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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Safe at Home Program Supports Survivors of Domestic Violence

MADISON, Wis. – As we recognize Domestic Violence Awareness Month this October, Attorney General Josh Kaul is highlighting the Wisconsin Department of Justice Office of Crime Victim Services’ address confidentiality program, Safe at Home. Safe at Home provides a legal substitute address to be used for both public and private purposes to victims of or those threatened with domestic abuse, child abuse, sexual abuse, stalking, and trafficking, or those who simply fear for their physical safety.

“People shouldn’t have to fear that their safety is at risk because someone who would harm them knows or can easily find out where they live,” said AG Kaul. “The Safe at Home program offers significant assistance to participants in safeguarding the confidentiality of their address.”

Per a new End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin [report](#), domestic violence claimed 99 lives in Wisconsin last year. The report included the following additional details:

- Domestic violence homicides occurred in 28 Wisconsin counties at a rate of one death every 3.7 days.
- In 2024, firearms were the weapons used in 71% of domestic violence deaths.
- The ages of victims in this report ranged from an unborn infant to 81 years old. Perpetrators’ ages ranged from 18 to 85 years old. The average age of perpetrators was 37 years old, and the average age of victims was 36 years old.

In an abusive relationship, one partner uses a pattern of systematic behavior to maintain power and control over the other partner. 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 a survivor's physical, mental, and emotional health.

Obstacles to leaving an abusive relationship are significant, which could include a victim fearing for their life. As the [National Domestic Violence Hotline states](#), “when a survivor leaves their abusive relationship, they threaten the power and control their partner has established over the survivor's agency. This often causes the partner to retaliate in harmful ways. As a result, leaving is often the most dangerous period of time for survivors of abuse.” The Safe at Home program plays a part in helping survivors during their most vulnerable time.

Enrollment in Safe at Home helps keep a participant's home address confidential by enrolling and assigning them a substitute address, reducing the risk of their being located by an abusive partner and supporting the safety of both the individual and their children. The program receives, processes, and forwards thousands of pieces of mail every month so that participants do not have to compromise their safety by disclosing their actual address. Program staff also assist with:

- notifying public and private entities of the person's participation in Safe at Home.
- facilitating the transfer of school records.
- acting as a participant's designated agent for service of process.
- issuing confidential voter affidavits.
- verifying program participation to local and state governmental agencies, such as the DMV or the circuit court.
- helping participants navigate any issues or challenges that arise with using their assigned address.

The program has been active for eight years. The Safe at Home program has seen an increase of survivors using address confidentiality as part of their safety plan.

- October 2025 – 1,262 active households, 2,744 active participants
- October 2024 – 1,079 active households, 2,323 active participants

A person is eligible to participate in Safe at Home if they attest to all of the following:

- That they are a resident of Wisconsin.
- That at least one of the following applies:

- They are a victim of an act or threat of abuse, a parent or guardian of a person who is a victim of an act or threat of abuse, or a resident of a household in which a victim of an act or threat of abuse also resides.
- They fear for their physical safety or for the physical safety of their child or ward.
- That they reside or will reside at a location in Wisconsin that is not known by the person who committed the abuse against, or who threatens, the applicant or their child or ward.
- That they will not disclose their actual address to the person who committed the abuse against, or who threatens, the applicant or their child or ward.

Individuals who enroll in Safe at Home participate in safety planning with an application assistant. Application assistants – who are often employees of domestic violence shelters – are trained victim service providers and advocates designated by Safe at Home to provide education about meaningful participation in the program and safety planning services. Find designated application assistants around the state [here](#).

Safe at Home is governed by Wis. Stat. § 165.68, which may be found at <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/165/68>. More information on Safe at Home can be found at safeathomewi.gov.