

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE

Inter-Office Communication

Date: January 16, 2025

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

From: Joseph Lamers, Director, Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance

JOSEPH LAMERS

Subject: Requesting Adoption of Resolution Recognizing, Accepting, and Appropriating \$6,250,000 in additional American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding from the State of Wisconsin for Courthouse Security and the Forensic Science Center

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

The Director of the Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance respectfully requests acknowledgment, acceptance, and appropriation of \$6,250,00 in additional State of Wisconsin American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to Milwaukee County for courthouse security purposes (\$2.3 million) and the Forensic Science Center (\$3.95 million). This request is necessary to account for changes in Memorandum of Understandings with the State of Wisconsin for these projects which were finalized in December 2024.

BACKGROUND

Courts Funding

Milwaukee County received an ARPA allocation of nearly \$16 million from the State of Wisconsin, earmarked in large part for Milwaukee County's court system to meet the needs of our constituents and help clear a pandemic-related case backlog while ensuring public safety. The MOU between Milwaukee County and the State of Wisconsin regarding use of these funds was executed on November 30, 2022.

The State and County finalized a revised version of the aforementioned MOU on August 20, 2024, reallocating unspent funds to ensure timely spend down and reappropriating commensurate tax levy funding to support high-priority public safety needs. A resolution authorizing the necessary appropriation and tax levy changes to support the modified MOU was adopted by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors within File 24-763.

In late 2024, Milwaukee County requested additional assistance from the Governor's Office to bolster Courthouse security. This request was approved and incorporated into the existing ARPA MOU. The revised MOU was fully executed on December 27, 2024. Among its changes, the memorandum increases State allocated ARPA funding to Milwaukee County by \$2,300,000. The revised MOU allocates \$2,000,000 to increase security hardening measures in courtrooms, and \$300,000 is allocated to bailiff staffing and overtime costs in the Office of the Sheriff. With the \$2.0 million security hardening allocation, security walls are planned to be placed in the remaining criminal courts (4 of 23 criminal courtrooms are currently without security walls), the family courts (5 total all without security walls), and civil courts (11 total all without security walls). To uphold the integrity of the judicial process, it is essential to implement enhanced security measures that safeguard every individual within these walls.

Center for Forensic Science and Protective Medicine

In September 2022, the State of Wisconsin dedicated \$20 million of ARPA funding to Milwaukee County for construction of the new Center for Forensic Science and Protective Medicine (Forensic Science Center). Forensic Science Center project WC020901 has a total budget of \$126.6 million and is financed with a combination of State ARPA, County ARPA funds, bonding, and cash financing resources. The project is currently under construction and is expected to be completed in 2026. The building will also house a new State of Wisconsin Department of Justice Crime Lab.

In December 2024, the State of Wisconsin allocated an additional \$3,950,000 to the Forensic Science Center project. This provides additional funding for potential change orders as the project advances, and as the County begins to outfit the building to the Medical Examiner and the Office of Emergency Management Offices specifications.

This file requests acknowledgment, acceptance, and appropriation of \$6,250,00 in additional State of Wisconsin American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to Milwaukee County for these purposes:

Courts Security Hardening Measures (Security Walls) There are currently security walls in most criminal courts, but not in the civil and family courts. This allocation will allow security walls to be placed in the remaining criminal courts (4 of 23 without). Security walls will also be installed in family and civil courts.	\$2,000,000
Sheriff Budget for Courthouse Staffing (Bailiffs) The Sheriff's Office has incurred additional overtime costs due to increased court activities intended to address the backlog. This \$300,000 allocation will support staffing and overtime costs for court bailiffs.	\$300,000
Forensic Science Center The State of Wisconsin has dedicated an additional \$3.95 million of ARPA funding towards construction of the Forensic Science Center.	\$3,950,000

FISCAL EFFECT

This resolution would acknowledge receipt of and appropriate \$6,250,000 of American Rescue Plan Act funds from the State of Wisconsin to the specific purposes outlined above.

RECOMMENDATION

This file includes the following recommended actions:

- Recognize and accept \$6,250,000 in American Rescue Act Plan funding from the State of Wisconsin including \$2,300,000 for courts security measures and \$3,950,000 for the Center for Forensic Science and Protective Medicine;
- Authorize administrative appropriation transfers to recognize and increase revenues and expenditures by \$2,000,000, which will be allocated to a capital project for the purpose of security hardening measures;
- Authorize administrative appropriation transfers to recognize and increase revenues and expenditures by \$300,000 for Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office for the purpose of court bailiff staffing and overtime costs;
- Authorize administrative appropriation transfers to recognize and increase revenues and expenditures by \$3,950,000 for the Forensic Science Center capital project WC020901.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

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ATTACHMENTS

Resolution

Fiscal Note

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Carl Ashley, Chief Judge
Denita Ball, Sheriff, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office

Sean Hayes, Director, Department of Administrative Services, Facilities Management Division,
Architecture, Engineering, and Environmental Services Section
Aaron Hertzberg, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Department of Administrative Services
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk
James Moon, Director, Central Business Office
Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services