

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

**DATE:** August 6, 2021

**TO:** Sup. Shawn Rolland and Mr. Ricardo Diaz, Co-Chairpersons,  
American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) Task Force

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

**SUBJECT:** **2021 Emergency Allocation of ARPA Funding**

**Request**

DHHS is requesting emergency approval to allocate American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funding toward a flexible housing subsidy pool.

**Background**

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to highlight how critical stable housing is to our county residents. Safe and stable housing provides a place to socialize, eat, rest, and teach our children who may be unable to attend in person schooling. The pandemic has also highlighted how many residents have been on the brink of being evicted or simply lose their informal living arrangement.

Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) in 2020, the County was awarded funding to support much needed emergency rental assistance. Through the federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program, this financial assistance has been extended. While this reservoir of aid has provided for thousands of individuals and families this year, significant housing needs remain in our community. Current guidelines for the emergency rental assistance are targeted at households that hold leases. It does not address individuals and families who are literally homeless or precariously housed (staying with friends or family, couch surfing). As a result, residents who fall into this category are unable to maintain housing.

For this reason, the Housing Division is requesting an allocation from the county's ARPA award to address the pressing needs of housing unstable individuals and families. The funding would be used to match private contributions already pledged to provide immediate and flexible rental assistance to those facing homelessness and are in emergency situations.

The following table identifies the emergency request for \$1.5 million in funding and a proposed amount for the next few years put forth by the Housing Division:

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Award Amount</b>
10/1/2021 – 12/31/2021 (Emergency Allocation)	\$1,500,000
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2024 (Remainder of proposal)	\$4,500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,000,000</b>

The \$1.5 million emergency allocation would provide a flexible housing subsidy to address residents in need of emergency assistance. These groups would include individuals or families dealing with literal homelessness (on the street or in an emergency shelter or safe haven) or precariously housed individuals and families, who do not have a lease, and at-risk of becoming homeless. Currently, neither of these populations are eligible for emergency rental assistance through current funding. These individuals and families will stay homeless or become homeless without a flexible subsidy.

Milwaukee County Housing will partner with United Way to connect directly with this housing unstable population. Housing has a well-established track record of working directly with community agencies to connect directly with the folks who could benefit from targeted interventions.

#### **Matching Funds**

United Way has pledged \$3,000,000 over the next three years.

#### **Recommendation**

In order to provide emergency flexible housing subsidy, it is recommended that DHHS-Housing be allocated ARPA dollars. The timely nature of the allocation will provide County residents with the tools to stabilize their living environment.

*Shakita LaGrant-McClain*

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Department of Health and Human Services