



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
& HUMAN SERVICES
**CHILDREN, YOUTH
& FAMILY SERVICES**



The new Milwaukee County Center for Youth, located at 10201 W. Watertown Plank Rd., Wauwatosa, WI 53226, is a secure residential care center for children and youth (SRCCCY) that will serve up to 32 youth at a time and is scheduled to open in 2026. The facility will be a 26,264 square foot addition to the Vel R. Phillips Youth and Family Justice Center, including 1,846 square feet of outdoor space and an 8,800 square foot renovation of the existing building. The facility is a treatment-oriented secure residential facility that will provide a safe, positive, sustainable, and developmentally appropriate treatment environment for youth, improve the youth justice system, and contribute to a safer community.

Since the passage of 2017 Wisconsin Act 185, Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has been moving forward to develop a local SRCCCY for youth committed to the county under Wisconsin Statute Section 938.34(4m) that effectively promotes accountability, protects the community, reduces recidivism, and returns youth to our community with the skills needed to become successful and productive citizens.

MILWAUKEE COUNTY CENTER FOR YOUTH

PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Renovation of two existing Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP) housing units at Vel R. Phillips.
- Education, including classrooms, teacher support, and offices, a computer/learning lab, vocational programming space, testing/consultation, and other multi-media activities.
- Mental Health, Health, and Dental Care—space in the main building includes space needed to meet all basic physical, mental health, and dental health needs, including space if needed for temporary housing of ill youth.
- Recreation—indoor and outdoor recreation and green space.
- Welcome Center, Visitation and Dining—public entry would occur via a welcoming vestibule and include space for family visitation and dining.
- The project reflects a 32-bed SRCCCY which provides for a net increase of eight beds from the current Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP). A total of four beds of the 32-bed facility would be dedicated to girls.

PROGRAMMING

The youth will receive individualized services and programming to meet their unique needs. The overall programming objectives are focused on Skill Building; Commitment to Healing & Equity; Positive Youth Growth; Community Restoration; Family Engagement & Inclusion.

Specific services include:

- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) group and individual sessions
- Restorative justice practices
- Substance use treatment
- Forward Thinking
- Culinary arts program
- Vocational services
- Educational opportunities

A COMMUNITY NEED

The well-integrated program model for the Milwaukee County Center for Youth is informed by multiple approaches and bodies of best practice research that have developed over the past 15 years. Along with the research about adolescent brain development and the impact of trauma on youth, there is a substantial body of knowledge and research that identifies best practices in working with youth in a confinement setting. The Milwaukee County Center for Youth will integrate key physical, interpersonal, and programmatic components into a consistent and holistic residential model that will lead to successful outcomes for youth and the community.

PREVENTION & INTERVENTION

DHHS Children, Youth and Family Services has built out a prevention and intervention strategy, expanding the continuum of care which to reduce the number of kids in secure care. This includes expansion of community violence intervention and interruption efforts with the Credible Messenger Program and Advanced Peace Fellowship, as well as gender specific services for justice involved girls, cognitive behavioral services, participatory budgeting initiative, restorative justice practices, and unique services for kids in detention.

