

Michigan Benefits Access Initiative

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CHIPRA Outreach Leads to Broader Partnership



Michigan Primary Care Association (MPCA) & Michigan Association of United Ways/Michigan-2-1-1 (MAUW) partnered on an outreach model

The model leveraged the capacities of both systems to garner access and utilized AmeriCorp volunteers to build connectivity

A similar model is being utilized across multiple benefits under the Michigan Benefits Access Initiative (MBAI)



Increase the economic stability for Michigan families

By connecting them to multiple public benefits through the use of the MiBridges technology

The Opportunity



Over \$930 million in federal benefits and tax credits go unclaimed in Michigan each year

Only 7 % of low-income, working families with children receive all of supports for which they qualify (food stamps, child care and Medicaid)

Capitalize on the existing relationships Community Based Organizations (CBOs) have with clients and “un-silo” our system

Need and Opportunity



- Michigan hit tremendously hard by economic down turn
- Unprecedented numbers of households qualify for public benefits
- State of Michigan & nonprofits struggle to meet the needs of low income families

Program	People Eligible/ Not Receiving	Benefits not Claimed
Food Stamps	584,075	\$638,160,544
EITC	113,766	\$158,589,312
Children's Medicaid	59,000	\$108,560,000
CHIP	20,000	\$27,260,0000

Budget on Wages Alone

INCOME		EXPENSES	
Wages	\$ 10,000	Rent	\$ 7,200
		Food & supplies	\$ 5,700
		Transportation	\$ 2,400
		Health & child care	\$ 15,500
		Taxes	\$ 1,000
TOTAL	\$ 10,000	TOTAL	\$ 31,800

Income = minimum wage for 2002, 69% of Federal Poverty Level

Expenses do not include items such as: driver's license fees, gifts, entertainment, school supplies and trip fees, after school and sports activities, vacation, college application fees and tuition, many more . . .

Budget with Basic Work Supports

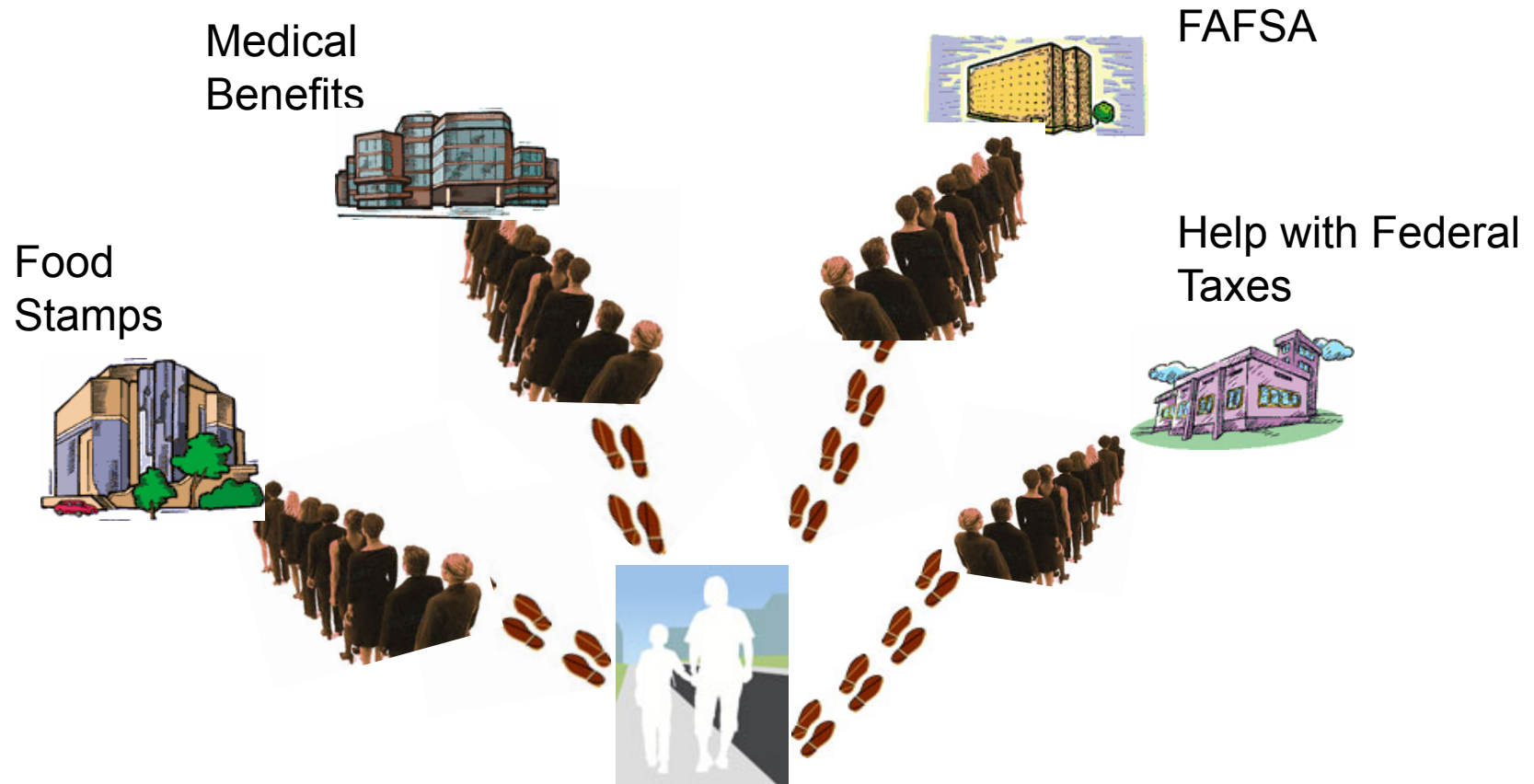


INCOME	
Wages	\$ 10,000
EITC	\$ 4,000
Food stamps	\$ 2,600
Medicaid	\$ 4,830
Child care subsidies	\$ 12,400
TOTAL	\$ 33,830

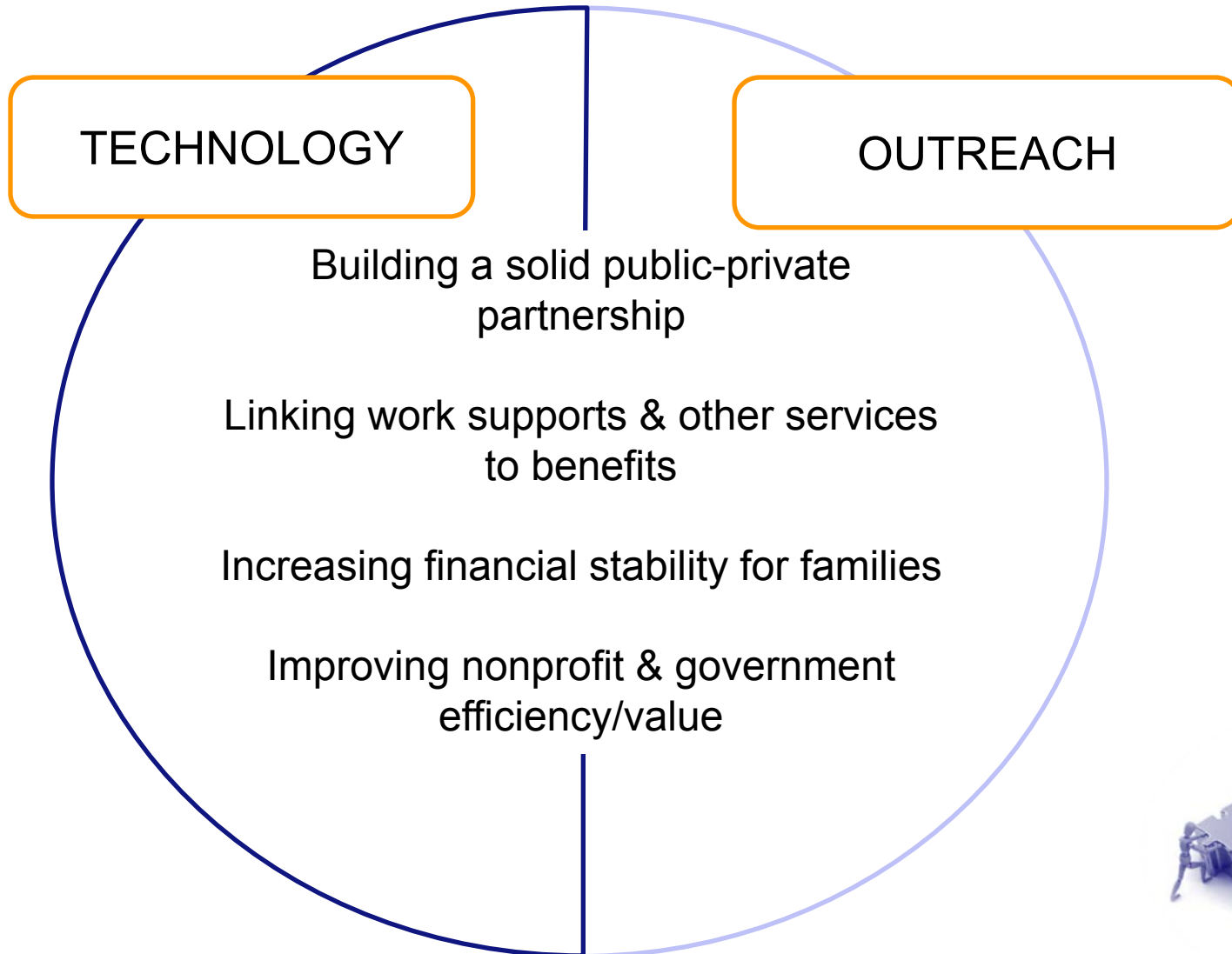
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Adapted from Sheila Zedlewski, Gina Adams, Lisa Dubay and Genevieve Kenney, "Is There a System Supporting Low-Income Working Families?" The Urban Institute (Feb. 2006), at 8-9.

Reasons for not applying: Lack of knowledge, distrust of government, welfare stigma, many stops, time missed from work, employed not eligible, or denied before.



Michigan Benefit Access Initiative Vision



Public-Private Partnership



Michigan Association of United Ways

Received funding from **multiple private foundations** to develop a way to increase economic stability for Michigan families.

Michigan Department of Human Services

In the process of developing an benefit application system, called MI Bridges, to enable families to apply for multiple benefits, check benefit status, and recertify all on-line.

Technology - MiBridges Expansion



- Medicaid
- Cash (FIP)
- Child Day Care
- SER/Food Assistance

Applications for All Programs

Check My Benefits Enhancement (Internet & phone)

- Improved access to information
- Reduced caseworker calls
- Increased efficiency



Improved Service – Adding:

Online Redeterminations (Eligibility Reviews)

- Document uploading
- Client letter retrieval
- Addition of Arabic

- Improved response
- Reduced closures
- Increase worker processing

MI Bridges Technology: Key Goals

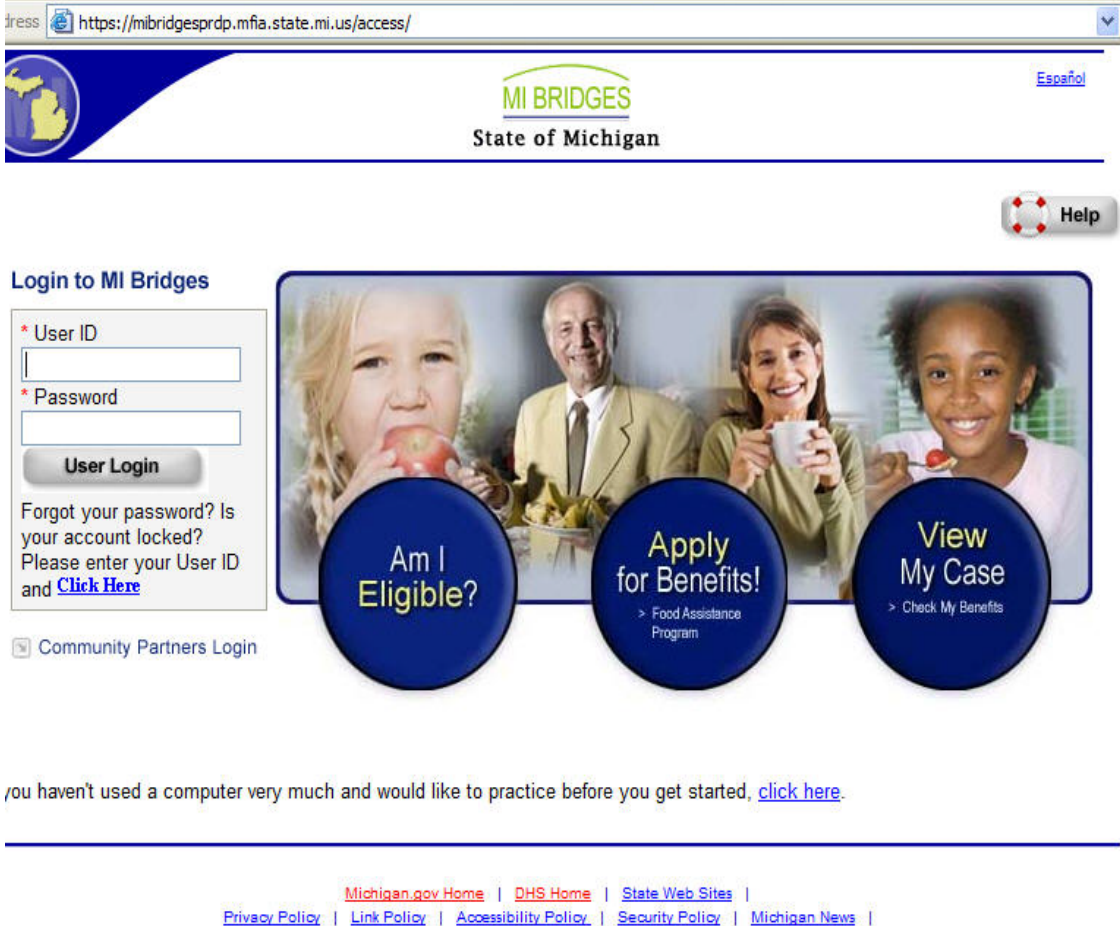


- Give DHS recipients anywhere, anytime access to apply for DHS programs and check on their case status.
- Reduce number of local offices visits and phone calls to DHS by recipients.
- Provide easier benefit maintenance through uploading of documentation.
- Allow DHS recipients to get answers to commonly asked questions themselves through the Internet and telephone.
- Build on the success of existing MI Bridges (As of August 22nd 2011)
 - Over 418,000 applications submitted online
 - Over 600 registered community partners
 - Over 247,500 online recipient accounts created
 - Over 43,500 case change reports submitted
 - Over 1,250,000 telephone calls received

Courtesy of MDHS

Technology: MiBridges Home Page

- Secure site available 24 hours a day
- Available in English and Spanish
- People may create a new account or login into an existing account to complete an application or view their case benefits
- Community partners play a vital role in assisting applicants



The screenshot shows the MiBridges Home Page for the State of Michigan. The browser address bar displays <https://mbridgesprdp.mfia.state.mi.us/access/>. The page header includes the United Way logo, the text "MI BRIDGES State of Michigan", and a "Español" link. A "Help" button is located in the top right corner.

The main content area features a "Login to MI Bridges" section with the following elements:

- * User ID:
- * Password:
-
- Forgot your password? Is your account locked? Please enter your User ID and [Click Here](#)
- Community Partners Login

To the right of the login form is a large image of a diverse group of people (a young girl, an elderly man, a woman, and a young girl) smiling and eating. Below this image are three blue circular buttons:

- Am I Eligible?**
- Apply for Benefits!**
> Food Assistance Program
- View My Case**
> Check My Benefits

At the bottom of the page, there is a link: "you haven't used a computer very much and would like to practice before you get started, [click here](#)."

The footer contains several links: [Michigan.gov Home](#) | [DHS Home](#) | [State Web Sites](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Link Policy](#) | [Accessibility Policy](#) | [Security Policy](#) | [Michigan News](#) |

Courtesy of MDHS

MI Bridges Expansion Release I – What can recipients do?



	Existing Functionality	New Functionality (as of Sept 2011)			
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Clients can:	Food Assistance	State Emergency Relief	Medical Assistance	Child Development and Care	Cash Assistance
Check their Benefit status	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Find upcoming appointments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Find who their case specialist is	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
View their case correspondence online	New Functionality	New Functionality	✓	✓	✓
Find pending verifications	✓	Online Only	✓	✓	✓

Online



Telephone



<http://www.michigan.gov/mibridges>

1-888-MIBRIDGES

1-888-642-7434

Courtesy of MDHS

MI Bridges – Release II & III Coming Soon



1 Apply for Benefits – Jan 2012

- Michigan Residents can apply for:
 - Cash Assistance
 - Child Development and Care
 - Food Assistance
 - Medical Assistance
 - State Emergency Relief

2 Report my Changes – Jan 2012

- Recipients can report changes on the following programs:
 - Cash Assistance
 - Child Development and Care
 - Food Assistance
 - Medical Assistance

3 Document Upload – Jan 2012

- Recipients and new applicants can easily upload documents for verifications, redeterminations and new applications

4 Text Messaging – Jan 2012

- Electronic Notification:
 - Allow recipients to receive text messages when new correspondence is generated

5 Renew my Benefits – March 2012

- Recipients can now submit online, information required for:
 - annual redetermination
 - semi-annual redetermination
 - mid-cert redetermination

6 Arabic Language – March 2012

- Recipients will have the option of a third language, Arabic. MI Bridges will then support:
 - Arabic
 - Spanish
 - English

Courtesy of MDHS

Benefit to MI Bridges to Applicant/Recipient



- Promotes recipients self-sufficiency - Households with multiple supports are more likely to gain and retain employment, increase their earnings and obtain postsecondary credentials.
- Gives anywhere, anytime access to apply for DHS programs and check case status – provides convenience and privacy
- Immediate access to benefit status and correspondence - reduces number of local offices visits and phone calls to DHS
- Allows DHS recipients to get answers to commonly asked questions themselves through the Internet and telephone.
- Better maintenance of benefits due to the convenience of uploading documents for recertification.

- **Community Outreach Coupled with MiBridges Expanded Technology**
 - CBO; churches; community clinics; early learning communities
- **Outreach to Special Populations**
 - Community College
 - Community Schools
 - Corrections

There was a rigorous and thoughtful process for selecting our partners...



Selection process was collaboration between UWSEM, MAUW, DHS and Seedco and encompassed the creation of an application, selection and funding criteria, webinar development and facilitation, review and scoring of submitted applications and award letter.

Statewide roll-out



Regional UW MBAI Capacity Hub

- UWSEM pilots MBAI capacity-building hub
- Expand MBAI capacity-building hubs across 7 other regions
- Regions mirror Voices 4Action, Health Access Coalition, 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness & Consumer Health Access Coalition

Statewide Sector Leadership

- Food Bank Council of MI
- MI Primary Care Association
- MI Community College Association
- MPRI
- MI EITC Coalition
- Coalition to End Homelessness
- DHS V4A
- MI Head Start Association
- MCAA

Getting to Scale

We are at a critical stage, poised to achieve a transformative statewide benefit access model

Transform and streamline Michigan's Benefit Access System

Secure Public Private MBAI Partnership

- Set vision
- Secure Funding
- Achieve leadership collaboration

Pilot Community Outreach

Pilot Special Population Outreach

- Establish MBAI infrastructure
- Engage high potential CBO partners
- Develop Training & Communications
- Set output targets
- Measure & adjust implementation models

Rollout Tested Community Outreach

Rollout Special Population Outreach

- Policy Change to support expansion and efficiency
- Accelerate shift from program delivery to integrated supports
- Grow numbers geometrically through established networks
- Measure & refine implementation

- Greater benefit uptake
- Greater bundled benefit uptake
- Greater efficiencies
- Continuously build upon technology & outreach innovation

Critical capabilities required

Fully Expanded MiBridges

Deep Multi-sector Engagement

Metrics and measurement

Solution "research" and architecture

Leading others to change

Households of Focus



- Only applied for one benefit (i.e. Food Stamps only)
- Applied before but denied
- Limited reading or computer literacy
- First time needing benefit, never applied before
- Transportation and computer access barriers

MBAI Outreach - Key Goals



- Improve access to public benefits for those in need of financial support.
- Educate Community Based Organizations (CBO) on the advantages of using MI Bridges for their community residents.
- Train CBOs on the use of MI Bridges and general benefit program eligibility to effectively help people with applications.
- Develop a referral system that will direct potential benefit recipients to organizations capable of providing application assistance.

Benefit of MI Bridges to Community Partners



- Promotes the mission of community partners to help clients achieve self-sufficiency – can move household successfully off client roster to help others in need
- Accessing DHS services online can save agencies time tracking down information or waiting for decision notices - time can be used in other focus areas
- For MI Bridges, online applications are processed more quickly, resulting in about 10% less overdue applications when compared to paper applications – less time that clients need emergency resources from community partners
- Less time away from work to complete applications and check case status – reduces obstacles to maintain employment and sustain income.

Capacity Building Grants



- Mini-grants will be processed through local United Ways to build capacity of CBOs that seek to fully engage community residents with computer access and direct assistance completing MI Bridges.
- Information will soon be made available on mini-grant applications on the MBAI web-based training center.
- Received AmeriCorp grant to build capacity statewide through 33 volunteers; placement also within 2-1-1 call centers

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.
LIVE UNITED



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