

PROTECTING CHILDREN & FAMILIES



2025-2026 Domestic Violence and
Sexual Abuse Civil Legal Services Program

Submitted to DCF
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Introduction

Equal justice under law is a fundamental principle of the American justice system. It's a difficult promise to keep if we don't ensure that those most at risk have meaningful access to legal assistance.

The barriers to meaningful access to legal assistance are not just financial. Add to that the isolation and stigma that so often plagues victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse, and you have a socio-economic crisis threatening a cycle of dependency on public assistance.

In State Fiscal Year 2026, the Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation's (WisTAF) Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse (DVSA) Civil Legal Services Program was both the means for and the proof of the State of Wisconsin's effort to halt that cycle of dependency and foster healthy, safe, and independent families.

"The opposite of poverty is not wealth; the opposite of poverty is justice."

~ Atty. Bryan Stevenson, Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption

Background & Data Collection

During the two-year 2025-2027 Wisconsin state budget cycle, \$1,000,000 of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding from the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) budget was allocated to WisTAF to administer a program for the provision of domestic violence and sexual abuse legal services to TANF-eligible Wisconsin residents. This report covers the \$500,000 distributed for services provided from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026, which marks the eleventh year of this vital program. It outlines the management processes that WisTAF used to grant the funds to subrecipient legal services providers and domestic abuse shelters and provides specific data on services provided with the funds.

Pursuant to its contract with DCF, WisTAF required grantees to submit annual reports following conclusion of the 2025-2026 grant cycle, which were used to compile the service and financial information contained in this report. The grantee annual report was designed to determine who was served, the location of services, type of service, and impact of the services provided to TANF-eligible clients. WisTAF's goal is to ensure that high-quality domestic violence and sexual abuse civil legal services are provided throughout Wisconsin through the efficient and effective use of this funding.

The grantees' accomplishments – what they were asked to do, and what they achieved – demonstrate the immense need for supportive legal services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual abuse. The investment was valuable not only in helping the individual clients who were served with the funds, but also in supporting Wisconsin's economic health and the preservation of families. Legal services providers were successfully able to ensure the safety and stability of vulnerable families; remove barriers to employment; retain housing for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse; and obtain child support and other economic supports for families facing uncertainty and, in some cases, imminent danger.

Program Development and Management

About WisTAF

The Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, Inc. (WisTAF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation created in 1986 by the Wisconsin Supreme Court to aid the courts and improve the administration of justice by administering funding for legal services to persons of limited means in non-criminal matters. WisTAF brings Wisconsin's legal and financial communities together to generate funds, which are used to make grants to nonprofit organizations providing civil legal services to Wisconsin's most vulnerable residents. Since its inception, WisTAF has distributed more than \$95 million to Wisconsin civil legal services providers, to help low-income Wisconsinites obtain information, advice, and/or representation critical to ensuring families' health, safety, security, and independence. The Foundation currently manages multiple sources of income, which are used to fund five grant programs, including the DVSA Civil Legal Services program. A nonpartisan, experienced fund administrator and grantmaker, WisTAF is the state's designated channel for the administration of low-income civil legal services funding in Wisconsin. More information about WisTAF's programs and services can be found online at www.wistaf.org.

Program Development and Resources

Pursuant to Wis. Stats. § 49.175(1)(j)14, which provides for grants to WisTAF of \$500,000 per fiscal year to fund this program, WisTAF prepared a plan for using the funds which was approved by DCF. Upon plan approval, WisTAF staff developed and implemented the grant application, approval, distribution and reporting/evaluation processes used to fund eligible services. WisTAF's contract with DCF specifies the conditions for use of the funds. WisTAF's volunteer Board of Directors and paid professional staff oversee funds and administer the program.

WisTAF's 15-member Board of Directors is comprised of three judges (appointed by the chief justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court), nine attorneys and three non-attorneys (appointed by the State Bar of Wisconsin president). In addition to its other functions, the board is

responsible for making all grant funding decisions. These dedicated volunteers bring a wealth of diverse legal, social services and other professional expertise to WisTAF. Upon joining the board, members are assigned to the Grants/Evaluation Committee, Finance Committee, or Executive Committee, depending on their experiences, leadership roles, and preferences.

Currently, WisTAF employs four full-time equivalent staff members. Grant program management is provided by the full-time grants program manager, a part-time program coordinator, and the executive director.

In August 2025, representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families and WisTAF signed a new contract:

- Contract Number: 437004-G26-0002592-000-01
- Contract Term: July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027
- Commodity or Service Description: Provide legal services in civil matters related to domestic abuse, sexual abuse, or restraining orders or injunctions for individuals at risk under Wis. Stat. § 813.123, for individuals eligible for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Assistance Listing: 93.558 Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

Grant Notification and Application Process

Current grant recipients and potential applicants were notified of the availability of DVSA funding by email. Foundation staff also posted information on the WisTAF website for public access.

WisTAF received fourteen grant applications by the application deadline. All applicants were required to meet the following provisions and criteria in order to receive funding consideration.

Grant Purpose and Funding Cycle

Grants were to be used to provide legal services in civil matters related to domestic abuse, sexual abuse, or restraining orders or injunctions for individuals at risk under s. 813.123 (TANF-eligible clients) from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

Eligible Client Populations

Grant recipients were required to verify that clients served met TANF financial and non-financial eligibility requirements. Any individual meeting Wisconsin's W2 eligibility requirements was automatically deemed eligible. Individuals concurrently enrolled in any of the following programs also were considered automatically eligible:

- Wisconsin Works (W2)
- Transform Milwaukee/Transitional Jobs
- Received Wisconsin Shares child care assistance
- Received the Wisconsin Caretaker Supplement
- Participated in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program

Grant Applicant Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to apply for 2025-2026 DVSA Civil Legal Services Grant funds, applicants were required to meet the following requirements:

1. The applicant had to demonstrate that it provided, planned to provide, or caused to be provided domestic violence and sexual abuse legal assistance to TANF-eligible clients; and,
2. The applicant had to be a civil legal assistance organization, a domestic violence shelter, or be an organization that qualified as a 501(c)(3) exempt organization; or
3. The applicant had to otherwise demonstrate the charitable purpose of the organization and project.

Grant Application Review and Decision Process

WisTAF's Grants/Evaluations Committee was responsible for reviewing applications and making a funding recommendation for board consideration. Staff also provided input on the applications and applicants based on their knowledge and experience in providing daily oversight for the program.

Following presentation and in-depth discussion of each application, the Committee used a two-step process to: 1) determine whether an application merited funding, and 2) allocate the funding amount to be awarded. Factors considered included the applicant's experience serving the eligible target population, current and historical financial stability and longevity, demonstrated partnerships, collaborations and community support, the program's geographic reach, and whether applicants were able to use prior cycle funds effectively and efficiently, if applicable.

As a result of this process, the Committee recommended funding eleven of the fourteen applicant agencies. The applicants who were not funded did not meet the program's requirements. WisTAF's full Board of Directors discussed and unanimously approved the recommended allocations on June 18, 2025. A summary of the awards is shown on page 5.

Applicant	Counties Served	Award
CASDA	Bayfield, Ashland, Douglas	\$62,100
Centro Legal	Milwaukee, Waukesha	\$57,500
Community Center for Immigrants	Milwaukee County area	\$0
Community Justice, Inc.	Dane and surrounding counties	\$0
End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin (RISE)	Statewide	\$20,700
Friends, Inc.	Washington County	\$0
Golden House	Brown	\$36,600
HAVEN	Lincoln	\$19,400
Indianhead Community Action Agency	9 northwest WI counties	\$48,800
Kids Matter Inc.	Milwaukee	\$39,000
Legal Action of Wisconsin	Oshkosh, Racine, Kenosha	\$66,100
Rainbow House Domestic Abuse Services	Marinette, Oconto, Florence	\$22,000
The Women's Center	Waukesha	\$14,600
Wisconsin Judicare	Northern 33 WI counties	\$63,200
TOTAL		\$450,000

Disbursement of Funds

Grant recipients began submitting expense reimbursement requests to WisTAF in August 2025 for eligible services provided beginning July 1, 2025. WisTAF reviewed expense supporting documentation, monitored administrative vs. direct expenditures, aggregated subrecipient requests, and submitted reimbursement requests to DCF via the SPARC online portal. WisTAF remitted expense reimbursements to subrecipients upon receipt from DCF. WisTAF included a monthly expense reimbursement request for the funds needed to administer the grant program in the monthly expense reimbursement requests submitted to DCF. WisTAF's administrative expense reimbursements were calculated based on its approved cost allocation policy/procedure. This process was repeated in each subsequent month of the grant contract period.

WisTAF subrecipient grantees provided eligible services and received expense reimbursements totaling \$430,115 by the conclusion of the funding cycle. WisTAF received reimbursements totaling \$67,616.

WisTAF's grants program manager and program coordinator processed monthly expense reimbursement requests; tracked the services provided and amounts spent on direct and administrative activity; and maintained ongoing communication with grantees in the event of reporting discrepancies or to clarify and/or request information. The executive director was responsible for the financial accounting for the DVSA funds that flowed through the Foundation.

The grants program manager coordinated all WisTAF Grants/Evaluation Committee activities associated with the DVSA grant. The executive director coordinated all WisTAF Board of Directors activities. In the spring of 2026, KerberRose SC conducted an independent single audit of WisTAF's financial information and management, which included the DVSA program. They issued an unmodified opinion with no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies noted and no instances of material noncompliance with applicable laws, regulations, or contracts. WisTAF submitted the audited financials to the DCF Audit team as required.

Note on ongoing discrepancy between contract expense period and State of Wisconsin accounting period: In May 2019, DCF notified WisTAF that Wisconsin Statute 49.175(1)(j) limits Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funding to Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, Inc. (WisTAF) to \$500,000 each fiscal year. TANF-funded expenditures in a state fiscal year (SFY) may not exceed the amounts provided under Wis. Stat. 49.175. DCF tracks compliance with TANF allocation limits provided in the statute using the State's accounting system STAR, not the SPARC system that WisTAF is required to use to report expenses. Expenses in SPARC for a given month are not recorded as an expenditure in STAR until the following month, e.g., the June expenses reported in SPARC are reimbursed in July. This means June expenses are counted as July expenses in the STAR accounting system, and are counted against the following year's contract amount, even though they were, in actuality, incurred and spent under the current contract. So, while Wis. Stat. 49.175 specifies allocations for the SFY (July 1 to June 30), from a practical standpoint, DCF looks at expenses entered by contractors in SPARC from June to May (paid in the financial system, STAR, from July to June) to ensure DCF is in compliance with statutory expenditure limits. Accordingly, the June 2024 expenses that were paid to WisTAF in July 2024 counted against the SFY 2025 contract even though they were incurred/spent under the SFY 2024 contract.

While DCF has proposed language in recent state budgets that would allow the Department to count all reported expenses within the annual contract cycle to the SFY allocation and conform to accrual-based accounting best practices, this change has not taken place. The accrual vs. cash-based accounting discrepancy will carry forward into each future contract year/grant cycle. DCF has verified in written communications with WisTAF that they are contractually obligated for those funds to WisTAF, likely to be remitted following the conclusion of the final contract governing this grant program.

Grant Oversight and Compliance Monitoring

WisTAF engages in a systematic process to evaluate successful usage of WisTAF funds and monitor compliance with contract and program requirements.

1. Provider Risk Assessment and Performance Monitoring

As the administrator of federal TANF funding via the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Civil Legal Services grant program), WisTAF has an obligation to identify and assess risks associated with the usage and administration of grant funds for each of the subrecipient agencies (“providers”) receiving funding.

WisTAF has chosen to use the risk-based approach in evaluating and monitoring providers’ administration of funds. DCF does not allow WisTAF to waive federal audit requirements for any providers meeting federal criteria for needing a program audit or a single audit that would otherwise be required under the Uniform Guidance. Per the Wisconsin Dept. of Children and Families Provider Agency Audit Guide, WisTAF will determine whether the risk factors associated with programs and providers point toward a lower or higher risk and will use the results of these individual factors to assess whether the provider’s overall risk is low, moderate or high.

WisTAF assesses risk and monitors performance using a variety of methods including: provider desk audit, onsite and/or remote visits, regular provider reporting, and review of additional documentation and relevant materials. Risk assessments are performed in a systematic and rational manner. WisTAF documents all results.

Regular provider reporting

WisTAF requires providers to submit quarterly reports describing activities performed by the provider using this funding; outcomes achieved; the number of TANF-eligible clients receiving services (including client demographic data); the areas of law where services were provided; and other qualitative and/or quantitative data the provider wishes to report.

Providers also are required to submit expense reimbursement requests detailing the amount of direct and administrative expenses incurred for eligible client services. Providers also must submit applicable supporting documentation accompanying expense reimbursements. All reimbursement requests are reviewed for reasonability and mathematical accuracy by WisTAF’s grant program manager prior to submission to DCF.

Desk reviews of WisTAF subrecipients

WisTAF also conducts a desk review of materials submitted by grantees in accordance with WisTAF’s risk-based monitoring plan/policy specifications. For example, *moderate risk* subrecipients receive a desk review of their compliance with program requirements annually.

Results of desk reviews are shared with subrecipients and a formal response identifying corrective action plans, if applicable, is required.

Ongoing monitoring of providers varies based on the nature of work assigned to each and WisTAF's assessed level of risk. Ongoing monitoring activities may involve any or all of the following:

- Regular contacts with subrecipients and appropriate inquiries regarding the program.
- Reviewing programmatic and financial reports prepared and submitted by the provider and following up on areas of concern.
- Monitoring subrecipient budgets.
- Offering providers technical assistance where needed.
- Maintaining a system to track and follow up on deficiencies noted at the site or "remote" visit in order to ensure that appropriate corrective action is taken.
- Establishing and maintaining a tracking system to ensure timely submission of all reports required of the subrecipient.

2. Setting and Communicating Clear Expectations

Once an applicant has received notification of a WisTAF grant award, a representative of that agency must sign a grant conditions contract agreement, which provides clear guidelines for the agency's use and management of the funds. Each DVSA grant recipient was required to sign such an agreement prior to receiving reimbursement. WisTAF also incorporates conversations regarding expectations into our subrecipient monitoring activity.

3. Long-term Relationships

With a relatively small pool of regular grantees covering the entire state, historically WisTAF has been able to stay in frequent contact with grantees on an informal basis. This helps us to learn about individual grantee agency problems before they develop into serious issues, and to direct grantee agencies to appropriate assistance as requested.

Initially, the DVSA Civil Legal Services State Appropriation grant program was atypical for WisTAF, because several grant recipients were not traditional legal services providers, but rather domestic abuse shelter agencies with which WisTAF had no prior relationship. In the initial 2015-2016 grant cycle, WisTAF offered assistance to support the development of DVSA legal services programs within these new organizations. This effort provided a proactive opportunity to help them determine what they needed to do to be successful and meet the requirements of the grant program. We have continued to maintain strong, supportive relationships with these agencies in subsequent grant cycles and we continue to identify and coordinate

trainings for subrecipients related to federal fund administration and Uniform Guidance requirements.

Program Results

Note: All names have been changed to protect client privacy/confidentiality.

***Elaine**, a married mother of five, first sought help from Indianhead Community Action Agency in 2023 after more than 15 years of verbal, emotional, and mental abuse. Her husband, who was incarcerated for drug trafficking, drug abuse, and child endangerment, had threatened her life, destroyed her belongings, contributed to the loss of her employment, and created legal challenges that ultimately resulted in her temporarily losing custody of her children. With legal guidance and support, she worked through her CPS case and fought to reunite with her children. She was advised to wait to pursue a divorce until the CPS matter was resolved. Last year, she returned to move forward with her divorce, stating, "I need a divorce to protect my children and myself." Despite continued threats and financial abuse from her husband while he was incarcerated, she is now standing up for herself and fighting for her rights and her children. After years of doing what would make him happy and giving in to keep the peace, she has found strength and confidence to set boundaries and demand better treatment. Her journey is not only changing her future, but also setting an important example for her children about self-worth, healthy boundaries, and what respectful and acceptable treatment looks like. Indianhead is proud to support her as she moves toward safety, independence, and a healthier future for her family.*

Expenditures

The table below summarizes 2025-2026 DVSA Civil Legal Services (TANF) State Appropriation Program expenses:

A. Direct expense	
Grant recipient direct expenses	\$382,744
WisTAF direct expenses	\$57,449
Direct expense subtotal:	\$440,193
B. Administrative expense	
Grant recipient administrative expenses	\$47,372
WisTAF administrative expenses	\$10,166
Administrative expense subtotal:	\$57,538
Total expenses reimbursed:	\$497,731

Due to the nature of reimbursement-based grants, not all grantees were able to use the full amount of the funds they were awarded. In addition, one grantee's participation in the program was suspended when WisTAF was notified of accounting irregularities. WisTAF worked closely with the grantee to examine and correct documentation, as well as provide technical support to ensure continued compliance. As in past years, WisTAF took proactive steps to determine the anticipated amount of unused grant funds and put in place a fair process to reallocate funds to grantees who incurred eligible expenses that exceeded their initial grant awards. This resulted in the best possible utilization of funds in areas with the greatest need.

Geographic Distribution of Funds

Family law cases involving domestic violence are among the most difficult legal cases an attorney can undertake. Statewide, many private attorneys refuse to take them because of the time commitment and the emotional circumstances that accompany these types of cases. Even domestic and sexual abuse survivors with means can have difficulty finding the legal help they need, because there are few private attorneys in their county that take domestic and sexual abuse family law cases. The odds are stacked even higher against low-income domestic and sexual abuse survivors. There is even less chance that they will find the legal help they need, particularly in rural areas, except through programs such as the ones funded by DVSA Civil Legal Services grants.

When making grant allocations, WisTAF strives to ensure that there will be coverage for clients in all parts of the state. The \$75,000 per grant cap makes it challenging to achieve this goal, because some of WisTAF's grantees cover multi-county areas or the entire state, while others may only serve a single county.

Although funds were granted to agencies that, collectively, serve victims in every county, our subrecipients reported providing DVSA-funded services in 40 of Wisconsin's 72 counties during this grant cycle. Other sources of funds, including WisTAF's other funding sources, VOCA and VAWA, were likely used to serve clients in additional counties.

Additional investment of TANF or other funds by the State and elimination of the arbitrary \$75,000 per award cap is crucial to expand the program's coverage and address areas of known unmet legal need going forward.

Clients Served

"Nadia" came to Golden House after experiencing seven months of domestic violence, including physical abuse while she was pregnant. As a Spanish-speaking survivor, navigating the legal system and separating from her abusive partner felt overwhelming. Two Golden House advocates worked closely with her, with one

providing Spanish-English interpretation, to ensure she understood her options and could communicate her needs. They connected her directly with Legal Action of Wisconsin for additional legal assistance. With the combined support of Golden House's legal advocate and the Legal Action attorney, Nadia was able to complete and file the necessary legal paperwork and prepare for court. Having consistent support throughout the process helped her feel more confident entering the courtroom and empowered her to advocate for herself and her children. Nadia successfully obtained full custody and placement of her two children, providing her family with greater safety and stability. Her story demonstrates the impact of accessible, coordinated legal and advocacy services. By removing language and legal barriers, WisTAF DVSA funding helped Nadia navigate a difficult legal process, find her voice in the courtroom, and take an important step toward a safe and independent future for herself and her children.

The lack of attorneys willing and able to take domestic violence and sexual abuse cases is not the only factor that prevents clients from being able to get the legal help they need. Lack of money is a huge obstacle faced by domestic and sexual abuse survivors, who may be cut off from financial resources by their abusers. Other factors such as disability, living in a more rural area of the state, and lack of transportation can also affect a survivor's ability to find an attorney.

In the 2025-2026 grant cycle, **DVSA funds were used to help at least 457 TANF-eligible individuals and their families.** The level of service ranged from brief advice to full representation in civil litigation. The following charts provide demographic information about the clients who were assisted through this program.

Chart 1: 2025-2026 DVSA Civil Legal Services Clients Served by Gender

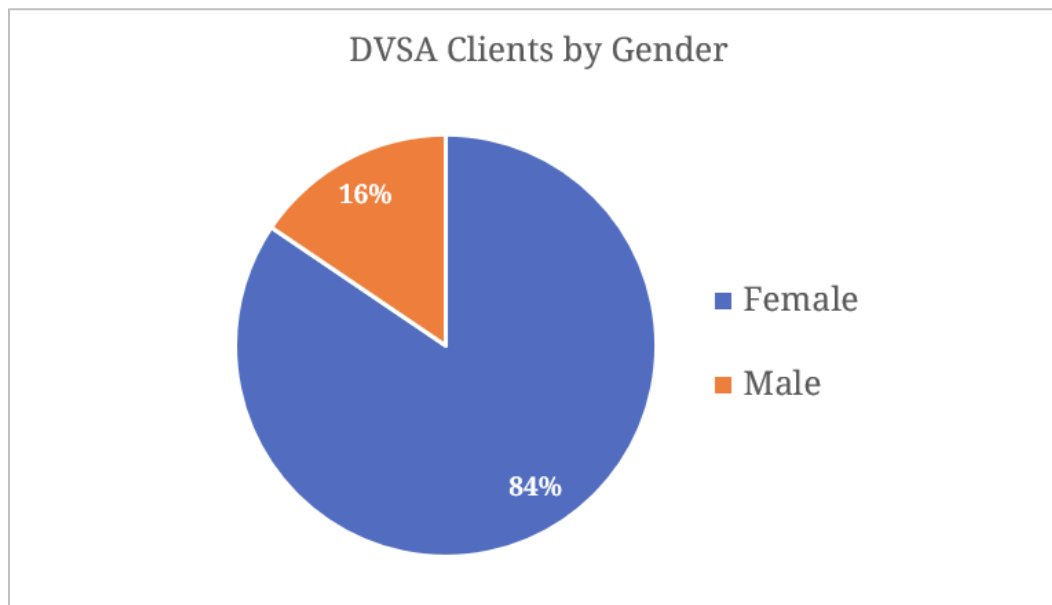
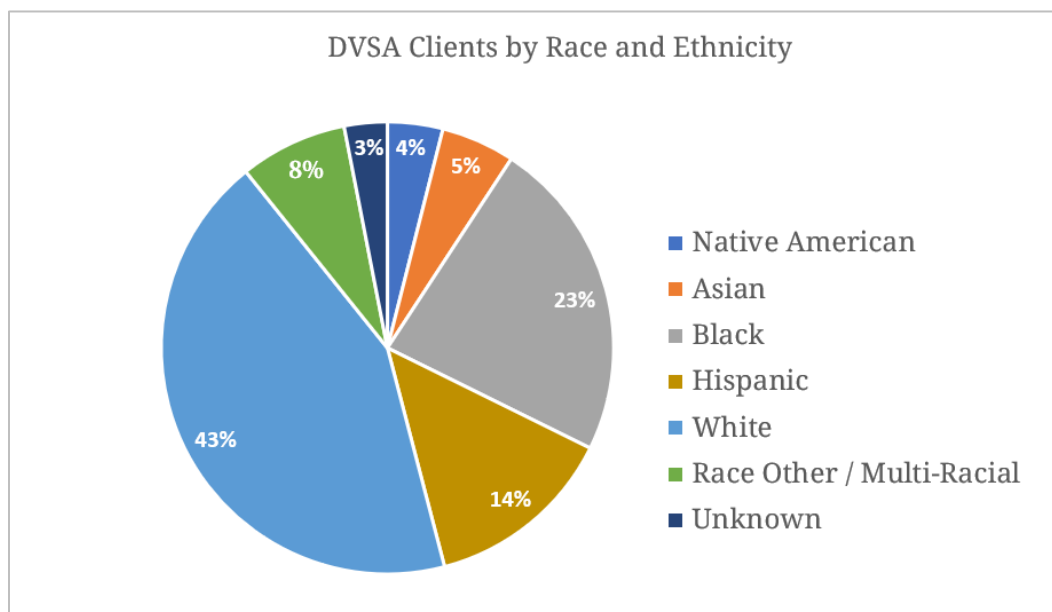


Chart 2: 2025-2026 DVSA Civil Legal Services Clients Served by Race and Ethnicity



Services & Outcomes

*For nearly two years, **Maggie** experienced ongoing coercive control and physical abuse by her partner. A domestic abuse service agency connected her with Legal Action of Wisconsin after recognizing that the abuser, a law enforcement officer, had used his position and department resources to control, manipulate, abuse, and track her movements across the state and nationally. His position in law enforcement required extraordinary care, preparation, and advocacy throughout the case. Over the course of a two-day contested evidentiary hearing, extensive testimony and evidence were presented to the court. Legal Action successfully met the heightened legal standard required to demonstrate a likelihood of first-degree homicide—a particularly difficult and rarely established standard in restraining order proceedings. As a result, the court granted our client a 10-year injunction with firearm restrictions, providing significantly longer-term protection than the standard four-year order.*

The outcomes of each case not only affect the individuals receiving legal help, they affect the Wisconsin court system, which runs more effectively and efficiently when legal professionals are available to expedite cases.

They affect local resources such as homeless shelters and police and rescue personnel, by removing people from dangerous situations and providing the legal help they need to become independent. They affect local economies, allowing employees who had previously missed work days due to abuse to keep regular work schedules, benefiting the employer as well as the employee.

Many private attorneys don't have the resources or experience to undertake domestic violence and sexual abuse cases that include complicating factors such as housing, employment and public safety. In addition, cases that involve domestic or sexual abuse are complex, sometimes simply because what may have begun as a common and easily resolved legal problem is rarely addressed in a timely fashion and continues to grow due to a lack of funds available to pay a private attorney.

In order to determine the number, type and financial impact of services provided by DVSA grantees, WisTAF used an outcome-based reporting system based on similar systems used to report civil legal services to the federal Legal Services Corporation. WisTAF organized the reported services into the areas of law where clients were served and requested case outcomes for services provided and funds successfully received or recovered for clients.

As in past years, the most common areas of law where civil legal services were provided in this program are family law, guardianship, public benefits, and victim rights.

“Without access to quality representation, there is no justice.”

~ U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia

Financial Impact: Funds Received or Recovered

Dee is a mother of a four-year-old, “Cam”. Dee has a learning delay, suffers from depression, and was a victim of sexual abuse from a young age. Dee was emotionally dependent upon “Ben”, whom she married at age 18. He controlled their finances, appointments, sexual intimacy, and household expenses. Dee believes she was over medicated by Ben, as he controlled her medications. She was in a “fog” for years. Her only joy was motherhood. However, as Dee’s medication increased at the insistence of Ben, her ability to participate in normal daily activities dramatically decreased and she spent hours alone in her bedroom. Instead of finding Dee help, Ben verbally abused her for being lazy and struck her whenever she cuddled with Cam. He justified his behavior as being protective of Cam. Dee fled to the protection of her brother but then was blocked from having any communication with her son. Ben claimed she was an unfit mother and filed for divorce. Ben’s lawyer convinced Dee to sign an order giving up placement of Cam. She was able to connect with CASDA, which provided legal representation and other support services. With CASDA’s help, Dee was able to obtain 50/50 placement. She now has her own apartment and works full-time. Most importantly, she is very active in her son’s life. By separating from Ben and working with a CASDA advocate and attorney, Dee reclaimed her self-worth. Her ability to independently juggle work and motherhood shows she is on a better path.

Many survivors of domestic and sexual abuse are unable to access jointly held funds to which they are entitled because the abuser controls the family's finances. This means that people continue to remain in an unsafe environment, since they don't have access to money for food, rent, and clothing. This is an even larger problem when children are involved. Without legal help, survivors are left with the choice to stay with the abuser and continue to expose their children to abuse, potentially perpetuating the cycle to the next generation, or to leave the abuser and try to establish their own financial support, not knowing if they will have access to safe housing, employment, or other necessities.

In 2025-2026, DVSA grantees reported that they **helped their clients receive or recover at least \$1.73 million as a result of the legal services provided through this program – a 350% return on investment for the State**. Without those financial outcomes, these families may have continued to live and raise children in the kind of environment that tears families apart, increases public costs, and destabilizes communities.

Moreover, WisTAF recently commissioned a study on the economic impact of civil legal aid in Wisconsin and found that **civil legal aid produced annual economic impacts totaling \$176 million — a return of \$8.40 for every \$1 invested.**

Conclusion

WisTAF is pleased to report continued successful management and implementation of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Civil Legal Services program to help TANF-eligible clients with much needed DVSA legal services. We are confident these services enhanced DCF's efforts to stabilize Wisconsin families and help them to be safe, secure and self-sustaining.

We offer sincerest thanks to the domestic abuse shelter agency and civil legal aid provider staff and attorneys who work so tirelessly to help clients gain the outcomes needed to achieve long-term health and self-sufficiency. We thank DCF and all who have been instrumental in securing continued DVSA civil legal services funding. We look forward to continuing our role in the efforts to help vulnerable families become thriving members of Wisconsin's great communities.

We invite you to view our [latest Annual Report](#) for information about WisTAF's mission and impact. For questions about the information contained in this report, please contact:

- Jeff Brown, Grants Program Manager jbrown@wistaf.org / 608.257.6844 or
- Rebecca L. Murray, Executive Director rmurray@wistaf.org / 608.257.2841

The Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation (WisTAF) is the leading state-based funder of legal aid in Wisconsin. WisTAF works with civil legal aid organizations in Wisconsin to increase access to justice. We oversee funds and invest in services and programs to help people resolve legal problems. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, WisTAF was created in 1986 by the Wisconsin Supreme Court to aid the courts and improve the administration of justice by administering funding for legal services to persons of limited means in non-criminal matters. The organization is committed to the vision that all Wisconsinites will have equal access to justice, regardless of their income. Visit us online at www.wistaf.org.