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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 19, 2025

**AG Kaul Highlights Victim Services Funding Crisis with
Legislators and Providers in Eau Claire**

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul is participating today in an additional roundtable discussion in Eau Claire to hear directly from victim service providers and criminal justice partners about the urgent challenges they are experiencing as a result of the significant reduction in federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding. Many programs have already been forced to cut services and staff, leaving crime victims with fewer resources.

“Victim service programs around the state are being adversely impacted by the steep reduction in available VOCA funding,” said AG Kaul. “There’s an acute need for an investment in victim service programs in the state budget.”

The Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) administers VOCA funding through its Office of Crime Victim Services (OCVS). However, available federal funding has dropped significantly. For a period of five fiscal years, Wisconsin DOJ was previously able to distribute approximately \$44 million in VOCA or a combination of VOCA and American Rescue Plan Act funds annually. In the current federal fiscal year, that amount has been reduced to just \$13 million, creating a funding gap that has forced many victim service providers to scale back operations.

Wisconsin DOJ has requested a substantial state investment in the upcoming biennial budget to help address the funding gap and support critical victim services. With the decline in VOCA funding, Wisconsin DOJ’s proposed budget request includes approximately \$67.8 million in state funding over two years to support victim service providers statewide and maintain 17 victim service positions at DOJ.

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Current victim services provided by DOJ include the services available through the Safe at Home program and the Victim Resource Center.

Wisconsin DOJ urges policymakers to support efforts that ensure victims receive the services they need.