

BLOG POST

WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT GUARENTEED INCOME?

Summer Hsu | July 2025



As a teenager, I feel unprepared for the future. The world I'm walking into is falling apart: genocide, inflation, recession, and climate change are just a few problems off the top of my mind. Every headline in the news seems negative, and social media is full of exaggerated, one-sided reports on current events. This is not what I pictured in 2016, when the most difficult thing in my life was sharing my play-doh with another kid.

Luckily, guaranteed income (a regular, unconditional source of cash) has grown in popularity recently, and some people are already receiving it. Not every teenager is paying their own bills yet, but guaranteed income could improve the near future for many.

Primarily, consistent financial support provides opportunity by giving breathing room to whoever receives it. It can be used to cover basic living expenses, allowing students to save up for college. Many skip college to avoid student debt or because they can't afford the time off. But with guaranteed income, they could attend college and later pursue specialized, meaningful jobs. Beyond education, it could create the opportunity for something riskier, like a startup or a passion project that would otherwise be sidelined for jobs done solely to put food on the table. Similarly, guaranteed income could allow people to pursue professions they would enjoy, like urban gardening or photography, without the stress of earning a steady income. In a rapidly shifting economic and political landscape (one different from what our parents grew up in), guaranteed income could provide a sort of anchor.

If students don't need or want guaranteed income themselves, people close to them (or even complete strangers) could still improve their quality of life with it. If they come from low-income families, it could help take financial pressure off their parents or siblings. Even if they are financially stable, being knowledgeable about guaranteed income could help them support friends who aren't as fortunate. And if they have the means to contribute to guaranteed income advocacy or pilot programs, they could help extend this freedom to complete strangers who need it.

This isn't just theoretical; pilot programs are already happening around the world, and the results are promising. Take Stockton, California, where they gave 125 people \$500 a month for two years. Critics expected people to blow the money on random stuff, but 99% of it went to basic needs like groceries, rent, and gas. Even better: people who got the money were actually more likely to find jobs than those who didn't—completely the opposite of what skeptics said would happen.

I know guaranteed income isn't an instant fix to all of the world's problems, but it represents something we need right now: hope backed by action. We're the generation inheriting climate change, economic instability, and political division—but we could also inherit a world where basic financial security isn't a luxury.