

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: July 14, 2022

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

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

Subject: A report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), providing an update for the requesting approval of \$2,950,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for justice involved girls and other special populations project

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

The Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) requests approval of \$2,950,000 in Milwaukee County of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to develop, implement and engage community partners to provide services specifically for girls and other special populations of justice involved youth. This report is to provide an update on the proposed project action report dated June 24, 2022.

BACKGROUND

This proposal would provide ARPA funds for the DHHS to work with community partners to build the system of care for justice involved girls, as well as other special populations of youth. Youth included in the special populations could include youth who are in multiple systems of care (children disability programs, child welfare, youth justice, behavioral health, etc.) and youth who identify as LGBTQIA. The proposed project is specifically designed to target girls (including transgender youth who identify as girls) involved in or at risk of involvement with the youth justice system. Funds will be strategically targeted at intervention and prevention services and will support comprehensive, gender responsive services for girls through new and growing partnerships with grassroots community-based organizations best positioned to serve these girls and address the root causes of behavioral problems; programming for girls in secure care; and expanded community-based alternatives to incarceration to prevent harmful placements.

The project is informed by the recommendations of the Girls Workgroup, a diverse group of internal and external stakeholders including representatives from CYFS, Wraparound Milwaukee, the Department of Children and Families, Office of Public Defenders, Children's Court, Urban Underground, Youth Justice Milwaukee, My Sista's Keeper, Saint A., Wauwatosa School District, Disability Rights Wisconsin, Foundations for Freedom,

Inc., and Children Service Society of Wisconsin. The workgroup received technical assistance and training from the National Girls Initiative via the National Crittenton which focused on catalyzing change for girls in the youth justice system and who are at risk of becoming involved. The result of this workgroup was a Girls Brief Report that had recommendations and a call to action. Resources are needed in order to implement these recommendations and this project will help provide some of the resources to ensure that Milwaukee County has a trauma-informed, strengths-based, gender-responsive, and culturally aware justice system and system of services for girls. The recommendations from the report include the following:

- Remove City and County Contracting Barriers to Fund More Community-based Providers
- Acknowledge Need for Advocacy Privilege for Community-based Providers
- Fund Recruitment, Training and Support of Positive Staff
- Increase Access to Community-Based Supports, including Promising Programs that Girls Find Helpful but Need Assistance to be Sustainable
- Work with Advocates to Proactively Respond to the Risk Posed by Sex Traffickers on Youth Serving Programs and Systems
- Increase Community-based Supports in Schools and Youth Settings to Prevent Referrals
- Involve Girls in the Evaluation of Services and Systems

The majority of requested funds - \$2,250,000 – are allocated to contracted and fee-for-service agreements with service providers to expand community-based and secure-care programming tailored specifically for girls and other special populations (to include, but not limited to transgender youth who identify as girls). Community-based services would include prevention and intervention programming for at-risk girls, community placement alternatives to incarceration, and out-of-home placements including foster care, group homes, healing homes, and residential treatment centers. Funds could also support girls-specific planning for the future state SRCCCY.

In 2022, CYFS opened an Expression of Interest (EOI) for community-based providers to respond to express their interest in working with justice involved youth through the CYFS network. One of the specific targets in the EOI were services and programs for justice involved girls. From that EOI, CYFS plans to enter into Fee For Service contracts with community based providers that have submitted completed applications. CYFS also plans to work with current contracted partners to expand the continuum of services they are providing to girls in the community, as well as bringing services to girls in the youth detention center. CYFS plans to provide funding resources to those individuals and groups that are already doing the work with girls in Milwaukee to be able to expand their reach, utilizing both preventative and intervention strategies.

Below are some of the identified agencies and services CYFS plans to work with through this project:

- **My Sista's KeepHer:** individual and groups designed to reach girls of all races

and background in Milwaukee; focus on girl empowerment, leadership and healing through poetry

- **Lad Lake:** individual services & groups, to include Voices curriculum, Making Proud Choices curriculum and Ending The Game
- **Multicultural Trauma and Addiction Center of WI:** individual and groups, to include working with survivors of sex trafficking and Healthy Relationships curriculum
- **Findley Foundation:** Girls Who Code
- **Glow 414:** individual and groups, to include IMPROV, and groups focused on girl empowerment and leadership
- **360 Support Services:** individual and groups, to include groups focused on girl empowerment, tutoring and healing services; Beauty Program (Brave. Educated. Artistic. Unbelievably. Talented.); Prenatal Care Coordination
- **Foundation For Freedom:** Project Pink (People Inspiring Needful Knowledge) engages girls in self-discovery, discipline and esteem building
- **Running Rebels Community Organization:** Lady Rebels leadership program
- **Center for Behavioral Medicine:** Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) teen girl groups
- **Center for Self-Sufficiency:** restorative justice groups for girls in detention and the community

There are additional community-based providers that have expressed an interest to modify existing services and programs to meet the needs of girls. CYFS will work with these agencies to identify what can be modified, support the implementation of any necessary changes to their services and enter into contracts with the agencies by utilizing funding from this project. These services include the following:

- Leadership development programming
- Goal setting and life skills
- Gender responsive mentoring & connections with female role models
- Music expression & education
- Audio & visual arts and entertainment
- Gender responsive anger management interventions
- Exposure and engagement in sports, yoga and other activities
- Skills groups to develop social, emotional and practical skills
- Education tutoring and support
- Mental health and counseling services
- Workforce development & employment opportunities

CYFS is working with the Milwaukee Turners, Greater Milwaukee Foundation and the Public Welfare Foundation (PWF) on a participatory budget that is currently open to target justice involved youth for a total of \$400,000 to be awarded to community-based agencies. CYFS plans to replicate this process for a second round of grant awards focused on girls and other special populations. CYFS plans to issue a request for

proposals related specifically to meet the unique needs of girls through a participatory budget process. This process is aimed at prevention and intervention strategies and programs with the goal to provide additional funding to grass roots organizations across Milwaukee County. The funding for the participatory grant awards is a total of \$400,000 (\$200,000 in 2023 and \$200,000 in 2024) with the potential for PWF to match it with another \$200,000.

This project will also support the Year of the Youth Initiative with a specific target on girls. This initiative will connect young people to jobs, encourage their creative passions, provide mentoring and job shadowing opportunities, feature youth days at sporting events, and publicly highlight the best in our youth across Milwaukee.

CYFS is also working with the Urban Institute to identify other jurisdictions that are targeting reform efforts specifically to justice involved girls and other special populations and implementing preventative measures as well. Some potential sites include Alliance for Girls, California, Equal Access for Girls, Oregon and Justice for Girls Coalition, Washington. The budget includes no more than \$50,000 to support staff attendance at conferences or site visits to learn about effective strategies to expand gender-responsive services. The budget also includes up to \$160,000 to support project management and technology supports for community-based interventions, and \$90,000 to fund youth and family supports to strengthen community engagement and community stabilization initiatives.

This proposal received approval from the Community Support Subcommittee and was approved by the ARPA Task Force at its meeting on June 9, 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors approve \$2,950,000 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to build the continuum of care for girls and other special populations in the youth justice system.

FISCAL EFFECT

This resolution would allocate \$2,950,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act funds to the specific programs above. See attached fiscal note.

TERMS

N/A

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Health and Human Services

Clare O'Brien, Budget & Policy Director, DHHS
Kelly Pethke, Interim Administrator CYFS

PREPARED BY:

Kelly Pethke, Interim Administrator, Children, Youth and Family Services, DHHS

APPROVED BY:

Shakita LaGrant-McClain

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Health and Human Services

ATTACHMENTS:

None

cc: County Executive David Crowley
Sup. Liz Sumner, Chair, Finance Committee
Sup. Shawn Rolland, Chair, Health Equity, Human Needs, and Strategic Planning
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
Pam Matthews, Fiscal & Management Analyst, DAS
Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, Research & Policy Analyst, Comptroller's Office