



The Invaluable Benefits of Investing in Black Women

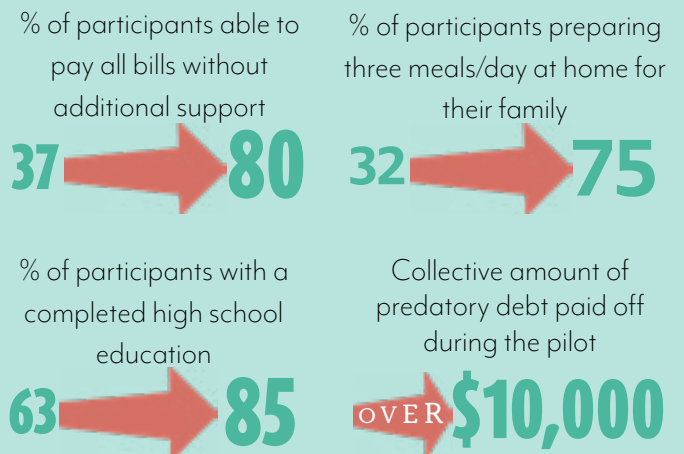
The Magnolia Mother's Trust was born out of a simple, yet radical idea - what if when Black women told us what they needed, we believed them?

The Magnolia Mother's Trust, a first-of-its-kind program providing \$1,000 monthly for 12 months to Black mothers living in extreme poverty in the Deep South, began disbursements in 2018 to a group of 20 women. In its second year, it expanded dramatically to 110 mothers, with at least another 100 set to begin receiving payments in 2021.

The concept of a guaranteed income has long been a part of American history, especially Black liberation movements. From the Black Panthers to the National Welfare Rights Organization to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., all saw the promise of cash to effectively and directly pull people out of poverty and provide financial stability. This is especially true when looking at our current economic crisis and the disproportionate toll the pandemic has taken on Black and Brown communities.

While we hear much about guaranteed income programs now, MMT was handing out checks before any of the current crop of pilots across the country. It is the only program in the world to specifically focus on Black women.

First Year Key Results



From the beginning, Magnolia Mother's Trust has focused on challenging the structures that hold Black women back in America, particularly poor Black women in the Deep South - stereotypes around work ethic, the paternalistic nature of our social safety net, who is deserving of help and dignity. Each year, MMT has included a rigorous research process to support the work, but the fact is, we already know cash helps poor people be less poor. That is common sense. Instead, we are building a movement – empowering Black women and unapologetically positioning them as worthy, capable, and valuable.



Beyond the tangible financial benefits, this program has highlighted the invaluable effects of economic security - being able to sleep at night, knowing your kids will have food on the table and a few gifts under the Christmas tree, and dreaming of a job you're passionate about and brings you joy and satisfaction.

That's why, as MMT enters its next iteration, we are looking to move beyond cash. The payments of the program will remain, but our work will focus not only on proving cash helps people, but on growing and leading the conversation around economic, racial, and gender justice. There are now more than a dozen pilots happening across the country and several bills to provide federal cash payments in Congress. As a pioneer in this field, Springboard To Opportunities is uniquely positioned to speak to a moment in which leaders are looking to move from pilot to policy. If it can work in Jackson, Mississippi, we can inform how it will work anywhere.

We'll also go deeper in our work to center the voices of the women involved. We are launching a Storytelling Lab in partnership with FRESH Speakers where mothers will develop and strengthen their verbal and oral storytelling skills, preparing them to share

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their stories and experiences in Op-Eds, town hall meetings, and directly with community leaders and policymakers. We are also developing a series of oral histories told by the women of the program, and continue our ongoing engagement with national press that has resulted in several [high-profile pieces](#) since MMT's launch. Beyond the program, we'll continue to lift up the broader narrative work of shifting damaging perceptions of Black women by countering stereotypes and [exposing the racism inherent](#) in our current social safety net programs.

For too long, the Deep South has been written off as a lost cause. But the women of The Magnolia Mother's Trust show that is not the case. We have the numbers and the stories to prove that real change is happening here in Jackson. With help, we can make sure that change is a lasting one that brings about a new vision of the South and beyond.

Second Year Results

The second cohort of mothers began just as nationwide lockdowns and social distancing measures were being put in place due to the **COVID-19 pandemic**. While data continues to be finalized, initial results are promising. Highlights from the initial data include:

- **56%** increase in **paying all bills** on time without support,
- **48%** more likely to have **money saved** for emergencies,
- **25%** increase in **health insurance** coverage and **30%** more likely to **seek professional medical help** for sickness or chronic illness,
- able to budget up to **\$150 more for food and household costs** resulting in lowered food insecurity and struggles with basic needs.