

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: 3/21/2025

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

From: Joe Lamers, Director, Office of Strategy, Budget & Performance *JOSEPH LAMERS*

Subject: Status on Shared Services

File Type: Informational Report

---

**REQUEST**

From the Director Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance providing an informational report on the status of activities regarding the Innovation Grant authorized as part of 2023 Wisconsin Act 12 and the Wisconsin Policy Forum report “Partnering Up”

**BACKGROUND**

In June 2023, Wisconsin Act 12 was fully approved and included the provision for the creation of a three-year innovation grant program. The Innovation Grant is to support the implementation of a transfer of an allowable service/duty to another county, municipality, tribe, nonprofit organization or private entity. The plan for such a transfer must realize a cost savings of at least 10%. Eligible services are broadly focused on public safety and include:

- Fire protection
- Jails
- Public Works
- Economic Development
- Parks & Recreation
- Emergency Services
- Training
- Information Technology
- Public Health
- Courts
- Communications
- Administration
- Housing/Planning/Zoning

As part of the grant requirements both entities involved in the transfer must enter into a contract agreement for the service transfer. Cost savings must be fully realized within 36 months of the transfer.

The Wisconsin Department of Revenue is responsible for implementing the grant program and only applications for the Innovation Planning Grant have been opened for submissions. Innovation Planning Grants are only eligible to municipalities with populations under 5,000. Milwaukee County is not eligible for planning grants and only Bayside and West Milwaukee are eligible municipalities within the county. As of mid-

March 2025 there have been seventy-two applications for the Innovation Planning Grant. Of those applications, sixteen have been approved and nine have been denied. In early February the application period for the planning grant was extended from February 28, 2025 to April 30, 2025. The Innovation Grant application is expected to be released in July 2025.

The Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance is currently undertaking an inquiry with departmental staff for ideas on innovation grant submissions and determining their viability related to the criteria. Further due diligence will then occur to determine feasibility of achieving the ten percent savings.

In November 2023, the Wisconsin Policy Forum released a report, "Partnering Up" that investigated the opportunity for service sharing of back-office functions. The report recommended six areas for further analysis: payroll, wellness, procurement/purchasing, facilities management, fleet operations/management and mowing.

Milwaukee County has been communicating regularly with the City of Milwaukee to further investigate the recommendations of the Wisconsin Policy Forum report. The collaboration includes investigation both within the confines of the criteria for the Innovation Grant as well as those for broader governmental efficiency and cooperation.

### **ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity
- 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions
- 3A: Invest "upstream" to address root causes of health disparities
- 3B: Enhance the County's fiscal health and sustainability

### **FISCAL EFFECT**

The report is informational only and there is no fiscal impact.

### **VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

Jeremy Lucas

### **PREPARED BY:**

Jeremy Lucas, Policy Director, Office of Strategy, Budget & Performance

### **APPROVED BY:**

Joe Lamers, Director – Office of Strategy, Budget & Performance

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk