

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

DATE: August 30, 2019

TO: Supervisor Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Mary Jo Meyers, Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Prepared by: Mark Mertens, Division of Youth & Family Services Administrator

SUBJECT: An informational report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, providing an update to Wisconsin Act 185

Background

Over the past few years, the County Executive and Milwaukee County Board have been working with key stakeholders to address the crisis at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake and have embraced policies surrounding the creation of a local alternative option for Milwaukee County youth to be placed in a safe environment, closer to home.

In March 2018, the Wisconsin State Legislature adopted Act 185 paving the way for the development of local alternatives to Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake. Act 185 directs the closure of Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake for use as youth correctional facilities by July 1, 2021 and authorizes County-operated Secured Residential Care Centers for Children and Youth (SRCCCYs). Under Act 185, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) maintains supervision over youth with adult court sentences and youth in the Serious Juvenile Offender Program (SJOP), but the supervision of youth under other correctional placements is now transferred to the counties.

In late June 2019, the Legislature passed AB188/SB168 which amended Act 185 and extended the deadline for the closure of Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake from January 1, 2021 to July 1, 2021. The amendments also pushed out the deadline to October 1 by which the Juvenile Corrections Grant Committee must make recommendations and establish a Wisconsin Model of Juvenile Justice Statewide Plan.

The original Act 185 legislation included \$40 million to counties for the planning and construction of SRCCCYs. The 2019-2021 Adopted State Budget increases this allocation by \$40 million for a total of \$80 million in State bonding.

Eligible construction costs under Act 185 include new construction as well as the renovation of an existing structure. To qualify for the funds, counties were required to submit a grant application to the Juvenile Corrections Grant Committee by July 1, 2019. The original deadline in Act 185 of March 31, 2019 was amended by the Legislature as part of AB188/SB168.

In order to meet the original March 31 deadline, DHHS submitted an application, approved by the County Board (File No. 19-236), which reflected the construction of a new facility at an estimated cost of \$41 million. It wasn't until mid-June that the DOC released the application for the July 1 submittal. DHHS then revised its application for submittal by the July 1 deadline.

Revised Grant Proposal

On July 1, DHHS submitted a revised application it believes will lead to greater youth justice reform. Since the proposal submission on March 1, intensive efforts have been underway to reduce the non-SJO population at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Schools. DYFS and Wraparound Milwaukee have collaborated closely to enact case plans that have resulted in an earlier release for some youth. New programs like the Bakari Center and the Youth Advocates Program (YAP) have been successful in preventing some youth from placement in Lincoln Hills. These combined efforts have resulted in the lowest corrections placements in decades for Milwaukee County. By mid-August, the daily census reached its lowest point of 33 non-SJO youth. Attaining these historically low placement numbers has put DYFS two years ahead of our most optimistic projections for reductions in placement numbers. This unprecedented reduction has allowed DHHS to lower our projected need for SRCCCY beds as reflected in the revised plan.

The revised proposal provided for the remodeling of two pods in the county's existing Vel R. Phillips Youth Detention Center to serve as Assessment and Crisis units for boys and renovating and/or converting existing building(s) to serve boys and girls in a community-based SRCCCY site or sites. The proposal also included a significant investment of nearly \$2.9 million for Front-End Diversion and Aftercare Transition programming. Although the State bonding available for SRCCCY projects doesn't support community-based services or any other operating costs, DHHS included this component in its application because Front-End Diversion and Aftercare are necessary in preventing and mitigating the need for secure placements of youth. DHHS believes that reform of the youth justice system cannot be successful without this investment.

Progress Since July Submittal

A total of four counties including Milwaukee County submitted grant proposals on July 1. These proposals total between \$134 to \$135 million compared to the total available funding of \$80 million. For this reason, the Grant Committee requested that counties identify cost-saving proposals (to decrease costs closer to the \$80 million) for presentation to the Grant Committee in August. On Aug. 26, DHHS presented its proposal for the Milwaukee County Model of Youth Justice Reform which included a Continuum of Services identified below. The SRCCCY is only one piece of the continuum – the other components are critical to achieving youth justice reform. The full presentation is included as an attachment to this report.

CONTINUUM OF SERVICES



Community-Based Alternatives	Non-Secure/Staff Secure Residential Treatment	SRCCCY	Transition & Aftercare
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wraparound Milwaukee, Running Rebels, YAP, Credible Messengers, Level II Monitoring, community treatment programs, Achievement Centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bakari center (24 beds) • Norris Virtual Academy • Staff Secure partnership with agency TBD for Girls residential(5 beds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32 bed expansion/remodel at Vel Phillips • Potential leased beds TBD • Vel Phillips School (Wauwatosa School District) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MST-FIT • Wraparound Milwaukee • MATC, Employ Milwaukee, Job Corps, other vocational partners

After this presentation, the Grant Committee requested further detail on our proposal. DHHS is currently developing two options – Option A which involves the renovation of Vel Phillips and leased beds in the community as well as Option B which involves the renovation of Vel Phillips only. In addition, DHHS is developing a final revised “up to” requested grant amount for submission to the Grant Committee. These two options will be presented to the Grant Committee on September 9.

All of the proposals that have been submitted so far as well as the options intended for submission on Sept. 9 to the Grant Committee are outlined below.

Milwaukee County Model of Youth Justice Reform Proposals to Juvenile Corrections Grant Committee				
	New Facility	Vel Phillips Renovation & Community Sites	Vel Phillips Renovation & Leased Beds (Option A)	Vel Phillips Remodel (Option B)
Proposal Submission Date	3/31/19	7/1/19	9/9/19	9/9/19
# of New Beds	40	32	16	8
# of Beds for Girls	0	8	0	0
Staffing Ratio	1:5	1:5 (boys); 1:3 (girls)	1:4	1:4
Vel Phillips Renovation	Yes	Yes	Yes (expanding footprint of Vel Phillips)	Yes (expanding footprint of Vel Phillips)
Residential Site(s)	No (one large facility)	Yes	Exploring potential for 16-leased beds	No
Project Description	Provides for 40 “new” beds on a new campus site and the remodeling and repurposing of 22 existing beds for the Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP), bringing the total SRCCCY bed capacity to 62	Remodel two pods in Vel R. Phillips Youth Detention Center to serve as Assessment and Crisis units for boys; Renovating and/or converting existing building(s) to serve boys and girls in a community-based SRCCCY site or sites.	24-bed remodel at Vel Phillips & 16 leased beds in the community for a total of 40 beds	32-bed remodel at Vel Phillips (which reflects 8 new beds)
Total Construction Cost	\$41.1 million	\$41.8 million	“Up to” Amount Currently Being Estimated	“Up to” Amount Currently Being Estimated
Start-up	\$1.7 million	\$2.1 million	TBD	TBD
Estimated Ongoing Operating Gap	\$2.7 million	\$4.4 million	TBD	TBD

Program Sustainability & Fiscal Impact

The Grant Committee and DOC representatives have indicated that the only funding available for the SRCCCYs is the \$80 million in bonding for construction. At this time, no additional funding such as Youth Aids is available to support ongoing operating costs for the SRCCCYs and the community-based alternatives which are necessary to implementing a successful youth justice reform model. Counties throughout the State of Wisconsin have expressed concern over the ongoing operating cost of the SRCCCYs and the difficulty in closing future budget gaps. Without additional funding, DYFS will likely need to reduce and/or eliminate some of its community-based programming and services to address the gap.

Milwaukee County continues to assert that expanding the State’s investment in proven prevention, early intervention, and community-based services for youth involved in the justice system will help reduce the need for “deep end,” confinement programs and result in better outcomes for our communities and youth.

Next Steps


Please see the timeframe for review of the applications below:

Action	Date*
Grants Committee Reviews Applications	July 1– September 30
Grants Committee Submits Recommendations to Joint Committee on Finance (JCF)	October 1

DHHS will return to the County Board with the recommendation from the Grant Committee on Milwaukee County’s application in the October cycle. Resolution File No. 19-236 indicated that once DHHS is notified by the JCF of a grant award, DHHS will submit a request to the County Board seeking approval of the grant award and will make a recommendation for any gap in construction funding.

Recommendation

This report is informational and no action is required.



Mary Jo Meyers, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

Attachment

cc: County Executive Chris Abele
Hon. Maxine A. White, Chief Judge
Raisa Koltun, County Executive’s Office

County Supervisor Supreme Moore-Omokunde

Steve Cady, Research Director, Comptroller's Office

Pam Matthews, Fiscal & Management Analyst, DAS

Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, Research & Policy Analyst, Comptroller's Office