

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: 6/5/2024

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chair, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Chantell Jewell, Superintendent, Milwaukee County Community Reintegration Center (CRC)

Subject: 2024 Budget Deficit

File Type: Informational Report

POLICY

Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	MCGO 56.02(1)
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BACKGROUND

This report is submitted consistent with the guidance of Section 56.02 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances. This ordinance states that, “whenever such person has reason to know or believe that a net deficit of at least one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) or an overtime deficit of at least one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) will occur or is projected to occur for the division of county government under the supervision of that person,” a written report shall be submitted.

The Milwaukee County Community Reintegration Center (CRC) is currently projecting an overall deficit of \$4,230,855 for 2024. This deficit is primarily due to four factors:

One: The food service request for proposals (RFP) window was still open during 2023 budget discussions. (See File #23-927). Because a vendor was not selected, the final food service contract cost was not included in the 2024 budget. The new food service contract with Trinity was \$2 million higher than anticipated.

Two: The CRC is currently projecting a deficit of \$594,000 in revenue because anticipated sanction revenue from the Department of Corrections (DOC) is less than expected. This is not something the CRC can control.

Every year, the DOC transfers residents serving an extended supervision sanctions to the CRC. The number of available residents the CRC will receive is less than the historical average and proposed revenue target. Again, this is not something the CRC can control. The number of sanctions that DOC has available has dropped significantly and negatively

impacts the CRC budget.

Three: The CRC is projecting a deficit of \$416,000 in salaries. When crafting the 2024 recommended budget, the CRC used a historical average for Vacancy and Turnover, or V&T. V&T is a negative salary adjustment that is used to budget a savings of salary based on vacancies in the department. In 2024, due to higher Correctional Officer (CO) pay, the CRC is retaining and hiring COs faster than anticipated. Thus, the V&T is too high, and is creating a deficit in salaries.

Overtime: The CRC is projecting a deficit of \$991,000 in overtime because the historical salary surplus will not be available to cover overtime expenses.

It is important to note that it takes almost two months to train new correctional officers. While these new recruits are in state-mandated training, we incur overtime expenses to cover unmanned assignments. This will be unlikely once new officers are trained and can independently work a post.

Increased Resident Population: The resident population at the CRC has increased to more than 1,100 residents. As a result, the CRC had to open four additional dormitories. This impacts the budget because six additional correctional officers are required to fully staff each housing unit that is opened. If officers are not available, the post must be covered by overtime. With four dorms open in 2024, an additional 24 correctional officer posts have been covered by overtime.

Mandatory Training: Training new correctional officers is another significant aspect of our operations. It costs nearly \$255,000 for eight weeks of training. This includes a five-week Jailor Academy class with approximately 20 officers. CRC training also includes one week of orientation, and two weeks of hands-on training with a Field Training Officer (FTO).

This eight-week training is mandatory and essential before the agency can realize a cost benefit that offsets overtime expenses. The CRC has completed three Jailor Academy classes in 2024, with two more scheduled.

Additionally, to maintain jailor certification through the Law Enforcement Standard Board (LESB), all security staff members must take 24 hours of mandatory annual in-service training. This costs the agency approximately \$280,000 in overtime each year.

Four: Finally, in 2024, the CRC has experienced a spike in hospital watches. This occurs when a resident is admitted to the hospital and requires an extended stay. Initially, two officers must be pulled from their regular posts to escort the resident to the hospital along with EMT personnel. Once the situation becomes a hospital watch, an officer must remain with the resident continuously until they are medically cleared, which can take several days. This has led to a significant increase in overtime.

In 2024, the CRC has managed 26 hospital watches, with some extending beyond two weeks. This is a substantial increase compared to the same period in 2023, which had

only 16 hospital watches. In 2022, there were only 13 hospital watches. The surge in hospital watches has resulted in unplanned and unpredictable overtime, straining our resources and budget.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

The CRC is working diligently to mitigate this deficit.

Regarding the food service contract, it was announced in File #23-927, that a fund transfer would be proposed to fund the difference from the 2024 budget to what will be needed to fulfill the contract. At that time, it was estimated to be about \$2,000,000. However, due to higher population, the fund transfer for the food service contract has increased to an estimated cost of \$2,070,000.

To mitigate the overtime deficit, CRC senior management reviewed security operations which led to the elimination of 12 correctional staff posts. While this reduction has and will certainly contribute to our cost-saving efforts, it is important to note that it also presents security challenges. Fewer officers are now available to respond to physical altercations and medical emergencies, which has necessitated a careful reassessment of our security protocols to ensure the continued safety of both staff and residents.

It is also necessary to address potential corrective actions should further reductions in overtime become imperative. These actions, though not desirable, include the elimination of face-to-face family visiting and the CRC virtual court option within our visiting area. The discontinuation of these services would impact families and the efficiency of legal proceedings significantly.

Additionally, the CRC may need to consider eliminating our programming staff, which would result in halting crucial programs such as financial literacy, welding, and educational courses for residents. Furthermore, reducing the hours of operation for the Law Library and Recreation Department would adversely affect the resources and activities available to residents, hindering their overall well-being.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is informational only there are no requests at this time.

PREPARED BY:

Michael Bickerstaff
Public Safety Fiscal Administrator



Chantell Jewell, Superintendent
Milwaukee County Community Reintegration Center

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