



## **MILWAUKEE COUNTY AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT**

### **Community Support Program Proposal**

### **CYFS Credible Messenger Fellowship**

#### **PROJECT DESIGN**

Provide an overview of how the community support project being proposed addresses an urgent community need brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Demonstrate how the project provides a feasible solution to the demonstrated need and is being coordinated with partners. Include any collaboration that will occur during the project. Explain how the proposal falls within Milwaukee County's scope of services. (500-word limit)

**Violence among youth is a public health crisis in the United States (U.S.). The three leading causes of death in the U.S. for people ages 15-34 are unintentional injury, suicide, and homicide and these violent deaths are, more often than not, directly associated with firearms. Like many other major cities around the country, Milwaukee has experienced a spike in domestic violence during the pandemic. As of May 18, 2020, there were 56 victims compared to 26 victims at the same time in 2019 and more than 40% of those homicides — or two out of every five — were related to domestic or family violence. This sharp increase is due to various factors, including high unemployment rates, virtual school and not being able to attend social functions, and limited space at shelters due to social distancing requirements, with the vast majority of victims and survivors being women and children.**

**It is undeniable that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequalities that drive violence, and its impact on social cohesion has given rise to incidents of youth violence among 13-20 year olds. Existing disparities compounded with economic stressors, social isolation, health challenges, strain on systems that support individuals and families, etc. have had significant impacts on children, youth, families and individuals who live in Milwaukee County increasing in need for food, housing, healthcare and mental health resources as early as March 2020. This was a result of the pandemic and policy (i.e., social distancing ordinances) that were put in place. Another uptick followed in June/ July 2020 as unemployment rates continued to rise as well as reductions in unemployment payments that were made to people. Trends in non- fatal shootings and homicides followed. MKE County experienced record numbers after several years of decline.**

**Under "normal" circumstances, Black youth in Milwaukee are 15 times more likely to be incarcerated than their white counterparts and on average, make up over 70% of youth committed to juvenile corrections in Wisconsin. Black and Brown youth are more likely to be diagnosed with Behavioral/conduct disorders than intellectual or developmental disabilities and are in need of service connection and family supports. Research has shown that, compared with non-disabled youth who commit offenses those with intellectual and developmental disabilities tend to commit more serious offenses, are at a much higher risk of second- and third-time offending and enter the youth justice system at a younger age. 66% of youth who enter the youth justice "door" in Milwaukee County have been identified as having mental health needs and 59%**

have been identified as a formal special education student or who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Homicides are the third leading cause of death among individuals age 15-24 in Wisconsin. The year 2020 was the most historically violent year in Milwaukee's history. Youth were overrepresented among the victims: 36% of the victims were age 18-29; 74% were Black; 79% were male; and the cause of death for 88% was a fatal gunshot. Milwaukee had the 11th highest five-year average homicide rate of all major U.S. cities from 2015-2019.

From 2013 to 2018, the motor vehicle crash fatality rate for Black, non-Hispanic Wisconsinites nearly doubled on an age-adjusted basis, according to data from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). When looking at just youth ages 13-19, motor vehicle crashes due to distracted and reckless driving are the second leading cause of death for U.S. teens. Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office recorded 107 motor vehicle accident deaths in 2020 — the highest recorded total ever for Milwaukee County with the victims being disproportionately young.

To date, 2022 is on course to surpass 2021 (data from Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission):

- Total victims of homicides and NFS up 12% compared to 2020.
- Year-end Homicides were up 3% (194) and nonfatal shootings were up 14% (871)
- Each month exceeded the average of the previous 5 years
- Substantial increase in the number of firearm victims of homicides and nonfatal shootings under age 25
- A similar proportion of the total firearm victims under age 25 between 2015 and 2021
- However, a higher proportion of gun violence incidents with victims under age 25 resulted in fatalities in 2020 and 2021
- The fatality rate increase was even more pronounced for those under age 21
- Incidents involving youth and young adults was highest during summer months and lowest during winter months
- It is worth noting that 67% of all incidents involving youth and young adults had suspect information and reported that 48% were social acquaintances. This is a relevant significant driver of group-based violence among youth. According to the Homicide Review Commission October, November, and December 2021 had fewer total victims compared to the same months in 2020. The Milwaukee Police Department credited the collaborative efforts of CYFS Credible Messenger program focusing on group-based youth violence with this reduction.

Milwaukee residents have signaled that safety is both a concern and priority. According to the 2016 Milwaukee County Community Health Survey, 42% of respondents rated violence as a top community health issue. In the 2021 City of Milwaukee Budget Priority Survey, "Building safe and healthy neighborhoods" received the most support of any other single goal at 21.4%.

## TRACKABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Provide an overview of the project's goals, objectives, outcomes, and/or outputs that will be achieved by December 31, 2024. Please ensure that proposed project outcomes align with the Milwaukee County vision to achieve racial equity and eliminate health disparities. (250-word limit)

- **Desistance: Youth will not receive any new charges (of same or higher severity), while receiving the service.**
- **Youth Engagement: Youth will be engaged in a positive pro-social activity, e.g. viable or temporary employment, community service participation, school assignment, etc. while in the program and upon completion (Per Case Plan).**
- **Youth Engagement: Youth will be engaged with a positive pro-social person, e.g. the Credible Messenger with lived experience or other supportive person, while in the program and upon completion.**
- **Youth Service: Youth will receive a minimum of 26 weeks or 78 hours of time with the Credible Messenger, which is research-based to be the minimum required amount of service to make impact.**
- **Youth Safety: Group based-violence injury or re-injury of youth will not occur while on Credible Messenger caseload.**

## INVEST IN EQUITY & INTENTIONAL INCLUSION

Provide an overview of how the proposed project supports historically underserved, marginalized and/or adversely affected groups. Demonstrate how this proposal supports any or all of the County's strategic objectives. If applicable, include how this proposal was informed by community input and builds capacity of community organizations. (500-word limit).

**CYFS launched the Credible Messenger program** in May of 2021 as way to be responsive to the needs of the community and its youth as the division, and DHHS, saw a trend in rising rates in gun violence. The goal of the program was to utilize persons with lived experience who are trusted adults and not associated with the system, and grassroots agencies with strong community connectivity to have a focused impact on the following outcomes for youth and young adults up to age 20:

- Helping *would be* actors of violence, and those affected by acts of violence, to develop and maintain positive community connections
- Helping *would be* actors of violence, and those affected by acts of violence, to develop and maintain connections with community-based agencies
- Expand access to, and knowledge of, community-based resources through various forms of individual and group outreach
- Engage referred youth and young adults through transformative mentoring and restorative practices to promote physical and community safety

The five community serving organizations who were tasked with this effort, have vigorously inserted themselves into community spaces to further each of these goals. Formal evaluation is being conducted for the program's impact in the following areas:

- Youth and families have been willing to voluntarily engage Credible Messengers to access resources and engage in pro-social activity which has fostered greater community and agency connections
- Milwaukee Police Department has utilized community referrals to Credible Messengers to create opportunities to engage youth with supportive services who would otherwise not have been previously eligible for services through the Division of Youth & Family Services
- The program is currently at 68% capacity – all voluntary participants; 23% of all enrolled youth are community-based referrals
- Credible Messengers have supported several highly attended community-based events that welcome youth, including the Juneteenth Festival, to support public safety and youth engagement with no disruptive incidents to date
- Credible Messengers have distributed more than 500 community resource kits, including information on Covid-19, at these events
- Credible Messengers employs persons with lived experience and credible messengers across models, thus providing needed communications and program promotion functions by informal community opinion leaders. This approach also holds promise to foster broader positive community norms about safety, reduce faulty reporting, and frame violence as preventable.
- Invest in affected communities, including staff and organization from those communities, and ensure culturally-responsive practices
- Encourages and supports community capacity building
- Civic engagement support of affected communities (City, Neighborhood Groups, and philanthropic foundations)
- Support of grassroots neighborhood safety groups (City, health care, foundations)
- Proactive community and population outreach and system navigation
- Removes system barriers to justice impacted persons to employment with Milwaukee County services.

#### **Pilot Implementation Phase:**

- Established national Partnerships with Credible Messenger Justice Center (CMJC) and Professional Community Interventionists Training Institute (PCITI) with Dr. Aquil Basheer, Founder and Director of Brotherhood Unified for Independent Leadership Through Discipline Program (BUILD). Dr. Basheer is an expert on violence intermediation, public safety, and gang intervention.
- 50 local youth interventionists representing 11 community-based organizations participated in a weeklong training in June 2020 by PCITI, establishing our Credible Messenger Learning Cohort
- Learning Cohort engaged in community led outreach efforts in Milwaukee County Parks (We Care Crew) and continue weekly community engagement meetings and monthly professional development check-ins
- 5 community agencies who demonstrated administrative and staffing capacity were selected to participate in the 2021 pilot

#### **EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGY**

Please describe the research and/or evidence-based studies that informed the development of this strategy. Indicate if the project was developed using strong evidence, moderate evidence, or preliminary evidence. Local program evaluation data may be used as preliminary evidence. (250-word limit)

Milwaukee County will advance the Cream City Credible Messenger Fellowship led by CYFS as its primary strategy to reduce youth violence. This model centers transformational mentoring, a practice that has been effective with youth who are at high-risk to participate in group and community-based violence, including formal and informal gangs. The proposed project is based on the highly successful “Arches” model that was launched in 2012 and is operated by the NYC Department of Probation (DOP).

An evaluation of the Arches model was conducted in 2018 used a comparison group to 1) assess the impact of Arches on participant outcomes, including recidivism reduction; 2) explore participant and staff experiences in and attitudes toward the program; 3) identify practices associated with successful programmatic operation and positive outcomes; and 4) develop recommendations for program enhancement.

The evaluation found that Arches participants are significantly less likely to be reconvicted of a crime; reconviction rates for Arches participants are 69 percent lower 12 months after beginning probation and 57 percent lower 24 months after beginning probation compared to their peers.

Milwaukee County’s Credible Messenger pilot is currently in the final stages of its evaluation phase and will be complete for release in early April. Preliminary results demonstrate this effectiveness with youth served.

### **ARPA REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Provide describe the department’s experience managing federal funds and contracts to ensure reporting deadlines are met. (250-word limit)

CYFS under the leadership of the DHHS is requesting an investment of \$1.2 million to expand the Credible Messenger program in 2023 and 2024. CYFS has done similar work with Running Rebels Community Organization over the last 30+ years, with evidence that supports the impact on public safety by successfully engaging youth and young adults across the full spectrum of justice system involvement. This investment would go to expanding our Credible Messenger service continuum to other organizations who serve youth with the deepest involvement in the justice system and boost the capacity to provide preventative services for youth who come to the program via community-based referrals.

DHHS is a department with an annual budget of over \$330 million serving over 80,000 people through many federal and state mandated services throughout Milwaukee County. Approximately \$150 million of this is distributed through provider network contracts. Over the period of 2010 to 2019 the department contracted over \$1.2 billion to providers and community partners. DHHS operates a complex management of procurement and contracting system with significant capacity to ensure adherence to local, county, state, and federal requirements.

### **ARPA FUNDS REQUESTED**

Provide the total request amount to be spent between 2022 – 2026. Explain how funds will be incurred and encumbered by December 31, 2024. Include a description of any matching funds/resources. (250-word limit)

Approximately \$600,000 annually will serve 50 youth in addition to existing state youth aids surplus and \$900,000 in OJJDP grant funds to support the Credible Messenger program through the 2023 and 2024 as CYFS continues to face budget challenges related to the state’s youth aids allocation.

## BUDGET

Complete the short-form budget and provide a formula for your calculation by defining the expense item, number of units, and cost per unit for the requested project period. In the table below, outline any matching funds or resources.

Expense Item	Description	Total Cost
<b>Personnel Expenses (including fringe benefits)</b>		
1. Salaries and benefits	Includes full and part time staff for 2023 and 2024	\$766,588
2.		
3.		
<b>Professional Services</b>		
1. Conferences & Meetings	Community mobilizations and conference/training registration	\$4,800
2.		
3.		
<b>Supplies &amp; Equipment</b>		
1. Occupancy	Office space	\$57,600
2. Supplies	Postage, Office Equipment, Depreciation	\$6,720
3. Technology	Staff Communications & Reimbursement (Cell Phones, Laptops)	\$15,600
4. Travel	Mileage Reimbursement	\$48,392
<b>Capacity Building Resources for Implementation</b>		
1. Allocated Costs	Project Management, Technology Systems, Apparel	\$130,436
2. Miscellaneous	Participant and Family Support, Community Events	\$61,864
3.		
<b>Total Calculations</b>		
<b>Direct Expenses Total</b>		\$1,092,000
<b>Indirect Expenses (10%)**</b>		\$109,200
<b>Total Expenses</b>		\$1,201,200

\*\*10% de minimis indirect cost rate for ARPA projects includes rent/space allocation costs, utilities, support and administrative staff time across **County departments**, cost of databases and software, etc.

Other Revenue Source(s)	Committed or Available Revenue Amount	Potential Revenue Amount

OJJDP Multi-year Grant Award (\$900,000)	<b>\$300k annually (2022-2024)</b>	
Youth Aids (Covers 2022 budget)	<b>\$1.2 Million</b>	
<b>Total Other Revenue Amount</b>	<b>\$2,100,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>