

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: March 24, 2023

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 \$412,500 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the expansion of UpStart Kitchen

File Type: Action Report

---

**REQUEST**

The Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) requests approval of \$412,500 in Milwaukee County of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the UpStart Kitchen expansion.

**BACKGROUND**

PRISM EDC was founded to bring hope and opportunity by and for the residents of the Sherman Park neighborhood. PRISM is a hub for food-related development, with two main programs: UpStart Kitchen, where food entrepreneurs launch and build their businesses, and Brigade MKE, an accelerated skills-based career track to get youth trained and into the workforce earning a livable wage. UpStart Kitchen serves as an incubator for entrepreneurs who want to start or grow their food-oriented businesses.

UpStart provides access to 1,350 sq. ft. of affordable, state-of-the-art, fully-equipped, and code-compliant commercial kitchen space, and also provides supportive services, training, mentoring, and community connections to help those businesses succeed. Business resources and technical assistance, including business planning, proposal writing and coaching, is provided directly by UpStart and in collaboration with partner organizations. The physical kitchen space includes separate kitchen areas for hot food prep, cold prep, and baking as well as cold and dry food storage and a shared coworking space.

Food entrepreneurs apply to become member-clients of UpStart Kitchen and are then able to rent one of the kitchen areas. PRISM seeks to influence the social determinants of health, improving the conditions in which people live, work and age. UpStart also has a lengthy waitlist for new member-clients, when we know that participation has the potential for both individual economic opportunity and greater community health and wellness. UpStart Kitchen has seen a steady stream of inquiries for membership. Currently, there are over 300

individuals on its waitlist and UpStart is poised to grow into spaces that will foster economic development throughout the city for entrepreneurs who are already in our pipeline, eager to begin.

PRISM is working to develop retail platforms where member-clients of UpStart can market their products and gain exposure to new clientele, with partners like Sherman Phoenix Marketplace and for this funding source a new location at the DHHS Housing Services office building on 6th and Walnut.

The Community Support, Other Social Determinants of Health Subgroup recommended \$412,500 to support UpStart Kitchen to serve as an incubator for entrepreneurs who want to start or grow their food-oriented businesses. UpStart Kitchen has been a close partner to Housing Services in DHHS by supporting Milwaukee County's Housing First Programs. During the pandemic, UpStart Kitchen served thousands of meals to formerly homeless individuals who had moved into housing but needed additional meal support. This was done at no cost to Milwaukee County or the clients in Housing First.

Housing Services intends to partner with UpStart Kitchen to create an employment program for the County's Housing First participants to assist with the operations of the café at the 6th and Walnut office location. DHHS Housing Services will serve as the manager for the initiative starting May 1, 2023 and continuing while ARPA funds remain available for use. Contracts and specific codes will be set up to ensure funds are allocated appropriately.

This proposal received approval from the Community Support Subgroup – Other Social Determinants of Health Subgroup and was approved by the ARPA Task Force (vote 6 to 0) at its meeting on March 9, 2023.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors approve \$412,500 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the expansion of UpStart Kitchen.

### **FISCAL EFFECT**

This resolution would allocate \$412,500 from the American Rescue Plan Act funds to the specific program above. See attached fiscal note.

**TERMS**

Funds are available to this project starting May 1, 2023 and until ARPA funds remain available for use.

**VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Health and Human Services  
Clare O'Brien, Budget & Policy Director, DHHS  
James Mathy, Administrator, Housing Services DHHS

**PREPARED BY:**

James Mathy, Administrator, Housing Services, DHHS

**APPROVED BY:**

*Shakita LaGrant-McClain*

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Health and Human Services

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1 – ARPA SDoH Upstart Kitchen Project Task Force Report  
Attachment 2 – ARPA Upstart Kitchen Program Proposal

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  
Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, Sr Budget and Management Analyst, DAS-Strategy, Performance & Budget