



Milwaukee County American Rescue Plan Act Allocation Community Support Program Proposal

Girls Programming and Programming for Special Populations in CYFS

Project Design

As the recent Division of Youth and Family Services Girls Workgroup Brief Report (December 2020) summarized, girls in the Milwaukee justice system experience many risk factors and harmful stereotypes well-documented in national literature and data, and as a result are often at greater risk of trauma and harm than boys. A growing body of literature indicates that girls are less likely to have access to treatment and have fewer community-based services and programming than boys. This combination of factors puts girls who engage in delinquency behaviors on a pathway to continued system involvement and re-traumatization that they carry into adulthood.

While service limitations for girls were identified years ago, the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified barriers to effective services for girls as providers across the continuum of services struggle to retain staff, connect with clients, and adapt service provision models to meet girls' needs. Many programs were forced to temporarily shut down during the pandemic, particularly those serving youth in secure placements and there is a need to restart and build on the foundation of previously existing program. Research has also shown that the pandemic has significantly increased need as it worsened mental health problems, particularly for teenagers who struggled with disconnection from school and peers and are reporting elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and depression.¹ This is particularly true for marginalized young people including youth of color and those who identify as LGBTQIA, who are overrepresented in justice-involved populations.² A story recently was published via the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel regarding the need for options to address the needs of girls within the youth justice system: <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/special-reports/2022/06/01/fewer-options-girls-plague-wisconsin-juvenile-justice-system/9408603002/>

¹ <https://www.psychiatrytimes.com/view/teens-in-america-how-the-covid-19-pandemic-is-shaping-the-next-generation>

² <https://college.unc.edu/2021/11/covid-mental-health/>



Analyses have shown that girls in Milwaukee County are often referred to court on misdemeanors that do not pose a serious public safety threat; yet, once under supervision, they are at risk of deeper involvement in the youth justice system -including detention- because of technical violations and lack of appropriate services. Between 2019 and 2022, one in four girls referred and adjudicated in the Milwaukee County court were found guilty of disorderly conduct or operating a vehicle without consent, offense categories in which African American girls have been overrepresented historically compared to their presence in the County population.³ Over that same period, 77 girls were placed out of home, 86 percent of whom were African American.⁴ In short, there is a pressing need to expand services for girls, particularly marginalized girls of color, to address the root causes of problematic behavior and prevent harmful justice involvement.

The current daily rate for a girl to be sent to the Division of Juvenile Corrections is \$1,154, which is over \$421,000 per year for every youth sent to Corrections. The daily rate will increase to \$1,178 as of July 1, 2022 at a cost of over \$429,000 per youth, per year. The proposed project will address this urgent need, expanding services for girls (including transgender youth who identify as girls) to meet their needs in Milwaukee. This project will also counteract social isolation and other harmful effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly African American girls who are disproportionately at risk, adjudicated, and placed out of home in the Milwaukee County youth justice system. Funds will support comprehensive, gender responsive services for girls including prevention and intervention services through new and growing partnerships with grassroots community-based organizations best positioned to serve these girls and address the root causes of behavioral problems; programming for girls in secure care; and expanded community-based alternatives to incarceration to prevent harmful placements. These services include the following for justice involved girls:

- Gender responsive mentoring and advocacy
- Individual and groups to address the impact of trauma
- Response to impact of sex trafficking, to include prevention and interventions
- Poetry and healing
- Gender responsive anger management interventions
- Exposure and engagement in sports and other recreational activities
- Restorative justice activities
- Leadership growth opportunities
- Skills groups to develop social, emotional and practical skills
- Education tutoring and support
- Mental health and counseling services
- Vocational and employment opportunities

³ Analysis of CYFS data; historical context from DYFS Girls Workgroup Brief Report December 2020.

⁴ Analysis of CYFS data

- Violence interruption and engagement
- Out of home treatment options, used only when necessary to meet the needs of the girls

The CYFS currently has 16 beds for girls in the detention center with a current population of 20 girls and does not have any ongoing contracts for community-based beds for girls. This project will help support the capacity building of community-based placements for girls in Milwaukee to reduce the population of girls in detention waiting for placement. This project will also support the Year of the Youth Initiative with a specific target on girls. This initiative will connect young people to jobs, encourage their creative passions, provide mentoring and job shadowing opportunities, feature youth days at sporting events, and publicly highlight the best in our youth across Milwaukee.

Trackable Performance Indicators

The goal of the proposed project is to expand access to gender- and culturally responsive prevention and intervention services for girls (including transgender youth who identify as girls) involved in or at risk of involvement in Milwaukee’s youth justice system. The project has four objectives:

- Expand the network of contracted service providers offering programming for girls to increase access to gender and culturally responsive services both in secure care and the community;
- Reduce disparities in access to critical health services that meet the unique needs of girls of color, particularly African American girls;
- Engage and collaborate with community stakeholders to co-create tailored solutions for girls; and
- Improve public safety by promoting equity and addressing root causes of systemic health disparities.

CYFS will track the following outcome metrics:

- **Expand Provider Network:** CYFS will increase the number of providers under contract to provide gender-responsive services for girls and, specifically, the number of grassroots organizations providing services that address the root causes of problem behavior in priority locations. CYFS currently works with providers on an individual basis and does not have any girls specific contracted programs.
- **Increase Girls’ Access to Services:**
 - CYFS will increase the number of girls-specific programs offered in detention and secure care to work with 3 or more providers.
 - CYFS will increase the number of funded community-based programs providing services particularly for girls to work with 5 or more providers; and



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- CYFS will increase the number of community-based treatment beds for girls from the current allocation of 0 beds via a contract with one or more local girls' specific residential treatment centers and/or foster agencies.
- **Increase Community Alternatives to Detention/Placement:** CYFS will increase the number of funded alternatives to detention or placement for justice-involved girls.
- **Promote Desistence:** The proportion of justice system-involved girls who are referred to the court on a new charge will decrease.

Invest in Equity & Intentional Inclusion

The proposed project is specifically designed to target girls (including transgender youth who identify as girls) involved in or at risk of involvement with the youth justice system, a disproportionate number of whom are marginalized, African American girls, and expand resources and opportunities for this historically underserved population. Through the project, CYFS will invest in proven and promising strategies to expand the menu of gender- and culturally responsive services available to girls in the community and secure placements and reduce barriers to access to promote racial and health equity. Funds will be strategically targeted at intervention and prevention services in marginalized and under-resourced communities to address the root causes of poor health outcomes, including justice system involvement, and prevent engagement with the court system entirely.

The proposed project was informed by community input and will build capacity of community-based organizations specializing in providing services specifically for girls. In 2022, CYFS has collected input directly from community members on strategies to reduce youth incarceration through four community forums and two youth forums – both of which were held in the detention center and one of which was held with girls only. The project is also informed by the recommendations of the Girls Workgroup, a diverse group of internal and external stakeholders including representatives from CYFS, Wraparound Milwaukee, the Department of Children and Families, Office of Public Defenders, Children's Court, Urban Underground, Youth Justice Milwaukee, My Sista's Keeper, Saint A., Wauwatosa School District, Disability Rights Wisconsin, Foundations for Freedom, Inc., and Children Service Society of Wisconsin. It also builds on ongoing community engagement efforts to connect with grassroots organizations including agencies run by women of color and launched specifically to provide services for justice involved girls and those at risk of becoming justice involved. Grants to these organizations will provide funds to build their capacity to meet the needs of girls in their communities and provide additional resources for girls and their families. This project will target residential and other out of home placements providers for girls to support their work in recruiting, training and retaining staff that want to work with justice involved girls in Milwaukee County. The project will increase the resources to respond to girls in unsafe situations and address their basic needs, such as clothing, food, transportation and temporary housing. There is a need to continue to advocate in the community in order to remove the stigmatization girls often face in



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seeking help and to address their unique and individual needs, to include mental health and substance use treatment. CYFS is also involved in a new Advisory Committee regarding

Evidence-Based Strategy

Given that specific program investments have not yet been determined, it is difficult to classify the evidence supporting the project. Research on effective services and supports for justice-involved girls and girls at risk of becoming justice involved is limited, though CYFS will invest in evidence-based and evidence informed programs adapted to the needs of girls in Milwaukee whenever possible. There are several proven and promising programs that could prove to be a good fit for Milwaukee County including Boys and Girls Club – Project Learn, Girls Circle, and Interventions Targeting Street-Connected Youth.⁵ CYFS will also utilize the feedback from the youth and community engagement sessions to inform collaborative partnerships and funding opportunities.

ARPA Reporting Requirements

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.

Fiscal Impact

This proposal allows for CYFS to work with community-based providers to work with girls and other special populations within secure detention and in the community to ensure their needs are met locally in the Milwaukee area. There is a need to build additional capacity to work with girls in a temporary, out of home placement in Milwaukee that can meet their unique needs through residential treatment programming and individualized foster home placements. CYFS intends to support existing programs as well as build the capacity of providers. If this project is not funded, girls are more likely to stay in detention longer, be court ordered to the Department of Corrections-Division of Juvenile Corrections (DJC) and be placed in an out of state facility. This impacts the average daily population and increases the average length of stay for youth in the youth detention center. The 2022 daily rate for a youth in the youth detention center is \$417, with an annualized cost of \$152, 205 per youth. The DJC has a current

⁵ Each of these three programs received the highest or second-highest rating in the Results First Clearinghouse Database, an online resource that critically assesses and classifies rigorously evaluated programs. See: <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/data-visualizations/2015/results-first-clearinghouse-database#:~:text=The%20Results%20First%20Clearinghouse%20Database%20is%20an%20online,of%20social%20policy%20programs%20from%20nine%20national%20clearinghouses>.

daily rate of \$1,154 and an annual rate of \$421,210 per girl. This rate will increase to \$1,178 per youth per day as of July 1, 2022, with the annualized cost of \$429,970 per girl, having an even greater negative impact on the CYFS budget. Girls are also placed outside of the state of Wisconsin when there are no other options to meet their needs locally. CYFS has no jurisdiction of the programming or length of stay, nor any oversight of any of the out of state facilities that girls are placed within, and the youth are then removed from their homes, communities and their state, negatively impacting them even further. The daily rate of the out of state facilities do vary, although CYFS has paid up to \$650 per day for a youth sent to an out of state facility, with an annualized cost of \$237,250.

ARPA Funds Requested

CYFS is requesting \$2,950,000 million to support the proposed project. The majority of funds - \$2,250,000 – are allocated to contracted and fee for service agreements with service providers to expand community-based and secure-care programming tailored specifically for girls and other special populations (to include, but not limited to transgender youth who identify as girls). Community-based services would include prevention and intervention programming for at-risk girls, community placement alternatives to incarceration, and programming for justice-involved girls on community supervisions or aftercare. Programs for youth in corrections and secure care would be tailored to the needs of girls in detention, the transition program currently being developed, and out-of-home placements including foster care, group homes, healing homes, and residential treatment centers. Funds could also support girls-specific planning for the future state SRCCY. The funds would also support technical assistance and training to support implementation of programming across the continuum of care.

The proposed project was also designed to leverage potential matching funds. Though not guaranteed, there is a potential for the Public Welfare Foundation to match up to \$200,000 to fund a participatory budget process focused on resourcing services for girls. Therefore, the proposed project includes \$400,000 (\$200,000 per year in 2023 and 2024) to support a participatory budgeting process with the Milwaukee Turners focused specifically on services for at-risk and justice-involved girls.

The budget also includes \$50,000 to support staff attendance at conferences or site visits to learn about effective strategies to expand gender-responsive services; \$160,000 to support project management and technology supports for Community-Based Interventions, and \$90,000 to fund youth and family supports to strengthen community engagement and Community Stabilization Initiatives.

BUDGET

Complete the short-form budget and provide a formula for your calculation by defining the expense



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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
Personnel Expenses (including fringe benefits)		
1. N/A		\$0
Professional Services		
1. Participatory Budget	Milwaukee Turners (\$200,000 per year in 2023 & 2024)	\$400,000
2. Girls & Special Population Specific Programming	CYFS Network expansion for community based or secure care programming (\$200,000 in 2022 and \$800,000 per year in 2023 & 2024)	\$1,800,000
4. Technical Assistance, Training & Support	Evidence informed implementation support (\$50,000 in 2022 and \$200,000 per year in 2023 & 2024) to support program planning and implementation of programming & services	\$450,000
Supplies & Equipment		
1. Travel	Mileage, Travel costs for a Site Visit/Conference for 3 staff (airfare, hotel, food/drink)	\$50,000
Capacity Building Resources for Implementation		
1. Technology Support for Community-Based Interventions	Project Management, Technology Supports (Advance Peace Fellowship)	\$160,000
2. Emergency Community Support	Youth and Family Supports (Stipends, Crisis Housing, etc.), Community Stabilization Initiatives	\$90,000
Total Calculations		
Total Expenses		\$2,950,000

Other Revenue Source(s)	Committed or Available Revenue Amount	Potential Revenue Amount
Public Welfare Foundation		\$200,000
Youth Aids	TBD	
Total Other Revenue Amount	\$TBD	\$200,000



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