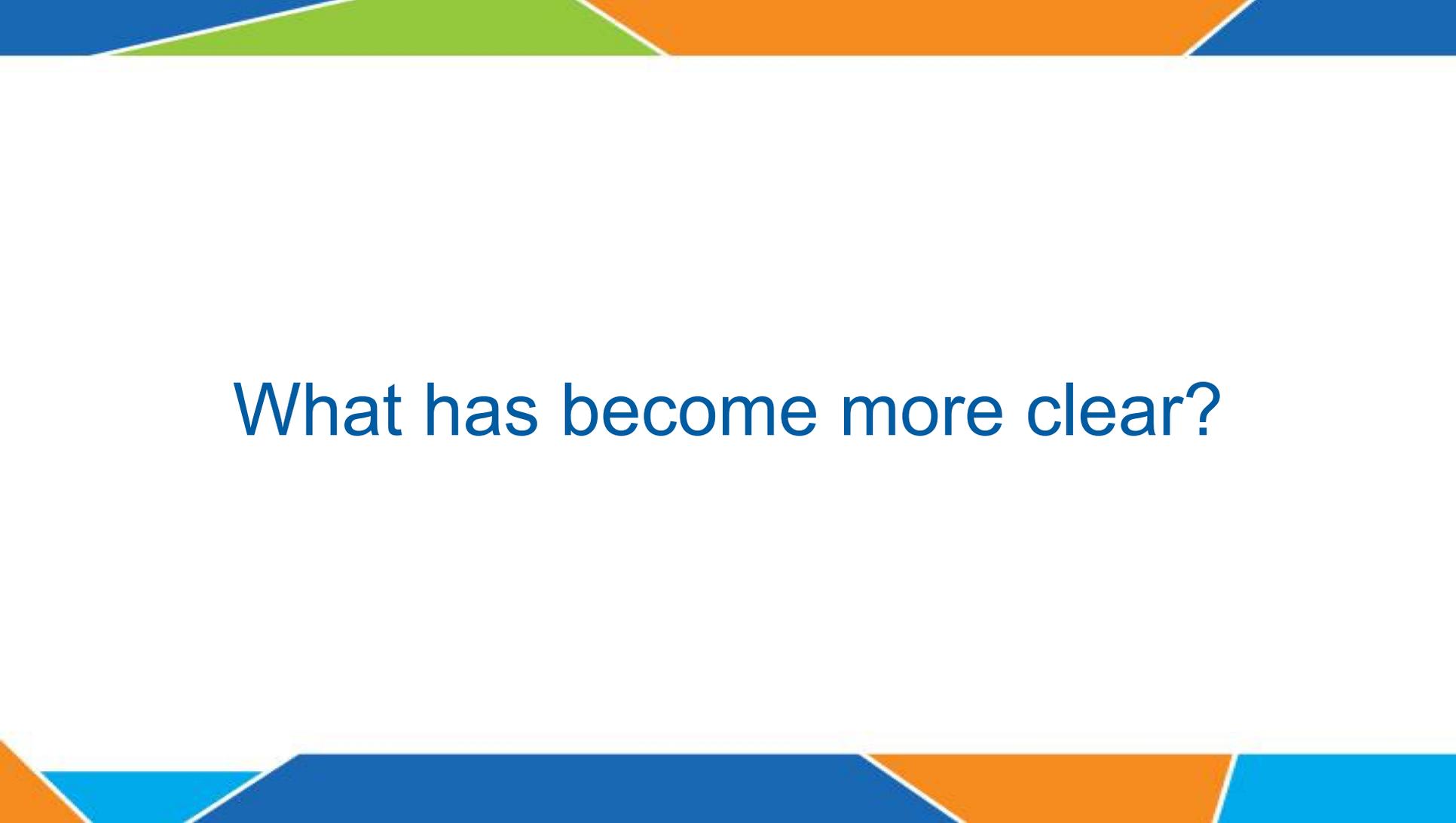


So now that you have a sense of what it means to be a Financial Empowerment Center Financial Counselor...

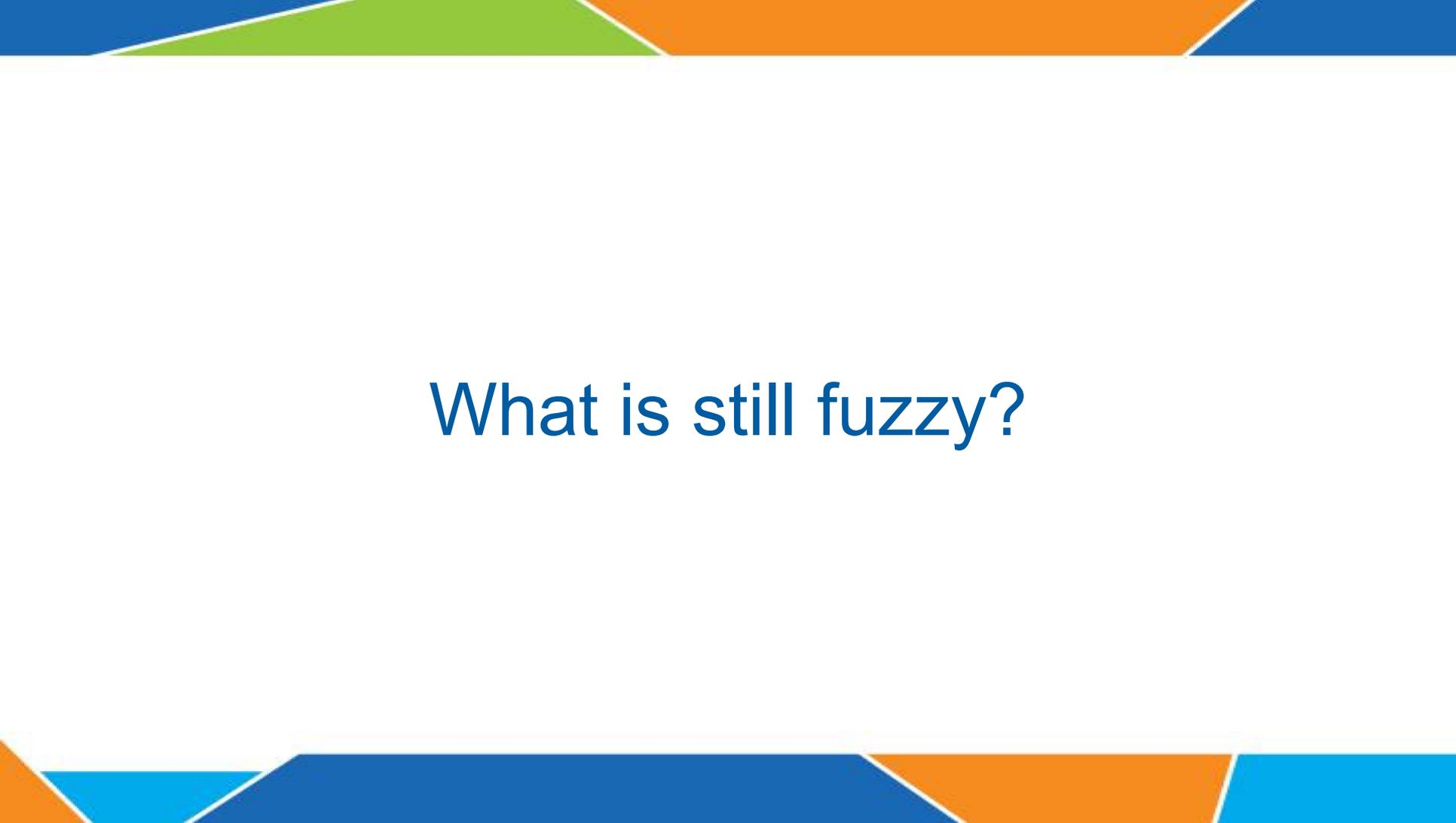




How has your perspective changed?



What has become more clear?



What is still fuzzy?



Please jot down your answers and follow the closing instructions in your workbook.

*Your contributions are critical to the success of our
Financial Empowerment Centers!*





Thank you, and...

Welcome to the Team!

