

PRESS RELEASE

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Barry Community Foundation Launches The Bridge, a New Community for Young Professionals

Membership is now open for the program's founding year, with a public kickoff event set for October 15 in downtown Hastings

The Barry Community Foundation today announced the launch of The Bridge, a new community program designed to connect young professionals in Barry County through social engagement, professional development, and hands-on philanthropy.

The Bridge brings together people ages 21–40 who want to build relationships, grow personally and professionally, and have a direct voice in local giving. Throughout the year, members will take part in social events, volunteer opportunities, and networking gatherings, while also reviewing grant proposals from local nonprofits and voting together on which community projects receive funding. A portion of every membership also supports The Bridge Endowment Fund, extending the program's impact for years to come.

"What makes The Bridge different is that members don't just show up to events, they help decide where real grant dollars go in Barry County. That's a level of hands-on impact that's rare for a group this new," says one of The Bridge coordinators and Communications Manager at Barry Community Foundation, Allison Cobb.

Membership registration is open now through November 11, 2026, with dues of \$100 annually or \$25 per quarter. Individuals aged 40 and older are welcome to participate as mentors, offering guidance and experience to younger members without holding a vote in grant decisions.

The Bridge also offers local businesses an opportunity to invest in their employees and their community by sponsoring membership on an employee's behalf.

Barry County residents can get an early look at the program at The Bridge's first public event, held **October 15 at Waldorf's in downtown Hastings**. The gathering is open to the community, whether attendees have already joined, and will include food, drinks, and a chance to meet current members and program organizers.

About The Bridge The Bridge is a program of the Barry Community Foundation created to inspire a new generation of community leaders through meaningful connection, generosity, and shared investment in the future of Barry County.

About Barry Community Foundation The Barry Community Foundation is an accredited community foundation that as of 2026 manages over \$67 million in charitable assets spread

across over 400 different funds that have been established by individuals, families, businesses, and nonprofit organizations in Barry County.

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