

## **MI Bridges Community Partner Benefits and Requirements**

MI Bridges is an unprecedented public-private partnership that aims to connect greater numbers of individuals and families in Michigan to a range of state and local resources, as well as MDHHS benefit programs, to promote household stability. In 2018, MI Bridges has undergone a number of changes to better serve our shared customers. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has partnered with clients and community partners to enhance the features available through MI Bridges. MI Bridges can be used to apply for benefits and manage their case, but it can now also be used to locate resources in local communities to support a wide range of needs including Food, Housing & Shelter, Utilities, Health, Income & Employment, Transportation, Child Care, Education, Legal, and Clothing and Household Goods. Any Michigan resident can use MI Bridges, not just MDHHS beneficiaries. New functionality has been included for community partners, they can receive referrals sent through MI Bridges, and have greater access to information via a directory of user they are assisting.

MDHHS is seeking community partners to help spread the word about MI Bridges, support access to the system, and connect with clients and to provide individual assistance in using MI Bridges. 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 greater stability! For more information about becoming a MI Bridges Community Partner, and to access partner training and resources, please visit [www.michigan.gov/mibridgespartners](http://www.michigan.gov/mibridgespartners).

With the new MI Bridges, community partners can choose to engage with MDHHS and customers in several ways. Organizations can register for one or more of the following levels of engagement.

### **Access Partner**

An Access Partner is an agency that agrees to promote MI Bridges by displaying promotional materials and providing a computer(s), tablet(s) or mobile device(s) to be utilized by clients to access MI Bridges. The device(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 a computer, tablet, mobile device, or the internet a way to access the MI Bridges portal. Examples of agencies that may consider serving as MI Bridges Access Partners include, but are not limited to libraries, community centers, and schools.

### **Requirements to be designated as a MI Bridges Access Partner:**

- Register as an Access Partner in the MI Bridges portal.
- Promote MI Bridges to your organization's clients, including making available MI Bridges educational materials.
- Ensure that your organization's lead point of contact completes an orientation to MI Bridges provided by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.
- Ensure that appropriate staff and/or volunteers within your organization (i.e. those that may interact with clients who are accessing MI Bridges at your organization) are aware of and encouraged to share the availability of local community partner assistance, as well as MI Bridges (phone) help desk support as needed.
- Ensure that your organization never charges a fee to provide access to MI Bridges.

The benefits of being a MI Bridges Access Partner include:

- Receive a Community Partner ID number from MDHHS.
- Receive ongoing communication from MDHHS regarding MI Bridges changes and policy updates.
- Receive a MI Bridges starter kit of promotional materials including posters, fliers and templates. Promotional materials may be sent on request
- Receive applicant resource materials including client handouts and assistance tools.
- Receive information about additional training opportunities.

### **Referral Partner**

A Referral Partner is an agency that agrees to receive referrals sent directly from clients using MI Bridges. Clients can identify a need using the 'Help Me Find Resources' feature, and the referral agency will be listed if it can help meet that need. The Referral Partner will receive referrals on their MI Bridges dashboard and contact the client to provide services.

### **Requirements:**

- Inclusion in the MI 2-1-1 database is mandatory.
- Register as a Referral Partner in the MI Bridges portal.
- Promote MI Bridges to your organization's clients, including making available MI Bridges educational materials and incorporating the use of MI Bridges into organizational processes where applicable.
- Respond to client referrals received through MI Bridges within 2 business days of receiving a referral.
- Provide referral feedback (i.e. description of how the referral was completed) through MI Bridges.
- Review your organization's information in the Michigan 2-1-1 database no less than annually to ensure the information included in the 2-1-1 database is accurate and comprehensive.
- Ensure that your organization's lead point of contact completes an orientation to MI Bridges provided by the MDHHS.
- Ensure that your organization's lead point of contact actively manages all MI Bridges user accounts associated with your organization, including routinely confirming all user information is accurate and up-to-date and immediately terminating users that no longer need access to MI Bridges (i.e. as a result of a staff person leaving the organization or moving to a position which no longer requires MI Bridges permission).
- Ensure that all agency staff and volunteers who are utilizing MI Bridges are registered as users and complete all required MI Bridges training(s) provided by the MDHHS for their community partner role / permission level prior to providing MI Bridges assistance.
- Ensure that all agency staff and volunteers participate in MI Bridges continuing education and training at least once per year after their initial training is complete.
- Ensure that your organization never charges a fee to provide MI Bridges assistance.

The benefits of being a Referral Partner include:

- Receive a Community Partner ID number from MDHHS and receive a user ID for each staff member or volunteer who uses MI Bridges.
- Receive ongoing communication from MDHHS regarding MI Bridges changes and policy updates.

- Receive a MI Bridges starter kit of promotional materials including posters, fliers and templates. Promotional materials may be sent on request
- Receive applicant resource materials including client handouts and assistance tools.
- Receive information about additional training opportunities.
- Access to ongoing technical assistance through the MI Bridges dedicated Help Desk.
- Ability to view key metrics related to the individuals your agency assisted.
- Receive promotion as a Referral Partner to accept referrals from other community partners and MDHHS, if desired.
- Referral partners are distinguished as a MI Bridges partner to clients in the portal.

### **Navigation Partner**

A Navigation Partner is an agency that agrees to promote MI Bridges by displaying promotional materials, providing a computer(s), tablet(s), or mobile device(s) to be utilized to access MI Bridges and providing one-on-one technical and navigation assistance to potential MI Bridges users. Typically, this includes teaching users how to navigate the system themselves, such as those with low computer knowledge or literacy skills. However, the assistance provided may vary from simply answering applicant questions to helping them complete a needs survey and application online.

### **Requirements:**

- Register as a Navigation Partner in the MI Bridges portal.
- Promote MI Bridges to your organization's clients, including making available MI Bridges educational materials and incorporating the use of MI Bridges into organizational processes where applicable.
- Provide one-on-one assistance to individuals using the MI Bridges system across the full range of MI Bridges features including helping clients find state and community resources through guided needs assessment, exploring available resources with clients, supporting clients in applying for all MDHHS assistance programs available through MI Bridges (not limiting assistance to one benefit program) and viewing MDHHS benefits information.
- Ensure that your organization's lead point of contact completes an orientation to MI Bridges provided by the MDHHS.
- Ensure that your organization's lead point of contact actively manages all MI Bridges user accounts associated with your organization, including routinely confirming all user information is accurate and up-to-date and immediately terminating users that no longer need access to MI Bridges (e.g. as a result of a staff person leaving the organization or moving to a position which no longer requires MI Bridges access).
- Ensure that all agency staff and volunteers who are utilizing MI Bridges are registered as users and complete all required MI Bridges training(s) provided by the MDHHS for their community partner role / permission level prior to providing MI Bridges assistance.
- Ensure that all agency staff and volunteers participate in MI Bridges continuing education and training at least once per year after their initial training is complete.
- Ensure that all MI Bridges Apply For Benefits applications are submitted by an applicant or his/her authorized representative, not by organization staff or volunteers unless they are acting in an official authorized representative capacity.
- Conduct a criminal history check per the organization's policies on all staff and volunteers whom your organization would like to provide one-on-one client assistance with MI Bridges. Prohibit

staff/volunteers with criminal convictions that raise concerns for clients' safety and property or raise questions about their honesty and integrity from providing one-on-one assistance. (Prohibited convictions include but are not limited to: homicide, criminal sexual conduct, assault, battery, kidnapping, larceny, embezzlement, conversion, fraud, forgery and false representation.)

- Ensure that your organization never charges a fee to provide MI Bridges assistance.
- If your organization is included in the Michigan 2-1-1 database, review your organization's 2-1-1 database information no less than annually to ensure the information included in the database is accurate and comprehensive.

NOTE: 2-1-1 database inclusion is not mandatory for Navigation partners, but it is highly encouraged

The benefits of being a Navigation Partner include:

- Receive a Community Partner ID number from MDHHS and receive a user ID for each staff member or volunteer who uses MI Bridges.
- Receive ongoing communication from MDHHS regarding MI Bridges changes and policy updates.
- Receive a MI Bridges starter kit of promotional materials including posters, fliers and templates. Promotional materials may be sent on request
- Receive applicant resource materials including client handouts and assistance tools.
- Receive information about additional training opportunities.
- Access to ongoing technical assistance through the MI Bridges dedicated Help Desk.
- Receive promotion as a Navigation Partner from other community partners and MDHHS, if desired.
- The ability to view client's case information, if a client provides their consent.
- Access to information on assistance provided to your clients via MI Bridges.

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

Jaspreet Malhotra  
Michigan Department of Health & Human Services  
(517) 335-5297 or [MDHHScommunitypartners@michigan.gov](mailto:MDHHScommunitypartners@michigan.gov)

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