



Michigan Benefits Access (MBA) Levels of Engagement

Michigan Benefits Access (MBA) is an unprecedented public/private partnership that aims to connect greater numbers of families in Michigan to a range of benefits to help promote household economic stability. The genesis of MBA came out of the aftermath of the devastating economic recession of 2008, which left Michigan as one of the hardest hit states in the nation. Michigan needed an easy-to-navigate, one-stop, web portal for individuals to apply and access public benefits. MI Bridges, developed and maintained by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), was created to provide families and individuals with safe and secure access to the following benefits: food assistance, cash assistance, medical assistance, child development and care, and state emergency relief (energy and non-energy related).

One of the benefits of MI Bridges is that individuals can apply and check their benefits anywhere and at any time. This means individuals no longer have to visit the local MDHHS office. They simply log on to the MI Bridges site at a time and location that is convenient for them.

The MDHHS is seeking community partners to help spread the word about MI Bridges and to assist applicants. Many community organizations already assist clients in leveraging resources to assist them on their path to self-sufficiency. Join MDHHS in helping more individuals receive the assistance they need to achieve economic stability.

Below are two ways that organizations can get involved and support Michigan Benefits Access.

Access Partner

An Access Partner is an agency that agrees to promote MBA and MI Bridges by displaying promotional materials about MI Bridges and providing a computer(s) to be utilized by clients to access MI Bridges. The computer(s) does not have to be exclusively for MI Bridges use. As a MI Bridges Access Partner, an agency will offer individuals without access to computers or the Internet a way to complete the application themselves. Examples of agencies that may consider serving as MI Bridges Access Partners include libraries, community centers, or schools.

Requirements to be designated as a MI Bridges Access Partner:

- Completion of an MBA MI Bridges orientation webinar or have attended an MBA MI Bridges Navigation Training. Visit www.mibenefitsaccess.org for more information.
- Complete Partner Application and submit to MDHHS.
- Certify that the agency may not use personal, medical, or demographic client data for any purpose that is not directly related to the fulfillment of my agency's outreach and enrollment responsibilities. The partner should also understand that the agency may not disclose personal, medical or demographic client information to any person not directly responsible for ensuring the processing of MI Bridges applications.

The benefits of being a MI Bridges Access Partner include:

- Receive an Access Partner ID number from MDHHS.
- Receive ongoing communication from MDHHS regarding changes and updates on MI Bridges, policy updates, and the number of applications your organization generated via MI Bridges.
- Receive MBA/MI Bridges promotional materials including posters, fliers and templates.
- Receive applicant resource materials including client handouts and identification signage.
- Receive information about additional training opportunities.
- Your organization will be represented and listed as a MI Bridges Access Partner on the MDHHS and MBA websites, if desired.

Navigation Partner

A Navigation Partner is an agency that agrees to promote MBA and MI Bridges by displaying promotional materials, providing a computer(s) to be utilized to access MI Bridges and providing one-on-one technical and navigation assistance to potential MI Bridges applicants. The assistance provided may vary from simply answering applicant questions to helping them complete the entire application online. This typically includes teaching persons how to use the system themselves, such as those without computer knowledge or literacy skills.

Requirements:

- Agency staff and volunteers who are providing one-on-one assistance with application completion must attend and successfully complete the MBA and MI Bridges Navigation Training provided by the Michigan Association of United Ways.
- Complete a Community Partner Application and submit it to MDHHS.
- Certify that the agency may not use personal, medical, or demographic client data for any purpose that is not directly related to the fulfillment of my agency's outreach and enrollment responsibilities. The partner should also understand that the agency may not disclose personal, medical or demographic client information to any person not directly responsible for ensuring the processing of MI Bridges applications.
- Certify that all staff and volunteers who will be providing one-on-one assistance with potential MI Bridges applicants have completed a MI Bridges Navigation Partner User Application Request Form and authorize MDHHS to complete a background check prior to providing one-on-one assistance with MI Bridges. The type of background checks to be conducted include: Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT) and the Child Abuse and Neglect Registry through MDHHS. Background checks will need to be completed on a yearly basis by MDHHS.
- Certify that all MI Bridges one-on-one assistance provided by the agency's staff or volunteers will be conducted in person.
- Certify that the agency will not financially benefit from providing MI Bridges one-on-one assistance.
- Sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the MDHHS.
- Participate in trainings and/or webinars for technology updates and programmatic changes.
- Participate in quality assurance reviews.

The benefits of being a Navigation Partner include:

- Receive a Navigation Partner ID number from MDHHS.
- Receive ongoing communication from MDHHS regarding changes and updates on MI Bridges, policy updates, and the number of applications your organization generated via MI Bridges.
- Receive MBA/MI Bridges promotional materials including posters, fliers and templates.
- Receive applicant resource materials including client handouts and identification signage.
- Receive information about additional training opportunities.
- Receive ongoing technical assistance on MBA integration and sustainability into existing agency systems.
- Receive promotion as a Navigation Partner to accept referrals from Access Partners and MDHHS, if desired.
- Receive quarterly information on benefits your clients accessed via MI Bridges and the cash value of those benefits.

For more information about becoming a MI Bridges Community Partner contact:

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The Access and Navigation Partners are not MDHHS employees/caseworkers, and as such, will not provide assistance regarding MDHHS policy, rules, etc.