

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: February 16, 2024

To: 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, requesting authorization to increase 2024 purchase of service contracts with Birth to Three community vendors for Children, Youth and Family Services

File Type: Action File

REQUEST

The Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is requesting authorization to increase 2024 purchase of service contracts for Children, Youth and Family Services (CYFS).

POLICY

Per Wisconsin Statutes, the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services is requesting authorization to increase a variety of CYFS purchase of service contracts.

Wisconsin State Statutes:		59.52(31)
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BACKGROUND

CYFS has executed several contracts with community-based providers to support the continuum of care for justice involved youth as well as serving children and families in the Birth to Three and Children's Long Term Support (CLTS) waiver programs.

The Birth to 3 Program, authorized under Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), supports children with developmental delays or disabilities under the age of three and their families. The program is a federal entitlement which utilizes state, federal, and local funds to enhance the development of children with developmental disabilities, minimizes the need for special education, and decreases rates of institutionalization. Counties are responsible for administering the program based on state and federal guidelines. Specific county responsibilities include establishing a comprehensive system to identify, locate, and evaluate children who may be eligible for the program.

Milwaukee County's Birth to 3 Network

CYFS contracts with three agencies to provide services to families to enhance their child's development. These services may include the following:

- Screening & Evaluation
- Related Health Services
- Family Education Development & Education Services
- Communication Services
- Occupational, Speech & Physical Therapy
- Case Management Services

Collaboration with the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership, Disability Rights Wisconsin, Head Start and Early Head Start Programs, the school system, and other partners has increased awareness and access resulting in increased referrals to Birth to 3 each year. However, while the costs and enrollments continue to grow, state and federal funding to Milwaukee County's Birth to 3 Program has remained flat.

As a result, the size of the provider network continues to shrink as agencies are unable to continuously operate with deficits to operate the program. Since 2018, Milwaukee County lost nearly two-thirds of its local providers with only three providers remaining in Milwaukee County. Over the last few years, the gap between the cost to run the program and the available reimbursements was between \$1.3 million to \$1.6 million which the providers covered out of their own budgets. Additional funding is needed to address the increased costs and enrollment which increased nearly 12% in 2023.

To that end, DHHS appreciates the support provided by the County Board and County Executive in adopting amendment #38 to the 2024 Budget. This amendment provides an additional one-time supplemental funding of \$250,000 to Birth to 3 in 2024. DHHS and its remaining contracted providers – Curative Care Network, Penfield Children's Center, and St. Francis Children's Center – have been meeting regularly to develop a strategy for increasing awareness and education around the Birth to 3 Program as well as advocating for additional funding. Creating long-term fiscal sustainability around Birth to 3 is a key priority for DHHS.

The 2024 contracts identified below were authorized by File 23-969 and reflect an average of 1,300 children being served per month. The chart allocates the additional \$250,000 approved in the 2024 budget based on the average number of kids served by each agency in 2023. The additional funding will be used to offset the funding gap.

Service	Provider	2024 Contract	2024 Proposed Increase	Adjusted Contract
Birth to 3 Early Intervention	Curative Care Network	\$2,187,288	\$160,000	\$2,347,288
Birth to 3 Early Intervention	Penfield Children's Center	\$1,544,451	\$55,000	\$1,599,451
Birth to 3 Early Intervention	St. Francis Children's Center	\$793,261	\$35,000	\$828,261
	Total	\$4,525,000	\$250,000	\$4,775,000

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The CYFS is committed to ensuring that the most vulnerable children and their families in Milwaukee County have access to and enrolled in the Birth to Three program in an equitable manner. DHHS will continue to work together with system and statewide partners to engage in a larger strategic plan to address the funding gaps in the program on a long-term basis.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors authorize the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, or her designee, to increase the purchase of service contracts in a total amount of \$250,000 for the services identified in the accompanying resolution. The effective date of the contract amendments would be the period of January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024.

FISCAL EFFECT

The 2024 DHHS Budget includes funding for these contract amendments in CYFS. A fiscal note is attached.

TERMS

The purchase of service contracts are effective January 1, 2024 and end December 31, 2024.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

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

Clare O'Brien, DHHS Budget & Policy Director

PREPARED BY:

Kelly Pethke, CYFS Administrator

APPROVED BY:

Shakita LaGrant-McClain

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, DHHS Director

ATTACHMENTS:

cc: County Executive David Crowley
Hon. Carl Ashley, Chief Judge
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
Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, Senior Budget and Management Analyst, DAS