

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

DATE: April 16, 2021

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

FROM: Shakita LaGrant-McClain, 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 a 2021 purchase of service contract with Employ Milwaukee for the Division of Youth and Family Services**

Issue

The Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), is requesting authorization to enter into a 2021 purchase of service contract with Employ Milwaukee for the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS).

Background

The Department of Health and Human Services is committed to ensuring that there are employment opportunities available for the summer and beyond for all youth who are interested in gaining employment. The Youth Employment Initiative is a collaboration between DHHS and external community partners working to ensure all youth, who are able and want to work, have the opportunity to gain summer employment and beyond. In 2020, over 100 youth jobs and services were facilitated across DHHS through various programs and collaborations such as the Community Resource Navigators, Supported Employment Program, Supported Employment & Education Program, and Broadscope Employment Services. This year, as part of a joint initiative and significant partnerships across DHHS and the community, we are looking to significantly expand that number.

Historically, DHHS has operated within silos with each division. The goal of this initiative is to target youth and young people regardless of where they are at in their journey and remove barriers to employment for the 2021 summer and beyond. This initiative targets all young people we serve across DHHS, including youths with complex needs that may be involved in a number of systems. DHHS is working to develop a cohesive set of summer jobs for youth and create a pathway for young people to gain vocational skills, knowledge, and employment. The combination of the programs would provide jobs for all eligible and interested youth, ages 14 through 24, across Milwaukee County.

Discussion

The Department is requesting approval to purchase services with Employ Milwaukee to operate the DHHS Youth Employment Program for the summer of 2021. Employ Milwaukee is the state-certified Workforce Development Board (WDB) serving Milwaukee County. Employ Milwaukee works with its partners to align workforce development services and investment with education and training programs to supply skilled and educated workers to employers.

The DHHS Youth Employment Program will serve up to 100 youth, ages 14 to 24. This program is modeled after the Earn and Learn Summer Youth Employment Program and targets youth involved in DHHS. A Program Specialist from Employ Milwaukee will be assigned to manage this program and enrolled youth will work up to 20 hours per week at \$10/hour for 12 weeks or more. This contract will support the program for May 1 through September 30, 2021.

The youth will be assigned to various work sites and receive ongoing job coaching and support from Employ Milwaukee as well as their team members in DHHS. The DHHS Youth Employment Program will develop a data collection plan and outcomes to measure the success of this initiative. The tentative outcomes include the following and will be finalized upon contract execution:

- Youth will gain experience in a field of interest
- Youth will learn new skills
- Youth will be paid a living wage for their work
- Youth will build positive connections such as professional relationship development, maintenance of those relationships, job reference and/or work-related advice
- Youth will complete the summer employment session
- Youth will be hired on a part and/or full-time basis after the completion of summer employment

The total budget for May 1 to September 30, 2021 is \$310,755. This reflects one full-time Program Specialist from Employ Milwaukee, financial literacy services, job readiness, career exploration and 100 part-time youth employment positions.

Because of Employ Milwaukee's designation as the state-certified WDB serving Milwaukee County and its experience with connecting youth to jobs, DHHS is recommending a contract with this provider for its Youth Employment Program. In addition, given the impending summer season and the reopening of businesses that were impacted by the COVID pandemic, it is important to move forward with a contract at this time.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors authorize the Director,

Department of Health and Human Services, or her designee, to enter into a purchase of service contract for \$310,755 for the time period of May 1 through September 30, 2021 with Employ Milwaukee to support the DHHS Youth Employment Program.

Fiscal Impact

The proposed purchase of service contract reflects total expenditures of \$310,755. Sufficient funds have been allocated in the 2021 Budget to cover these costs. A fiscal note form is attached.

Shakita LaGrant-McClain

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

cc: County Executive David Crowley
Hon. Mary E. Triggiano, Chief Judge
Sup. Jason Haas, Chair, Finance Committee
Mary Jo Meyers, County Executive's Office
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