

Milwaukee County American Rescue Plan Act Allocation
Revenue Loss Recovery

Children, Youth and Family Services Secure and Community Continuum Expansion Proposal

Project Design

The COVID-19 health crisis has placed extreme pressure on marginalized youth and families in Milwaukee, intensifying existing challenges and magnifying inequities that have existed for generations. The addition of economic stressors, social isolation, health problems, and strained support systems caused by the pandemic have significantly impacted young people and their families, particularly African American residents in communities struggling with an increase in violence. Pandemic challenges have contributed to both a dramatic increase in the number of young people entering the youth justice system on serious charges and an intensification of staffing shortages in Children, Youth, and Family Services (CYFS) while at the same time the County is working with the state to end state corrections placements at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake. Most recently, we have had youth test positive when they arrive to detention. Due to our increased numbers and limited space, we have seen a slight increase in the transmission of COVID over the last two weeks. These combined factors have created a perfect storm that has placed tremendous strain on the youth justice system.

Milwaukee County has seen a significant increase in youth referred to the youth justice system and committed on serious charges, many of whom are having to wait several weeks or months to access the programming they need. Between 2019 and 2021, CYFS saw a 37% increase in youth referrals on armed robbery and a 129% increase in youth referred on possession of a dangerous weapon charge (55 referrals in 2021 compared to 24 in 2019). In addition, data from the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission projected that local violence in 2022 is on course to surpass 2021 in which the county already saw a substantial increase in the number of firearm victims of homicides and nonfatal shootings under age 25. Further, youth released from detention in 2020 and 2021 had been incarcerated 12 days longer on average than youth released in 2019

Following increases in admissions and lengths of stay, Milwaukee County's detention center has been operating at or near capacity since the summer of 2021. The state's efforts to close the only remaining youth prisons – Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake – have placed additional strain on the facility as youth adjudicated and committed on serious offenses are being redirected locally to the current Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP) in detention. Since September 2021, the MCAP has had a wait list of between 5 and 28 youth, some of whom were forced to wait 6 to 10 weeks to begin the treatment program.

Like many jurisdictions across the country, Milwaukee County is also struggling with staffing shortages that have resulted from pandemic-related challenges, low compensation relative to comparable jobs, and vaccine requirements and testing burden. Workers have increasingly

been asked to do more – be more flexible, create new protocols and processes, manage more serious cases – without being compensated for that additional work.

The proposed project will address an urgent need to build staff and programming capacity within CYFS and increase programming for young people who need it most. ARPA funding will provide critical resources to expedite implementation of the developing Champions Make Change (CMC) program (current MCAP), expand programming for youth in both secure care and the community including dedicated credible messengers, reduce the amount of time young people are stuck in detention waiting for services, and improve outcomes for committed youth. It is important to move quickly to expand capacity to avoid placement at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake which currently cost \$1,154 per youth per day - **\$421,210 per youth per year** - and will only get more expensive as the rate will increase to \$1,178 per youth, per day as of July 1, 2022. There are currently 13 youth on the wait list for the CMC and if all youth were to be sent to Corrections in lieu of CMC, the total cost for CYFS would be **\$5,475,730 for one year**. The proposed project will address this urgent need, expanding services for youth to meet their needs in Milwaukee. This project will also counteract social isolation and other harmful effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

Trackable Performance Indicators

The **goal** of the proposed project is to build capacity, expedite implementation of the new Champions Make Change (CMC) program (former MCAP), and expand access to research-informed, targeted programming for youth committed to youth corrections in Milwaukee.

CYFS will track the following outcome metrics related to this investment:

- **Improve Secure Services:**
 - CYFS will decrease the number of youths on the MCAP waitlist; and
 - CYFS will decrease the average time spent waiting to access programming.
- **Increase Community Programming for Committed Youth Returning Home:** CYFS will increase the number of funded community-based programs supporting committed youth returning to the community from the CMC program.
- **Promote Desistance:** Youth in the CMC program will not receive new charges (of same or higher severity), while receiving services.
- **Decrease Staff Turnover:** The voluntary turnover rate of HSWs and Youth Corrections Officers will decrease.

Invest in Equity & Intentional Inclusion

The proposed project is specifically designed to improve services for young people adjudicated delinquent and committed to secure care in the Milwaukee County detention center, the majority of whom are African American boys with identified mental health and special education needs. African American youth in Milwaukee are 15 times more likely to be incarcerated than their white counterparts and make up 70% of youth committed to

corrections in Wisconsin. In addition, 66% of youth referred to youth justice have an identified mental health need and 59% have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or are identified as a formal special education student.

Implementing the newly developed Champions Make Change (CMC) program and additional community-based programming will promote racial equity and dismantle barriers by providing evidence-informed programming adapted to meet the unique needs of committed youth in Milwaukee County. The strengths-based CMC program has been thoughtfully designed to build critical cognitive behavioral skills; promote healing, individual growth, and desistance from problematic behavior; provide opportunities to restore harm; and support youth and families together to build a foundation for long-term success. Funding will support an entirely new skill building program – Forward Thinking – as an alternative option for youth who do not need Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), the primary treatment component of the program. The new program will be administered both in detention and in the community providing critical stability to support youth as they transition home and ensuring that young people do not get “stuck” in a secure setting simply to complete programming that they could participate in from home. In addition, resources will support additional credible messenger mentors to support program participants throughout their full supervision terms and implementation of the Advance Peace model to interrupt community violence.

The proposed project was developed collaboratively with community partners including Wraparound Milwaukee, Housing, Running Rebels Community Organization, Wisconsin Community Services, Behavioral Affiliates, Jonathan Cloud, Center for Behavioral Medicine, Credible Messengers, and judicial stakeholder partners including the Office of Public Defenders, Children’s Court, and District Attorney’s Office. The proposal also includes resources for emergency housing placements to provide emergency housing for youth and families displaced by violence. CYFS will work with the City of Milwaukee in these situations and provide any additional emergency financial support for youth and their families.

By design, investment in the community continuum and the CMC program will help build capacity of community-based organizations because a robust continuum of care and supports for youth is central to the program’s success. It will also allow us to decrease the number of youth in detention, making it possible to avoid transmission of COVID-19 if we are able to decrease our population. New agreements and contracts will be executed to community-based organizations to support new programming including Girls Voices, Self-Mastery for Boys, and Forward Thinking.

Evidence-Based Strategy

The proposed project is firmly grounded in evidence-based programming and practice. The CMC program is built on CYFS’s Growth Focused Case Management approach which applies best practices from both research on adolescent development, growth, and desistance as well as effective supervision practices with youth. Several project components have been rigorously studied and proven effective. For example:

- **Dialectical Behavior Therapy** is the core treatment model in the CMC program and has growing research support of effectiveness. The modality has been implemented in a range of settings and is listed as promising by [Pew's Results First Clearinghouse](#) as an effective alternative to residential placement for youth with severe emotional and behavioral problems. Research specifically on adolescents in justice settings is limited. Two studies of DBT in Washington state correctional facilities found that the treatment effectively reduced behavioral problems and resulted in lower recidivism rates compared to a matched group though samples were small, power was limited, and findings did not reach statistical significance. But a third study found that DBT participants did have lower felony recidivism rates compared to a matched group. See:
 - Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families. July 2, 2019. *An Evaluation of Dialectical Behavior Therapy in Washington State's Juvenile Rehabilitation*. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/Evaluation-DBT-JR.pdf>
 - Trupin, E.W., Steward, D.G., Beach, B. & Boesky, L. 2002. "Effectiveness of a Dialectical Behavioral. Therapy Program for Incarcerated Female Juvenile Offenders." *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 7(3), p.121-7.
 - Drake, E. & Barnoski, R. 2006. *Recidivism Findings for the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration's Dialectical Behavioral Therapy Program: Final Report*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

CYFS plans to work with a local, community-based partner to evaluate the CMC Program, to include the components of (1) Healing and Racial Equity, (2) Positive Youth Growth, (3) Family Engagement & (4) Community Restoration.

- **Credible Messenger Mentoring:** Milwaukee's Credible Messenger Mentoring program centers transformational mentoring, a practice that has been effective with youth who are at high-risk to participate in group and community-based violence, including formal and informal gangs. The proposed project is based on the highly successful "Arches" model that was launched in 2012 and is operated by the NYC Department of Probation (DOP). A rigorous evaluation of the program found that Arches participants were significantly less likely to be reconvicted of a crime; reconviction rates for Arches participants are 69 percent lower 12 months after beginning probation and 57 percent lower 24 months after beginning probation compared to their peers. See:
 - Lynch, Mathew, Nan Marie Astone, Juan Collazos, Micaela Lipman, and Sino Esthappan. February 20, 2018. *Arches Transformative Mentoring Program: An Implementation and Impact Evaluation in New York City*. Washington DC: Urban Institute. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/arches-transformative-mentoring-program>
- **Advance Peace:** The Advance Peace model is a violence interruption model that invests in the development, health, and wellbeing of people at the center gun violence in urban communities. Advance Peace engages the small number of individuals at the center of

gun violence in one-on-one, personalized fellowships to build new opportunities and break the cycle. The model has been rigorously evaluated and has been proven to cost effectively reduce violence. In Sacramento, the program contributed to a 27% reduction in gun homicides at a cost benefit ratio of \$18.20-\$41.88 : 1 (see Jason Corburn and Amanda Fukutome-Lopez. "Outcome Evaluation of Advance Peace Sacramento 2018-2019." University of California-Berkeley Institute of Urban and Regional Development. March 2020. <https://www.advancepeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Corburn-and-F-Lopez-Advance-Peace-Sacramento-2-Year-Evaluation-03-2020.pdf>). Preliminary data in four other communities – Stockton, Richmond, Fresno and Sacramento is promising. For example, Stockton saw a 40% reduction in homicides in the first year following the launch of Advance Peace in 2018 (see https://www.advancepeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/APStockton_Impact2019.pdf). Additional impact research on the Advance Peace model is available here: <https://www.advancepeace.org/about/learning-evaluation-impact/>

ARPA Reporting Requirements

DHHS is a department with an annual budget of over \$330 million serving over 80,000 people through many federal and state mandated services throughout Milwaukee County. Approximately \$150 million of this is distributed through provider network contracts. Over the period of 2010 to 2019 the department contracted over \$1.2 billion to providers and community partners. DHHS operates a complex management of procurement and contracting system with significant capacity to ensure adherence to local, county, state, and federal requirements.

ARPA Funds Requested

CYFS is requesting \$4,076,974 support the proposed project, \$589,026 in 2022 and \$1,743,974 annually between 2023 and 2024. These funds are allocated to support the capacity building in the detention center to expand services for youth in the secure phase of the Champions Make Change (CMC) program, particularly those on the program waiting list. Resources will support additional Running Rebel Advocates, DBT facilitators, dedicated CMC Human Service Workers (HSW), HSW Supervisor, Youth Correctional Officer (YCO), Quality Assurance Specialist, and support to local agencies to provide a range of programming including Self Master for Boys, Girls Voices groups, restorative justice programming, vocational Parent Advocates, and expanded substance use treatment. This project will also fund community-based programming to support CMC youth in the community phases of the program including additional GPS devices and dedicated CMC credible messenger mentors. An additional \$774,999 will fund community continuum of care expansion, to include \$23,333 for emergency housing placements, \$11,666 for communication and training needs for stakeholders and staff, \$706,700 for training and technical assistance to implement the Advance Peace model, to include application access and to support youth vocational training and employment.

BUDGET

Please see attached.