

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE

Inter-Office Communication

Date: June 24, 2022
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, regarding the evaluation of the Children, Youth, and Family Services Credible Messenger Pilot
File Type: Informational Report

REQUEST

In May 2020, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) began offering training to community partners committed to performing youth interventionist work using a “Credible Messenger” framework. This included staffing programs with persons with previous justice involvement and community navigators who worked in partnership with CYFS. In October 2020, the department entered into five purchase of service contracts with agencies selected to pilot this approach, with work beginning in May 2021 (File No. 20-742). The purpose of this report is to share the evaluation results of this pilot.

POLICY

Milwaukee County Board Resolution	File No. 20-742
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BACKGROUND

Milwaukee County Credible Messenger effort (CM) launched in 2020 to promote public safety and supportive positive outcomes for Milwaukee youth—within an emphasis on those in the youth justice system. The effort focuses specifically on impacting youth at all points of system involvement by coordination amongst various partners, including community-based organizations, public health entities, academic institutions, and government agencies includes:

- West Care Milwaukee
- 414Life
- Milwaukee Christian Center
- Running Rebels
- Youth Advocate Program

- Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- DHHS Children Youth and Family Services (CYFS)
- Office of Violence Prevention
- Milwaukee County Children's Court
- Medical College of Wisconsin
- Others

The CM partner agencies work collectively to:

- Provide prevention and intervention with youth, keeping them from both entering the Youth Justice System or having deeper involvement with the Youth Justice System
- Reduce recidivism and offer preventive education, along with positive youth engagement with a pro-social support system.

Together, CM partners advance the following strategies:

- Transformative mentorship
- Community violence prevention
- community engagement,
- youth advocacy,
- family involvement,
- resource coordination,
- partner collaboration, and
- system partnership

The effort is currently centered on building system capacity with experienced transformative mentors. Also, known as Credible Messengers or mentors, these individuals are rooted in the community and support youth through collective work and their ability to connect with families, communities, and leaders to prevent and interrupt violence. Youth are connected with CM mentors through a referral process that involves partner agencies. Other community-level contribution from the Credible Messenger mentors include:

- Response to neighborhood/community-level trauma,
- Create positive youth engagement and community voice,
- Serve as change agent for racial equity and policy issues that plague the youth, families, and community

The CM mentors are expected to attend training to cultivated skills. They are expected to complete various reports and forms, follow DHHS-CYFS policies and procedure, collaborate with social workers and complete resource referrals.

Core activities of the pilot efforts:

- Coordinate resource referrals
- Build trust with individual and family

- Conduct violence meditations
- Facilitate career explorations and readiness techniques
- Provide Family conflict resolution skill education
- Civic engagement education
- Participate in cross agency activities and events

Outcome Indicators

- No new chargers –of same or higher severity
- No new re-injuries (gun violence)
- No new gun-related re-injuries
- Create space for positive youth engagement and community voice

Figure A: Logic Model of Credible Messenger Pilot

Transformational Mentoring— <i>Credible Messenger</i>					
Input	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor person (based on criteria) • Community-based referrals • Administrative Agency • Partnering Agencies • Youth involved w/ MCYJS • Census Report • Referral Form • Incident Report • Youth Progress Report • Reporting Workbook • Consent Form • DYFS Policy x Procedures • CM and PCITI Trainings • HSW • Community Crisis Response Protocol • Case planning 	Engage youth in pro-social activities	X number of Youth will receive a minimum of 26 weeks or 78 hours of time with Credible Messenger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth are engaged in an positive pro-social activity • Youth are engaged with a positive pro-social person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact youth at all points of systems involvement • Violence Prevention and Interruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote public safety and supportive positive outcomes for Milwaukee youth
	On-site resource distribution	# of Resource referral	Cultivated space for positive youth engagement and community voice		
	Conduct violence meditations	# of mediations	Youth receive no new chargers (of same or higher severity), while receiving services.		
	Participate in cross agency activities and events	# of community partner activities or events	Cultivated space for positive youth engagement and community voice		

Purpose

The Credible Messenger Pilot Evaluation demonstrates efficacy of the effort. The findings are to inform resource collections, program development and support partnership sustainability. Due to the maturity of this effort, the evaluation will focus heavily on process and outcomes. The evaluation was guided by the following core questions:

- How does the community understand Credible Messenger?
- How does the Credible Messenger impact the community and input?
- How do systems and process impact the implementation of CM?
- What are unexpected outcomes of this effort?
- What impact/value of persons with lived experience have on youth life outcomes?

DHHS will use the evaluation findings to learn how to enhance the effort for sustainable partnerships, efficient processes, and effective resource allocation. Community partners

will use the evaluation findings to learn how their collaborative efforts impact expected outcomes. The results will demonstrate the value of the efforts and how to address areas of improvement. The findings will guide the refinement of the scope of work, expected outcomes and expectations of partners. Also, the evaluation results will drive effort to increase awareness of Milwaukee County Credible Messengers effort. Reliable information is based on the accurate representation of input shared those doing the work.

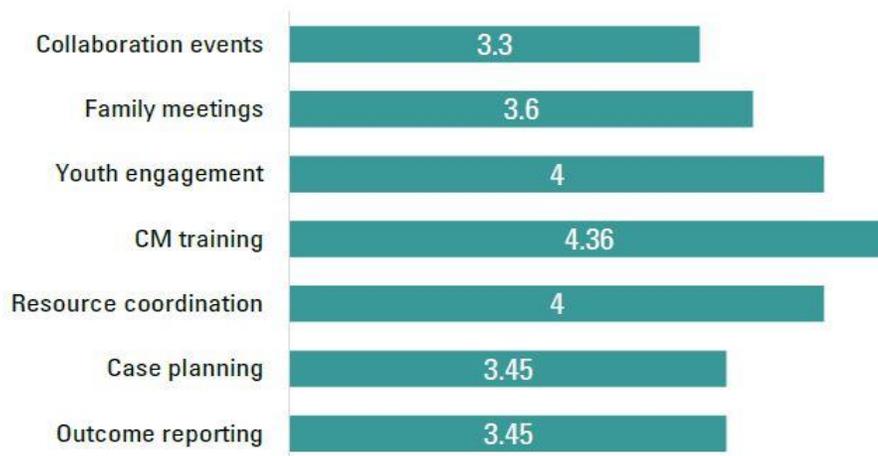
Approach

The evaluation project involved stakeholders of the effort in the process. This participatory approach helps to identify relevant evaluation questions, improve accuracy and relevance of reports, improve performance, empower partners, build capacity and sustain network learning and growth. This allowed stakeholders to participate in every component of the process as described below. Also, the approach included rapid, real-time feedback using diverse, user-friendly feedback techniques with encouragement of learning. Lastly the data collection methods included a heavy emphasis on storytelling.

Data Collection Method	Source of Data
Program Logic Discussion	Program Logic Synthesis
Existing (Secondary) Data	OVP Community Education Series, CM success story. Email responses
Partnership Feedback Survey	CM Partner Feedback Results
Youth Feedback	Youth Conversations
Weekly report	CM data spreadsheet

Key Findings

Figure C: Average scores for how for how effective expected activities are to advancing the Credible Messenger goal. (1=low, 5-high)



Although a high indication of effectiveness, these expectations only graze the support CM mentors provide to youth and the Milwaukee community. CM mentors are transforming the lives of youth with activities that are not explicitly expected or thoroughly captured.

- Career development: (job connections, resume building, etc.)
- Health relationship building: (parent coaching, communication techniques, conflict resolution, etc.)
- Personal responsibility: (financial literacy, grocery shopping, goal setting, self-advocacy)
- Social emotional development: (self-awareness, coping, self-reflection)
- Conflict meditation: (resolve bounties, deescalate verbal/physical conflicts, group-based violence interventions)
- Youth Advocacy: (civic engagement, system navigation)

On average, these activities highly impact on youth who are served by this effort as indicated in figure D.

Figure D: Average scores for how for how impactful expected activities are to advancing the Credible Messenger effort. (1=low, 5-high)

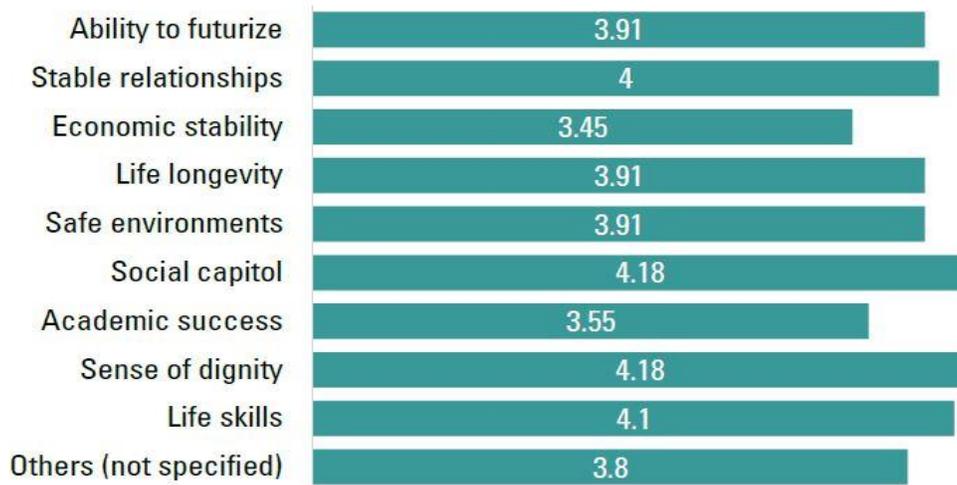


Lived Experience Impact

With these activities, CM mentors are achieving outcomes beyond what was intentionally intended—indicated in Figure E. These accomplished, indicate the impact that youth

supported by those with lived experiences have on their lives.

Figure E: Average accuracy scores of how Credible Messenger mentors impact youth. (1=low, 5=high)

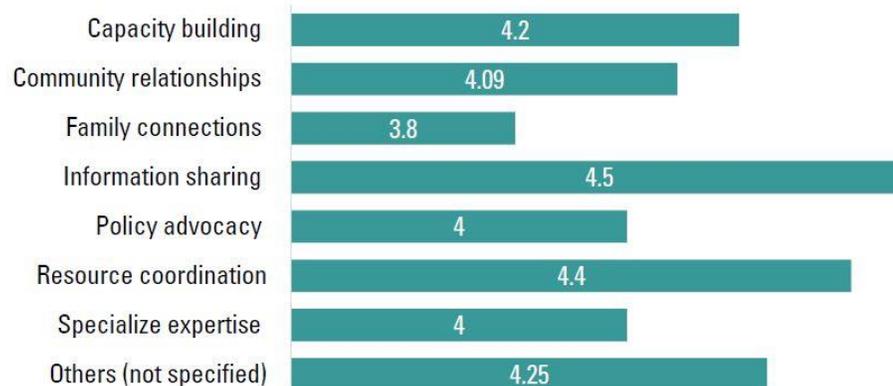


Partnership Value

The partnership that existing amongst the CM agencies is very valuable. The value of the partnership involves the following aspects.

- Specialize expertise (violence interruption, mental health, street outreach, legalities)
- Community relationships (employers, health providers, education supports, etc.)
- Family connections (parent/guardian relationships, peer outreach, etc.)
- Information sharing (frequent meetings, sensitive intel, access to sources)
- Resource coordination (e.g., filling gaps to meet youth needs)
- Policy advocacy (e.g., elevating needs to system agencies)
- Capacity Building (support to do to the work better)

Figure G: Average score for how partners add to each other's ability to advance the CM work. (1=low, 5=high)



The Credible Messenger effort has an immeasurable impact on its intended target audience—youth, as well as families, and community. The collaboration occurring amongst the partner agencies has system and community level implications which is an indication of the value of the Credible Messenger effort.

Conclusion

The results of the Milwaukee County Credible Messenger effort are well beyond what is expected and supported to impact the lives of youth. The greatest value of the effort is mentors' ability to transform youth and community capacity building and partnerships. Youth are healthier and safer because of this effort. Partner agencies are committed to collaboration and have demonstrated the positive effect incentivized agreements have on the ability to drive collective impact work. However—to sustain outcomes and enhance impact, more planning and resources are needed. Developing clearer goals and expectations will address many process inefficiencies, support a sustainable partnership, and increase visibility and awareness. Greater investments to this effort support the ability to drive goals and ensure that quality outcomes are achieved.

Related File No's:	20-287; 20-742; HRA22-96
Associated File No's (Including Transfer Packets):	
Previous Action Date(s):	9/2/20; 10/22/20; 10/28/20; 10/30/20; 11/5/20; 3/10/22

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This item achieves several key components of the County strategic plan by addressing institutional and policy barriers to persons with previous justice involvement and diverse contractors. Additionally, it expands the provider network to serve youth with grassroots and culturally responsive practitioners and interventionists. The strategy employed requires the breaking down of inter-governmental silos and community partners of color. The evaluation centers the experience of youth and their families and demonstrates impact to social determinants of health. The efforts are population focused but take place in neighborhoods most impacted by health disparities for people of color.

FISCAL EFFECT

This item is informational only.

TERMS

The period for Credible Messenger Pilot Evaluation was for the period of May 2021 to May of 2022. Programming is ongoing and a part of the of 2022 budget with plans for 2023. Evaluation results are being incorporated to refine the program outcomes.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

TJ Cobb, Enterprise Quality Director, DHHS
Kelly Pethke, Interim Administrator, CYFS
Verlynette Lewis, Admin Coordinator/Project Manager, CYFS

PREPARED BY:

David Muhammad, Deputy Director, Department of Health and Human Services

APPROVED BY:

Shakita LaGrant-McClain

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

ATTACHMENTS:

Evaluation Report, Evaluation PowerPoint

cc: County Executive David Crowley
Sup. Shawn Rolland, 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
Steve Cady, Research and Policy Director – Comptroller's Office
Allyson Smith, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk
Pam Matthews, Budget Analyst – DAS
Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, Research & Policy Analyst, Comptroller's Office