



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Milwaukee County

DAVID CROWLEY • MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

August 14, 2020

Kevin A. Carr, Secretary
WI Department of Corrections
3099 East Washington Ave.
Madison, WI 53704

Dear Secretary Carr:

Milwaukee County looks forward to continued dialog and partnership with the State to fully achieve the goal of bringing youth home from Lincoln Hills as soon as possible. We share the belief with Governor Evers that it is necessary and possible to establish a new paradigm of youth justice that assures our youth receive proper care under conditions that promote growth and affirms, rather than destroys, the social contract between youth and society.

Please consider this letter as Milwaukee's County's formal request to defer acceptance of the grant award for \$15,215,293 to develop a portion of the detention center within the Vel R. Phillips Youth and Family Justice Center to a 32-bed Secure Residential Care Center for Children and Youth (SRCCCY). In light of the continued uncertainty around the availability of resources to realize the full vision of Wisconsin Act 185, we are deferring grant acceptance until further information is available about the State's plan for the Type 1 facilities as well as potential operating support for SRCCCYs in the next biennial budget.

As you are aware, the Milwaukee County grant amount recommended by the Grants Committee was reduced by \$8.4 million to \$15.2 million. Based on this reduction, our team developed a revised plan estimated to cost a total of \$17.9 million compared to the original submittal of nearly \$25 million. Even with this reduced project estimate, Milwaukee County would need to invest nearly \$2.7 million of its own funding which equates to 15 percent rather than the five percent required by Act 185. This unanticipated increase in costs, which exceeds our statutory requirements, combined with the operating gap that results from supporting the 32-bed SRCCCY, creates significant sustainability concerns. Layered on top of the current challenges we face as a result of COVID-19, with county revenues plummeting and cost of services surging, we are concerned about exacerbating these financial uncertainties, unless we receive additional revenue from the state.

Further, we continue to actively listen to our community and must reassess whether there is a desire to invest increasingly scarce resources into bricks and mortar rather than reformative and rehabilitative programs and services. For this reason, we plan to undertake additional public



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engagement to explore the best possible solutions which promote the success of our youth and are also fiscally feasible and sustainable.

Sincerely,

David C. Crowley
Milwaukee County Executive

Shakita LaGrant McClain
Interim Director
Department of Health & Human Services