

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: June 24, 2022

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Health and Human Services

Subject: A report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), requesting approval of \$4,076,974 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to expand the secure and community continuum of care opportunities in Milwaukee County

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

The Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) requests approval of \$4,076,974 in funds within the Revenue Loss Recovery Expenditure Category for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding consideration to expand the secure and community continuum of care for justice involved youth.

BACKGROUND

This proposal would provide ARPA funds for the Children, Youth and Family Services to expand the continuum of services within the secure youth detention center and within the community for justice involved youth and their families. This initiative seeks \$4,076,974 million of ARPA funds towards the implementation of programming in the secure detention center in the post disposition program (Milwaukee County Accountability Program, MCAP), as well as supporting the youth and family as they transition into the community and building the continuum of care across the youth justice system.

Pandemic challenges have contributed to both a dramatic increase in the number of young people entering the youth justice system on serious charges and an intensification of staffing shortages in Children, Youth, and Family Services (CYFS) while at the same time the County is working with the state to end state corrections placements at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake. Most recently, we have had youth test positive when they arrive to detention. Due to our increased numbers and limited space, we have seen a slight increase in the transmission of COVID over the last several weeks. These combined factors have created a perfect storm that has placed tremendous strain on the youth justice system.

Milwaukee County has seen a significant increase in youth referred to the youth justice

system and committed on serious charges, many of whom are having to wait several weeks or months to access the programming they need. Between 2019 and 2021, CYFS saw a 37% increase in youth referrals on armed robbery and a 129% increase in youth referred on possession of a dangerous weapon charge (55 referrals in 2021 compared to 24 in 2019). In addition, data from the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission projected that local violence in 2022 is on course to surpass 2021 in which the county already saw a substantial increase in the number of firearm victims of homicides and nonfatal shootings under age 25. Further, youth released from detention in 2020 and 2021 had been incarcerated 12 days longer on average than youth released in 2019.

Following increases in admissions and lengths of stay, Milwaukee County's detention center has been operating at or near capacity since the summer of 2021. The state's efforts to close the only remaining youth prisons – Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake – have placed additional strain on the facility as youth adjudicated and committed on serious offenses are being redirected locally to the current Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP) in detention. Since September 2021, the MCAP has had a wait list of between five and 28 youth, primarily boys, some of whom were forced to wait six to 10 weeks to begin the treatment program.

The proposed project will address an urgent need to build staff and programming capacity within CYFS and increase programming for young people who need it most. ARPA funding will provide critical resources to expedite implementation of the developing post dispositional program, Champions Make Change (CMC) program, (current MCAP), expand programming for youth in both secure care and the community including dedicated Credible Messengers, reduce the amount of time young people are sitting in detention waiting for services, and improve outcomes for committed youth.

The proposed project was developed collaboratively with community and system partners. The proposal also includes resources for emergency housing placements to provide emergency housing for youth and families displaced by violence.

The proposed project will address this urgent need, expanding services for youth to meet their needs in Milwaukee. This project will also counteract social isolation and other harmful effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CYFS is requesting \$4,076,974 in support for the proposed project, including \$589,026 in 2022 and \$1,743,974 annually between 2023 and 2024. These funds are allocated to support the capacity building in the detention center to expand services for youth in the secure phase of the Champions Make Change (CMC) program, particularly those on the program waiting list. Resources will support additional Running Rebel Advocates, DBT facilitators, dedicated CMC Human Service Workers (HSW), HSW Supervisor, Youth Correctional Officer (YCO), Quality Assurance Specialist, and support to local agencies to provide a range of programming including Self-Mastery for Boys, Girls Voices groups, restorative justice programming, vocational Parent Advocates, and expanded substance

use treatment. This project will also fund community-based programming to support youth in the CMC while in the community phases of the program including additional GPS devices and dedicated CMC Credible Messenger mentors. An additional \$774,999 will fund community continuum of care expansion, to include \$23,333 for emergency housing placements, \$11,666 for communication and training needs for stakeholders and staff, \$706,700 for training and technical assistance to implement the Advance Peace model, to include application access and to support youth vocational training and employment.

This was an emergency request from CYFS utilizing funds from the Revenue Loss Recovery Expenditure Category. This proposal received approval from the ARPA Task Force at its meeting on June 9, 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors approve \$4,076,974 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to expand the youth justice continuum of care opportunities in Milwaukee County.

FISCAL EFFECT

This resolution would allocate \$4,076,974 from the American Rescue Plan Act funds to the specific programs above. See attached fiscal note.

TERMS

N/A

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Health and Human Services
Clare O'Brien, Budget & Policy Director, DHHS
Kelly Pethke, Interim Administrator CYFS

PREPARED BY:

Kelly Pethke, Interim Administrator, Children, Youth and Family Services, DHHS

APPROVED BY:

Shakita LaGrant-McClain

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Health and Human Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution
Fiscal Note

cc: County Executive David Crowley
Sup. Liz Sumner, Chair, Finance Committee
Sup. Shawn Rolland, Chair, Health Equity, Human Needs, and Strategic Planning
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County
Steve Cady, Research Director, Comptroller's Office
Pam Matthews, Fiscal & Management Analyst, DAS
Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, Research & Policy Analyst, Comptroller's Office