

Candice Owley, RN  
2785 S. Delaware Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53207  
October 28, 2024

### **Testimony at the Hearing on the Milwaukee County Budget**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening. My name is Candice Owley. I am a resident of Bay View in District 4 of Milwaukee County and a member of Citizen Action of Wisconsin. I am here to speak in strong support of including \$100,000 for an IRA Coordinator position in the Office of Sustainability Budget.

In addition to being a County resident, I am also a Retired Registered Nurse, a mother and a grandmother.

When I was a new nurse it was rare to see young children with asthma but as the years went on more and more children ended up in respiratory crises at the hospital. As a mother I was glad that neither I nor anyone in my family ever had asthma. I was shocked therefore when first my daughter and then my granddaughter developed asthma and now carry their own inhalers. I saw first hand how climate change had begun to impact our local air quality and the health of our children

That is why I am here to thank County Executive Crowley for his leadership and commitment to make Milwaukee County the Healthiest County in the State and to thank him for taking action on this promise by including the IRA coordinator funding in his budget. This funding will allow the County to take full advantage of the historic funds now available through the Inflation Reduction Act.

We believe this new coordinator position will pay for itself many times over by securing funding for projects that will make our community more resilient and cleaner by reducing pollution, providing affordable transportation options and creating new family supporting jobs that our community needs.

I also want to thank so many County supervisors who have already gone on record in support of this new initiative and urge all of you to not only support the \$100,000 in this budget but continue your support for Milwaukee County's Climate Action's goal of making our County carbon neutral by 2050.

Not only is it the right thing to do financially but it is the right thing to do for the health of our community.



TO: Milwaukee County Executive Crowley and County Supervisors

DATE: October 28, 2024

RE: Milwaukee County Budget Support for a Grant Writer in the Office of Sustainability

The League of Women Voters of Milwaukee County urges the County Executive and all Supervisors to approve a \$100,000 allocation for the Office of Sustainability to hire a grant writer and thereby avail the County of funds from the Inflation Reduction Act. This request is consistent with the League's consensus positions on climate change<sup>1</sup>, equal rights, equal opportunities and economic justice<sup>2</sup>.

The \$100,000 constitutes an investment, one that offers the County an opportunity to obtain Federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds to implement clean energy projects. Dollars available through the *Elective* or *Direct Pay* feature of the IRA allow local governments to receive cash payments in lieu of tax credits for clean energy projects. The National Counties Association provides information on how counties can utilize the *Direct Pay* option to finance multiple, cost-savings projects,<sup>3</sup> including:

- Installing energy facilities such as solar, wind and microgrid facilities
- Converting county vehicle fleets, including cars, buses and trucks to zero- or low-emission ones
- Installing electric vehicle (EV) charging stations

Local experience with "return on investment" can be found in the Whitefish Bay School District's experience in the early 2000s. An outside consultant hired for about \$40,000 guaranteed his recommendations, if implemented, would result in savings exceeding cost. Savings were approximately \$250,000 the first year after implementation.

Through collaboration with the City and other County municipalities, every governmental unit in Milwaukee County stands to benefit from the IRA. Everyone living in the County will benefit financially, directly or indirectly, from successful implementation. All will breathe better because of cleaner air!

The LWV of Milwaukee County urges you to approve the \$100,000 allocation to hire an expert grant writer to obtain IRA dollars for a sustainable and healthy Milwaukee County future.

1. <https://www.lwv.org/impact-issues>, p. 112

2. [https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/LWV\\_ImpactOnIssues2022-2024.pdf](https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/LWV_ImpactOnIssues2022-2024.pdf), p 121

3. <https://www.naco.org/resources/what-counties-need-know-about-direct-pay-inflation-reduction-act#:~:text=What%20is%20Direct%20Pay%3F,available%20to%20tax%2Dpaying%20entities>