



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

One East Main, Suite 301 • Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 266-3847 • Fax: (608) 267-6873

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #426

Services for Children and Families -- Meta House (DHFS -- Children and Families)

Bill Agency

[LFB 2007-09 Budget Summary: Page 319, #6 (part)]

CURRENT LAW

Meta House is an alcohol and drug abuse treatment center in Milwaukee designed specifically to help women through the process of recovery. Meta House has three programs; (a) a residential program, which serves women who need 24-hour care and would benefit from a therapeutic communal living environment; (b) an outpatient services program, which serves women who need intensive support but are not in need of the 24-hour structure of the residential treatment program; and (c) a housing program, which serves women who have successfully begun recovery and are ready for independent living, with supportive services.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$250,000 annually from revenue the state collects from vital records fees to fund gender-responsive alcohol and other drug abuse treatment, case management, child and family services, and educational services to drug dependent women with children. Although grant recipients are not named in the bill, the Governor's intent is to provide the funding to support services provided by Meta House, Inc. in the City of Milwaukee.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Meta House offers a wide variety of services that focus on women with substance-abuse problems and their children. These services include a variety of alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA) treatment services, parenting education, child development classes, mental health

treatment, birth-to-10 developmental screenings, pre-natal and post-natal care coordination, nutrition and health training, case management services, and vocational and educational services. The program helps women to overcome their substance abuse problems to become better parents and enter the workforce. The program addresses mental health needs of both parents and children.

2. The residential treatment program provides 24-hour care for women as they live in Meta House's residential facility. The program provides direct services to both the women enrolled and their children, and their children are allowed to live with their mothers during treatment.

In 2005, the residential program served 120 women and 48 children. Of those women who were discharged after 90 days or more; 82% were discharged to a drug-free location and 80% entered into employment or job training. 12 months after leaving the program, 77% were alcohol- and drug- free.

3. For women who may not require the intensive 24-hour services provided by the residential treatment program, three levels of outpatient services are provided; (a) a day treatment program; (b) an intensive outpatient program; and (c) an outpatient program. During the outpatient services, on-site child care is available for women in the program.

In 2005, the outpatient services program served 188 women and 133 children. Twelve months after using the outpatient services, 62% were alcohol- and drug- free.

4. For women who are in the process of recovery and are identified as being ready for independent living, Meta House provides a housing program in which women continue to maintain a substance-free life and prepare to rejoin society as productive citizens. The housing program provides a clean and secure family-friendly environment. In order to be eligible, clients must be certified as homeless and pay at least 30% of the adjusted gross income as rent.

In 2005, the housing program served 34 women and 57 children. At their 12 month follow-up, 78% were alcohol- and drug-free.

5. DHFS currently provides \$473,000 FED (from the substance abuse prevention and treatment block grant) to Meta House for three programs: (a) \$100,000 for the cocaine families program; (b) \$305,000 for residential AODA treatment; and (c) \$68,000 for services to people in treatment.

6. During the past several years, Meta House's total annual budget has been approximately \$4.8 million, which has been supported from a variety of county, state and federal funds, as well as private funds. During this period, Milwaukee County's contribution to Meta House included funding the county received from the state under the access to recovery (ATR) grant, a federal grant the state received from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

7. In 2004, Wisconsin was one of 14 states to receive an ATR grant. The grant totaled approximately \$23 million over a three-year period, and has been used to fund vouchers for clients

to purchase substance abuse clinical treatment and recovery support services in Milwaukee County. However, the grant is scheduled to terminate on August 1, 2007. In anticipation of the termination of this grant, Milwaukee County notified its substance abuse service providers, including Meta House, that it would reduce support for substance abuse services in calendar year 2007. The expected reduction in ATR funding for Meta House beginning in 2007 totals \$800,000.

8. Based on Meta House's current calendar year 2007 budget, unless Meta House reduces its services in 2007, or finds additional revenue, it will have a projected shortfall of approximately \$600,000, which is primarily due to the loss of funding from the ATR grant.

9. DHFS has applied to DHHS to continue the ATR grant for an additional three-year period. Although DHFS staff is confident that Wisconsin will receive the continued funding, it is not certain that DHHS will renew the grant. If DHHS renews the grant and Milwaukee County receives the amount of funding it had previously received from this source, it would not be necessary to provide the additional funding in the bill to maintain Meta House's current service level.

10. However, if the ATR grant is not renewed, providing Meta House \$250,000 annually would not be enough to fully address the agency's current projected shortfall, but would help to offset the reduction in federal funding available to support ATR.

11. Due to the uncertainty of whether the ATR grant will be renewed, the Committee could either: (a) adopt the Governor's recommendation; or (b) modify the Governor's recommendation by placing all of the funding in unallotted reserve, which could be made available to Meta House only if the ATR grant is not renewed.

12. Alternatively, the Committee may determine that it is inappropriate to use vital records fees to fund this program if either: (a) it determines that the priority use of the fee revenue should be the state's vital records program; or (b) it chooses not to increase the vital records fees, as proposed by the Governor. If the Committee wishes to provide state support for Meta House, it could provide GPR funding, rather than revenue from vital records fees.

13. Some may argue that the state is not obligated to offset reductions in federal funding and that it is not appropriate to do so when the benefits primarily accrue to a single county.

ALTERNATIVES TO BILL

A. Funding

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to provide \$250,000 PR annually in vital records fee revenue to support Meta House.

ALT A1	Change to Bill	Change to Base
	Funding	Funding
PR	\$0	\$500,000

2. Modify the Governor's recommendation by: (a) deleting \$250,000 PR annually in vital record fee revenue to support Meta House and all provisions relating to the use of this funding source to support Meta House; and (b) providing \$250,000 GPR annually for the program.

ALT A2	Change to Bill	Change to Base
	Funding	Funding
GPR	\$500,000	\$500,000
PR	<u>- 500,000</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	\$0	\$500,000

3. Delete provision. (If the Committee chooses this option, it need not proceed with the options under "B.")

ALT A3	Change to Bill	Change to Base
	Funding	Funding
PR	- \$500,000	\$0

B. Placement of Funds in Unallotted Reserve

1 Adopt the Governor's recommendation to place funding for this purpose in the Department's supplies and services budget, so that DHFS could make this funding immediately available to Meta House upon passage of the biennial budget bill, regardless of whether the ATR grant is renewed.

2. Place all funding for this purpose in unallotted reserve. Require DOA to make this funding available to Meta House only after the state is notified that the ATR grant has not been renewed.

Prepared by: Katie Maguire