



The Bridge Project in Milwaukee

An unconditional cash transfer program
for mothers and babies in Milwaukee



APRIL 2024

WELCOME



ABOUT US



The Zilber Family Foundation is a private, independent grantmaking institution, dedicated to enhancing the wellbeing of individuals and communities. For more than 15 years, the Zilber Family Foundation has invested in Lindsay Heights, Clarke Square, and Layton Boulevard West to increase access to social and economic opportunity and improve the quality of community life. Cash transfers align with our priorities as an intervention to meet the needs of today, interrupt cycles of generational poverty, and reduce racial inequality.

THE BRIDGE PROJECT

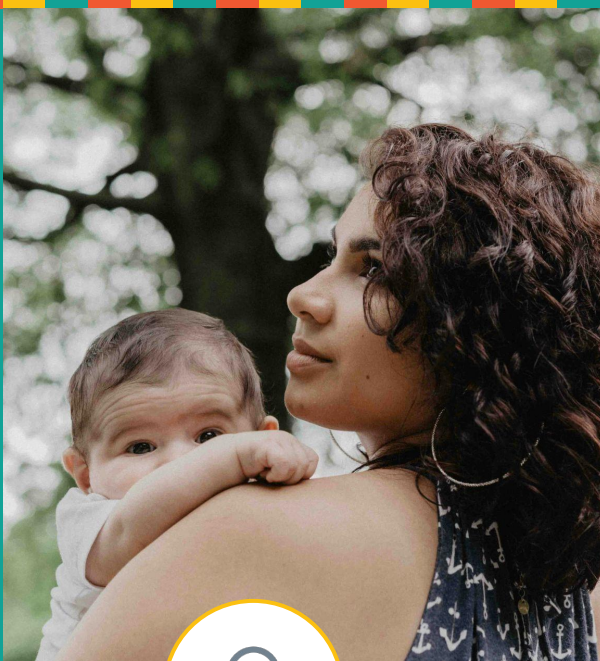
The Bridge Project (TBP) is the nation's first, consistent, unconditional cash transfer program for new mothers and their babies. By investing directly and flexibly in early childhood, the program aims to break the cycle of stress and poverty passed down through generations, and enhance socioeconomic mobility of families. The goal of The Bridge Project is to build a foundation for prosperity that transcends generations. Through trust, cash and community, The Bridge Project now supports over 1,200 mothers across New York in tackling child poverty.

WHY

Strategy Alignment

Unrestricted cash helps participants meet basic living costs, increase opportunities, and better their quality of life.

Too many people on the brink are forced to make impossible choices. Nobody should have to choose between paying bills or putting food on the table.



The Zilber Family Foundation strives to address basic needs and ensure personal safety, increase access to social and economic opportunity, and improve the quality of life in neighborhoods.



Unrestricted cash cuts across these three strategies as an intervention to reduce generational poverty and racial inequality.

MONEY SOLVES POVERTY.



Unrestricted cash plants seeds of economic opportunity and trusts the agency of people for how and on what terms they build their lives, provide for their families, and contribute to society.

WHY

The Bridge Project

Experienced team, established program

Commitment to best practices

Family-centered program design

Backed by the Monarch Foundation - wants to invest in Milwaukee

A need for The Bridge Project's model in Milwaukee:

- Milwaukee ranks as the worst metro area for Black women's economic outcomes
- Disparities persist: Higher levels of death among Black and Hispanic infants and their mothers in Wisconsin

5x

Black birthing people have about five times the pregnancy-related mortality rate relative to their white counterparts in Wisconsin.

3x

Black infants in Wisconsin are three times more likely to die than white infants

1.4x

Hispanic infants in Wisconsin are three times more likely to die than white infants

We all recognize the challenges our community faces



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.**

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



It's time for us to empower families and get cash into the hands of those that need it

WHY UNRESTRICTED CASH?

Cash offers simplicity and versatility, allowing mothers the freedom to spend it on anything – food and formula, rent or car repairs, childcare or diapers – recognizing their right to make their own financial decisions.

This approach challenges the stigma that low-income families can't manage their finances, promoting autonomy and dignity by trusting them to know what's best for their families.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS 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

Program Eligibility

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:

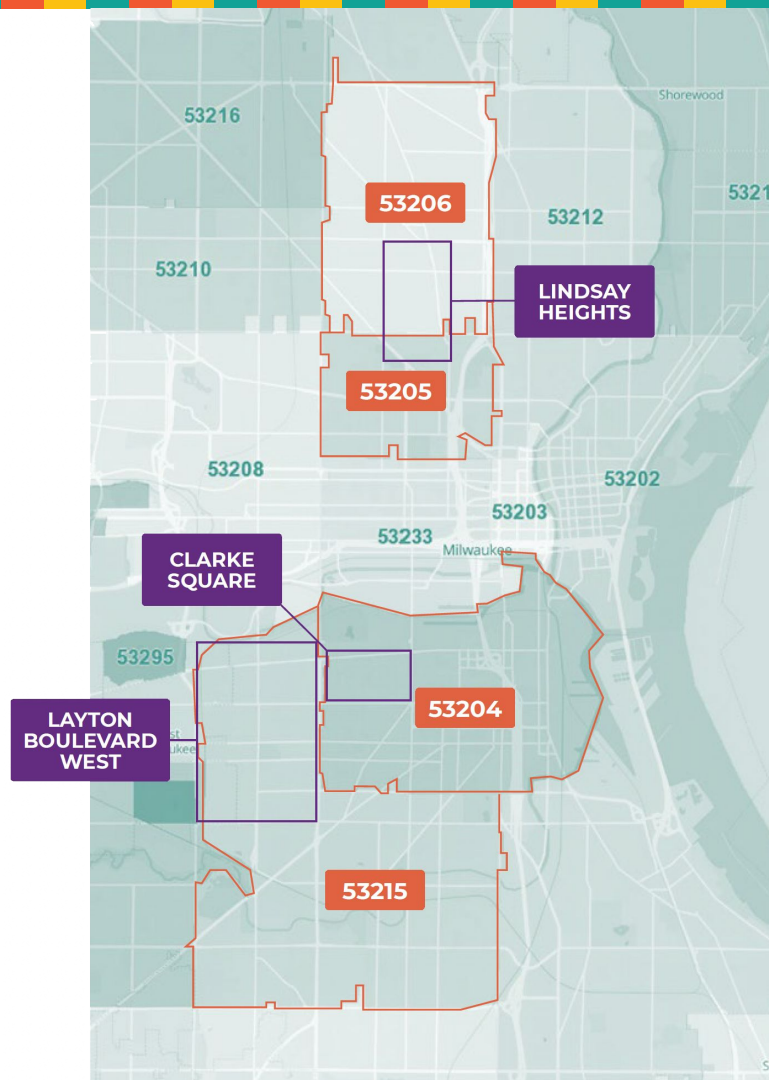
▶ **18 years or older**

▶ **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**

No SSN or ITIN required



THE BRIDGE PROJECT ROLLOUT

Timeline for Milwaukee

APRIL 10

JUNE 1

June



Applications Open

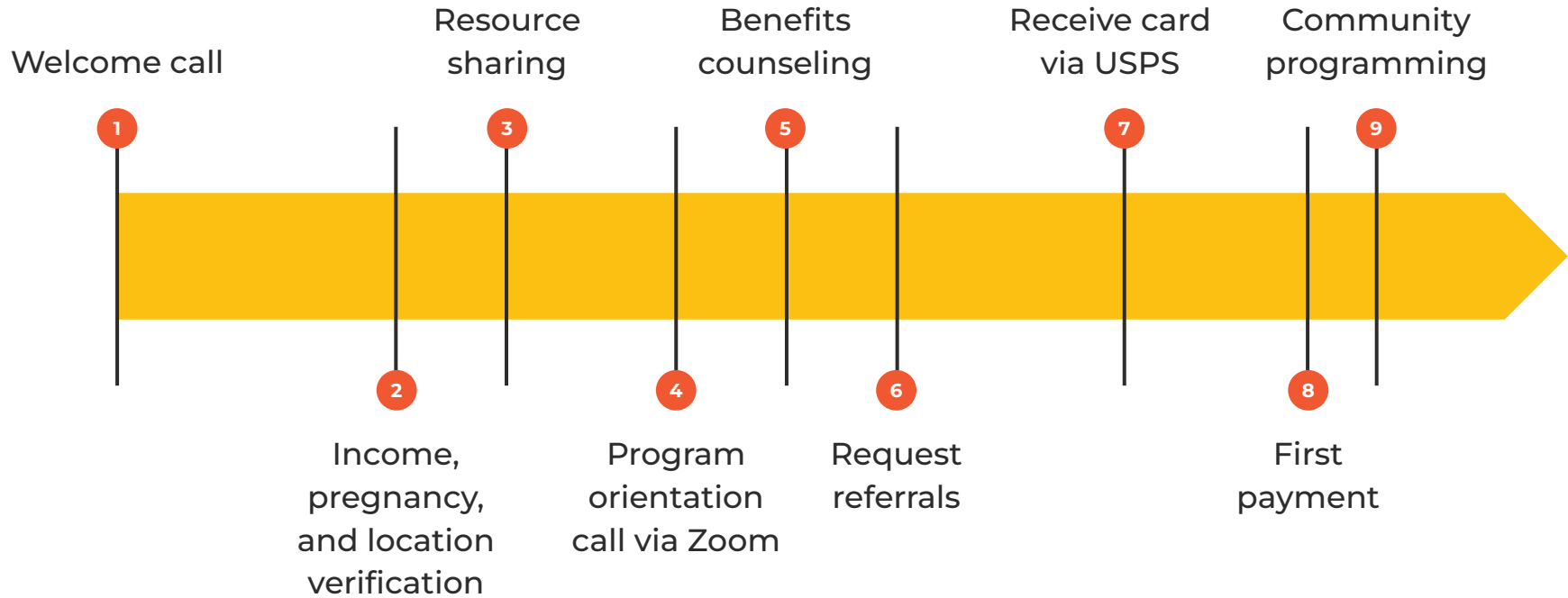


First payments go out



Community groups kick off via WhatsApp

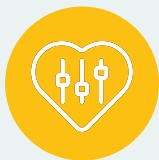
Participant Onboarding Process



The Impact

The Bridge Project has partnered with UPenn's Center for Guaranteed Income Research and are conducting a randomized control trial.

EARLY INSIGHTS INCLUDE:



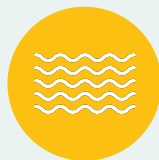
90% of participants reported improvements in their mental health and stress levels after receiving just one payment.



There was a 63% increase in participants receiving outside childcare after just 6 months in the program.



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).



Milwaukee participants have the opportunity to participate in qualitative and quantitative research to inform maternal health and early childhood outcomes.

Next Steps



How you can engage:

- Pass along application and recruitment materials to clients or mothers you serve. **We will share these materials with you all on April 10 via email**
- Connect us to recruitment partners (people who serve mothers or where first time mothers engage)
- Connect us to referral partners (people who serve mothers and families more broadly)
- Help us sustain the program with financial support

How we will engage:

- Provide updates on recruitment and reach in Milwaukee (September 2024)
- Update on research efforts and stories of Milwaukee mothers in the program



Questions?



Email us at:
info@bridgeproject.org

