

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
**INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION**

**DATE:** June 22, 2019

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

**FROM:** Mary Jo Meyers, Director, Department of Health and Human Services  
*Prepared by: Dennis Buesing, Administrator, DHHS Contract Services*

**SUBJECT: From the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, requesting an extension of the Temporary Assignment to a Higher Classification (TAHC) for the Energy Assistance Program Manager for the operation of the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP)**

**Issue**

The Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is requesting approval of an extension of the Temporary Assignment to a Higher Classification (TAHC) until July 31, 2019 for the Energy Assistance Program Manager for the operation of the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP).

TAHCs are authorized pursuant to Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances 17.085, and TAHCs that extend beyond 180 days require approval by the Milwaukee County Board.

Additionally, Section 16.27 of the Wisconsin Statutes governs the operation of the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) in the State of Wisconsin and prescribes a role for counties in delivering such assistance.

**Background**

The prior DHHS Energy Assistance Program Manager retired unexpectedly in late 2018. While the search for a new Energy Assistance Program Manager has been underway, Ms. Cleopatra Echols has been serving in this capacity under a TAHC since December 17, 2018. It was necessary to fill the position of Energy Assistance Program Manager promptly to ensure the continuity of services provided to consumers of the Milwaukee County Energy Assistance Program as well as serve as the point of contact for the State of Wisconsin in administering the program and provider agencies.

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA), Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources (DEHCR) administers the statewide program to assist households with heating and electric bill payment assistance as well as benefits and services to assist with energy crisis

situations. WHEAP serves as the umbrella program for the federally-funded Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Public Benefits (PB) funded from fees collected through the electric utilities.

The program has served over 60,000 households this season and currently operates six application intake sites across Milwaukee County through two subcontracted community agencies, Community Advocates and UMOS. The program also operates a call center that receives over 80,000 calls annually.

For FFY2019 (October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019), DHHS received about \$3.6 million (base funding allocation and amendments) to administer the Energy Assistance Program for Milwaukee County.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors authorizes the extension of the existing Temporary Assignment to a Higher Classification (TAHC) for the Program Manager of Energy Assistance currently filled by Cleopatra Echols to continue through July 31, 2019.

### **Fiscal Impact**

This position is funded in the 2019 Adopted Budget. Therefore, temporarily assigning an employee to the position via TAHC status or permanently filling the position has no fiscal effect. A fiscal note form is attached.



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Mary Jo Meyers, Director  
Department of Health and Human Services

cc: County Executive Chris Abele  
Sup. Supervisor Eddie Cullen, Chair, Personnel Committee  
Sup. Marina Dimitrijevic, Vice Chair, Personnel Committee  
Raisa Koltun, County Executive's Office  
Teig Whaley-Smith, DAS Director  
Kelly Bablitch, County Board  
Steve Cady, Research and Policy Director – Comptroller's Office