

Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors: Passes resolution allowing 'credible messengers' to work with youth

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Milwaukee – The Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors adopted a [resolution](#) at its Thursday, May 28 meeting to allow individuals who have demonstrated personal growth after certain criminal convictions to be able to provide care and services to youth. The goal is to give “credible messengers” the opportunity to help at-risk youth in Milwaukee County.

“They say experience is the best teacher. There are people in our community with lived experiences that could prove transformational if they were given the chance to become leaders and credible messengers for our youth,” said Supervisor Moore Omokunde. “This resolution opens up opportunities for those who have overcome difficult circumstances to give those currently going through similar challenges a better path in life.”

A credible messenger has been described by [The Atlantic](#) as “someone with personal experience of the criminal-justice system, typically their own criminal record, who now has unique legitimacy to help others in a similar position.” Credible messenger programs have led to demonstrable reductions in violence during programs conducted in cities such as New York City, Baltimore and Chicago according to the [Pinkerton Foundation](#).

The resolution aligns Milwaukee County policy with the State of Wisconsin, except for Chapter 948 Crimes Against Children and domestic violence, which are maintained as barrable offenses for providing care and services to youth.

The resolution also urges the Milwaukee County Mental Health Board—which oversees the county’s Behavioral Health Division—to adopt this policy.

Supervisors Ryan Clancy, Eddie Cullen, Russell Antonio Goodwin, Sr., Jason Haas, Patti Logsdon, Felesia A. Martin, Sylvia Ortiz-Velez, Steven Shea, Sequanna Taylor and Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson co-sponsored the resolution, which passed on a 17-1 vote.