

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: August 31, 2022

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

From: Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Department of Health and Human Services

Subject: An informational report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, regarding the implementation of a Secured Residential Care Center for Children and Youth (SRCCCY) under Wisconsin Act 185

File Type: Information

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**REQUEST**

This informational report is intended to update the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors on the implementation of a Secured Residential Care Center for Children and Youth (SRCCCY) in Milwaukee County.

**POLICY**

In March 2018, the Wisconsin State Legislature adopted Act 185 paving the way for the development of local alternatives to Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake. Act 185 directs the closure of Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake for use as youth correctional facilities by July 1, 2021 and authorizes County-operated Secured Residential Care Centers for Children and Youth (SRCCCYs). Under Act 185, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) maintains supervision over youth with adult court sentences and youth in the Serious Juvenile Offender Program (SJOP) within Type 1 facilities, but the supervision of youth under other correctional placements would be transferred to the counties.

Wisconsin State Statutes:	Ch. 938
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**BACKGROUND**

Per Act 185, the State is to fund 95 percent of the design and construction of SRCCCYs with counties contributing the remaining 5 percent. To qualify for the funds, counties were required to submit a grant application to a state grant committee. Milwaukee County submitted an initial application along with subsequent revisions and ultimately, received a \$15.2 million grant award which was \$8.4 million short of the total amount requested in State funding needed to modify the detention center at the Vel R. Phillips Youth and Family Justice Center as an SRCCCY.

In July 2020, DHHS received a communication from the DOC requesting that Milwaukee County accept the \$15.2 million grant award. In response, County Executive David Crowley and the DHHS Director submitted a letter to the DOC requesting deferral of the grant award. The reasons for the deferral included the uncertainty around the State's plans for its Type 1 facilities and additional operating support for the SRCCCY.

On July 8, 2021, Governor Evers signed the 2021–2023 State Budget that excluded his previous youth justice reform proposals and raised the daily rate for youth correctional placements at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake school from the previous rate of \$615 to \$1,154 per day. The DJC daily rate will increase to \$1,178 per youth as of July 1, 2022. It has been proposed that the funds awarded to counties for building local SRCCCYs could be repurposed to pay for the facility if counties continue to defer the funds.

The Milwaukee County Act 185 Steering Committee met on May 5, 2022 to discuss updates around the implementation of Act 185 and to review the decision to defer the grant award. The committee affirmed the deferment decision due to the same concerns as noted above as well as efforts underway to build the continuum of care within Milwaukee for justice involved youth.

Legislation was approved in April 2022 to allocate up to \$41.7 million to construct the new state-run Type 1 correctional facility for boys in Milwaukee. In early August, the Milwaukee Common Council voted to support initiating the process of building a new Type 1 facility on the city's northwest side near 76th Street and West Clinton Avenue. Zoning for this facility still needs to be approved.

### ***Latest Update***

At the end of July, DHHS met with the State Department of Corrections (DOC) to discuss Milwaukee County's position on an SRCCCY and to advocate for additional funding to meet the capital budget gap. Subsequent to this meeting, DHHS submitted a written request to the DOC for an additional \$15 million for the remodeling and construction costs for the SRCCCY.

On Aug. 16, the Wisconsin Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance voted unanimously to re-allocate \$13.1 million from Dane and Brown Counties to Milwaukee County based on a recommendation from the State DOC.

The grant award still requires approval by the State Building Commission which is scheduled to meet in December 2022. In combination with the \$15.2 million already approved, the total amount of State funding is anticipated to be \$28.3 million. At this time, the total estimated capital budget is about \$30 million. After accounting for the \$28.3 million in State grant funding, the remaining balance is \$1.6 million. This amount is already available in existing capital project WS0124 – Secure Youth Facility – Phase 1 and allows the county to more than meet its 5 percent match.

The \$30 million budget reflects a 32-bed SRCCCY which provides for a net increase of eight beds. A total of four beds of the 32-bed facility would be dedicated to girls.

The proposed project scope would include the following:

- Renovation of the two existing Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP) pods at Vel Phillips
- Education – classrooms, teacher support and offices, a computer/learning lab, vocational programming, testing/consultation, and other multi-media activities
- Mental Health, Health, and Dental Care – space in the main building includes space needed to meet all basic physical and dental health needs, including space if needed for temporary housing of ill youth
- Recreation Space – indoor and outdoor recreation and green space
- Welcome Center and Visitation - public entry would occur via a welcoming vestibule and include space for family visitation

**Next Steps**

State Building Commission approval of the \$13.1 million grant award is required and is expected to occur in December. After that, Milwaukee County will need to formally accept the grant. Once DHHS receives the grant agreement from the State, DHHS will seek County Board approval which is anticipated to occur sometime in the first quarter of 2023.

In the meantime, the DAS Facilities Management Division is reengaging the SRCCCY planning and design workgroup to begin updating the plans for the SRCCCY.

DHHS will continue to update the County Board on any future changes.

Related File No's:	21-29, 20-21, 19-23, 18-924
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**ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

DHHS continues to work toward transitioning youth out of Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Schools. CYFS has been leveraging its resources toward the ongoing development of community-based programming for justice-involved youth and their families through innovative initiatives, all of which support the zero-youth corrections plan. All of these initiatives are occurring in the Milwaukee community and are focused not only on the youth but also their families. This programming meets the youth where they are in unique ways that are individualized to their needs.

**FISCAL EFFECT**

This report is informational and there is no fiscal effect.

**TERMS**

N/A

**VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, DHHS Director  
Kelly Pethke, CYFS Interim Administrator

**PREPARED BY:**

Kelly Pethke, CYFS Interim Administrator

**APPROVED BY:**

*Shakita LaGrant-McClain*  
Shakita LaGrant-McClain, DHHS Director

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None

cc: County Executive David Crowley  
Sup. Shawn Rolland, Chair, Health Equity, Human Needs, Strategic Planning Committee  
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office  
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
Steve Cady, Research and Policy Director – Comptroller's Office  
Allyson Smith, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk  
Pam Matthews, Budget Analyst – DAS  
Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, Research & Policy Analyst, Comptroller's Office