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ZILBER FAMILY FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF THE BRIDGE PROJECT IN MILWAUKEE

180 Milwaukee moms to receive unrestricted cash support; applications open October 1, 2026

MILWAUKEE – Today, the Zilber Family Foundation announced it will provide over $3 million to support the expansion of the Bridge Project, building on the impacts of the first cohort in Milwaukee. The Yabuki Family Foundation, City of Milwaukee with ARPA funds, and other donors will also provide funding. This expansion will provide at least 180 eligible, low-income pregnant individuals in Milwaukee with unrestricted cash support for three years.

“The impact of the Bridge Project’s first Milwaukee cohort demonstrates what is possible when mothers have the flexibility to make the financial decisions that are best for their families,” said Zilber Family Foundation Executive Director Lianna Bishop. “With the support of public and private donors, we are excited to build on that progress and provide more Milwaukee mothers with economic stability during such a formative period in the lives of their children.”

The expansion builds on the progress from Milwaukee’s first cohort of 122 moms. After one year of engagement, participants saw a 67% decrease in housing instability, 33% saw a reduction in food insecurity, and 23% of mothers began new job training or education programs.

"When we invest in families early, we invest in their long-term health and financial stability," said Bridge Project Executive Director Suzanna Fritzberg. "We’re proud that Milwaukee was the first city we launched in after building our roots in New York. Our expansion today shows what's possible when public and private partners come together to give babies the strongest possible start."

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

The Bridge Project is the nation's first multistate direct cash program for moms and babies. It works to ensure no baby is born into poverty by investing directly in the perinatal period, centering mothers as storytellers and changemakers, and building a collective movement to advance policies that strengthen families from the start. Since 2021, the Bridge Project has grown to 14 states, committing more than $99 million in direct, unrestricted cash support to over 4,450 moms and babies.

Over the course of the program, mothers will receive $20,250 of unrestricted cash support:

- A $1,125 one-time, upfront prenatal stipend;
- $750 per month for the first 15 months of program participation; and
- $375 per month for the remaining 21 months of program participation

These funds can be spent on anything needed to keep the mother and baby healthy and stable – be it food, formula, rent, childcare, and diapers, or any number of surprise expenses that come with parenting.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

Applications will be available online on the Bridge Project website beginning **October 1, 2026.** The Bridge Project utilizes a randomized selection process to select eligible program participants that meet the following criteria:

- 18 years or older
- 23 weeks pregnant or less
- Live in the City of Milwaukee
- Have an annual household income of less than $39,000 USD

The program is open citywide; however, some funding is designated to prioritize eligible participants living in specific neighborhoods and ZIP codes. Please visit our website and/or our FAQs to learn more.

EXPANDING THE BRIDGE PROJECT ACROSS MILWAUKEE

The expansion of the Bridge Project in Milwaukee is made possible through generous private funding from the Zilber Family Foundation, the Yabuki Family Foundation and other donors; continued public investment through City of Milwaukee ARPA funds; and administrative funding from The Monarch Foundation.

The Bridge Project presents an opportunity to transform lives by improving mothers' financial trajectories and promoting lasting economic stability," Mayor Cavalier Johnson said. "Partnerships usually produce the best outcomes. The Bridge Project brings together the city, philanthropy and trusted community partners to connect more Milwaukee mothers with resources that can strengthen their families' economic stability."

The Bridge Project is helping reach a future where more Milwaukee mothers have the flexibility and resources to create a stable start for their children, and where economic barriers do not dictate a family's potential for success.

To learn more about the Bridge Project, visit www.bridgeproject.org.

About the Zilber Family Foundation:

Founded in 1961 by philanthropist and businessman Joseph J. Zilber and his wife Vera, the Zilber Family Foundation is a private, independent grantmaking institution dedicated to increasing access to social and economic opportunity. We partner with nonprofits and communities to address basic needs, advance economic stability, deliver nonprofit sector support, and sustain legacy projects initiated by our founders. For more information, please visit: www.zilberfamilyfoundation.org.

About the Bridge Project:

The Bridge Project is the nation's first multistate direct cash program for moms and babies. The Bridge Project works to ensure no baby is born into poverty by investing directly in the perinatal period,

centering mothers as storytellers and changemakers, and building a collective movement to successfully advance policies that strengthen families from the start. Since 2021, the Bridge Project has grown to 14 states across the U.S., committing $144+ million in direct, unrestricted cash support to over 4,450 moms and babies.

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