

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
**Inter-office Memorandum**

**DATE:** May 11, 2021

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

**FROM:** Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Department of Health and Human Services  
*Prepared by James Mathy, Administrator, Housing Division*

**SUBJECT:** **Report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, requesting retroactive authorization to execute a contract with the State of Wisconsin for \$12,666,258 in federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funding and apply for and accept an additional \$8,410,244 in direct ERA 2 federal funding**

**Issue**

The Director, Department of Health and Human Services, is requesting retroactive authorization to execute a contract with the State of Wisconsin for the allocation of \$12,666,258 in federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funding as well as to apply for and accept an additional \$8,410,244 in direct ERA 2 funding. The ERA 2 funding is being allocated directly to Milwaukee County from the U.S. Department of the Treasury. This file also requests authorization to allocate the funds for use on eligible purposes as well as requests approval to accept any future allocations and execute any related contracts.

**Background**

In February 2021, the County Board authorized the Housing Division to accept and implement programming related to \$10.6 million in federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funds (File 21-196). These funds were primarily used to pay rental arrearages for low-income renters facing eviction as well as future rent and utility payments for qualifying households. Ten percent of the funds were used for administrative costs and housing-related services to include program staff, case management services, and general housing expenses. This program began on March 1 and it is expected that a majority of the funds will be exhausted by June 1. Through April 30, the program has served over 1,749 households with a total of 7,665 inquiries received. Using a racial equity lens, 75 percent of households served have been African American.

**Discussion**

Due to the ability of Milwaukee County and its partners to quickly implement ERA funds, the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration notified DHHS on May 6, 2021 of an additional \$12,666,258 in funding to continue this initiative. The funds would be available immediately and the accompanying resolution would allow the DHHS-Housing Division to amend its existing contracts with its non-profit providers to continue to serve the public uninterrupted. The funds expire on September 30, 2022 and 10 percent of the allocation can be used for administrative expenses. The State also indicated a strong likelihood that additional funds could be allocated to Milwaukee County if there is a demonstrated need.

On May 7, 2021, DHHS was notified of \$8,410,244 in ERA 2 funds from the Treasury Department directly to Milwaukee County to be used in a similar fashion as the ERA from the State. The difference is that the ERA 2 allows for 15 percent of the funds to be used for administrative expenses, and the deadline to expend the funds is September 30, 2025.

This file further requests approval to accept any future allocations and execute any contracts related to this limited-term Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

Further updates will be provided to the County Board regarding any allocation changes as additional information becomes available.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors retroactively authorize the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, or her designee, to execute a contract with the State of Wisconsin for the allocation of \$12,666,258 in federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funding as well as accept an additional \$8,410,244 in direct ERA 2 funding.

In addition, the file also requests approval to allocate these funds for eligible purposes, accept future allocations and execute contracts for future Emergency Rental Assistance funding.

### **Fiscal Impact**

There is no direct fiscal impact on Milwaukee County as all related program funds to be allocated are state and federal funds.

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

cc: County Executive David Crowley  
Sup. Jason Haas, Chair, Finance Committee  
Sup. Felesia Martin, Chair, Health Equity, Human Needs, & Strategic Planning Committee  
Mary Jo Meyers, County Executive's Office  
Aaron Hertzberg, DAS Director  
Kelly Bablitch, County Board  
Steve Cady, Research and Policy Director – Comptroller's Office  
Pam Matthews, Budget Analyst - DAS