

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

**DATE:** October 2, 2020

**TO:** Supervisor Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Shakita LaGrant, Director, Department of Health and Human Services  
*Prepared by: Mark Mertens, Division of Youth & Family Services Administrator*

**SUBJECT:** **Report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, requesting authorization to enter into 2020 purchase of service contracts with community providers for a Credible Messenger pilot within the Division of Youth and Family Services**

**Background**

Since 2015, the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) has collaborated with system stakeholders to decrease the number of youth who are court ordered to the Department of Corrections (DOC), Division of Juvenile Corrections (DJC) and has developed a plan to address the crisis at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Schools. Due to the steady decrease in the youth population at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake, the DYFS has an anticipated surplus in the 2020 fiscal year. The DYFS is requesting to reinvest a portion of this funding into community-based programming, technical assistance and the provision of individualized and high quality services to advance the continuum of care for youth in their homes and communities.

**Discussion**

The Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), is requesting authorization to enter into 2020 purchase of service contracts for a Credible Messenger pilot within the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS).

**Purchase of Service Contracts**

**Cream City Credible Messengers**

In April 2020, the DYFS contracted with the Professional Community Intervention Training Institute for \$98,000 to provide a Credible Messenger certification training, technical support and coaching for 11 Milwaukee County community agencies. Credible Messengers is a transformative mentoring intervention for those youth who are involved in the youth justice system and those at risk of becoming involved. The program utilizes individuals who live in the same communities as the youth and who themselves may have been involved in the youth and/or adult justice systems.

As a result of that certification and ongoing discussions, the DYFS is proposing to fund a Cream

City Credible Messenger pilot involving five of those 11 agencies starting in 2020 and continuing in 2021. These agencies include: City of Milwaukee - 414Life, Youth Advocates Program, WestCare, Milwaukee Christian Center and Running Rebels Community Organization. The five agencies were selected for the pilot based on their current capacity to do the work, the relationships and work they are already doing in the community with youth and families and the skill set of their current certified staff. The pilot will focus on the intervention, prevention and reduction in violence, advocacy for youth and families, connect youth with supportive communities, and focus on the resilience of individuals. Program referrals will be made to each agency through DYFS or other approved DYFS referral sources.

The Credible Messengers will work directly with the youth, their families and communities to engage them in an intentional way that increases positive outcomes. DYFS will work with each contracted provider to develop performance measures related to the credible messenger work with the ultimate goal to reduce violence in the community, reduce recidivism and deeper system penetration for the youth served in the program.

Other supportive components of the Cream City Credible Messengers include, but are not limited to, education support, vocational support and employment, leadership, life skills development and restorative justice practices. All of the work of the Credible Messengers is carried out in individual, group and community-based settings and is individualized based on the needs of the youth, their families and communities. Each agency is expected to serve between 12 and 20 youth at a time but will vary based on the needs of the youth, the agency expertise and level of intervention needed. The total number of youth anticipated to be served is about 200 annually.

DYFS recommends the following four new contracts for the Cream City Credible Messengers pilot for a term of November 5, 2020 through October 31, 2021 in the following not-to-exceed amounts:

| <b>Provider</b>            | <b>2020<br/>Adjusted<br/>Contract</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| City of Milwaukee, 414Life | \$300,500                             |
| Youth Advocates Program    | \$350,000                             |
| WestCare                   | \$210,000                             |
| Milwaukee Christian Center | \$110,000                             |
| <b>Subtotal</b>            | <b>\$970,500</b>                      |

In addition, DYFS recommends the following amendment to an existing contract with Running Rebels for a term of November 5, 2020 through October 31, 2021 in the following not-to-exceed amount:

| <b>Provider</b>                       | <b>2020 Initial Contract</b> | <b>2020 Amendment</b> | <b>2020 Adjusted Contract</b> |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Running Rebels Community Organization | \$99,000                     | \$200,000             | \$299,000                     |
| <b>Subtotal</b>                       | <b>\$99,000</b>              | <b>\$200,000</b>      | <b>\$299,000</b>              |

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors authorizes the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, or her designee, to enter into \$970,500 in new Credible Messenger contracts and an amendment to an existing contract for \$200,000 for a total of \$1,170,500 for the time period of November 5, 2020 to October 31, 2021 with the providers listed and in the amounts specified in the attached resolution.

Approval of the recommended contract allocations will allow for the provision of high-priority, community-based services for youth being served by the Division of Youth and Family Services.

### **Fiscal Impact**

The proposed purchase of service contracts reflect total expenditures of \$1,170,500. Sufficient funds have been allocated in the 2020 Budget to cover these costs due to the projected surplus in DOC-DJC court orders. A fiscal note form is attached.

Respectfully Submitted:



Shakita LaGrant/Director

Department of Health and Human Services

cc: County Executive David Crowley  
 Hon. Mary E. Triggiano, Chief Judge  
 County Supervisor Jason Haas, Finance Chair  
 County Supervisor Supreme Moore-Omokunde, Health & Human Needs Chair  
 Mary Jo Meyers, County Executive's Office  
 Kelly Bablitch, County Board  
 Steve Cady, Research Director, Comptroller's Office  
 Pam Matthews, Fiscal & Management Analyst, DAS  
 Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, Research & Policy Analyst, Comptroller's Office