



## 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**

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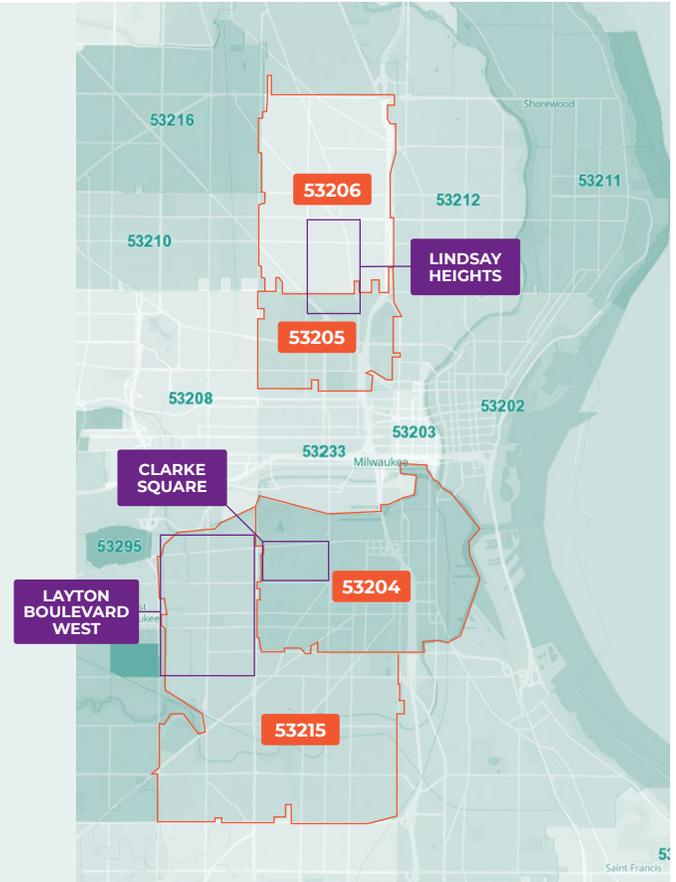
- ▶ **23 weeks pregnant or less**

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- ▶ **Live in 53204, 53205, 53206 or 53215 with priority in Lindsay Heights, Clarke Square or Layton Boulevard West neighborhoods in Milwaukee, WI**

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- ▶ **Have an annual household income of less than \$39,000 USD**



## IMPORTANT DATES

**APRIL 10**  
Online Program Applications Open

**JUNE 1**  
First Payment Disbursements