

DENVER BASIC INCOME PROJECT



Fact Sheet

About Denver Basic Income Project

The Denver Basic Income Project (DBIP) is studying the impact of providing direct cash assistance to unhoused people living in Denver. A direct cash transfer system is a way to reduce wealth inequality and improve human thriving. Our approach and decision-making is centered by the input from those with lived experience, those on the frontlines, and those currently experiencing homelessness. With more than 32,000 individuals experiencing homelessness in Denver Metro alone, the learnings from this program will be invaluable in informing the future strategies and policies that serve this community.

DBIP conducted two pilots in August 2021 and July 2022 to test the program design and assumptions. Using the learnings from those studies, we launched the full program in November 2022 and participants began receiving payments thereafter.

The Study

DBIP is distributing cash payments to 807 individuals/families experiencing homelessness with dignity and speed, and with [research methods](#) implemented to analyze the project's impact. We want to learn and identify which approach has the greatest impact including acquiring stable housing, overall well-being, and economic security.

Participants were placed randomly into one of three groups:

- Group A participants will receive 12 monthly cash payments of \$1,000 for a total of \$12,000 over 12 months.
- Group B participants received an initial direct cash payment of \$6,500 and will receive 11 monthly payments of \$500 for a total of \$12,000 over 12 months.
- Group C participants will receive 12 monthly cash payments of \$50 for a total of \$600 over 12 months.

In addition to the 807 individuals enrolled in the main program, 39 individuals enrolled in the earlier pilot cohorts also received direct cash assistance.

While participation in the project's research component is not mandatory, nearly 93% of program participants opted to join the study. This exceptionally high opt-in rate is an initial indication that the trust is placed in participants to make this choice and to decide how to use their cash leads to reciprocal trust and more opportunity for positive engagement. The research activities include surveys every six months and short bi-weekly text surveys that will ask about health and well-being, housing stability, and financial well-being. Participants are also invited to complete interviews to share their experience with DBIP.

Participant Demographics

The Denver Basic Income Project's participant pool is designed to mirror the demographics of those that experience homelessness in Denver and reflects the project's mission of having an equity-centered approach to outreach and selection.

Of the 807 participants,

- 67.3% identify as people of color, with the majority identifying as Black (25.77%) and Latinx (23.3%), followed by multi-racial (7.81%), American Indian/Alaska Native (4.71%).
- Nearly half of the cohort identify as a woman, non-binary, transgender, or gender non-conforming individual (49.94%).
- Nearly a quarter (22.6%) identify as a family household, with at least one dependent under 18.
- Nearly half of the cohort have some type of disability (49.3%).

The participant demographics allow the Denver Basic Income Project findings to be generalizable to inform policy and programming for the unhoused community in Denver, and capture how other forms of social marginalization intersect with experiences of homelessness.

Applicants were determined eligible to participate in the study if they:

- Are connected with one of the community-based organizations participating in the Denver Basic Income Project.
- Are experiencing homelessness, meaning they are without fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, which includes:
 - Living in motels, hotels, and camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - Sharing housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (e.g. being "doubled up" or "couch surfing");
 - Living in cars, parks, public spaces, and abandoned buildings;
 - Living in emergency shelters or transitional shelters;
 - People whose nighttime residence is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations.
- Do not have severe and unaddressed mental health or substance use needs.
- Are 18 years old or older.

The Denver Basic Income Project has gained national attention and is being watched by other cities across the United States as a potential model for addressing homelessness and economic inequality. The findings of the Denver Basic Income Project are likely to inform and shape policy decisions made by the new leadership in Denver, particularly regarding issues of homelessness and economic justice. Cash is increasingly seen as the gold standard by which

all social impact programs should be evaluated, as it provides people with the autonomy to make decisions that are best suited to their individual needs and circumstances.

DBIP Funding

Denver Basic Income Project is a private/public partnership, generously supported by private foundations and individuals, and public funders, including, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, the City and County of Denver, The Colorado Trust, The Colorado Health Foundation and the Wend Collective.

The first year of the Denver Basic Income Project is yielding promising results and we are thrilled that DBIP has been approved to extend this critical program for another year. We believe the first year establishes a sense of stability for program participants but the second year is when individuals experience a profound transformation.

Year 1: Stability Phase

- \$500k initial seed funding from DBIP Founder in 2021
- \$8.3M total raised to date since 2021 inception

Recipients of basic income experience the immediate benefits of financial stability which allows participants to alleviate the burdens of financial stress, freeing them to focus on other aspects of their lives.

Year 2: Transformation Phase

- \$9M needed to continue this critical program

Building upon the foundation of stability, individuals gain the confidence and security necessary to explore new opportunities and take calculated risks. The second year allows recipients to escape the cyclical nature of poverty and invest in their personal growth and development.

By extending the project for another year, we can maximize the project's impact and empower even more individuals to break free from the vicious cycle of poverty. Continued funding will allow the Denver community to witness the long-term effects of this program and create a compelling case for its widespread adoption across the country.

Have more questions?

For additional information about Denver Basic Income Project, please visit denverbasicincomeproject.org and direct media inquiries to abby@allinstrategic.com.