

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: October 28, 2021

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

From: Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Department of Health and Human Services

Subject: A report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, requesting to implement a \$2.75 per hour premium pay increase for Adult Protective Services (APS) staff in DHHS utilizing funding authorized under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act of 2021

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

A \$2.75 per hour premium pay increase is requested for Adult Protective Services (APS) staff in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). APS staff who are non-compliant with the County's Vaccine Mandate, that is employees who have not completed a full vaccine series and do not have an approved accommodation, will not qualify for the premium pay increase. This plan is consistent with the County's vision to be the healthiest County in Wisconsin.

The \$2.75 per hour increase for APS staff represents a pay increase of between approximately 7% to 12%, with the range dependent upon current staff pay amounts. The action is requested to be retroactive to October 1, 2021 and to remain in place through December 31, 2021. If an employee comes into compliance with the mandate after October 1, 2021, in other words, the employee completes a full vaccine series and validates that in Dayforce or receives an approved accommodation, the employee will qualify for the premium pay starting the next pay period. Employees or the employee's manager will add the premium pay adjustment to the employee's timesheet once the employee is validated to be compliant with the Vaccine Mandate.

The estimated total cost of the \$2.75 premium pay increase including salary and social security is \$23,446 in 2021. This represents the maximum cost if all 15 eligible employees are compliant with the Vaccine Mandate.

The premium pay cost is being funded by the U.S. Administration for Community Living to help county APS agencies address challenges brought on or intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding was appropriated under the Coronavirus Response and Relief

Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act of 2021. The State of Wisconsin has received approval to distribute \$1.15 million in funding to county APS lead agencies. Milwaukee County DHHS received an allocation of \$169,295. There is no match requirement.

POLICY

Compensation of Milwaukee County employees is governed by Ch. 17 of the Milwaukee County Ordinances.

Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	Ch. 17
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BACKGROUND

Wisconsin's county-based Adult Protective Services (APS) system has experienced a dramatic increase in the complexity and severity of cases of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and financial exploitation (abuse) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Policies designed to slow the spread of the pandemic and protect older adults and other individuals at risk from disease have also served to socially isolate them from persons in a position to observe and report abuse. At the same time, limitations on face-to-face consultations and other in-person activity by APS professionals, which serve to keep both clients and workers safe, have hampered the system's ability to investigate abuse and provide protections for its clients.

To date, the DHHS APS Program has received over 4,500 calls in 2021. The increase in referrals and calls can be attributed to the education, outreach, and marketing of programs in the community, the online APS Referral Form, and presentations to agencies, families, and community partners concerned about abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of community members, family, and friends.

Further, APS has received a 45% increase in financial exploitation cases of older adults age 60 and over. We have also been challenged by staff vacancies. Currently, two APS worker positions are vacant. The State has been concerned about our response time and the number of vacant positions. Per State Statute, APS is to respond to referrals within 48 hours.

This request seeks a \$2.75 per hour premium pay increase for the following classifications of positions within the DHHS APS Program: Human Service Worker, Human Service Worker - Aging, Disabilities Services Coordinator, Elder Abuse Prevention Coordinator, Paralegal, Unit Supervisor, and RN2.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This request aligns with the county's strategic plan because the premium pay increase is being applied to retain staff to support enhanced services in the advancement of health equity.

FISCAL EFFECT

The total estimated cost in salary and social security is \$23,446 for the \$2.75 hourly rate increase for 15 APS staff. The pay increase is being requested retroactive to October 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. This cost is supported out of funding appropriated under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act of 2021. The State of Wisconsin received a total award of \$1.15 million to be distributed to county APS lead agencies. Milwaukee County DHHS received an allocation of \$169,295.

TERMS

This premium pay increase would be retroactive to October 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

The Director of the Department of Health and Human Services recommends implementation of a \$2.75 per hour premium pay increase for eligible Adult Protective Services staff in DHHS.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

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PREPARED BY:

Clare O'Brien, DHHS Budget & Policy Director

APPROVED BY:

Shakita LaGrant-McClain

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Department of Health & Human Services

ATTACHMENTS:

None

cc: County Executive David Crowley
Sup. Jason Haas, Chair, Finance Committee

Sup. Felesia Martin, Chair, Health Equity, Human Needs, & Strategic Planning Committee
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Scott Manske, Milwaukee County Comptroller
Margo Franklin, Chief Human Resources Officer
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk
Steve Cady, Research Director, Comptroller's Office
Pam Matthews, Fiscal & Management Analyst, DAS
Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, Research & Policy Analyst, Comptroller's Office