



## New Orleans releases first dollars for 'guaranteed income' pilot program

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### NEW ORLEANS —

Wynn Williams has been in a bind. The 20-year-old hasn't been going to college because he can't afford it without a job. And he's had trouble getting a job.

But New Orleans' latest version of a pilot "guaranteed income" program seeks to end the spiral for Williams and 124 other young adults. The pre-selected recipients — all between ages 16 and 25, as well as out of work and out of school at some point over the past year — will get \$350 a month. No strings attached.

"I just want to say thank you to everyone that's a part of this," Williams said at a news conference Monday, in which Mayor LaToya Cantrell announced the first payments had already gone out. "I just can't wait to see what's going to happen next."

The money comes from a \$500,000 grant from Mayors for a Guaranteed Income, a private group supported by Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey.

Cantrell hopes the program can set the stage for similar programs in the future, including those that could involve public funds.

"Nothing stops a bullet like a job," the mayor said. "But it's also about wraparound resources and access to capital and cash to help our people along."

But critics worry that expanding "guaranteed income," especially using government dollars, would dis-incentivize work.

"They ought to be looking at more jobs in the private economy, so more young people and lower-income people can be hired," Cato Institute economist Chris Edwards told WDSU.

Cantrell maintains the money would just be supplementary, to lift young adults from poverty-induced spirals.

"People get access to resources," she said. "They plan. They're educated in the process. And they move on to a better quality of life and one that is sustained. That's what this is all about."