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Right on Time: How Cash Helps Families Move Through Life's Transitions

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Executive Summary

Over the past decade, more than 250 guaranteed income pilots, programs that provide people with regular cash with no restrictions on how they use it, have run across 40 states and the District of Columbia. That research has revealed many learnings, and this report focuses on one clear takeaway: cash has its largest and most consistent effects during life's moments of transition. Some are nearly universal family experiences, like welcoming a new child or weathering a serious illness. Others are moments of acute vulnerability, such as leaving incarceration or aging out of foster care. In any case, a temporary setback can compound into lasting insecurity. Cash that arrives at these moments prevents temporary precarity from becoming permanent, and allows people the breathing room to move forward, whether it means taking a new job, moving into better housing, or simply focusing on their next chapter.

These findings point to a practical strategy for expanding cash in the near term. Policymakers can build cash policy around these transition moments one at a time, beginning where the evidence is strongest and adding programs as each builds public support and funding for the next. Many of these programs can draw on funds jurisdictions already budget for related purposes, rather than requiring new appropriations. That means cities and states can act swiftly without waiting for federal action. This focus on transition points is also politically durable, because the public commonly accepts that people deserve support at moments of disruption. Whether it comes after a layoff, the birth of a new child, or a natural disaster, transition-based cash inherits the public's support rather than stoking debates about cash policy more broadly.

This report lays out the case for transition cash programs both through the strength of existing evidence and the durability of its politics. Section I explains why a decade of evidence has sharpened the question of when and where cash does the most good. Section II describes how an ordinary disruption becomes lasting insecurity. Section III presents the evaluation evidence that cash does its strongest work at moments of transition. Section IV examines why framing cash around those moments changes its politics. Section V turns to the choice now facing policymakers, advocates, and funders, and the case for acting on a transition-based approach to cash.

Introduction

Americans live in an economy with little margin for error, where disruption is frequent and financial cushions are thin. People need support in life's inevitable moments of transition, like starting a family, changing jobs, or rebuilding after an unexpected natural disaster. Well-designed policy meets people in these moments, catching a temporary setback before it compounds into lasting insecurity. In Philadelphia, for example, a cash rental assistance program found that families who received cash were half as likely to experience homelessness as families that did not. The cash halted housing instability before it hardened into something worse.[1]

Unexpected life disruptions are commonplace for most households. Twenty-one million American workers are laid off or fired each year.[2] Sixty-three million Americans provide unpaid care for a family member with a serious illness or disability, and nearly one in four takes on debt to do so.[3] In 2024, there were 90 federal major disaster declarations, nearly double the 30-year average.[4] Nearly two-thirds of families lack the savings to absorb a simultaneous drop in income and a spike in expenses,[5] and AI-driven job displacement is widening that exposure further.[6]

A decade of guaranteed income pilots offers clear evidence that unconditional cash improves people's lives, and shows when its impact is greatest. Cash produces its largest and most consistent measured effects at moments of transition, periods of disruption when income is unstable, choices narrow, and small setbacks cascade into lasting harm. Among young parents in Baltimore, for example, cash more than doubled the rate of applications to education or professional training – a direct signal that cash at a moment of economic precarity opens the door to transition, not just stabilization.[7] In the months after release from incarceration, cash reduced parole violations by 41 percent and violent violations by 64 percent.[8] Among young people aging out of foster care in New York City, homelessness dropped from 13 percent to 1 percent within twelve months.[9] In Los Angeles, cash recipients in deep poverty reported lower rates of intimate partner violence at 18 months.[10] Effects like these are easy to miss in studies not designed to detect them. They are also overlooked when cash is judged against broad, long-run averages rather than measures at acute moments of disruption.

In a guaranteed income pilot in Shreveport, Louisiana, for example, household income among participants didn't rise durably, but the cash parents received allowed them to reduce overtime hours and time at second jobs to spend more time with their children.[11] In Oakland, cash didn't build long-term savings, but it measurably buffered participants against a real shock: when COVID-era assistance programs were rolled back halfway through the pilot, participants showed significantly lower income volatility and significantly less worry about paying bills than the control group at the same moment.[12] In Fresno, California, employment rates for participants did not change, but the cash they received moved the needle in more nuanced ways, like helping seasonal agricultural workers smooth the income volatility built into their work, and allowing new parents to spend more time at home for caregiving and recovery.[13]

Life transitions take many different shapes. For instance, leaving foster care, incarceration, or an unsafe relationship, or more universal experiences like becoming a parent, entering retirement, weathering an illness, losing a job or finding one, a move, a disaster, all fall into this category.

Nearly every American will have at least one of these experiences. Many will encounter several during their lifetimes or even just in a single hard year. Because these moments are more easily understood, the public often recognizes them as times when people deserve support. This recognition gives cash built around transitions a political advantage by beginning with public support that broader programs have to earn from scratch. Cash works best at precisely the moments where the politics are most favorable, which makes them the strongest ground for advancing cash policy now.

Section I: From Whether to When

A wealth of data collected from over 250 cash and guaranteed-income pilots across forty states and the District of Columbia has proven cash is a legitimate policy tool, and large-scale transfers during the pandemic showed direct cash can reach households at speed and scale. The question is no longer whether cash belongs in the policy toolkit, but when it works best in practice. Artificial intelligence is already making involuntary job transitions more common and harder to absorb. Climate disasters are accelerating faster than the systems built to respond to them. That urgency argues for putting cash to work where it can move fastest and matter most, at life's moments of transition.

A comprehensive review of the evidence must include the pilots that produced *null results, meaning results where what is measured did not have a change*. In many of these studies, the outcome being measured was a long-run one – accumulated savings, for example, or increased earnings years later. A time-limited cash transfer is poorly matched to impact outcomes that accumulate over time. However, when those same pilots measured outcomes at moments of disruption in participants' lives, the effects were clearer and more consistent. A null headline is nonetheless often read as a failure – sometimes in bad faith, by opponents of public support, and sometimes in good faith, by policymakers asking whether modest average effects justify continued investment. The standard for providing cash's efficacy has also continued to rise as the evidence base has grown, from whether cash could reach people at all, to the long-disproven concern that recipients would misuse it, to whether it raises employment, to whether it builds lasting wealth, so that each threshold met soon surfaces another. Rather than defend every null finding, a stronger framework for cash identifies where the evidence is clearest, at moments of transition, and builds from there.

This memo examines when cash works best, and why. Section II identifies the problem social policy seeks to address, the specific insecurity that emerges when life is disrupted and one's savings cannot cover costs. It is episodic insecurity, the kind that can turn into chronic poverty if nothing meets it. Section III examines the strongest evaluation data showing when cash is most effective, looking at findings from moments of transition in broader pilots, then turning to findings from programs designed around moments of transition from the start. Section IV lays out the stakes of how cash is designed, and the political advantage of framing it around moments the public already deems worthy of support. Section V describes the choice now facing policymakers and the case for acting on it now.

Section II: How Disruption Becomes Lasting Insecurity

Small Setbacks Become Lasting Harm

For many, insecurity arrives or deepens when something changes.

A move that requires a deposit before income arrives. A job change that creates a gap. An illness that interrupts work. A caregiving responsibility that appears suddenly. A cut in hours. A paycheck delayed by a government shutdown. These events are common and often overlooked by our current safety net. When resources are limited, small disruptions push people off balance. Missed rent hardens into housing instability, a short layoff into months out of work, a temporary illness into a full financial crisis. Everyday setbacks become lasting harm.

Well-off families have backstops for these moments. Private income protection and financial reserves work to absorb a shock before it cascades. Severance is itself a form of transitional cash, a payment timed to the moment a job ends, meant to carry a worker to the next one. But it is discretionary rather than guaranteed, reaching only a fraction of laid-off workers and concentrated among higher earners, so the cushion is strongest for those with the most leverage and weakest for those with the least. Federal flood insurance, though nominally available to all, functions in practice as a subsidy for wealthier homeowners, lowering the cost of living in high-risk coastal and waterfront areas. The picture for everyone else is different. Among flood-exposed low-income households, more than 90 percent are underinsured. When disaster hits, their uninsured losses often exceed 20 percent of their annual income.[14] Without a cushion, they face a cycle; each disaster depletes what little savings exist, leaving less capacity to absorb the next one. JPMorgan Chase Institute research found that nearly two-thirds of families lack sufficient liquid savings to absorb a simultaneous dip in income and spike in expenses.[15] These gaps hit low-income households hardest, the same population with the least capacity to manage them.

These disruptions are common. More than 21 million American workers are laid off or fired each year.[16] Sixty-three million Americans (nearly one in four adults) provide unpaid care for a family member with a serious illness or disability, and nearly half report at least one major financial consequence, including depleted savings or new debt.[17] In the most recent year on record, there were 90 major disaster declarations, nearly double the thirty-year average.[18] These are built into American economic life, recurring, patterned, and predictable in the aggregate, even when no single one is. That predictability is what makes them designable. Policy can meet these moments, if it's built to.

Cash Holds People Steady

Cash can help keep a manageable setback from hardening into lasting insecurity. For instance, cash that arrives quickly can steady a household through weeks when income is unstable and the margin for error is thin, covering urgent expenses, and holding people in place long enough to act on the plans they already have. This is the role the evidence supports most clearly, and the next section turns to this evidence.

Section III: Cash Does Its Strongest Work at Moments of Transition

General Pilots Reveal Specific Benefits

The cash pilots of the past decade have produced a deep bench of evidence on its impact. One pattern stands out; cash does its strongest work in moments of transition. That signal is easy to miss because of which measures get highlighted. Across several well-known pilots, average impacts on the long-run outcomes they tracked, savings, wealth, earnings a year or two out, are small or fade as payments end. In Shreveport, gains in financial well-being did not persist six months after the pilot closed.[19] In Oakland, a study of 300 recipients and 360 controls found that cash left longer-run savings and resilience unchanged even as it raised full-time employment, from 15 to 26 percent, compared with 14 to 18 percent in the control group, and lowered the odds of homelessness.[20] In Fresno, improvements in food security and debt reduction were strongest while payments flowed and eased as the program wound down.[21]

What this data captures is real, but only part of the story. Many of these pilots set out to move broad, long-horizon outcomes – lasting jumps in savings, earnings, or employment – that a time-limited transfer was never built to move on its own, especially not against the weight of decades of entrenched economic disadvantage. Those are the outcomes most emphasized when cash is called modest. The Baby's First Years pilot is the clearest example. A pilot of $333 a month to new mothers through the COVID-19 pandemic, measured at four years against four preregistered outcomes, language development, executive function, social-emotional behavior, and high-frequency brain activity.[22] The result, no significant effect on those markers, is what you would expect when a modest, time-limited transfer is judged against narrow neurodevelopmental outcomes across the full arc of early childhood.[23]

Baby's First Years was also, at its core, a pilot about one of the most acute financial transitions in a person's life, the arrival of a child. Read for what cash did at that moment of disruption, rather than what it moved four years later, and the question it was answering changes entirely. The transition to new parenthood is a period of compressed financial pressure, disrupted employment, and immediate new costs. Families receiving the cash spent more money on child-focused items like books, toys, diapers, and clothing, and spent more time on early learning activities with their children.[24] During the acute economic disruption of the pandemic's early months, mothers receiving the cash also worked fewer hours, consistent with families using the flexibility of unconditional cash to manage an acute income and caregiving squeeze rather than being forced to choose between the two.[25] These are exactly the kinds of near-term, transition-specific effects the framework in this memo predicts, and they are easy to miss amid long-term modest effects. Cash is not a single, all-purpose solution that should be expected to produce broad and durable effects across every population and context at once. No mature policy tool is held to that standard.

The more useful questions are when and how cash helps most. Emerging evidence suggests cash does more when it arrives alongside optional support suited to the moment, services like document recovery at reentry into community life post incarceration, housing navigation for a family on the edge, prenatal and postpartum support for a new baby, or safety planning for someone leaving an unsafe relationship.[26] To ensure stabilization, timing is key. Cash must reach individuals before a disruption leads to a crisis.

Even Modest Findings Support the Power of Cash in Transitions

In many cases, cash's proven impacts have been demonstrated within pilots designed around other questions entirely. Even studies that produced modest overall results contain transition-specific findings that point in a consistent direction. When researchers look beyond average effects and examine what happened at moments of disruption within those same pilots, the picture sharpens.

In the Austin Guaranteed Income Pilot, evaluated by the Urban Institute, cash's average effects on employment were unremarkable, but 30 percent had secured better employment or a higher salary by six months after the pilot ended, a transition to better work made possible by the financial buffer the cash provided.[27] In Los Angeles, a large randomized trial of over 3,000 participants in deep poverty found that cash recipients were more likely to leave abusive relationships and reported lower rates of intimate partner violence at 18 months.[28] And in Open Research's cash transfer pilot across Illinois and Texas, where headline employment effects showed a modest but real decline, qualitative findings told a different story; many parents in the study shifted hours out of paid work and toward caregiving, a choice employment numbers recorded as a loss but that families put into their children.[29]

The pattern of cash's proven impact during moments of transition appears in studies that were not designed to detect it. When cash arrives at a moment of disruption, like leaving an unsafe situation, searching for better work, or adapting to parenthood, it produces effects that broad averages obscure. The impact is concentrated rather than diffuse. These are patterns that surfaced in more generalized pilots built around other questions. However, the most convincing evidence comes from programs designed around a moment of transition from the start.

Cash at the Right Time

When a life is in flux and the margin for error is thin, timing matters. Cash delivered early on in moments of transition can prevent a downward spiral that would be costly to reverse later. Cash steadies people; it doesn't try to move the entire arc of their lives. It preserves options long enough for people to act on existing plans and responsibilities, to make the job change, take the training, get out of an unsafe situation, hold on until the next paycheck arrives. Cash in these moments is not intended to permanently replace the need for work and wages, but it prevents the financial pressure that forces people into worse work or out of work they value.

In the current political moment, when the evidence base is complete enough to act on and the window for building cash into policy remains open, it is imperative to answer how to best build cash solutions into the toolkit at the moments where it works best before there is greater erosion of the safety net.

Cash Closes the Timing Gap

The transitions where cash has its highest impact tend to land wherever a gap opens between when costs hit and when income is secure enough to meet them. For many transitions highlighted in this report, that gap opens early in the life cycle. Earnings rise predictably with age and experience — workers 15 to 24 earn a median of $20,220, less than a third of what workers eventually earn at the 45-to-54 peak of $63,230 — but many of the costliest transitions arrive well before that peak. For mothers, the average first birth in the U.S. comes at age 27.5, arriving with child care costs of $6,868 to $28,356 a year, on top of pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum costs that average $20,416, including $2,743 in out-of-pocket expenses even for those with employer insurance. Education and training carry the same mismatched timing. A year of higher education requires an upfront investment of $38,270, trade school and apprenticeship programs run $4,000 to $15,000, and the average public university student borrows $31,960 to cover the gap between when tuition is due and when a degree pays off.[30] Big costs like these tend to land before savings can be built, and income often catches up too late to cover them.

Adults ages 50 to 64 with low incomes face a version of this mismatch later on in the life cycle. They are old enough to have reached or passed peak earnings, but not yet old enough to draw on Social Security or Medicare. Sixty-six percent of low-income adults in this age group report struggling financially, compared with 47 percent of those 65 and older. More than half report they could cover a month or less of expenses if they lost their primary income, and nearly two-thirds of employed respondents in this age group still report financial hardship.[31] These findings suggest a differently-timed life cycle mismatch for low-income Americans who are earning too little to get by later in life, but are still years away from entitled old-age supports.

Direct cash as a policy intervention isn't just about absorbing a shock in moments of disruption. It is about closing a predictable gap between when costs peak and when income is robust enough to meet them. Cash delivered in transition moments, whether toward the start or the end of the life cycle, corrects for a timing problem built into the arc of American earning and spending.

Across Different Disruptions, Cash Helps Most

The pattern holds across a range of contexts where cash has been tested in programs designed around transition from the start, and in each, the mechanism is the same.

In **parenting and caregiving transitions**, the data is strongest where cash meets the predictable arc from pregnancy through early childhood. In Flint, Michigan, the Rx Kids program offered cash to every pregnant woman in the city, $1,500 during pregnancy, then $500 a month through the baby's first year. Preterm births fell 18 percent, low birthweight fell 27 percent, admissions to newborn intensive care fell 29 percent. The same program cut allegations of child maltreatment by nearly a third.[32] In New York City, the Bridge Project provides pregnant women and new mothers with a prenatal stipend and monthly unconditional cash through the first three years of a child's life. In its first cohort, participants more than tripled their savings, and were 63 percent more likely to access outside childcare than the control group. Though not designed as a housing program, the program found that cash not only allowed moms to transition more seamlessly into new parenthood, but also into better living situations: 63 percent of moms in their second cohort who were living in transitional housing moved to permanent housing within a year of receiving cash.[33] In Columbia, South Carolina the CLIMB pilot provided cash to fathers navigating child support obligations and the economic barriers that strain family engagement, many of whom were working to rebuild or stabilize their role as present parents. Cash held full-time employment near 40 percent over twelve months while the control group declined from 37 to 23 percent.[34] The transition to active, stable fatherhood is a moment where financial pressure is one of the primary documented barriers, and in each of these cases, cash reduced the pressure that was already undermining it.

Each year, roughly 20,000 young people **age out of foster care** into legal adulthood with no family backstop. A quarter to a third experience homelessness in the years that follow, and by their mid-twenties, fewer than half are employed.[35] For this population, cash functions as a critical buffer during the transition out of care, supporting moves, education, and early employment decisions that shape long-term trajectories. In New York City, a pilot for young adults aging out of foster care saw homelessness drop from 13 percent to 1 percent, with independent housing more than doubling over twelve months. Among parenting participants in the same pilot, Child Protective Services (CPS) investigations dropped from 57 percent to 32 percent, a direct measure of family stabilization at a moment of acute vulnerability.[36] In Alameda County, food insecurity among young people leaving foster care fell from 73 percent to 27 percent during a two-year program, and the share holding a postsecondary credential doubled.[37] In each case, the cash arrived at a consequential moment that stands to shape a young person's longer-term trajectory.

In **reentry after incarceration**, cash stabilizes the immediate post-release period, when housing is uncertain, employment options are constrained by stigma, and access to basic needs like food and transportation can determine whether reintegration succeeds. A national program across 28 cities providing cash stipends to recently released individuals, evaluated in Los Angeles and Alameda counties, found that parole violations dropped over 41 percent in the first six months and violent violations dropped 64 percent, with positive effects lasting at least twelve months.[38] In Gainesville, a guaranteed income pilot for formerly incarcerated individuals found a 12 percent additional reduction in recidivism odds, with participants reporting that the cash prevented them from returning to illegal activity for survival.[39] In Durham, a pilot found a reduction in psychological distress among 109 participants returning home from prison, along with modest gains in housing quality and neighborhood desirability relative to the control group.[40] In each of these cases, cash addressed the acute vulnerability of the post-release window, the period when the risk of reincarceration is highest and when timely stabilization has the greatest return.

In **housing instability and relocation**, cash is most effective when it arrives at the moment of acute need, covering a deposit, simplifying a housing search, stopping an eviction, or enabling a move before arrears accumulate. Once housing loss occurs, costs increase and options narrow. In Providence, Rhode Island, homelessness among recipients fell over the 24-month follow-up while the control group held flat, and recipients were more likely to have moved to better neighborhoods and higher-quality homes.[41] In Newark, New Jersey, the share of participants in unstable housing dropped from 15 percent to 4 percent among those receiving recurring payments, and from 29 percent to 9 percent among those receiving lump-sum payments. Lump-sum recipients used the cash to make larger housing moves, including leaving abusive relationships and escaping unsafe situations, while recurring payments bridged monthly gaps.[42] The NYC Trust Youth Initiative, a cash-plus model for youth experiencing homelessness, found that 92 percent of participants had stable housing at 24 months.[43] A targeted prevention program providing flexible cash to young people at imminent risk of homelessness across seven states found that 90 percent remained stably housed, at an average cost of roughly $4,000 in cash per household.[44]

Urgency doesn't only come from a sudden crisis. It also builds slowly, in **the gap between qualifying for help and actually getting it**. Nationally, families who eventually receive a housing voucher spend an average of two and a half years on a waitlist first, and in the highest-demand cities that wait stretches past seven or eight years, leaving families to absorb homelessness, eviction, and overcrowding while the very assistance meant to prevent it sits just out of reach.[45] In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania the PHLHousing+ program identified renter households already on the waitlist for a housing voucher. Two years in, participating households experienced homelessness at well under half the rate of those left on the waitlist, and forced moves fell by roughly two-thirds relative to that group. Every household offered the cash subsidy was able to use it, compared with 75 percent of those offered a voucher, whose benefit depends on finding a landlord willing to accept it.[46] The pattern is consistent, whether it prevents a housing loss or supports a move towards stability, cash works when it meets people in an acute moment of transition.

In **work disruption, job loss, or transition**, cash is most effective when it bridges short gaps, giving people time to make strategic decisions rather than hurried ones. In Baltimore, Maryland, young parents ages 18-24 who received cash were more than twice as likely as the control group to apply for college or professional training, an effect that persisted after payments ended.[47] In Tacoma, Washington, working families receiving cash were significantly more likely to hold full-time employment than the control group at nearly every measured checkpoint, and participants described using that stability to change jobs for better long-term prospects rather than clinging to inadequate positions out of financial desperation.[48] In Seattle, Washington, a guaranteed income pilot for residents facing significant barriers to employment saw employment nearly double, from 37 percent to 66 percent, over ten months, with new jobs paying more and offering substantially better benefits than participants' previous work.[49] Among community college students balancing school with parenting in Santa Fe, New Mexico, a guaranteed income pilot cut unemployment by two-thirds and raised full-time employment by 19 percentage points, while nearly a third of parents in the program successfully completed their degree during the pilot year or in the six months after.[50]

In **disaster and crisis response**, direct cash is consistently among the fastest and most effective tools for stabilizing households after a shock, well before traditional aid systems are able to respond. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a direct cash program in Washington, D.C. distributed $5,500 to 590 households in lower-income neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River. Food insecurity dropped from 34 percent to 19 percent, and the share of families unable to access care for their children's needs fell from 68 percent to 36 percent.[51] In Maui, two years after the Lahaina fires killed over 100 people and destroyed over 2,000 homes, unconditional cash helped support survivors who were homeless, unbanked, or too overwhelmed to navigate the administrative hurdles of traditional aid. A formal evaluation is still pending, but in a survey of the initial cohort, 80 percent of recipients reported feeling less anxious or stressed by the pilot's end, attributing the improvement to a greater sense of control, being able to help others, or having more time with family — and for a third, the financial cushion gave them room to seek out better jobs.[52]

This is consistent with what humanitarian response has long shown: after a shock, unconditional cash outperforms slower and more prescriptive alternatives.[53] When the window for stabilization is narrow, cash preserves options that delayed aid does not.

The evidence across these contexts reinforces the same conclusion. Cash is most powerful at moments of transition and disruption.

Section IV: Why Transition Framing Changes the Politics

Cash delivered at a moment of transition borrows a political logic that the public already accepts. Social Security proves that Americans will accept large-scale benefits when they are legible as earned — a worker paid in, a worker is owed. Unemployment insurance and paid family and medical leave extend that same contributory logic, but add a second condition, the benefit is only triggered by a verified, bounded disruption — a layoff, a birth — not simply by status or tenure. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance after a disaster goes a step further, showing that a circumstantial trigger alone, without any contribution requirement at all, is enough to command public acceptance.[54] In each case, the public accepts that a disruption occurred that warrants time-bound support.

Transition-based cash sits in that tradition, extending that same logic of circumstance to additional moments in the life cycle. A new parent, a young person entering college, a worker reskilling into a new career, a family recovering from a disaster, a young person aging out of foster care, a person leaving an unsafe relationship; each is a moment the public already understands as warranting help. And, in many of these cases, public dollars are already budgeted for support, often through more restricted channels, that could be transformed to provide unconditional cash support. From large community college budgets, restrictive workforce transition aid funds, and Title IV dollars for foster youth, budgets can be redesigned to provide the unrestricted flexibility of guaranteed income and reap the benefits of reducing administrative monitoring of individual spending.

The underlying logic is already accepted in other facets of the American economic system. Financial markets are protected through deposit insurance, emergency lending, and targeted interventions, tools meant to keep one shock from bringing down the whole system. Most households have no such backstop. When shocks hit families with little margin for error, consequences compound quickly: short income gaps become housing instability, temporary illness becomes job loss, and once those cascades begin, economic and fiscal costs rise sharply. Cash at these moments fills the gap. It absorbs shocks early, when intervention is least costly, and prevents temporary disruptions from becoming permanent harm.

Transitional cash is not a substitute for generally higher wages. The fight to make a job pay what the work is worth goes on. Wages are what we earn from the people we work for while transitional cash is what public policy provides for the gaps that markets were never designed to fill.

Section V: What Comes Next?

Policymakers at every level are now deciding whether and how to build cash assistance into policy. Artificial intelligence is reshaping the labor market in real time and accelerating involuntary job transitions faster than workers or employers can adapt. A warming climate is producing disasters that outpace the recovery systems built to meet them. Young people are taking longer to establish economic footing in a market that has made it harder to do so. While long-term solutions must continue to be fought for, such as climate change mitigation, workplace bargaining, and beyond, policymakers are making decisions under today's conditions, and transitional cash is directly responsive to them. We can make immediate-term progress for people, which will only increase their civic participation to fight for greater policy change down the line.

Some of the innovation in embedding transition-based cash to solve urgent economic challenges is already underway. In Los Angeles, the BOOST program provided $1,000 a month to community college students training for healthcare careers, using cash to smooth the transition from school into a deeply needed workforce.[55] In New Mexico, a state-legislated pilot is testing the same logic through public dollars directly, granting adult learners in job-training programs $1,000 a month to help them successfully transition into high-demand fields, such as healthcare, construction, and renewable energy.[56] As disruptions increase in scale and frequency in our communities, these examples, among many others, show how governments and institutions are already testing the transition-based model this report advocates for.

For policymakers, starting with transitions is also more practical than launching an open-ended, widespread cash program all at once. Each of these moments, from the less visible cases, such as aging out of foster care or leaving an abusive relationship, to the more commonplace, such as attending college and seeking new employment, already commands public funds and public understanding. Programs built around them can often be funded by redirecting money jurisdictions already spend in far more restrictive means, rather than winning new appropriations from scratch. Where new appropriations are needed, the price tag is bounded and near-term, a far more achievable win than an open-ended income program. Each program that succeeds builds both the evidence base and the political room for the next.

This is not a task for policymakers alone. Advocates, community organizations, and philanthropy each have a part to play in turning these transition moments into large-scale unrestricted cash programs. After these first ten years of implementing direct cash, the next years can utilize strong evidence with an existing point of contact with systems, whether that is prenatal care for expecting parents, a reentry program at the point of release, or a disaster declaration that already triggers a response. Where a system already reaches people at the moment of need, cash can often be layered onto it without building new infrastructure from scratch.

A natural place to start in seeking public funding is with dollars already committed. Many transitions sit within existing public streams, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), child welfare or workforce budgets, restrictive higher-education access funding, or disaster relief, to name a few, that may be redirected toward direct cash rather than requiring new appropriations. Philanthropy continues to play a distinct role as well, whether by absorbing the early risk of new pilots, funding the evaluations that build the evidence base, or demonstrating demand so that public funding can bring proven programs to scale and move from state-based interventions into federal policy.

Even as the fight for long-term structural change continues, disruption is becoming a more common feature of American life. As AI and climate change accelerate the shocks households are asked to absorb, the case for meeting people at these moments will only grow. Transition-focused cash meets that reality directly, and in doing so builds the public support and funding that broader, unrestricted cash programs will require. In winning cash policies at the transition moments of peoples' lives, when they are most precarious, cash solutions earn the standing to go bigger, turning each win at the moment of need into public support for an economy where every family can get ahead.

Endnotes

1. Reina, V., Fowle, M., Jaffee, S., Tanski, M., Mulbry, R., & Fortenberry, M. (2025). PHLHousing+ Pilot: Housing Outcomes at Two Years. Housing Initiative at Penn, Center for Guaranteed Income Research, University of Pennsylvania, in partnership with the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation and Philadelphia Housing Authority. Randomized controlled trial with three assignment groups: 301 households receiving a monthly cash rental subsidy, 170 households offered a traditional housing choice voucher, and 725 control households receiving no rental subsidy, all randomly selected from PHA's Housing Choice Voucher and public housing waitlists. Eligibility: household income at or below 50% of area median income, with a child age 15 or under. At two years: cash reduced forced moves by 63–75 percent relative to control once households had received at least a year of payments; any-homelessness incidence was 3.0 per 100 cash households vs. 6.9 per 100 control households; serious housing-quality concerns fell 22 percent relative to control. 100 percent of cash households used their subsidy, versus 75 percent of those offered a voucher (25 percent could not lease a unit with it). Note: the voucher arm also produced significant reductions in forced moves and a 31 percent reduction in housing-quality concerns relative to control, so this is best read as cash performing comparably to vouchers with meaningfully higher take-up, not cash outperforming vouchers on housing security itself. https://www.housinginitiative.org/phlhousing-housing-outcomes-at-two-years.html

2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS), 2025 Annual Data, released March 13, 2026. Annual layoffs and discharges totaled 21.2 million in 2025, representing 33.8 percent of total separations. This figure captures involuntary separations initiated by the employer across the nonfarm economy. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/jolts_03132026.html

3. AARP and National Alliance for Caregiving, Caregiving in the U.S. 2025 (Washington, DC: AARP, July 24, 2025). Nationally representative survey of 6,858 caregivers aged 18 or older who had provided care within the past 12 months for either (a) an adult relative or friend age 18 or older, or (b) a child with a complex medical condition or disability. Findings cited: 63 million Americans — nearly 1 in 4 adults — provide ongoing care for older adults, people with serious illnesses, or those with disabilities; approximately one in four caregivers reports taking on debt due to caregiving, and nearly half report at least one major negative financial impact, including depleted savings or new debt.
https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/ltss/family-caregiving/caregiving-in-the-us-2025/

4. International Institute for Environment and Development, US in Disaster: Analysis of FEMA Data (March 2025), conducted in collaboration with CNN. The analysis reviewed 30 years of FEMA major disaster declarations (1995–2024), restricted to weather-related declarations. Finding: 90 major disaster declarations in 2024, approximately double the 30-year annual average of 55. By cross-referencing with Census data, 137 million people (41 percent of the U.S. population) lived in areas affected by a major disaster or emergency declaration at some point in 2024.
https://www.iied.org/major-disaster-us-declared-every-four-days-2024-iied-analysis-shows

5. Diana Farrell, Fiona Greig, and Chenxi Yu, Weathering Volatility 2.0: A Monthly Stress Test to Guide Savings, JPMorgan Chase Institute (October 2019). Analysis of monthly take-home income, spending, and account balances of over six million Chase checking accounts between 2013 and 2018. Key findings cited: (a) families experience large income swings in almost five months out of every year; (b) families need roughly six weeks of take-home income in liquid assets to weather a simultaneous income dip and expenditure spike, and more than 60 percent of families lack sufficient buffer to do so. Downside income risks are greatest among low-income families.
https://www.jpmorganchase.com/institute/research/household-income-spending/report-weathering-volatility-2-a-monthly-stress-test-to-guide-saving

6. Erik Brynjolfsson, Bharat Chandar, and Ruyu Chen, "Canaries in the Coal Mine? Six Facts about the Recent Employment Effects of Artificial Intelligence," Stanford Digital Economy Lab Working Paper (November 2025). Using ADP payroll data on millions of U.S. workers, the study finds that employment for early-career workers in AI-exposed occupations (e.g., software engineering, customer service) has declined significantly since late 2022, even as employment for older workers in the same occupations, and the economy overall, continued to grow — a pattern the authors attribute specifically to AI automation rather than broader economic conditions.

7. Baltimore Young Families Success Fund (BYFSF), Abt Global (interim report June 2024; final evaluation 2025). Randomized controlled trial with 130 treatment and 158 control participants; young parents aged 18–24 in Baltimore receiving $1,000/month for 24 months. Administered by the CASH Campaign of Maryland in partnership with Mayors for a Guaranteed Income. Findings cited (treatment-vs-control): cash recipients were more than twice as likely as the control group to apply for education or professional training. Food insecurity dropped 16 percentage points during the pilot and remained 20 percentage points lower six months after payments ended.
https://www.abtglobal.com/insights/publications/report/guaranteed-income-after-one-year-in-baltimore

8. Megan Schwartz, Support for the Journey Home: An Impact Study of the Returning Citizens Stimulus Program, MDRC (2025). Quasi-experimental impact study of a program operated by the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) across 28 U.S. cities; the MDRC study geography was Los Angeles and Alameda counties. Participants received up to $2,750 across three payments. Findings cited (impact estimates relative to comparison group): parole violations dropped over 41 percent in the first six months after release, violent violations dropped 64 percent, with positive effects lasting at least twelve months. Note: the program footprint is 28 cities; the evaluation covers two counties.
https://www.mdrc.org/work/publications/support-journey-home

9. YouthNPower: Transforming Care, "Starting to Live": Findings of a Direct Cash Transfer Pilot for Former Foster Youth in New York City (Children's Defense Fund–New York and CUNY Graduate Center Public Science Project, 2025). The pilot provided $1,000/month for 12 months (June 2023–May 2024) to 100 young people aged 18–22 who had aged out of New York City foster care. Mixed-methods participatory research design with baseline, midpoint, and endpoint surveys (97 percent and 93 percent response rates at baseline and endpoint). Finding cited: self-reported homelessness decreased from 13 percent at the start of the pilot to 1 percent at the end of 12 months of support (pre/post within the treatment group; this is a self-reported housing status measure, not a treatment-vs-control comparison of shelter utilization). A companion administrative-data evaluation by CIDI (NYC Mayor's Office) found that pilot and control groups experienced similarly low levels of HUD-definition shelter utilization.
https://youthnpower.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/CORRECTED_YNP_PAR_Report.pdf

10. Bo-Kyung Elizabeth Kim, Amy Castro, Stacia West, Nidhi Tandon, Loraine Ho, Vanessa Tepos Nguyen, and Karim Sharif, The American Guaranteed Income Studies: City of Los Angeles BIG:LEAP, Center for Guaranteed Income Research, University of Pennsylvania (July 2024). Randomized controlled trial with approximately 3,200 treatment and 4,992 control participants. $1,000/month for 12 months to households in deep poverty in Los Angeles. Finding cited: at the 18-month follow-up (six months after payments ended), treatment group reported significantly lower total IPV scores than control group ($B = -7.97$, $p < .05$); effect also statistically significant for physical abuse subscale ($B = -2.90$, $p < .05$). Qualitative findings documented recipients using cash to prevent returning to unsafe relationships, to heal from violence, and to exit abusive relationships. https://hpri.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/CGIRLABIGLEAPFinalReport.pdf

11. Stacia West, Amy Castro, Nidhi Tandon, and Karim Sharif, The American Guaranteed Income Studies: Shreveport, Louisiana, Center for Guaranteed Income Research, University of Pennsylvania (October 2024). Randomized controlled trial with 110 treatment and 132 control participants. $660/month for 12 months, delivered to single parents at or below 120 percent of the federal poverty line in Caddo Parish, Louisiana. Finding cited: positive effects on financial well-being during the pilot did not persist six months after payments ended. https://www.penncgir.org/publications

12. Stacia West et al., The American Guaranteed Income Studies: Oakland, California, Center for Guaranteed Income Research, University of Pennsylvania (April 2025). Randomized controlled trial with 300 treatment and 360 control participants. $500/month for 18 months to low-income families in Oakland. Median household income approximately $14,500. Finding cited: cash mitigated income volatility but participants' economic vulnerability was so severe the program could not produce enduring effects on savings or financial resilience. https://www.penncgir.org/publications

13. Amber R. Crowell, Advancing Fresno County Guaranteed Income (AFCGI) Evaluation Report, Center for Community Voices at Fresno State (December 2025). Randomized controlled trial with 150 treatment and 150 control participants across urban (Southwest Fresno) and rural (Huron) communities; 12-month pilot. Finding cited: gains in food security and debt reduction showed a marked fade as the program approached its end. https://www.guaranteedincomeworks.org/s/AFCGI_Evaluation_Report_CCV_Dec2025.pdf

14. Neptune Flood, Bridging the Flood Insurance Gap: Addressing the Underinsurance Crisis in the United States (2025).

15. Farrell, Greig, and Yu, Weathering Volatility 2.0. See note 5.

16. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, JOLTS, 2025 Annual Data. See note 2.

17. AARP and National Alliance for Caregiving, Caregiving in the U.S. 2025. See note 3.

18. IIED, US in Disaster. See note 4.

19. West et al., Shreveport. See note 11.

20. West et al., Oakland. See note 12.

21. Crowell, AFCGI Evaluation. See note 13.

22. Greg J. Duncan, Katherine Magnuson, et al., Baby's First Years, a randomized controlled trial enrolling 1,000 low-income mothers across four U.S. communities (2018–2019), randomized to a high cash gift ($333/month) or a nominal gift ($20/month) over the child's early years. The four-year follow-up (NBER Working Paper 33844, 2025) found no statistically significant effect on the study's preregistered primary outcomes of children's language, executive function, and social-emotional development. An earlier one-year analysis had reported a marginal brain-activity (EEG) difference that did not persist. The pattern is what a modest, time-limited transfer measured against sweeping developmental outcomes would produce. https://www.nber.org/papers/w33844 https://www.babysfirstyears.com/

23. Magnuson, Katherine, and Lisa A. Gennetian. 2025. "What recent findings from the Baby's First Years study reveals about cash's impact on family life of young children in the United States." The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab.

https://www.povertyactionlab.org/blog/11-24-25/what-recent-findings-babys-first-years-study-reveals-about-cashs-impact-family-life.

24. Lisa A. Gennetian, Greg Duncan, Nathan A. Fox, Katherine Magnuson, Sarah Halpern-Meekin, Kimberly G. Noble, & Hirokazu Yoshikawa, "Unconditional Cash and Family Investments in Infants: Evidence from a Large-Scale Cash Transfer Experiment in the U.S.," NBER Working Paper No. 30379 (2022) — finding increased spending on child-focused items (books, toys, diapers, clothing), increased time in early-learning activities with infants, and a reduction in the share of families at or below the federal poverty line. https://www.nber.org/papers/w30379; https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2024.105159

25. Maria Sauval, Greg J. Duncan, Lisa A. Gennetian, Katherine A. Magnuson, Nathan A. Fox, Kimberly G. Noble, & Hirokazu Yoshikawa, "Unconditional Cash Transfers and Maternal Employment: Evidence from the Baby's First Years Study," Journal of Public Economics 236 (2024): 105159 — finding no statistically detectable overall effect on maternal labor-force participation or household earnings, but a reduction in maternal work hours concentrated during the height of the pandemic in 2020–21.

26. Calhoun, K. H., Field, M., Connot, N., Locke, S., Wilson, J. H., & Brisson, D. (2025). The "plus" in Cash Plus: Client-perceived implications of homelessness service provision and guaranteed income. Journal of Community Practice, 33(2). https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2025.2505413

27. Mary Bogle et al., Evaluation of the Austin Guaranteed Income Pilot: Participant Outcomes at 12 Months, Urban Institute (2024). Non-randomized evaluation of 135 households enrolled September 2022 in a housing-focused pilot in highest-poverty and rapidly gentrifying Austin neighborhoods. $1,000/month for 12 months. Partners included UpTogether, ten community-based organizations, and the City of Austin Equity Office. Findings cited are pre/post within-group (no control arm): 64 percent of participants reported job quality changed by six months post-pilot; of those, 30 percent reported they had secured better employment or a higher salary. Causal attribution to the cash is limited by the absence of a control group. https://www.urban.org/research/publication/evaluation-austin-guaranteed-income-pilot

28. Kim et al., BIG:LEAP. See note 10.

29. Both findings come from the OpenResearch Unconditional Income Study (ORUS), a randomized controlled trial of roughly 3,000 low-income participants in Texas and Illinois receiving $1,000/month (treatment) versus $50/month (control) for three years. Employment: Eva Vivalt, Elizabeth Rhodes, Alexander W. Bartik, David E. Broockman, Patrick Krause, and Sarah Miller, *The Employment Effects of a Guaranteed Income: Experimental Evidence from Two U.S. States*, NBER Working Paper No. 32719 (2024) — a 4.1 percentage-point decline in labor-force participation and about 1–2 fewer work hours per week, with treated participants more likely to shift toward caregiving than to remain unemployed and not looking for work. Parenting: Patrick K. Krause, Elizabeth Rhodes, Sarah Miller, Alexander W. Bartik, David E. Broockman, and Eva Vivalt, *The Impact of Unconditional Cash Transfers on Parenting and Children*, NBER Working Paper No. 34040 (July 2025) — treated parents reported better parenting behaviors, and among the lowest-income families, greater use and quality of non-parental child care.

30. Earnings-by-age, child care cost, pregnancy and postpartum cost, and higher education and trade school cost figures are drawn from Becky Chao and Mike Konczal, The Affordability Framework (Economic Security Project, October 2025), 27–29, https://economicsecurityproject.org/resource/affordability/ — citing U.S. Census Bureau, "Earnings Summary Measures by Selected Characteristics: 2023 and 2024," Table A-6, September 2025; Economic Policy Institute, "Updated resource calculates the cost of child care in every state," March 5, 2025; Aubrey Winger, Matthew Rae, and Cynthia Cox, "Health Costs Associated with

Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Infant Care," Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker, September 9, 2025; Melanie Hanson, "Average Cost of College & Tuition," EducationData.org, August 29, 2025; Melanie Hanson, "Student Loan Debt Statistics: Average + Total Debt," EducationData.org, August 8, 2025; and Indeed Editorial Team, "How Much Does Trade School Cost? (And How To Pay for It)," Indeed, updated June 6, 2025.

31. AARP Foundation, *Economic Security Monitor: Tracking the Harsh Realities of Aging in Poverty*, Spring 2026 wave, conducted in partnership with NORC at the University of Chicago. Quarterly longitudinal survey of U.S. adults age 50 and older living at or below 250% of the federal poverty level; Spring 2026 wave included 2,112 completed interviews. Findings cited: 66 percent of respondents ages 50–64 reported struggling financially, compared with 47 percent of those 65 and older; 54 percent of the 50–64 group could cover a month or less of expenses if they lost their primary income; 63 percent of employed respondents in this age group still reported financial hardship. Note: this is descriptive survey data on economic conditions, not an evaluation of a cash transfer program; no guaranteed income pilot has yet been designed around or evaluated for this population.
https://www.aarp.org/aarp-foundation/research-economic-security-monitor.html

32. Rx Kids (Flint, Michigan). Birth outcomes: Sumit Agarwal et al., “The effects of the Rx Kids unconditional cash prescription programme during pregnancy and infancy on birth outcomes in the USA: a population-based, quasi-experimental study,” The Lancet Public Health (2026), analyzing roughly 4,500 Flint births from January 2021 through June 2025 against matched Michigan cities. The program provides $1,500 during pregnancy and $500 per month through the infant’s first year.
https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(26)00055-1/fulltext Child-maltreatment finding: “Cash Transfers in the Perinatal Period and Investigations of Infant Maltreatment,” JAMA Pediatrics (2026), doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2026.1602, a 7.0 percentage-point decline in infant-maltreatment investigations, a 32 percent relative reduction.
https://rxkids.org/reductions-infant-maltreatment-investigations/

33. The Bridge Project’s Steph Silkowski and Vanessa Dor, interview, "What NYC Is Learning About the Impacts of Unconditional Cash on Moms and Babies: The Bridge Project," NYC Family Policy Project (September 2024). These figures are self-reported by program staff in an interview, not an independent evaluation or published report; the second cohort (500 mothers) did not include a control group.
https://familypolicynyc.org/2024/09/17/steph-silkowski-vanessa-dor/

34. Stacia West, Amy Castro, and colleagues, Columbia Life Improvement Monetary Boost (CLIMB): Guaranteed Income for Fathers in Columbia, South Carolina, Center for Guaranteed Income Research, University of Pennsylvania (February 2024). Randomized controlled trial with 100 fathers enrolled in the Midlands Fatherhood Coalition, many navigating child support obligations and labor market stigma. $500/month for 12 months. Finding cited (treatment-vs-control, employment tracked over 18-month study period): full-time employment held near 40 percent in the treatment group while the control group declined from 37 percent to 23 percent. Sample size is small (N=100). https://www.guaranteedincomeworks.org/

35. Federal foster-care data (AFCARS); see also Anthony Bald, Joseph J. Doyle Jr., Max Gross, and Brian A. Jacob, “Economics of Foster Care,” Journal of Economic Perspectives 36, no. 2 (2022): 223–46; and Mark E. Courtney et al., Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH): Conditions of Youth at Age 23 (Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 2020).

36. YouthNPower, "Starting to Live." See note 9. CPS investigation finding cited: among parenting participants, the share who had been subject of a child protective services investigation fell from 57 percent in the year before the pilot to 32 percent during the pilot year (pre/post within treatment group).

Independent housing finding: share of participants living in their own house or apartment rose from 27 percent at baseline to 62 percent at end of pilot (pre/post within treatment group).

37. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, Alameda County Guaranteed Income Pilot: Evaluation of Post-Foster Youth Support (January 2026). 67 foster youth in Alameda County received $1,000/month for 24 months plus a matching savings program (up to $5,000 in year 2) and optional case management. Findings cited are pre/post within-group: food insecurity fell from 73 percent to 27 percent during the two-year program; share of participants holding a postsecondary credential doubled. Sample size is small (N=67); base rate for the credential-doubling finding should be interpreted with that caveat.

38. Schwartz, Support for the Journey Home. See note 8.

39. Lucius Couloute, Nidhi Tandon, Stacia West, Sydney Blocker, Henisha Patel, and Amy Castro, Just Income GNV: Guaranteed Income for Formerly Incarcerated People in Gainesville, Florida, Center for Guaranteed Income Research, University of Pennsylvania (February 2025). Randomized controlled trial with 115 treatment and 134 control participants; formerly incarcerated individuals in Alachua County, Florida. Initial payment of $1,000 in month 1, followed by $600/month for 11 months (12 months total). Findings cited: the recidivism rate (new arrest, incarceration, or conviction) among participants was 31 percent lower over the 18-month study period, representing a 12 percent decrease in the odds of recidivism relative to the control group. Participants reported that cash prevented them from returning to illegal activity for survival. https://www.guaranteedincomeworks.org/data-from-gainesville-fl

40. Couloute, L., Tandon, N., West, S., Blocker, S., Patel, H., & Castro, A. (2025, February). The American Guaranteed Income Studies: Durham, North Carolina. University of Pennsylvania, Center for Guaranteed Income Research. Randomized controlled trial: 109 formerly incarcerated participants (released within the prior 5 years, income at or below 60% of area median income) received $600/month for 12 months; 138-person control group received no payments. Sample was 75% male in the treatment group, 85% in control. Housing: by the pilot's conclusion, a greater share of the treatment group had transitioned into better-quality homes (54% vs. 50% control) and more desirable neighborhoods (45% vs. 37% control). Financial resilience (ability to cover a $400 emergency) showed a consistent directional improvement for the treatment group but was not statistically significant. Recidivism did not differ significantly between groups.

41. Center for Guaranteed Income Research, The American Guaranteed Income Studies: Providence, Rhode Island (University of Pennsylvania, January 2025). Randomized controlled trial with 110 treatment households receiving $500/month for 18 months; low-income households, majority with children; 24-month follow-up window. Finding cited: homelessness among recipients decreased significantly over the 24-month follow-up while remaining unchanged in the control group; recipients were more likely to have moved to better neighborhoods and higher-quality homes. https://www.penncgir.org/publications

42. Nidhi Tandon, Stacia West, Elizabeth DeYoung, Henisha Patel, Allison Thompson, and Amy Castro, Newark Movement for Economic Equity: Lump-Sum vs. Recurring Cash Payments (primary report), and Guaranteed Income and Reconstructing Home: Housing, Parenting, and Educational Outcomes in Newark, New Jersey (housing supplement), Center for Guaranteed Income Research, University of Pennsylvania (June 2025). Randomized controlled trial with three arms: 200 recurring-payment recipients ($250 twice monthly), 200 lump-sum recipients ($3,000 twice yearly), and 478 controls. Newark residents below 200 percent FPL negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; focus on housing insecurity. Total payments of $6,000 per year over two years. Findings cited (pre/post within each arm, baseline to 30 months; Table 2 of the housing supplement): share in unstable housing dropped from 15 percent to 4 percent among recurring-payment recipients, and from 29 percent to 9 percent among lump-sum recipients. (The control arm also showed

improvement, from 23 percent to 13 percent.) Qualitative findings documented lump-sum recipients using cash to exit domestic violence situations and escape unsafe housing.
https://guaranteedincome.us/images/newark-report2.pdf

43. Amanda M. Griffin and Sarah Berger Gonzalez, Evaluation of the NYC Trust Youth Initiative: Summary of Findings from the NYC Pathways Study, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago (July 2025). Cash-plus model for young adults ages 18–24 experiencing homelessness in NYC; participants received unconditional direct cash transfers (housing stabilization funds of $550/month for 24 months plus a one-time $3,000 enrichment payment) alongside optional youth-directed supportive services including housing navigation, financial coaching, and peer counseling. Evaluation compared 29 TYI participants to 49 services-as-usual controls at 6, 12, 24, and 30 months post-enrollment. At 30 months (six months after program end), 92 percent of TYI participants had stable housing. The authors note that due to small sample size, the study lacked statistical power to detect significant differences between groups; findings are directionally promising but preliminary.
https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Chapin-Hall_NYC-Pathways-Study-Findings_July-2025.pdf

44. Point Source Youth and Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, Targeted Housing Assistance Program: Summary of Findings (May 2025). Uncontrolled evaluation of 345 participant households (623 individuals) across seven states (OR, CA, AZ, TX, GA, MI, NY); youth aged 16–26 at imminent risk of homelessness. Flexible cash assistance averaging $3,937 per household. Finding cited is a descriptive participant-outcome measure, not a treatment-vs-control differential: 90 percent of participants remained stably housed one month post-cash.
https://www.pointsourceyouth.org/targeted-housing-assistance-program

45. Sonya Acosta and Erik Gartland, "Families Wait Years for Housing Vouchers Due to Inadequate Funding," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2021), analysis of HUD data on households that received Housing Choice Vouchers in 2020: national average wait time of 28 months (close to two and a half years); among the 50 largest housing agencies, only two report average waits under one year, while some agencies report waits of up to eight years.
https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/families-wait-years-for-housing-vouchers-due-to-inadequate-funding

46. Reina, V., Fowle, M., Jaffee, S., Tanski, M., Mulbry, R., & Fortenberry, M. (2025). PHLHousing+ Pilot: Housing Outcomes at Two Years. See note 1.

47. Baltimore Young Families Success Fund (BYFSF), Abt Global (interim report June 2024; final evaluation 2025). Randomized controlled trial with 130 treatment and 158 control participants; young parents aged 18–24 in Baltimore receiving $1,000/month for 24 months. Administered by the CASH Campaign of Maryland in partnership with Mayors for a Guaranteed Income. Findings cited (treatment-vs-control): cash recipients were more than twice as likely as the control group to apply for education or professional training.
https://www.abtglobal.com/insights/publications/report/guaranteed-income-after-one-year-in-baltimore

48. Center for Guaranteed Income Research, Growing Resilience in Tacoma (GRIT): Final Evaluation Report, University of Pennsylvania (November 2024). Randomized controlled trial with 110 ALICE families (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) in Tacoma. $500/month for 13 months (December 2021–December 2022). Partners: City of Tacoma, United Way of Pierce County, Mayors for a Guaranteed Income. Finding cited (treatment-vs-control): greater full-time employment stability than controls; participants used the buffer to switch jobs for better long-term prospects rather than remaining in inadequate positions out of desperation.
https://www.penncgir.org/publications

49. Seattle-King County Guaranteed Basic Income Pilot. Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, independently evaluated by Applied Inference. 102 participants below 200% of the federal poverty line received $500/month for 10 months (Fall 2022–2023), paired with mandatory monthly case-management check-ins and an optional financial-literacy course; no control or comparison group was used, so findings are pre/post only. Employment rose from 37 percent to 66 percent; new jobs offered higher wages and increased access to benefits, including health insurance and retirement plans. Because the program bundled cash with case management and financial coaching and had no control group, the employment effect should not be attributed to cash alone. https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/how-king-countys-500-a-month-guaranteed-income-program-fared/

50. Santa Fe Learn, Earn, and Achieve Program (LEAP). Center for Guaranteed Income Research (CGIR), University of Pennsylvania, in partnership with the City of Santa Fe, Santa Fe Community College, the Santa Fe Community Foundation, and Mayors for a Guaranteed Income. 100 Santa Fe Community College students, age 30 or under, primary caretaker to at least one child, income below 200% of the federal poverty level, received $400/month for 12 months (October 2021–September 2022); no control group was used, so findings are pre/post only. Between baseline and endline, full-time employment rose 19 percentage points and unemployment fell from 9% to 3%; 30% of parents in the program completed their degree during the program year or within six months after it ended. SP2 CGIR Santa Fe, NM Report, University of Pennsylvania Center for Guaranteed Income Research. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5fdc101bc3cfda2dcf0a2244/t/67c5ce759a7a2d61ee819d23/1741016697009/SP2+CGIR+Santa+Fe+NM+Report.pdf

51. Mary Bogle, Emily Bramhall, Olivia Fiol, Peace Gwam, Elaine Maag, Owen Noble, Peter A. Tatian, Timothy Triplett, and Fay Walker, An Evaluation of THRIVE East of the River: Findings from a Guaranteed Income Pilot during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Urban Institute (February 24, 2022). Non-randomized evaluation (no control group) of 590 households in Wards 7 and 8 of Washington, D.C. (east of the Anacostia River) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants received $5,500 as either a single lump-sum payment or five $1,100 monthly payments. Findings cited are pre/post within-group (baseline to endline): food insecurity dropped from 34 percent to 19 percent; share of families unable to access care for their children's needs fell from 68 percent to 36 percent; more than 80 percent of participants chose the lump-sum payment, citing immediate need. Caveat: pandemic-era enrollment confounds interpretation, results may partly reflect general COVID recovery dynamics rather than the cash alone. https://www.urban.org/research/publication/evaluation-thrive-east-river

52. Gabriela Aoun Anguiera, "Monthly Cash Payments Could Boost Disaster Survivors. A Maui Nonprofit Tries It Out," Associated Press, March 18, 2026.

53. Shannon Doocy and Hannah Tappis, "Cash-Based Approaches in Humanitarian Emergencies: A Systematic Review," Campbell Systematic Reviews (2017), doi:10.4073/csr.2017.17.

54. On bipartisan public support for these forms of help: a 2024 national poll by BPC Action, with Pivotal Ventures and Morning Consult, found that 82 percent of voters support a federal paid family and medical leave program, including 90 percent of Democrats and 76 percent of Republicans. https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/caregiving-poll-june-2024/

55. BOOST (Building Outstanding Opportunities for Students to Thrive), Los Angeles Community College District, in partnership with the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation and the Young Adults Forward Fund (an initiative of the California Community Foundation). Guaranteed income pilot providing $1,000/month for 12

months in unconditional cash payments to a cohort of 251 students across four LACCD colleges (East Los Angeles College, Los Angeles City College, Los Angeles Trade-Technical College, and Los Angeles Southwest College), with a particular emphasis on students pursuing clinical, allied, or behavioral health careers. Funded through more than $4 million in private philanthropic funding. Designed with a randomized controlled trial — the first GBI program for community college students to include one, and the largest GBI program for community college students in the U.S. to date. As of this writing, the pilot is ongoing and outcome data has not yet been published. https://guaranteedincome.us/los-angeles-boost/

56. New Mexico House Bill 303, Workforce Training Funds Pilot (2024 legislative session), sponsored by Rep. Linda Serrato and Rep. Cristina Parajón. Directs the New Mexico Higher Education Department's Adult Education Division, in partnership with UpTogether, to provide monthly stipends to participants in Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs — adult basic education or English-language instruction combined with training toward an industry-recognized credential in a high-demand field (health care, construction, early childhood education, renewable energy, broadband expansion, agriculture, and others). Stipend is $1,000/month for up to 12 months per participant (lifetime cap). The pilot is newly underway and has not yet produced outcome data.
https://hed.nm.gov/news/gov-lujan-grisham-signs-legislation-expanding-tuition-free-college-university-research-and-more