

THE BRIDGE PROJECT

The Bridge Project seeks to solve child poverty with trust, cash, and community. We are the nation's first, consistent, unconditional cash allowance program for new mothers & babies.



The Bridge Project is rooted in the belief that direct, flexible cash investment in our youngest can separate a generation from the toxic stresses of poverty, break intergenerational cycles of trauma, and create a generation of happy, healthy, adults. Our work began in 2021 with a pilot phase of 100 mothers. By the end of 2023, The Bridge Project will serve over 1,000 mothers throughout New York City, launch a presence in the rest of the state, and have invested nearly \$30 million directly into the hands of mothers living in over 65 of the state's most poverty-stricken zip codes and alongside over 80 community-based organizations and partners. A portion of the program is a randomized control trial in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Guaranteed Income Research, and all additional research and evaluation is conducted in-house.

Studies show that excessive prenatal and postnatal toxic stress, caused or exacerbated by poverty and its related impacts, can lead to a lifetime of adverse physical, mental, and emotional outcomes. Investing in our youngest during their most formative development phase can break the intergenerational cycle of poverty rather than merely attempting to mitigate its effects, creating safer and healthier communities and limiting the need for intervention later in life.

We provide new mothers with up to \$1,000 for 36 months during pregnancy, birth, and the earliest days of their babies' lives. The cash we provide mothers can be flexibly spent on food and formula, rent, childcare or diapers - whatever the mother needs to keep her baby healthy and household stable. The Bridge Project acts as a model for what social policy and an investment in our future generations can be.



WHY BABIES?

In one of the richest cities in the world, nearly one in four children under the age of 3 live in poverty. That rate is about ten percentage points above the national childhood poverty rate, and the numbers are even worse for Black and Hispanic children.

49%

Nearly half of New York City's kids live in lower-opportunity neighborhoods with poverty rates of at least 20 percent

38%

More than a third of young children live in families who could not afford one or more basic necessities

60%

of New York City's babies and young children ages zero to three were within 200% of the poverty line

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WHY CASH?

It's easy, and it's intuitive. Poverty by definition is a lack of cash — low-income families lack flexible cash, live paycheck to paycheck, and are unable to save and generate wealth.

It's flexible. We get the biggest bang for our buck, and mothers do too. The cash we put in the hands of mothers can be spent on food and formula, rent or car repairs, childcare or diapers — we really don't care and neither should you. No one tells us how to spend our money, and all mothers deserve the same.

It's empowering. The existing web of government programs and public support can feel arbitrary and demeaning. Let's move away from the narrative that low-income families and women of color can't be trusted to make their own decisions, and start allowing them to choose what's best for their own, unique situations.



THE PROGRAM: MANHATTAN, BRONX, BROOKLYN, QUEENS, AND STATEN ISLAND, ROCHESTER

1,100 new, low-income mothers

36 months of support

\$1,500 up to \$1,500 prenatal stipend

\$1,000 up to \$1,000 first 18 months

\$500 up to \$500 last 18 months

TOTAL: \$30M+

OUR PARTNERS



We know this will work, but we are dedicating resources to gathering the numbers and stories to prove it. As we continue to expand our work within and outside of New York, we will expand our partner base to additional grassroots organizations, continue to center the lived experiences and voices of the mothers in our program and in our communities, and engage in local and national advocacy around reforming our social safety net programs for our families.

LET'S CREATE A BRIDGE TO A BRIGHTER TOMORROW.