

RESOLUTION

ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Human Services Board
INITIATED BY



9/7/2022
DATE DRAFTED

Authorizing Additional Funding for the Butler Institute for Families to Complete the Child Welfare Assessment

WHEREAS, Resolution 21-10A-342 directed the County Administrator to identify and develop a contract with a consultant with expert knowledge of child welfare to assess Rock County’s child welfare system; and,

WHEREAS, Resolution 22-1B-418 authorized a contract with the Butler Institute for Families, housed in the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver, to conduct this assessment at a fixed price cost of \$114,300, plus an additional \$11,430 contingency, bringing the total contract budget to \$125,730; and

WHEREAS, due to the level interest in the project and the desire to include the perspectives of everyone who wanted to provide input, after consulting with County and Human Services Department leadership, the Butler Institute increased the number of focus groups from the 13 originally included in the proposal to 16, and the number of interviews from the 5 originally included in the proposal to 15, resulting in a 72% increase in work effort related to gathering stakeholder feedback; and

WHEREAS, a lack of authorization by the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families to have direct access to the eWISACWIS case management system resulted in the need to reassess the case file review process, including additional time for on-site review, further expanded the time needed to complete the case reviews; and

WHEREAS, the addition of an on-site pilot case review was necessary to be able to provide information to the steering committee to ensure the randomly sampled cases reflected the intended case types and that case documentation contained sufficient information to answer the questions contained in the case review instrument to provide relevant data for the research questions identified by the steering committee; and

WHEREAS, these changes to the project scope have resulted in the need for additional resources to complete the project, as well as an extension of the timeline for completion of the project is adjusted from the end of August to the end of November 2022.

WHEREAS, funding is available in the Human Services Department budget to transfer to cover this additional cost.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rock County Board of Supervisors duly assembled this 22nd day of September, 2022, does hereby authorize the contract with the Butler Institute for Families be amended with an additional \$23,270, bringing the total project budget to \$149,700.

FISCAL NOTE:

Funds will be transferred from the Child Protective Services wage line. Funds are available due to staff vacancies.

Sherry Oja
Finance Director

LEGAL NOTE:

The County Board is authorized to take this action pursuant to §§ 59.01 & 59.51, Wis. Stats.

Richard Greenlee
Corporation Counsel

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

Recommended. During the approval of this contract, a topic of discussion was the amount of stakeholder input that was going to be included in the project. Due to the level of interest from these stakeholders as Butler commenced its public input sessions, we asked Butler to expand the number of focus groups and individual interviews to ensure all perspectives were heard and to enhance the credibility of the final report. This resulted in Butler using the hours in the contract that were to be dedicated to case file review. In order for Butler to complete the case file analysis, additional funding is necessary.

Josh Smith
County Administrator

Committee Action

Human Services Board

Human Services Board recommended this resolution for approval by a unanimous voice vote. Supervisors Farrell, Herrmann, Podzilni and Citizen Representative Reyes were absent.

Executive Summary

Authorizing Additional Funding to Butler Institute for Families to Complete the Child Welfare Assessment

In October 2021, the County Board directed the County Administrator to identify and develop a contract with a consultant with expert knowledge of child welfare to conduct an assessment of Rock County's child welfare system. This action followed concerns expressed by foster parents and other system stakeholders that included case practice, supervision, safety, time to permanence, and staff turnover. Implementation of new requirements under the federal Family First act is also thought to contributed to these concerns.

In January 2022, the County Board authorized a contact with the Butler Institute for Families, housed in the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver, to conduct this assessment. The Butler Institute was contracted at a fixed price cost of \$114,300 to complete a designated set of tasks, including establishing a local steering committee to help guide their work, holding focus groups and stakeholder interviews, conducting a case file review, developing a policy brief about the federal Family First act, and preparing a final report with recommendations for improvement. In anticipation of the need to expand the scope of the project as it progressed, an additional \$11,430 was included in the project budget as contingency, bringing the total contract budget to \$125,730.

As anticipated, the project scope did expand, for three primary reasons. First, given the interest in the project by stakeholders, and wanting to ensure all voices were heard, County leadership and Butler staff decided to expand the number of focus groups and interviews conducted, which resulted in a 72% increase in these meetings.

Second, the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families did not authorize Butler to have direct access to the eWISACWIS case management system. While this is typical, it resulted in the need to reassess the case file review process, including additional time for on-site review. This further expanded the time needed to complete the case reviews.

Finally, the addition of an on-site case review pilot was necessary to be able to provide information to the steering committee to ensure the randomly sampled cases reflected the case types intended by the steering committee. This was also necessary to ensure that case documentation contained sufficient information to answer the questions contained in the case review instrument to provide relevant data for the research questions identified by the steering committee.

As a result, additional funding is needed to complete the project, with much of the work on the case file review still outstanding. The additional \$23,270 in funding needed for this purpose is available in the Human Services Department budget, and would be transferred from another account. The new project timeline identifies that the project will now be completed by the end of November.