



MILWAUKEE COUNTY AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT MATCHING GRANT PILOT PROGRAM

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Background

Milwaukee County created a new Grants and Special Projects Division (GSP) in December 2020. The GSP Division focused its inaugural year on initiating systems and processes to enhance Milwaukee County's ability to compete in grant contests and implement projects. Within its first six months, the division established two processes for the Administrative Manual of Operating Procedures (AMOPs) focused on tracking and establishing a system to effectively support grant writing efforts of county offices and departments.

As a result, in 2021, Milwaukee County applied for 51 competitive grants totaling \$122,775,023 in requests. Grants ranged in size from \$2,750 to \$32,738,900, across nine departments. As of May 1, 2022, 34 proposals have been awarded, securing \$41,675,339 in revenue from state, federal, and private sources.

Challenge

While 2021 was a successful year of supporting County departments with meeting grant development goals, barriers to pursuing new grants continue to exist. Identifying match funds or resources when required by a funder is one significant challenge and deterrent. This impedes the County's ability to diversify the funders and grant programs accessed by the enterprise.

With stagnant levy targets and increasing expenses, County departments are challenged if applying for new grant revenues that require a match. Of the 51 grants applied for in 2021, 33% required matching funds. Almost half of those grants were pursued by the Department of Health and Human Services Housing Division, where available matching resources exist. Other County departments are not as readily able to identify local sources and are often deterred from pursuing grants due to the requirement.

For example, the Parks Department has elected to not apply for the WisDOT Transportation Alternatives program despite having over \$5M in projects already identified due to the need to provide \$1M in matching funds to receive the grant. Similarly, Parks has applied to the USDOT RAISE grant for planning and design funds principally because there is no local match requirement. However, the County will need to account for the local 10%-20% match of project cost required for construction projects approved through RAISE. Lastly, the County has received grant awards of \$3.2 million for an extension of the Oak Leaf Trail in Bender and Kohl Parks but has struggled to generate the local match of \$820,000 needed to access these funds.

Pilot Proposal

The Office of Strategy, Budget & Performance (SBP) proposes to reserve \$2M in ARPA aid for matching funds for new competitive grant opportunities to stimulate grant development across County departments. By removing a common barrier to pursuing new grant funds, the matching fund reserve will reduce financial strain and support the programmatic goals of County service areas.

The pilot will be facilitated by the Project Management Office (PMO) within SBP. The PMO will communicate the availability of matching funds to departments and continue to provide grant development support as described in

AMOP 11.02: [Grant System of Support](#). The unit will be notified of the need for matching funds through the [Grant Intent Notification](#) process (AMOP 11.01) and will track project statuses and availability of matching funds through 2024. Due to the nature of grant spending timelines, the pilot project will accommodate grant proposals submitted through 10/1/2023 to meet ARPA requirements. *Note: The matching fund reserve will only be used when other resources are unavailable, to preserve the availability of funds.*

Summer 2022-Fall 2023: Grant application period

Spring 2023-Fall 2024: Grant and matching fund spending period

Success will be measured by documenting the return on matching fund investment. For instance, it is anticipated that \$1,000,000 in matching funds will allow Milwaukee County to secure at least \$4,000,000 in new grant revenue, assuming a 25% match requirement. If successful, the pilot will initiate an increase in grant development activity and could be sustained and operationalized through annual reserves.

The overarching goal of the program is to maintain a 75% return on matching fund investment. For every \$1 of local Milwaukee County funds contributed to a project, \$3 will be received from an external source.

Strategic Alignment

Grant revenue allows Milwaukee County to enhance existing programs and provide innovative upstream services that address the needs of the Milwaukee community. Grant funds allow for the piloting of promising practices in Milwaukee County’s dynamic community and can inform future budgetary and strategy decisions. Overall, new grant revenues support the following strategic objectives:

- Determine what, where and how we deliver services based on the resolution of health disparities.
- Invest upstream to address root causes of health disparities.
- Enhance the county’s fiscal health and sustainability.

BUDGET

The project will require an initial investment of \$2M to launch the pilot program. The PMO grant unit will monitor the competitive grant proposals submitted and awarded monthly.

Expense Item	Grant Project Match	Grant Project Revenue	Total Project Cost
Grant Project Budgets	\$2,000,000	\$6,000,000	\$8,000,000