

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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APPLICATIONS OPEN: THE BRIDGE PROJECT UNCONDITIONAL CASH PROGRAM ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR MILWAUKEE MOMS AND BABIES

The Zilber Family Foundation offers unconditional cash funding for low-income, pregnant individuals in Milwaukee

MILWAUKEE – Today, [The Bridge Project](#), in partnership with the [Zilber Family Foundation](#), opened applications for Milwaukee's first unconditional cash program, following last week's announcement of the innovative collaboration. The Bridge Project will provide 100 eligible low-income, pregnant individuals with unrestricted 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 expenses that come with parenting.

"As we open applications for The Bridge Project in Milwaukee, we're not just providing financial support; we're extending a lifeline to families in our community, creating a pathway to economic mobility and a healthier, brighter future," said Gina Stilp, Executive Director of The Zilber Family Foundation. "The Zilber Family Foundation has a long history of commitment to innovative solutions that tackle poverty head-on. Through our partnership with The Bridge Project, we are holding true to that legacy and harnessing unconditional cash support to uplift those in Milwaukee who need it most."

Program participants will receive a one-time prenatal stipend of \$1,125, followed by monthly payments of \$750 for the first 15 months and \$375 for the remaining nine months. Eligible program participants will be selected by lottery. Eligibility criteria includes:

- 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; and
- Have an annual household income of less than \$39,000 USD.

The application process will remain open until all program slots are filled, offering a crucial chance for financial assistance aimed at securing a prosperous future for participating families.

"The Bridge Project is a significant opportunity to demonstrate how investments in people – particularly mothers and their babies – can be transformative. I want to lift families from poverty and set our residents on a course for success," said Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson. "By providing direct, unrestricted financial support, The Bridge Project is attempting to give power back to residents, so they can make their own choices and address essential needs as they see fit. The

program's innovative partnership with the Zilber Family Foundation aims to positively impact the families receiving support, and, in turn, that can benefit the entire city of Milwaukee."

Launched in New York in 2021 by The Monarch Foundation, The Bridge Project invests directly and flexibly in early childhood with an aim to break the cycle of stress and poverty passed down generationally and to enhance socioeconomic mobility of families. As Milwaukee's first unconditional cash program, The Bridge Project is designed to support low-income, pregnant individuals and their families from pregnancy through the critical first two years of a child's life, offering financial stability and the freedom to address immediate needs without restrictions. Made possible through generous funding from the Zilber Family Foundation and The Monarch Foundation, this approach supports healthy child development and empowers families to make decisions that best suit their circumstances.

"The Zilber Family Foundation's partnership with The Bridge Project to provide unconditional cash is a vital investment in the health and well-being of Milwaukee families and a historic step in achieving my vision for Milwaukee County to become the healthiest county in Wisconsin," said Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley. "By supporting initiatives like The Bridge Project, we're addressing the immediate financial needs of our people and reaffirming our commitment to equity, empowerment, and building a strong foundation of opportunity and stability for the future of Milwaukee County."

The Zilber Family Foundation and The Bridge Project encourage the Milwaukee community to apply and be part of this groundbreaking endeavor to uplift families by addressing childhood poverty at its roots.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.zilberfamilyfoundation.org/thebridgeproject.html>.

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About the Zilber Family Foundation:

Formed in 1961 by Joseph J. Zilber, a philanthropist and businessman, the Zilber Family Foundation is a private independent grantmaking institution dedicated to enhancing the well-being of individuals, families, and neighborhoods by supporting nonprofits to address basic needs and personal safety, increase access to social and economic opportunity, and improve the quality of life in neighborhoods. For more information, please visit: www.zilberfamilyfoundation.org.

About The Bridge Project:

Launched in New York in 2021 by The Monarch Foundation, The Bridge Project invests directly and flexibly in early childhood with an aim to break the cycle of stress and poverty passed down generationally and to enhance socioeconomic mobility of families. Through trust, cash and community, The Bridge Project now supports over 1,200 mothers across New York in tackling child poverty.

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The following quotes were issued in conjunction with the announcement of applications opening for The Bridge Project in Milwaukee.

Cavalier Johnson, Mayor, City of Milwaukee

"The Bridge Project is a significant opportunity to demonstrate how investments in people – particularly mothers and their babies – can be transformative. I want to lift families from poverty and set our residents on a course for success. By providing direct, unrestricted financial support, The Bridge Project is attempting to give power back to residents, so they can make their own choices and address essential needs as they see fit. The program's innovative partnership with the Zilber Family Foundation aims to positively impact the families receiving support, and, in turn, that can benefit the entire city of Milwaukee."

David Crowley, Milwaukee County Executive

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Gwen Moore, United States Representative, Wisconsin's 4th Congressional District

"As a champion of the expanded Child Tax Credit, I am beyond thrilled to see this new cash program reach some of our most vulnerable expectant mothers in Milwaukee. The expanded Child Credit was a tremendous success and its monthly payments empowered families to meet their immediate needs, including paying bills, putting food on the table, and buying school supplies and lifting children out of poverty. Sadly, poverty remains a reality for too many of my constituents, and I fully support pursuing more tools to help empower families to escape the grip of poverty. We know that demonizing the poor does not work. I am looking forward to seeing how these cash infusions help children and their families in our community."



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