



**THE BRIDGE
PROJECT**

The Bridge Project in Milwaukee
Partner Toolkit





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BACKGROUND

The Zilber Family Foundation is thrilled to announce we have joined forces with The Bridge Project in an innovative collaboration to introduce Milwaukee's first ever unconditional cash program!

Unconditional cash assistance recognizes mothers' right to make their own financial decisions and delivers more than a check – it plants seeds of economic opportunity. The Bridge Project will help make Milwaukee a model city for demonstrating the positive impacts of unconditional cash on economic stability, child wellbeing, and community health.

Backed by the data and infrastructure of The Bridge Project, the Zilber Family Foundation will provide 100 eligible low-income, pregnant individuals with unconditional cash to be spent on whatever is needed to keep mom and baby healthy and stable for the first two years of the child's life – be it food, formula, rent, childcare, diapers, or any number of other surprise expenses that come with parenting.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This program will be officially announced on **Monday, April 1**, and applications will open on **Wednesday, April 10**.

To help spread the word about this important program, we have developed a partner toolkit for your use including:

- Social media posts and graphics
- Drafted communications for stakeholders and board members
- Applicant flier
- Fact sheet
- FAQs

These materials can be used to refer expectant mothers directly to the application. We are honored to collaborate with so many dedicated partners working to create a better future for Milwaukee. Thank you for your support!



For questions, please contact us at info@bridgeproject.org

[Click here for social media posts](#) that will be shared on the Zilber Family Foundation Facebook page in April as we announce The Bridge Project launching in Milwaukee. We invite you to reshare the posts made by ZFF, or share any of these posts on your social media channels and within your network **beginning April 1** to ensure local families know about this opportunity and how to apply. Please tag the Zilber Family Foundation in your posts.

[DOWNLOAD SOCIAL GRAPHICS HERE](#)



RECOMMENDED HASHTAGS:

- ▶ #BridgeProjectMilwaukee
- ▶ #economicsecurity
- ▶ #birthequity
- ▶ #ZFFBridge
- ▶ #unconditionalcash

SAMPLE: REFERRAL EMAIL TO POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

Share this email with those who may be eligible and interested in applying for The Bridge Project

English Speaking:

Hi,

We're writing to tell you about a new program that you may be eligible for. The program, called **The Bridge Project** (TBP), is a groundbreaking initiative offering unconditional cash transfers to support mothers and their babies in Milwaukee. Aimed at empowering pregnant individuals by providing financial stability, it is part of a broader effort to address child poverty and promote long-term well-being. Launched in 2021 in New York to address high child poverty rates, TBP is expanding to Milwaukee, offering financial flexibility to expecting individuals in need.

The program lasts 24 months, beginning during the third trimester of pregnancy. Mothers who are selected to be a part of The Bridge Project will receive an upfront stipend of \$1,125 and then a monthly total of \$750 for the first 15 months of the program and \$375 a month for the last 9 months, all on a biweekly basis - no strings attached.

In order to apply for The Bridge Project, you must meet all of the eligibility requirements listed below:

- Be 18 years old or older
- Be 23 weeks pregnant or less at time of application
- Live in 53204, 53205, 53206 or 53215 with priority given to those residing in Lindsay Heights, Clarke Square or Layton Boulevard West neighborhoods in Milwaukee, WI
- Have an annual household income of \$39,000 USD or less

If you meet these criteria, please fill out an application **here!** Once you have completed the application, you will receive an email confirming its receipt. As you near your third trimester, someone from The Bridge Project will contact you with an application status update.

Please note, completion of an application does not guarantee program acceptance. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis for eligibility and eligible program participants will be selected by lottery. Applications will remain open until all program slots have been filled. If you are randomly selected to be a part of the program, all money from The Bridge Project will be unconditional and come with no requirements, and you will have the option to keep your participation in the program anonymous.

Please reach out to The Bridge Project directly at info@bridgeproject.org if you have any additional questions about the program.

Thanks!



SAMPLE: REFERRAL EMAIL TO POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

Share this email with those who may be eligible and interested in applying for The Bridge Project

Spanish Speaking:

Hola,

Le escribimos para informarle sobre un nuevo programa para el que puede ser elegible. El programa, llamado **The Bridge Project**, es una iniciativa innovadora que ofrece dinero en efectivo incondicional para apoyar a las madres con bajos ingresos durante el embarazo y los primeros años de la vida de sus hijos proporcionándoles dinero en efectivo constante e incondicional cada dos semanas. Lanzado en 2021 en Nueva York para abordar la alta pobreza infantil tarifas, TBP y se está expandiendo a Milwaukee, ofreciendo flexibilidad financiera a los que esperan individuos necesitados.

El programa tiene una duración de 24 meses, comenzando durante el tercer trimestre del embarazo. Las madres que sean seleccionadas para ser parte de The Bridge Project recibirán un estipendio inicial de \$1,125 y luego un total mensual de \$750 durante los primeros 15 meses del programa y \$375 al mes durante los últimos 9 meses, todo quincenalmente. Sin condiciones.

Para postularse para The Bridge Project, debe cumplir con todos los requisitos de elegibilidad que se enumeran a continuación:

- Tener 18 años o más
- Tener 23 semanas de embarazo o menos al momento de la solicitud.
- Viva en 53204, 53205, 53206 o 53215 con prioridad en los vecindarios Lindsay Heights, Clarke Square o Layton Boulevard West en Milwaukee, WI.
- Tener un ingreso familiar anual de \$39,000 USD o menos

Si cumple con estos criterios, complete una solicitud [aquí](#). Una vez que haya completado la solicitud, recibirá un correo electrónico confirmando su recepción. A medida que se acerque a su tercer trimestre, alguien de The Bridge Project se comunicará con usted para informarle sobre el estado de su solicitud.

Tenga en cuenta que completar una solicitud no garantiza la aceptación del programa. Las solicitudes se revisan periódicamente para comprobar que se cumplan los criterios de aptitud y los participantes para el programa se seleccionan por sorteo entre quienes sean aptos. Se recibirán solicitudes hasta que se completen todos los espacios del programa. Si eres seleccionado al azar para ser parte del programa, todo el dinero de The Bridge Project será incondicional y no tendrá requisitos, y tendrás la opción de mantener tu participación en el programa de forma anónima.

Comuníquese con The Bridge Project directamente en info@bridgeproject.org si tiene alguna pregunta adicional sobre el programa.

¡Gracias!



THE BRIDGE PROJECT COMES TO MILWAUKEE

The Bridge Project seeks to eradicate childhood poverty. It is Milwaukee's first unconditional cash program for moms and their babies, nurturing them from pregnancy through the first two years of life.

This transformative program will provide unconditional cash to eligible low-income, pregnant individuals to empower families and the community through financial assistance.

This program is made possible through generous funding from the Zilber Family Foundation and The Monarch Foundation.



We Believe in Economic Empowerment

Putting money directly in the hands of mothers empowers women to make decisions about their finances and the wellbeing of their babies. Support during the first 1,000 days of life can allow an entire generation to separate from the toxic stresses of poverty, break intergenerational cycles, and provide the environment for children to grow into healthy adults — physically, financially, and mentally.

Leading economists agree that early interventions have the highest return on investment (Heckman Curve).

- Our brains are **25%** grown at birth.
- Our brains are **50%** grown by age 1.
- Our brains are **80%** grown by age 3.

NO BABY SHOULD BE BORN INTO POVERTY

In Wisconsin, about 14% of children, or roughly 1 in 7, live below the poverty line.



Wisconsin's minimum wage remains at the federal minimum of \$7.25 per hour.

Among the 20 states sticking to this minimum wage, 16 see over 12% of their child population living in poverty, highlighting a correlation between low wages and child poverty rates.



Milwaukee contends with the second-highest poverty rate among the top 50 most populated cities in the United States.

44% of children are living in poverty in Zilber Neighborhood Initiative (ZNI) neighborhoods of Lindsay Heights, Clarke Square and Layton Boulevard West.

We Believe in the Power of Simple Solutions

Direct cash is a highly scalable solution that can be rolled out to large populations immediately. It minimizes interference and maximizes impact. It empowers participants to make their own choices for their families.

Cash is simple, flexible and empowering. Unrestricted cash assistance recognizes mothers' right to make their own financial decisions. Additionally, cash allows mothers the freedom to spend on essentials like food, rent, or childcare without restrictions. This approach challenges the stigma that marginalized groups can't manage their finances, promoting autonomy and dignity by trusting them to know what's best for their families.



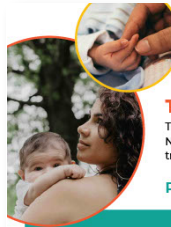
90% of participants reported improvements in their mental health and stress levels after receiving just one payment.



There was a 242% increase in participants having more than \$500 in savings after just 6 months in the program.



Mothers reported less chaos and more harmony in their households (clinical scales used).



THE BRIDGE PROJECT IN ACTION

The Bridge Project will provide 100 eligible low-income, pregnant individuals with unconditional cash. No strings attached. The cash can be spent on anything — food, formula, rent, childcare, diapers — truly, whatever the mother decides. The program duration is two years, beginning June 2024.

Program participants will receive:

\$1,125 one-time, upfront prenatal stipend

\$750 per month for the first 15 months of program participation

\$375 per month for the remaining 9 months of program participation

HOW DO MOTHERS APPLY?

Applications will be available online beginning **APRIL 10, 2024**. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis for eligibility and eligible program participants will be selected by lottery. Applications will remain open until all program slots have been filled. Eligibility criteria includes:

- ▶ 18 years or older
- ▶ 23 weeks pregnant or less
- ▶ Live in 53204, 53205, 53206 or 53215 with priority in Lindsay Heights, Clarke Square or Layton Boulevard West neighborhoods in Milwaukee, WI
- ▶ Have an annual household income of less than \$39,000 USD



IMPORTANT DATES

APRIL 10
Online Program Applications Open

JUNE 1
First Payment Disbursements

Learn more by visiting www.zilberfamilyfoundation.org/thebridgeproject.html or contact us at info@bridgeproject.org

**DOWNLOAD
FACT SHEET HERE**

▶ What is The Bridge Project Milwaukee?

The Bridge Project (TBP) Milwaukee is a groundbreaking initiative offering unconditional cash transfers to support mothers and their babies in Milwaukee. Aimed at empowering pregnant individuals by providing financial stability, it is part of a broader effort to address child poverty and promote long-term well-being. TBP got its start in New York to address high child poverty rates, and is expanding to Milwaukee spring of 2024, offering financial flexibility to expecting individuals in need.

▶ Why was The Bridge Project created?

The Bridge Project was developed by the Monarch Foundation and evolved from the Monarch Foundation's initial work. The Monarch Foundation supported numerous nonprofits across New York City, aiding families and infants. When the pandemic began, it was evident that people needed immediate help, and that organizations couldn't respond fast enough. It became clear that flexible resources — in the form of cash — were the fastest and most efficient way to get them that help. Promptly, efforts to launch The Bridge Project were accelerated. This initiative aims to relieve mothers' financial burdens while setting up their babies for long-term success, empowering them to make life-enhancing decisions such as pursuing education or spending valuable time with their newborns. Building on the program's success in New York, the Zilber Family Foundation is now funding The Bridge Project expansion to Milwaukee.

▶ Why is The Bridge Project coming to Milwaukee?

Milwaukee contends with the second-highest poverty rate among the top 50 most populated cities in the United States. In Zilber Neighborhood Initiative neighborhoods, 44% of children are living in poverty. In Wisconsin, roughly 1 in 7 children — about 14% — live below the poverty line. Zilber Family Foundation is honored to support the launch of The Bridge Project and unconditional cash in Milwaukee, in service of its mission to enhance the wellbeing of individuals, families, and neighborhoods by investing to address basic needs and help ensure personal safety; increase access to social and economic opportunity; and improve the quality of life in neighborhoods.

▶ How does The Bridge Project work?

Eligible pregnant individuals receive a monthly cash transfer to be spent flexibly to cover basic needs and expenses. This support is provided with no strings attached, allowing families to allocate the funds as they see best for their circumstances.

▶ Who is eligible for The Bridge Project in Milwaukee?

The program targets pregnant individuals, focusing on those experiencing financial hardships. Specific eligibility criteria include residency in certain neighborhoods and income below a certain threshold. Eligible program participants will be selected by lottery. Eligibility criteria includes:

- ▶ 18 years or older
- ▶ 23 weeks pregnant or less
- ▶ Live in 53204, 53205, 53206 or 53215 with priority in ZNI neighborhoods of Lindsay Heights, Clarke Square or Layton Boulevard West in Milwaukee
- ▶ Have an annual household income of less than \$39,000 USD

▶ How do mothers apply?

Applications will be available online beginning April 10, 2024. Applications are reviewed for eligibility on a rolling basis. Applications will remain open until all program slots have been filled. Eligible program participants will be selected by lottery. To apply, visit www.bridgeproject.org.

▶ Why cash?

Cash is simple, flexible and empowering. Unrestricted cash assistance recognizes mothers' right to make their own financial decisions. Additionally, cash allows mothers the freedom to spend on essentials like food, rent, or childcare without restrictions. This approach challenges the stigma that marginalized groups can't manage their finances, promoting autonomy and dignity by trusting them to know what's best for their families.

▶ Why babies?

Decades of research shows how important the first 1,000 days of a baby's life are in setting a foundation for the rest of their life, which leads to better social and economic opportunities.

The Bridge Project aims to take a preventative approach, providing support early on to set up success. In providing mothers with unrestricted cash for the first two years of their child's life, The Bridge Project helps provide a stable start to life - which can have positive lifelong and even generational effects.

▶ Why focus on a baby's first two years?

In providing mothers with unrestricted cash for the first two years of their child's life, The Bridge Project helps provide a stable start to life - which can have positive lifelong and even generational effects.

▶ What is the financial assistance structure?

Participants receive between \$375 and \$750 monthly, with durations and amounts tailored to ensure critical support during a child's first two years of life, aiming to provide a foundation for a prosperous future. Program participants will receive:

- ▶ \$125 one-time, upfront prenatal stipend
- ▶ \$750 per month for the first 15 months of program participation
- ▶ \$375 per month for the remaining 9 months of program participation

▶ Can participants spend the money on anything?

Yes, recipients can use the funds to meet any of their needs or priorities, from rent and utilities to childcare and educational expenses, offering flexibility not found in traditional benefit programs.

▶ What impact has The Bridge Project had in other cities?

Early data from The Bridge Project's New York cohorts has shown that with the unconditional cash transfers, moms were better able to afford child care and build up emergency savings. Longer-term research found the payments increased organization and harmony within the household — which is critical in stabilizing a baby's earliest days and helping to prevent lifelong harm and benefit society at large.

Previous cohorts of The Bridge Project have demonstrated that unrestricted cash can even have a positive impact on employment. The flexibility of a cash safety net allows mothers to take an hour off work for an interview without needing to stress about paying the bills that month, so they can pursue better opportunities for their families and themselves.

The response to The Bridge Project has been resoundingly positive. Participants in New York have used their unrestricted cash to pay for things like safe strollers, childcare, rent for stable housing, and even a washing machine so that, during COVID lockdowns, they could minimize trips to the laundromat that could put baby and mother's health at risk.

▶ How is The Bridge Project Milwaukee funded?

The program is supported through generous funding from philanthropic partners like Zilber Family Foundation that awarded \$1,575,000 to The Bridge Project to support cash transfers to mothers, and by the Monarch Foundation that supports the program administration costs.

▶ How do you measure the project's success?

The Bridge Project is already seeing promising results. Early insights showed moms were better able to afford child care and to build up emergency savings. Longer-term research found the payments increased organization and harmony within the household — which is critical in stabilizing a baby's earliest days and helping to prevent lifelong harm and benefit society at large. We already know cash at scale is successful — the expanded Child Tax Credit in 2021 slashed child poverty by nearly half. The question isn't does it work, it's clear it does. The question now is how to structure it so it works best, which is what The Bridge Project is doing with multiple cohorts.

▶ How can I get involved?

To get involved with The Bridge Project Milwaukee and learn more about how you can support or participate, visit www.zilberfamilyfoundation.org/thebridgeproject.html or contact us at info@bridgeproject.org.

▶ What's the ultimate goal of the project?

The Bridge Project and Zilber Family Foundation believes every baby in this country deserves to be cared for, with the hope that one day there will be some version of this program across the U.S. The expanded Child Tax Credit is seen as a crucial start. At the core of this program is the reality that it's much easier to prevent harm in the first place than try to undo it after the fact — those first years of a baby's life are skin to building a house. One can only adjust so much in the early stages, but once the house is built it's very difficult to make changes to the foundation.

For more information on The Bridge Project in Milwaukee, visit www.zilberfamilyfoundation.org/thebridgeproject.html

[DOWNLOAD
FAQs HERE](#)



PREGNANT INDIVIDUALS IN MILWAUKEE CAN RECEIVE UP TO \$750 A MONTH OVER TWO YEARS - NO STRINGS ATTACHED!

HOW?

In collaboration with The Bridge Project, The Zilber Family Foundation is introducing Milwaukee’s first unconditional cash program to empower families and our community through financial assistance. Eligible mothers participating in the program will receive monthly cash payments with no restrictions!

HOW DO I QUALIFY?

- 18 years or older
- 23 weeks pregnant or less
- Live in Milwaukee zip codes 53204, 53205, 53206 or 53215, with priority in Zilber Neighborhood Initiative (ZNI) neighborhoods of Lindsay Heights, Clarke Square and Layton Boulevard West
- Have an annual household income of less than \$39,000 USD

HOW DO I APPLY?

Fill out an application at <https://bridgeproject.org/apply/> or by using this QR code →



FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT US AT info@bridgeproject.org



LAS PERSONAS EMBARAZADAS DE MILWAUKEE PUEDEN RECIBIR HASTA \$750 AL MES DURANTE DOS AÑOS, SIN COMPROMISOS

¿CÓMO PARTICIPO?

En colaboración con The Bridge Project, The Zilber Family Foundation está presentando el primer programa de ingreso garantizado de Milwaukee para empoderar a las familias y a nuestra comunidad a través de asistencia financiera. Las madres elegibles que participen en el programa recibirán pagos en efectivo mensualmente sin restricciones.

¿CÓMO CALIFICO?

- 18 años de edad o mayor
- 23 semanas de embarazo o menos
- Vivir en Milwaukee, códigos postales 53204, 53205, 53206 o 53215, con prioridad en los vecindarios de la Zilber Neighborhood Initiative (ZNI) de Lindsay Heights, Clarke Square y Layton Boulevard West
- Tener un ingreso del grupo familiar de menos de \$39,000 USD

¿CÓMO LO SOLICITO?

Rellene una solicitud en <https://bridgeproject.org/apply/> o use este código QR →



SI TIENE PREGUNTAS, ESCRIBANOS A info@bridgeproject.org



COV POJ NIAM CEV XEEB TUB HAUV MILWAUKEE TUAJ YEEM TAU TXAIS NYIAJ NTAU TXOG \$750 TAUJ IB LUB HLIS MUS TXOG OB XYOOS – YAM TSIS TAS YUAV TSUM TAU UA IB QHO DAB TSI LI!

YUAV UA LI CAS?

Nyob hauv txoj kev ua hauj lwm koom tes ua ke nrog The Bridge Project, lub koom txoos pab nyiaj Zilber Family Foundation yog Milwaukeee thovj qhov kev pab cuam muab nyiaj pab rau cov tesv neeg thiab pab lub zej zos kam muaj lub zog pab tau lawv tus kheej. Cov niem muaj feem tau kwais uas koom rau hauv qhov kev pab cuam no yuav tau kwais nyiaj ntsuab thhua hli yam tsis muaj kev tow dab tsi li!

YUAV UA LI CAS KUV THIAJ MUAJ FEEM TAU TXAIS?

- Muaj hnub nyoog 18 xyoo los yog siab dua ntawd
- Cev xeeb tub tau 23 lub lim piam lawm los yog tsawg dua
- Nyob hauv Milwaukee cov zip codes 53204, 53205, 53206 los yog 53215, ua ntej tshaj yog nyob hauv Zilber Neighborhood Initiative (ZNI) cheeb tsum ntawm Lindsay Heights, Clarke Square thiab Layton Boulevard West
- Tsev neeg muaj cov nyiaj tau los tauj xyoo tsawg dua \$39,000 USD

KUV YUAV UA NTAWV THOV LI CAS?

Ua ib daim ntawv thov nyob rau ntawm <https://bridgeproject.org/apply/> yog siv tus cim QR no →



YOG MUAJ LUS NUG, THOV TIV TAUJ PEB NTAWM info@bridgeproject.org

**DOWNLOAD
APPLICANT FLIERS
HERE**

Available in English, Spanish, Hmong, Rohingya, and Laotian!