

**RESOLUTION**

**ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Brian Knudson  
INITIATED BY



3/3/2022  
DATE DRAFTED

**Reserving American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds for Family Services to Develop a Family Centered Transitional Housing Resource in Rock County**

**WHEREAS**, there is an acute shortage of affordable housing in Rock County; and,

**WHEREAS**, limited housing opportunities negatively impact employee recruitment and employment; and,

**WHEREAS**, insecure housing negatively impacts the psychosocial well-being of adults and children; and,

**WHEREAS**, the increase of such housing for families with children combined with the provision of professional caseworker services will generate long-term benefits for the County as whole, for employers, for adult participants, and for the children; and,

**WHEREAS**, there is established community stakeholder support for and progress underway in the development of a family-centered low income housing initiative and this effort entails time for project development; and,

**WHEREAS**, Rock County continues to spend tens of thousands of dollars annually on short term fixes to housing insecurity, including motel stays and emergency sheltering, which do not produce long term changes and housing insecurity also contributes to increased county expenditures related to foster care, mental health and substance use services; and,

**WHEREAS**, the American Rescue Plan Act funds awarded to Rock County may be used to support the development of family centered low – income housing, as the Final Rule states that “programs or services to improve access to stable, affordable housing among individuals who are homeless, and the development of affordable housing to increase supply of affordable and high-quality living units, are responsive to individuals and households that were impacted by the pandemic”, and lists “promoting long-term housing security” as an eligible use of ARPA funds; and,

**WHEREAS**, the allocation of \$3 Million in ARPA funds to be reserved for a transitional housing initiative represents a wise investment in long term reductions in homelessness and increased access to affordable housing in Rock County, thereby saving money spent on short-term solutions.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Rock County Board of Supervisors duly assembled this 10th day March, 2022 does hereby allocate \$3,000,000 of American Recovery Plan Act funds to be reserved for Family Services to implement a transitional housing initiative.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, funds will be provided to Family Services after development of a proposal that is eligible under ARPA rules and subsequent approval by the Rock County Board of Supervisors.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the 2022 budget be amended as follows:

| <b>Account</b>     | <b>Budget<br/>2/1/22</b> | <b>Increase<br/>(Decrease)</b> | <b>Amended Budget</b> |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Source of Funds    |                          |                                |                       |
| 19-1980-0000-42100 | \$17,723,024             | \$3,000,000                    | \$20,723,024          |

ARPA

|                    |     |             |             |
|--------------------|-----|-------------|-------------|
| Use of Funds       |     |             |             |
| 19-1980-3101-64604 | -0- | \$3,000,000 | \$3,000,000 |
| Program Expense    |     |             |             |

FISCAL NOTE:

This resolution requests a \$3 million allocation from the County's ARPA funds. Housing security and housing support are two of the categories allowed under ARPA rules.

Sherry Oja  
Finance Director

LEGAL NOTE:

The County Board is authorized to take this action pursuant to §§ 59.01 & 59.51, Wis. Stats. As an amendment to the adopted 2022 County Budget, this Resolution requires a 2/3 vote of the entire membership of the County Board pursuant to § 65.90(5)(a), Wis. Stats.

Richard Greenlee  
Corporation Counsel

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

In general, addressing housing needs, such as transitional housing, would be an eligible expenditure under ARPA. This resolution would reserve ARPA funding specifically for a project to be developed by Family Services. However, the County Board would need to approve a subsequent resolution authorizing an agreement with Family Services once the final project details have been developed. This subsequent resolution would provide assurance to the Board that the specific project meets ARPA eligibility guidelines. For example, ARPA-funded capital projects exceeding \$1 million trigger additional requirements, including that they be designed to address the needs of those most harmed from COVID-19 and proportional to the extent of that harm. Further justification would include documentation of why a capital project is necessary (rather than additional funding for current programs or services, for example). Also required would be a comparison of at least two alternative capital options and an explanation of why the chosen option is best, including data to support that conclusion, if available.

Josh Smith  
County Administrator

**Committee Action**

Human Services Board

Supervisor Aegerter moved the resolution to the floor, second by Supervisor Schulz. The resolution was approved 8 for - 1 opposed as follows: Supervisor Knudson, Aegerter, Bostwick, Williams and Schulz; Citizen Representative Kleven, Weaver-Landers and Reyes were for. Supervisor Podzilini opposed.

Approved.

Finance Committee

Finance Committee recommended this resolution for approval by a vote of 3-1 in which Supervisors Bostwick, Davis, and Aegerter votes "Aye" and Supervisor Mawhinney voted "Nay". Supervisor Fox was absent.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Reserving American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds for Family Services to Develop a Family Centered Transitional Housing Resource in Rock County

This resolution proposes to reserve 3 million dollars in ARPA funding to support an initiative by Family Services of Southern Wisconsin and Northern Illinois, Inc. (Family Services) to develop a transitional living program (TLP) for vulnerable families who are residents of Rock County. Transitional Living Programs aim to provide short term housing (typically up to 2 years) to those experiencing economic hardship and other challenges and, unlike emergency sheltering, offer additional supportive services that assist in moving residents to independence. This proposal is distinct in that it targets single parent families with children and will incorporate childcare services and other supports to remove common barriers to parents' successful engagement in the workforce and progress toward financial independence.

Family Services has invested significant time and resources in the initial planning for this project and they have engaged and elicited support from a broad group of community stakeholders. Family Services' longevity and credibility as a successful non-profit organization in Rock County is reflected in their established relationships with funders and their ability to demonstrate positive measurable outcomes associated with their programs. Correspondingly, plans for ongoing operational costs and future sustainability of this project include ongoing, targeted fundraising, pursuit of grant and other funding from both public and private sources aimed at addressing housing instability and/or vulnerable children, and engagement with agencies who are currently expending resources on emergency housing and who are interested in contractual arrangements to access a more robust and comprehensive intervention for families in need.

While this resolution allocates County ARPA funds to support the development of a TLP, Family Services would hold full responsibility for development and operation of the program. Like other services that provide supports to the families the County is mandated to serve, it is possible that HSD would propose to contract for services provided through the Family Services TLP once it is established. However, this resolution does not obligate any future County responsibility, funding, or contractual relationships.

A 20-family transitional living program will not solve the housing crisis in Rock County, but the establishment of a TLP for families would fill a gap in the current continuum of services, provide an alternative to the reliance on crisis-oriented short-term solutions, and result in a more efficient use of county funds as well as cost savings over time. In addition, a TLP resource that includes childcare, employment supports, and linkage with other community services will contribute to the interruption of patterns of intergenerational trauma and poverty and will build resilience among vulnerable families in our communities.