

# Who in Rochester gets basic income?

## City shares statistics from GBI pilot program

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Rochester's guaranteed basic income program announced its launch last summer. And after inquiries from the Democrat and Chronicle, the city shared statistics from the pilot.

The guaranteed income pilot was designed to provide monthly payments of \$500 to 351 individuals for 12 months, for \$6,000 per participant. The payments are unconditional, which means there are no strings attached, no work requirements, and no restrictions on how the money can be used.

"This program is founded in the belief that individuals in poverty are best positioned to make informed financial decisions to address their household needs," Mayor Malik Evans said at the first city hall news conference.

"Folks aren't going to get this money and waste it," the mayor said in response to criticism that the city is giving money away.

The program received \$2.2 million from the City's federal American Rescue Plan Act grant, and a private donor pledged \$6,000 through the Rochester Area Community Foundation fund to support one participant for an entire year.

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# GBI data

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Here were the qualifications for the GBI pilot program:

- Only one individual per household was eligible to participate.
- Household income must be at or below 185% FPL.
- Recipients must be of legal adult age (18 years old) or emancipated.
- Recipients must be City of Rochester residents (with city residency for at least one year).
- Recipients must reside in qualifying census tracts (QCT).

### How many people applied for guaranteed income?

“With GBI, we are testing a theory,” City Council President Miguel Meléndez said in 2023. “If you give a family resources, they will know what to do with them. This council will be monitoring

progress closely, and it’s our hope that when this program is successful, we can find the necessary resources to continue and expand the program.”

During a one-week application window, the City received 16,123 applications.

Of these, 397 were duplicates, and 4,028 were from applicants residing outside a qualified census tract or indicating a household income too high to meet the qualifications.

Ultimately, the City received 11,698 qualified applications.

Applicant breakdown:

- Female 74.8%
- Male 24.5%
- Black 73.2%
- White 11.9%
- Latino 18.6%
- Other race 14.9%

### How many people were selected for Rochester basic income?

- Total participants: 351
- 1st cohort – 174. 2nd cohort – 176.



Mayor Malik Evans announces the launch of Rochester’s guaranteed basic income program (GBI). ROBERT BELL/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

- One selected applicant from the 1st cohort moved outside the country after three payments.

The City of Rochester says that program milestones were established before its launch and have been successfully achieved as the program progresses.

The city’s application form inquired whether applicants were interested in

counseling services from the City’s Office of Financial Empowerment. Over 6,100 applicants expressed interest, and the OFE organized six workshops on financial literacy for GBI applicants and the general public.

More than 160 individuals registered for these workshops, which were held in September, October, and November 2023, according to the City of Rochester.