

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: May 12, 2022

To: Milwaukee County ARPA Task Force

From: Ashley Adsit, Director of Project & Performance Management, Office of Strategy, Budget & Performance

Subject: The Office of Strategy, Budget, and Performance requests \$4 million in ARPA funding to contract with an entity to design and conduct an evaluation plan for strategies funded through the federal aid

File Type: Action Report

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**REQUEST**

The Office of Strategy, Budget, and Performance requests \$4 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) and contract with a qualified entity to design and conduct an evaluation plan for strategies funded through the federal aid.

**POLICY**

Milwaukee County Board file 21-555: "A resolution to create a Task Force to review and recommend funding allocations to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors for monies received by the County in the Federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021"

**BACKGROUND**

Milwaukee County will directly receive \$183 million in federal ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to spend through December 31, 2026. On September 2, 2021, the ARPA Task Force approved ARPA Expenditure Categories and a process for reviewing and recommending ARPA funding allocations. Within this process, the Fund Administration subgroup was established to facilitate reporting and evaluation activities as required by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

The Fund Administration subgroup is preparing an RFP to secure an evaluation partner contract to support federal requirements. The evaluation contract will allow the County to analyze data to measure short, intermediate, and long-term progress toward meeting the programmatic goals of ARPA investments and achieving the County's racial and health equity vision. The evaluation plan will allow the County to establish data collection systems and processes to measure and report the impact of ARPA investments.

***Funding Evidence-Based Strategies***

The U.S. Department of the Treasury encourages the use of evidence-based practices

when identifying ARPA SLFRF investments. Guidance by the federal agency states:

*Recipients are encouraged to use relevant evidence Clearinghouses, among other sources, to assess the level of evidence for their interventions and identify evidence-based models that could be applied in their jurisdiction; such evidence clearinghouses include the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse, the U.S. Department of Labor's CLEAR, and the Childcare & Early Education Research Connections and the Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness clearinghouses from Administration for Children and Families, as well as other clearinghouses relevant to particular projects conducted by the recipient.*

Currently, Milwaukee County's ARPA recommendation process for Community Support project ideas and proposals includes assessment of the project's evidence level. The U.S. Department of the Treasury guidance explains that a formal program evaluation is needed when ARPA spending is not dedicated towards an evidence-based intervention. In those cases, a program evaluation must describe:

- the evaluation design including whether it is a randomized or quasi-experimental design;
- key research questions being evaluated;
- whether the study has sufficient statistical power to disaggregate outcomes by demographics;
- and the timeframe for the completion of the evaluation (including a link to completed evaluation if relevant).

Once the evaluation has been completed, recipients must post the evaluation publicly and link to the completed evaluation in the Recovery Plan.

### ***National Evaluation***

The U.S. Department of the Treasury also states that recipients may be selected to participate in a national evaluation, which would study their project along with similar projects in other jurisdictions that are focused on the same set of outcomes. In such cases, recipients may be asked to share information and data that is needed for the national evaluation.

### ***Comprehensive Evaluation***

The U.S. Department of the Treasury encourages recipients to consider how a Learning Agenda, either narrowly focused on SLFRF or broadly focused on the recipient's broader policy agenda, could support their overarching evaluation efforts in order to create an evidence-building strategy for their jurisdiction.

The Milwaukee County Office of Strategy, Budget, and Performance intends to utilize a comprehensive evaluation of ARPA investments to (1) evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of investments and distribution of Milwaukee County ARPA allocation in the four expenditure categories and (2) understand the impact of ARPA funds on Milwaukee County's vision to become the healthiest county in Milwaukee by achieving racial equity. Fund authorization for a multi-year (2022-2026) evaluation contract will ensure the

appropriate resources and evaluation partner are in place to undertake this task. The development of the evaluation plan and findings can be leveraged beyond ARPA as a template and/or a springboard to determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity.

### **ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Describe how the item aligns to the objectives in the [strategic plan](#):

- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity
- 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions
- 3A: Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities
- 3B: Enhance the County’s fiscal health and sustainability
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

### **FISCAL EFFECT**

On September 2, 2021, the ARPA Task Force approved ARPA Expenditure Categories which included \$7,347,848 towards Fund Administration for the purpose of managing and coordinating use of ARPA funds to ensure strong programmatic and fiscal accountability, timely reporting, and alignment with supplementary funding.

The evaluation contract will utilize ARPA funding from 2022 through 2026 with an anticipated cost of \$1M per fiscal year (dependent upon RFP responses) which is approximately 2% of the fund. The Office of Strategy, Budget, and Performance will issue the RFP and award the contract 2022, with work starting in the latter part of 2022 into 2023.

**Table A: Approximate Annual Contract Costs**

FY22-23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Total
\$1M	\$1M	\$1M	\$1M	\$4M

### **TERMS**

The anticipated contract terms extend from 10/1/2022-12/31/2026.

### **PREPARED BY:**

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### **ATTACHMENTS:**

N/A