

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: August 23, 2023

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

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

Subject: A report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), on the creation of a youth justice programming task force approved as part of the 2023 Adopted Budget

File Type: Informational Report

POLICY

The Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is providing an update on Amendment 59 approved as part of the 2023 Adopted Budget for Children, Youth and Family Services (CYFS).

Specific Adopted Budget:	2023 Budget
Specific Adopted Budget Amendment:	59

BACKGROUND

For 2023, CYFS made reductions to its community-based programming for justice involved youth to meet its 2023 budget target. These reductions resulted in a total savings of just under \$2 million. Amendment 59 requested that a CYFS Programming Task Force be created to develop recommendations on ways to replace this reduction in programming. The amendment directed that the task force includes community members, youth in care and representatives from CYFS. Further, the task force is to report to the Health Equity, Human Needs and Strategic Planning Committee at least twice per year.

Over the last few years, CYFS has focused on long-term planning and implementation to engage and include justice involved youth and the community. CYFS would like to highlight the efforts it has already launched to embed a process for gathering stakeholder feedback to inform changes and improvements to community-based programming. This outreach has focused primarily on justice involved youth, young people and their families within the community.

By hosting numerous community outreach events and violence prevention forums, CYFS has gathered feedback from youth and their families that has been used to influence programming and services. These topics include addressing youth and group violence in the community, identifying the gaps in services and programs in the justice system and community, identifying additional resources to address the gaps in services and opportunities to collaborate across systems and entities.

The chart on the next page highlights the process CYFS has incorporated to gather feedback from youth, families and other stakeholders to improve and shape youth justice programming now and into the future:

Participant Forum	Topic	Stakeholder Group(s)	Impact	Frequency for Gathering Feedback
Community Healing Events (Healing 4 Our Youth)	Solutions to youth violence across Milwaukee	Justice involved youth and their families and other community members	1) 150 participants shared experience and opinions on potential solutions; 2) Identify opportunities to collaborate across networks & share knowledge, communication & resources; 3) Emergency housing resources provided based on input from families impacted by violence & CYFS staff	Next event – August – to be focused on youth only
Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) Stakeholder Collective	Build a better & more equitable justice system & promote 8 core strategies	Community members, system partners, youth and families served across CYFS	1) Feedback used to guide future priorities; 2) Reallocate resources in ARPA youth justice funded projects	Quarterly
Youth Detention Center	Feedback on gaps in services and improvements	Youth in Care	1) Added new services for youth in detention, to include Trap Therapy, Forward Thinking, workshops to develop emotional and social skills for girls, poetry & motivational groups, psychoeducation/group therapy using music, prenatal & postnatal care for females, substance abuse groups, etc.	4 sessions have occurred thru August 2023; ongoing plan to conduct sessions a minimum of 4 times annually
Participatory Budget Projects	Zero Youth Corrections	Community based members, to include justice involved young people & their families	1) Feedback used to guide 2024 budget priorities; 2) Reallocate resources in ARPA youth justice funded projects; 3) Used to create the ZYC Request for Proposals grant application	One round annually with 2 grantees being awarded grants up to \$200,000 per grant
CYFS Youth Justice Expression of Interest for Network Services	Add new services in the CYFS network	Youth & families in the youth justice system; opened to all interested parties in Milwaukee County	Added new providers for existing services (clinical, anger management, etc.) and new services, to include yoga, restorative justice practices, Forward Thinking, poetry & motivational workshops, health & wellness	As needed
Credible Messengers Program	Expansion of the Credible Messengers Program	N/A	Based on program usage and feedback from youth, families and community, Credible Messengers have expanded; Youth Advocates Program to lead the Credible Messenger Response Team and GLOW 414 to specifically serve girls	N/A

Participatory Budgeting Process

CYFS is engaged in three participatory budget projects with one focused on early childhood

engagement and two focused on the youth justice system. The youth justice projects include community engagement and listening sessions, and these occurred throughout June 2023 in community settings as well as a youth specific sessions for kids in the secure detention center. The youth have helped to prioritize the services offered to them while in the youth detention center and has helped to expand the services and programs offered as well. The CYFS is taking all the input, feedback and suggestions and is utilizing this information to identify the priorities in the 2024 budget process as well as reallocating resources in the ARPA youth justice funded projects.

Efforts to Secure Alternative Funding

CYFS has made intentional efforts to identify alternative revenue streams for funding in order to replace the funding cut from the operating budget, which includes identifying new potential funding sources for the services and programs that have been reduced or eliminated due to budget concerns. These alternative revenue streams include state and federal grants, and CYFS has submitted applications for two federal grant awards that are currently pending an award decision. CYFS has also reached out to philanthropic entities to identify potential collaborations with additional engagement efforts ongoing.

CYFS is working on expanding the number of children served through the Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) program and expanding the CYFS service network of CCS providers for youth and their families. CCS is a great resource for children and families and can provide a continuity of care when the youth are no longer justice involved. CYFS also has several ARPA funded projects that are in process that focus solely on building out the continuum of care for youth and families across Milwaukee County. These projects include efforts at prevention and diversion, as well as building out a continuum of care for justice involved youth, which is adding new services and programs across the continuum.

In Summary

CYFS is committed to engaging all stakeholders in developing solutions to the challenges and concerns identified to address the social determinants of health, inequities and needs of youth and their families across Milwaukee County. CYFS is also committed to identifying creative solutions to the budget reductions and in identifying additional revenue sources for community-based services and programs in order to prevent, divert and provide interventions for kids and their families. This is currently being done through the various existing spaces and workgroups to include the JDAI Stakeholder Collective, Participatory Budget engagement, listening sessions, and Community Healing Initiative. All of these spaces include community members throughout Milwaukee County, community and contracted partners, youth and young adults and justice involved individuals, both youth and adults.

We believe the current model as described in this report provides tremendous value in fostering community engagement and empowering citizens to shape youth justice priorities. Establishing a separate task force would duplicate these efforts and potentially create competition for community participants among these various forums. For these reasons, DHHS respectfully requests to continue its current efforts in lieu of the creation of a new task force.

FISCAL EFFECT

There is no fiscal impact for this action.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is informational.

TERMS

N/A

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, DHHS Director
Kelly Pethke, CYFS Administrator

PREPARED BY:

Kelly Pethke, CYFS Administrator

APPROVED BY:

Shakita LaGrant-McClain
Shakita LaGrant-McClain, DHHS Director

ATTACHMENTS:

None

cc: County Executive David Crowley
Hon. Carl Ashley, Chief Judge
Sup. Liz Sumner, Chair, Finance Committee
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, Office of Strategy, Budget & Performance