

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: November 8, 2023

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

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

Subject: Report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, requesting approval to reallocate \$1,613,900 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from the Reducing Medical Debt project to the Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool and Credible Messenger Program projects

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

DHHS is requesting to reallocate American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding totaling \$1,613,900 from 1AR43 - Reducing Medical Debt project to two existing ARPA projects administered by DHHS: 1AR02 - Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool project and 1AR05 - Credible Messenger Program project. The request intends to repurpose funding originally allocated to 1AR43- Reducing Medical Debt project.

POLICY

Milwaukee County Board file 21-555: “A resolution to create a Task Force to review and recommend funding allocations to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors for monies received by the County in the Federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021”.

BACKGROUND

Milwaukee County will directly receive \$183 million between 2021-24 in federal ARPA aid. Of this amount, approximately \$40,415,339 has been allotted for Community Support projects. This subsection was established to generate project-level allocation recommendations to respond to economic harm to workers, families, small businesses, impacted industries, and the public sector.

In March 2023, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors approved the Reducing Medical Debt project for \$1,613,988 in ARPA funds to purchase and forgive Milwaukee County residents’ medical debt (File [23-377](#)). The Reducing Medical Debt project will not be implemented due to hospital systems expressing a preference to promote their charity care programs, which would also address medical debt concerns targeted by the ARPA project. It is recommended that the \$1,613,988 of ARPA funds be transferred to two existing ARPA

projects as shown in Table A below. Funding these requests would fully allocate the Community Support Expenditure Category.

Table A: Recommended ARPA Funded Projects

Project Name	Description	Transfer
1AR43 - Reducing Medical Debt	The Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors approved ARPA funding to purchase and forgive Milwaukee County residents' medical debt (file 23-377). The Reducing Medical Debt project will not be implemented due to hospital systems expressing a preference to promote their charity care programs, which would also address medical debt concerns targeted by the ARPA project.	(\$1,613,900)
1AR02 - Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool	The Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors approved APRA funding to create an emergency flexible housing subsidy pool (file 21-861). Funding will increase the ability to help unhoused individuals and families through a master leasing strategy. The additional funding is needed to maintain programming and is anticipated to house 55 additional unsheltered or housing insecure households through September 30, 2026.	\$613,900
1AR05 - Credible Messenger Program	The Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors approved APRA funding to work with youth in the justice system who have been negatively impacted by racial inequities across all systems (file 22-418). Funding will support an evidence-based approach to Community Violence Interventions (CVI). This includes investing in the Credible Messengers and Advance Peace evidence based CVI approaches. The additional funding is needed to maintain programming and fidelity to the evidence-based model through September 30, 2026.	\$1,000,000
Net Fiscal Impact		\$0

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Given Milwaukee County's racial and health disparities, the programs described here are needed to foster equity via targeted services and interventions while also addressing root causes. By addressing social determinants of health as well as racial and health disparities, this work dismantles barriers to diverse and inclusive communities.

The item aligns to the following objectives in the strategic plan:

- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions
- 3A: Invest "upstream" to address root causes of health disparities
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors reallocate American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding totaling \$1,613,900 from 1AR43 - Reducing Medical Debt project to two existing ARPA projects administered by DHHS: 1AR02 - Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool project and 1AR05 - Credible Messenger Program project. This would eliminate ARPA funding to 1AR43 - Reducing Medical Debt ARPA, increase funds to 1AR02 - Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool by \$613,900, from \$1,500,000 to \$2,113,900, and 1AR05 Credible Messenger by \$1 million, from \$1,201,200 to \$2,201,200.

FISCAL EFFECT

A fiscal note form is attached.

TERMS

Funding would be authorized to be carried forward if necessary up until December 31, 2026, which is the end date of ARPA funding eligibility.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, DHHS Director
Melissa McGaughey, Enterprise Project Manager

PREPARED BY

Melissa McGaughey, Enterprise Project Manager

APPROVED BY:

Shakita LaGrant-McClain

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

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution and fiscal note are attached.

Cc: County Executive David Crowley
Sup. Liz Sumner, Chair, Finance Committee
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County
Steve Cady, Research Director, Comptroller's Office
Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, Senior Budget and Management Analyst, DAS