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4 **A RESOLUTION**

5  
6 requesting the creation of a pilot reentry program that provides incarceration and post-  
7 incarceration support for individuals returning to the community and requesting the  
8 Milwaukee County House of Correction working in conjunction with the Milwaukee  
9 County Department of Health and Human Services, the Behavioral Health Division, and  
10 the Office of the Sheriff to develop a pilot reentry program that assists individuals post-  
11 incarceration with navigating housing resources, economic resources, mental health  
12 services, and trusted community members to prepare them to successfully reenter the  
13 community, maintain productivity, and become less likely to reoffend  
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16 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee County House of Correction (HOC) is a low security  
17 detention facility operated by the County and authorized to house up to 1,766  
18 individuals with sentences of 12 months or less; and  
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20 WHEREAS, the HOC operates a Reentry program in partnership with Employ  
21 Milwaukee and the Benedict Center's Women's Reentry Program; Employ Milwaukee  
22 assists with career planning, job readiness, skills planning, and an employment action  
23 plan and the Benedict Center assists women with cognitive behavioral therapy, trauma  
24 coping, nurturing, parenting, employment assistance, violence prevention and more;  
25 and  
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27 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee County Office of the Sheriff, Detention Services  
28 Bureau is responsible for operating and maintaining safety in the jail; and  
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30 WHEREAS, the jail is authorized to house up to 960 individuals and most  
31 individuals housed at the jail are awaiting trial or transfer to other correctional facilities;  
32 and  
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34 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services  
35 (DHHS) provides an array of services such as housing assistance, youth justice  
36 reforms, disability services, and behavioral health services; and  
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38 WHEREAS, the Behavioral Health Division Adult Services Unit has a Community  
39 Access to Recovery Services (CART) program for individuals ages 18 and older that  
40 provides prevention services, case management, treatment, and recovery support; and

41 WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) operates a robust  
42 reentry unit that partners with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to  
43 assist individuals with completing a pre-release Medicaid application; and  
44

45 WHEREAS, the DOC assists disabled individuals with obtaining federal and state  
46 benefits to maintain economic security and the Opening Avenues for Reentry Success  
47 program managed by DHS assists individuals with mental illnesses gain self-sufficiency  
48 upon returning to the community; and  
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50 WHEREAS, the Reentry Unit of the DOC has been successful as recidivism  
51 continues to trend downward across all genders and age groups since 2000, according  
52 to the Wisconsin Recidivism Data Dashboard; and  
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54 WHEREAS, recidivism, as defined and tracked by the DOC, is committing a  
55 criminal offense that results in a new conviction and sentenced to confinement at a  
56 DOC facility or supervision by DOC; and  
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58 WHEREAS, the American Psychological Association noted that it is essential for  
59 reentry preparation to begin on day one of incarceration as individuals released from  
60 incarceration often face difficulty securing housing, employment, and often don't qualify  
61 for public assistance due to the nature of their conviction(s); and  
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63 WHEREAS, strict housing policies can make it difficult for an individual released  
64 from custody to secure public housing assistance as individuals convicted of certain  
65 crimes are ineligible for public housing; and  
66

67 WHEREAS, obtaining employment can be a challenge for individuals post-  
68 incarceration as some employers are often reluctant to hire an individual due to their  
69 lack of employment, lack of skill, and limited education, this often results in individuals  
70 working low skill and low wage jobs; and  
71

72 WHEREAS, individuals seeking food share benefits in the State of Wisconsin  
73 must disclose if they have been convicted of a felony drug offense in the past five years  
74 and if they have been convicted they are subject to a drug test in order to receive  
75 benefits; and  
76

77 WHEREAS, according to the DOC more than 95 percent of individuals under the  
78 custody of the DOC will return to their community and individuals housed at the HOC  
79 will return to their community within a year; and

80 WHEREAS, the HOC could redefine its reentry program to include partnering  
81 with the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services and Behavioral  
82 Health Division to begin the process of preparing individuals to return to their community  
83 on day one of admission into the facility and at least one year and six months post-  
84 incarceration; and

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86 WHEREAS, including the Office of the Sheriff on this endeavor could further  
87 provide helpful insight and recommendations for potential services that both facilities  
88 could provide to prepare individuals being released into the community; and

89  
90 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors adopted File No. 20-  
91 742 to enter into a contract for Credible Messengers, people with relevant life  
92 experiences that mentor and guide youth transitioning back into the community after  
93 being involved with the justice system; and

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95 WHEREAS, Credible Messengers support youth transitioning back into the  
96 community, and a similar model could be implemented for adults involved in the criminal  
97 justice system on day one of incarceration; and

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99 WHEREAS, trusted community members that relate to those incarcerated would  
100 take on a mentorship role and guide those individuals towards making positive  
101 decisions and avoid recidivism; and

102  
103 WHEREAS, those community members would also be required to participate in a  
104 mentorship training to ensure they are prepared to fulfill the duties of the role; and

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106 WHEREAS, preparing individuals to return to their community on day one of  
107 admission and with a team that includes trusted community members to advocate for  
108 the individual, case managers to assist with housing and economic services, access to  
109 mental health services, and support groups will help the individual overcome challenges  
110 and avoid recidivism; and

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112 WHEREAS, redeploying resources to support individuals incarcerated and post-  
113 incarceration will help them become more productive, make them less likely to reoffend,  
114 make their communities safer, and strengthen their family; and

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116 WHEREAS, the Committee on Health Equity, Human Needs and Strategic  
117 Planning, at its meeting of September 15, 2021, recommended adoption of  
118 File No. 21-859 (vote 4-0); now, therefore,

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120 BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors supports a pilot  
121 reentry program that supports individuals while incarcerated and for a period post-  
122 incarceration to aid in the successful return to their community; and

123 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County House of Correction is  
124 authorized and directed to work in collaboration with the Milwaukee County Department  
125 of Health and Human Services, the Behavioral Health Division, and the Office of the  
126 Sheriff to develop a pilot reentry program that assists individuals returning to the  
127 community with accessing housing resources, economic resources, mental health  
128 services and trusted community members to prepare them to successfully reenter the  
129 community, maintain productivity, and become less likely to reoffend; and

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131 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the House of Correction shall provide a written  
132 report to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors during the December 2021  
133 committee meeting cycle that includes criteria for admission to the pilot program,  
134 collaboration options with the Department of Health and Human Services, the  
135 Behavioral Health Division and the Office of the Sheriff, cost, and a projected timeline to  
136 implement the program.

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