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File No. 26-381

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: April 22, 2026

To: Marcelia Nicholson-Bovell, Chair, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Chantell Jewell, Superintendent, Milwaukee County Community Reintegration Center (CRC)

Subject: 2026 Budget Deficit

File Type: Informational Report

POLICY

Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	MCGO 56.02(1)

BACKGROUND

This report is submitted consistent with the guidance of Section 56.02 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances. This ordinance states that, “whenever such person has reason to know or believe that a net deficit of at least one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000.00) or an overtime deficit of at least one million dollars ($1,000,000.00) will occur or is projected to occur for the division of county government under the supervision of that person.,” a written report shall be submitted.

The Milwaukee County Community Reintegration Center (CRC) is projecting an overall deficit of approximately $2,825,000 for 2026, reflecting both expenditure and revenue impacts associated with maintaining safe, secure, and constitutionally compliant operations.

The CRC anticipates an expenditure deficit of approximately $2,553,000, primarily driven by personnel costs required to sustain operations. The facility is currently operating with an approximate 13% vacancy rate (34 correctional officer positions), necessitating the use of overtime to maintain appropriate staffing levels. Additionally, protected leave, including FMLA, contributes to ongoing staffing variability. For 2026, the CRC is projecting a salary deficit of approximately $506,000 and an overtime deficit of approximately $2,079,000.

These workforce challenges are consistent with trends across correctional systems nationally, reflecting competitive labor markets and the demands of a 24/7 public safety environment.

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The CRC is also projecting a revenue deficit of approximately $273,000. Revenue reductions are primarily due to decreased placements from the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC), driven by compliance with the Christensen Consent Decree and the need to accommodate additional individuals from the Milwaukee County Jail. This population shift has required the activation of additional housing units, increasing staffing needs. Currently, 29 of 30 dormitories are in operation and near capacity, with the remaining unit expected to return to service shortly.

As DOC placements decline, the CRC experiences a corresponding reduction in revenue associated with unfilled placements.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

The CRC has developed and is actively implementing a multi-faceted plan to mitigate the projected deficit while maintaining safe, secure, and effective operations.

As part of this approach, the CRC has made operational adjustments, including discontinuing the acceptance of state sanctions, which is expected to gradually reduce the overall population and corresponding staffing requirements. In parallel, the CRC continues to address system-wide population pressures, including the impact of court backlogs on the County Jail and resulting housing demands.

The CRC is also working collaboratively with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) to expedite the transfer of individuals who have been sentenced to state facilities but remain housed at the CRC. Advancing these transfers will support more efficient use of housing units and create opportunities to consolidate operations where appropriate.
In support of workforce stability, the CRC has implemented targeted retention and recruitment strategies. These include structured mentorship by supervisory staff, expanded wellness resources such as peer support and chaplain services, and dedicated space for employee wellness. The CRC continues to partner with local institutions, including the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee (UWM), Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), and UMOS, to strengthen recruitment pipelines and enhance hiring efforts.

While limited, short-term operational adjustments may be considered as needed, the CRC remains focused on sustainable, long-term solutions. Ongoing collaboration with Human Resources and the Office of Strategy, Budget, and Performance is focused on strengthening workforce planning, enhancing recruitment and retention strategies, and improving staffing stability.
Through these combined efforts, the CRC is taking a proactive and strategic approach to managing current challenges and positioning the organization for improved operational and fiscal stability.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is informational, only there is no request at this time.

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FISCAL EFFECT

The CRC's fiscal team closely monitors and has frequent discussions with Administration regarding the budget.

PREPARED BY:
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Public Safety Fiscal Administrator

Chantell Jewell
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Chantell Jewell, Superintendent
Milwaukee County Community Reintegration Center

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk