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DATE: May 26, 2022
TO: Health and Human Needs Committee Members
FROM: Shawn Tessmann, Director
RE: Additional Information for 2022 RES-005

This memo is offered as additional information and context from the Dane County Department of Human Services as the committee deliberates its action on 2022 RES-005. As you know, this resolution proposes the reclassification of two Social Worker positions to Case Managers. The CCS Program added a total of four social worker positions in the 2022 budget to meet the demands of individuals in Dane County. Two of those positions have already been recruited as Social Workers.

While this will hopefully provide additional context behind the department's request, staff are also available to respond to questions this information might prompt.

Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) in Dane County

CCS offers a wide array of services and support activities that assist participants with mental health and/or substance use conditions to chart a path to recovery and to help achieve their highest possible level of stability and independence. Dane County Department of Human Services operates CCS under certification from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. CCS services are delivered in collaboration with over 90 community-based agencies, serving more than 2,000 participants.

DCDHS staff operate the CCS Intake Unit, which has 18 staff positions assigned to it, including one Case Manager – Bilingual (Spanish), 15 Social Workers, plus the two positions under consideration with 2022 RES-005. This unit is responsible for assessing individuals' eligibility for CCS in compliance with Wisconsin Administrative Code. Program eligibility must be reassessed annually, which is also completed by DCDHS staff. To remain in compliance with Wisconsin

Administrative Code, all annual functional screens must be prioritized over enrolling new participants. Each staff person screens approximately 170 participants per year.

There are currently 172 people on the CCS wait list. Wait time has grown to approximately three months and the wait list continues to grow. Once these two positions are filled, the wait list would be reduced by about 30 additional participants each month.

Rationale behind the request

Two of the five strategic priorities detailed in the [DCDHS Strategic Plan](#) speak directly to this request to reclassify these two positions. The first priority that is applicable is to advance racial justice, which includes an initiative to, “Make changes to recruitment and hiring policies and procedures to increase retention, trust, and racial and ethnic diversity of staff.” Reclassifying these positions takes direct aim at recruiting a more racially and ethnically diverse staff. According to recruitment data from Employee Relations, recruitments for case managers yields a pool of applicants that is more diverse than social worker recruitments. In 2021, Case Manager recruitments attracted an applicant pool that was 36% non-White, whereas Social Worker recruitments attracted an applicant pool that was just 18% non-White.

The other priority applicable to this reclassification request is to promote organizational culture, specifically, “To create, strengthen, and support an organizational culture that exemplifies our core values in which employees feel empowered, respected, and valued.” The recommendation for this reclassification came from the CCS Intake staff themselves. After the murder of George Floyd, the CCS unit began having focused Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion dialogues. The team discussed structural barriers to having a more inclusive workplace and unit. One issue that was raised was the requirement that all CCS intake workers must be social workers. The team came to a consensus to pursue reclassification of two of the four new social worker positions that CCS obtained in the 2022 budget to case managers. The team hoped to see if this would assist with recruitment of diverse candidates. Due to enrollment projections, reclassifying all four positions was not feasible due to the delay in hiring that would have caused. On September 2, 2021, the CCS team proposed their case manager reclassification idea to their Division Administrator at their all-staff meeting. Reclassification of these two positions is being pursued because staff made a well-reasoned recommendation to improve the program in a way that will likely benefit those we are charged to serve.

It is also noteworthy that a majority of personnel currently employed in key roles across the Dane County CCS network would not meet the minimum qualifications for a Social Worker position. Service Facilitators are the hub of the team that helps an individual navigate their path to recovery in CCS. A review of the current personnel records found that just 23% of the 245 Service Facilitators would be eligible for a Social Worker position in the CCS Intake Unit. Reclassification of these two positions opens the door to a larger number of professionals who are already very familiar with the population CCS serves.

Job Responsibilities

The primary difference between a Case Manager and a Social Worker are in the minimum requirements an applicant must meet in order to be considered a candidate for the position.

- **A Case Manager position** requires a Bachelor's Degree in a human services field (social work, psychology, sociology, nursing, counseling, etc.) and one (1) year of professional

experience working with persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or substance use disorders, in a setting where the primary function is assessment, treatment, intervention, or observation of mental health and/or substance use conditions.

- **A Social Worker position** requires a Bachelor's or Master's Degree in Social Work. Applicants who are currently in their final semester of school and are obtaining a Bachelor's or Master's Degree in Social Work will also be screened through. Applicants with any other major must possess a temporary or permanent Social Work Certification from the WI Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) prior to applying (a training certificate will not be accepted). All individuals must possess a degree and a temporary or permanent Social Work Certification from the WI Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) prior to the first day of employment... Candidates with a temporary certificate must obtain a permanent certification within one (1) year in order to pass probation. CCS Social Work positions also require a minimum of one (1) year, paid full-time experience working in a treatment setting with persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or substance use disorders. Experience is defined as working directly with individuals identified as part of the target population (mental health/substance use) in a setting where the primary function is assessment, treatment, intervention, or observation of mental health and/or substance use conditions.

The work expectations for Case Managers in the CCS unit are identical to the expectations for Social Workers. There is nothing in the minimum qualifications that disqualifies one or the other classification from performing any and all assigned job tasks.