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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wisconsin DOJ Recognizes Domestic Violence Awareness Month

MADISON, Wis. – 85 Wisconsinites lost their lives to domestic violence last year, according to a new [report](#) from End Abuse Wisconsin. As we recognize Domestic Violence Awareness Month this October, Attorney General Josh Kaul is reminding Wisconsinites of the resources available through the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) for survivors of domestic violence. Attorney General Kaul is also raising awareness of the need for victim service provider financial support amid reductions in federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding.

“Everyone deserves to be safe in their home and to live free from domestic violence,” said Attorney General Josh Kaul. “We must ensure that vital victim services continue to be available for survivors.”

When one intimate partner strives to maintain power and control over the other partner, domestic violence occurs. This control-seeking behavior might manifest as verbal or emotional abuse, intimidation, isolation, economic abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, or other forms of abuse. The trauma caused by these abusive behaviors can have a significant impact on survivors, sometimes being fatal.

End Abuse Wisconsin’s [2023 Domestic Violence Homicide Report](#) revealed domestic violence claimed 85 lives in Wisconsin last year. The overall number of deaths came from 66 incidents. The report revealed the following additional details:

- Domestic violence homicides occurred in 22 Wisconsin counties at a rate of one death every 4.3 days.

- Firearms remain the most common means of perpetrating domestic violence homicides. In 2023, firearms were the weapons used in 78% of domestic violence deaths.
- The ages of victims in this report range from 1 year old to 83 years old. Perpetrators' ages ranged from 16 to 81 years old. The average age for perpetrators was 38 years old, and the average age for victims was 41 years old.

Domestic violence situations that have reached a lethal level are dangerous to everyone. Identifying potentially lethal cases and intervening can prevent lethal escalation by connecting victims to services and heightening criminal justice responses.

Wisconsin DOJ works to ensure perpetrators are held accountable by successfully prosecuting domestic abusers who murder their partners. Wisconsin DOJ trains police officers in the investigation of domestic abuse, homicide and stalking and regularly provides advice to law enforcement and district attorney's offices across the state on best practices in specific cases they are working involving domestic abuse, homicide and stalking.

Wisconsin DOJ assists survivors of domestic violence through a variety of programs and grants, including Safe at Home - Wisconsin's address confidentiality program, and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) STOP Program.

The Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program provides a legal substitute address that can be used in place of a victim's actual home or work address. This resource is available to anyone to help maintain privacy and safety in their home, school, or work life. This safety precaution is a unique strategy available to help prevent domestic violence homicide. Visit <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/ocvs/safe-home> to learn more about Safe at Home.

The Wisconsin DOJ's Office of Crime Victim Services (OCVS) administers the federal VAWA STOP program, which allocates funds to develop comprehensive strategies to combat violence against women that are attentive to the needs of victims and hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes. By encouraging communities to explore non-traditional approaches and resources to address domestic violence and other gender-based crimes, the VAWA STOP program fosters long-term partnerships between the criminal justice system and victim advocacy agencies.

To find a domestic violence program in your area, please visit <https://www.endabusewi.org/get-help/>

About VOCA Funding

Wisconsin DOJ's OCVS manages and administers federal grant programs and state funding for victims of crime and victim service providers. The largest of those funding sources is the federal VOCA Assistance Formula Grant, which supports direct victim services, such as safety planning counseling, crisis intervention, shelter, and legal advocacy.

VOCA Assistance Formula Grant awards to states across the country have substantially decreased. In federal fiscal year 2025, Wisconsin's VOCA awards for victim service providers were reduced by approximately 70 percent.

Amid the reductions in federal VOCA funding, as part of its agency budget request for the 2025-2027 biennium, DOJ has asked the State of Wisconsin to restore support for victim services. DOJ is requesting approximately \$66,150,000 in state funding over the biennium for grants to victim service providers, which would return them to the level of funding they received for the past five federal fiscal years.