

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

DATE: May 21, 2021

TO: Supervisor Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

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

SUBJECT: **A report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, seeking authorization to submit an application to the State Department of Health Services for the establishment of a combined Milwaukee County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)**

Issue

The planning and State application process to integrate both the Aging Resource Center (ARC) and Disability Resource Center (DRC) is underway with implementation of a combined Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) anticipated in 2022. As part of the State application, the State Department of Health Services (DHS) is requesting that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution authorizing the ADRC application.

Background

Over the past few years, DHHS has been implementing a “No Wrong Door” customer service approach meaning that anyone, regardless of age, disability, race, gender, or socio-economic status can and will be served no matter a person’s entry point into the system. A fully integrated human service model will not only align Milwaukee County with the rest of the state and country in terms of how people are served across the lifespan, it will also provide greater access to a wider array of services for people of all ages and abilities. The 2021 Budget included the integration of the Department on Aging as a division within DHHS to advance this effort. The scope of the integration also envisioned combining the Aging Resource Center and Disability Resource Center into one Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) as part of the 2022 Budget.

The Aging Resource Center (ARC) and Disability Resource Center (DRC) both currently operate as separate organizational units within DHHS. In fact, Milwaukee County is the only county in Wisconsin that operates separate resource centers based on a customer’s age. The ARC and the DRC provide the same services in accordance with the same Wisconsin state statutes and administrative codes. The State contracts separately with each resource center and service delivery is determined based on a customer’s age. Customers aged 60 and over are served by the ARC and those under age 60, are served by the DRC. Currently, when a customer reaches his or her 60th birthday, that individual must transition

to a new case worker. This change can be disruptive and confusing to customers. Under a combined ADRC, this transition would no longer be necessary.

Discussion

ADRCs assist both older adults and people with disabilities. The ADRC provides information on a broad range of programs and services, educates people in the various long-term care options available to them, assists individuals in applying for programs and benefits, and serves as the access point for publicly funded, long-term care.

The combined ADRC model has been employed throughout the state and beyond and has proven to be successful as a way to ensure older adults and people with disabilities receive critically important services that allow them to remain independent and lead dignified lives. The combined ADRC will continue to provide quality, person-centered services to Milwaukee County residents with streamlined access to services while maintaining expertise in all areas of services and customers.

The State application is due to DHS by September 30, 2021. As part of this application, DHHS is required to submit an organizational chart, letters of support, annual budget, administrative framework detailing the structure, policies, and governance as well as a service plan. Work is underway on all of these components as discussed below:

ADRC Staffing

Currently, there are a combined total of 85 positions in the ARC and DRC. This reflects five administrative, six managerial/supervisory and 74 direct service full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. DHHS is working with the Department of Administrative Services (DAS)-Human Resources on new position descriptions and title codes to align with the new roles for staff. It is anticipated that all positions will be maintained, and staff will be trained in their combined roles. The organizational chart and budget reflecting these changes will be finalized over the summer and incorporated into the department's 2022 Requested Budget.

Stakeholder Input

As part of the planning effort, feedback is being gathered from stakeholders through community input sessions, regular updates to the Commission on Aging, Aging and Disability Resource Center Governing Board and Combined Community Services Board. To date, DHHS has received letters of support from the ADRC Governing Board, Alzheimer's Association, CCSB, Commission on Aging, Disability Rights WI, and Independence First. In addition, customer input sessions will occur over the summer.

Administrative Framework & Service Plan

DHHS also is developing a framework and service plan for the combined ADRC which includes its outreach strategy, how it will provide information and assistance to each member of the target group, how it will deliver long-term care options counseling, counseling to caregivers, Elderly Benefits and

Disability Benefits Counseling as well as engage with Managed Care Organizations/IRIS Consultant Agencies and handle enrollment and disenrollment counseling, among other service provisions.

Next Steps

The completed application is due to State DHS by September 30, 2021. The combined ADRC would be effective starting January 1, 2022 and will be included in the 2022 Requested Budget for DHHS.

Racial Equity Impact

The ADRC strives to provide equitable access to services by offering services over the phone, virtually, in a person's home or at another location convenient to the customer. The phone system also ensures accessibility to those with hearing or language difficulties. ADRC Outreach has focused on areas of Milwaukee with higher rates of poverty and underserved populations. A mobile outreach team will intentionally target underserved Black and other communities of color to inform them of the ADRC programs and services for older adults and individuals with disabilities. ADRC staff provides the level of assistance needed by each individual customer to reach their goals, whether that be connecting to resources to maintain their independence or applying for publicly funded long-term care.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors authorize the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, or her designee, to submit an application to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to certify an Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) for Milwaukee County.

Fiscal Impact

Authorization of the application to combine the Aging Resource Center and Disability Resource Center has no fiscal effect. A fiscal note form is attached.



Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director
Department of Health & Human Services

cc: County Executive David Crowley
Sup. Jason Haas, Chair, Finance Committee
Sup. Felesia Martin, Chair, Health Equity, Human Needs & Strategic Planning Committee
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