

# PROTECTING CHILDREN & FAMILIES



2023-2024 Domestic Violence and  
Sexual Abuse Civil Legal Services Program

Submitted to DCF  
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2023-2024 Domestic Violence & Sexual Abuse Civil Legal Services Program

## 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 2024, 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, in *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption***

## Background & Data Collection

During the two-year 2023-2025 Wisconsin state budget cycle, \$1,000,000 of 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, 2023 through June 30, 2024, which marks the ninth 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 a contract between the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families and the Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, WisTAF required grantees to submit fourth quarter and annual reports following conclusion of the 2023-2024 grant cycle, which were used to compile the service and financial information contained in this report. The annual report

they completed was designed to elicit the information that WisTAF needed to determine that grant recipients provided high-quality domestic violence and sexual abuse legal services to TANF-eligible clients in all parts of Wisconsin through the efficient and effective use of their DVSA Civil Legal Services grants.

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 \$75 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 six 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](http://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 the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (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 one or more of the following committees, depending on their experiences, leadership roles and preferences: Grants/Evaluation Committee, Finance Committee, and/or Executive Committee.

Currently, WisTAF employs 3.75 full time equivalent (FTE) staff members, plus a limited-term, part-time position. Grant program management is provided by the full-time grants program manager and executive director.

In June 2023, representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families and the Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation signed a new contract:

- Contract Number: 437004-G24-0002248-000-01
- Contract Term: July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025
- 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**

Potential applicants were notified of the availability of DVSA funding by email. WisTAF staff also posted information on the WisTAF website for public access. Online grant application materials were released on March 3, 2023.

WisTAF received twelve grant applications by the application deadline. (See Appendix Table 1: 2023-2024 DVSA/TANF Civil Legal Services Grant Applicants and Requests.) 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, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

## 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 2023-2024 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 ability to identify and serve the specified target population; current and historical financial stability and longevity; demonstrated partnerships, collaborations and community support; the programs' geographic reach/service area; 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 all twelve applicant agencies. The full board discussed and unanimously approved the recommended allocations on June 14, 2023. (See Appendix Table 2: 2023-2024 DVSA Civil Legal Services Grant Awards.)

## **Disbursement of Funds**

Grantees began submitting expense reimbursement requests to WisTAF in August 2023 for eligible services provided beginning July 1, 2023. WisTAF verified expense eligibility and 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 the organization's approved Cost Allocation policy/process. This process was repeated in each subsequent month of the grant contract period.

WisTAF subrecipient grantees provided eligible services and received expense reimbursements totaling \$445,484.98 by the conclusion of the funding cycle.

WisTAF's grants program manager coordinated 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 2024, Wipfli LLP conducted an independent single audit of WisTAF's financial information and management, which included the DVSA program. Wipfli submitted the audited financials to the DCF Audit team as required.

Note on 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 2023 expenses that were paid to WisTAF in July 2023 counted against the SFY 2024 contract even though they were incurred/spent under the SFY 2023 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, this change has not taken place. The accrual vs. cash-based accounting discrepancy will carry forward into each future contract year/grant cycle, however, DCF has verified 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. (Note: 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 adults receiving services (including client demographic data); 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.

### *Provider desk review and review of additional documentation and relevant materials*

WisTAF also conducts a desk review of materials submitted by prospective grantees in accordance with risk-based monitoring plan/policy specifications. For example, *moderate risk* subrecipients receive a desk audit annually.

The following materials typically are reviewed:

- Articles of Incorporation
- Bylaws or other governing documents
- Determination letter from the IRS (recognizing the subrecipient as exempt from income taxes under IRC section 501(c)(3))
- Most recent Form 990 or 990-EZ, including all supporting schedules and attachments (also Form 990-T, if applicable)
- Most recent audit report and management letter from subrecipient's independent auditor
- Most recent internally-prepared financial statements and current budget

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 agency 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 2023-2024 funding. 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 in that several grant recipients were not traditional legal services providers per se, 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 to these new grantees. 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. 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

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

*Melanie, a 24-year-old survivor in northeastern Wisconsin had a minor child and was seeking a restraining order injunction against her abusive ex-boyfriend, the father of the*

*child. She had suffered verbal, emotional and physical abuse during their relationship. When she left the relationship, her former partner, who had open felony criminal charges pending, began stalking and harassing her. She was afraid of attending court alone and speaking about the abuse and the stalking. A Judicare Legal Aid attorney worked with Melanie to help prepare her for testifying in court. Because Melanie had an attorney at the hearing, the attorney was able to speak to the respondent and reach an agreement, making it unnecessary for Melanie to take the stand. She was so relieved and thankful for the outcome and the length of the injunction that the court entered.*

## Expenditures

The following table summarizes 2023-2024 DVSA Civil Legal Services (TANF) State Appropriation Program expenses:

### DVSA Civil Legal Services State Appropriation (TANF) Program Expenses

<b>A. Direct expense</b>	
1. Grantee direct expenses	\$400,419.63
<b>Direct expense subtotal:</b>	<b>\$400,419.63</b>
<b>B. Administrative expense</b>	
1. Grantee administrative expenses	\$45,065.35
2. WisTAF administrative expenses	\$50,000.00
<b>Administrative expense subtotal:</b>	<b>\$95,065.35</b>
<b>Total expenses reimbursed:</b>	<b>\$495,484.98</b>

Due to the nature of reimbursement-based grants, five agencies were unable to use the full amount of the funds they were awarded. 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 incurring eligible expenses that exceeded their initial grant awards. As a result, approximately \$48,000 was reallocated to grantees who incurred eligible expenses exceeding their original grant allocations. This resulted in the best possible utilization of funds in the 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 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 subrecipient agencies cover multi-county areas or entire regions of the state, while others may only serve a single county. This year, the cap meant that \$4,015.02 in unspent grant funds could not be reallocated to agencies who otherwise would have been able to assist additional, eligible clients in rural areas.

Although funds were granted to agencies that, collectively, serve victims in every county, our subrecipient reported providing DVSA-funded services in 48 of Wisconsin's 72 counties during this grant cycle. Other sources of funds, including VOCA and VAWA, may have been used to serve clients in additional counties.

We hope to continue to expand the program's coverage and address any areas where there may be unmet legal needs in the future, if the State's investment in civil legal aid is increased.

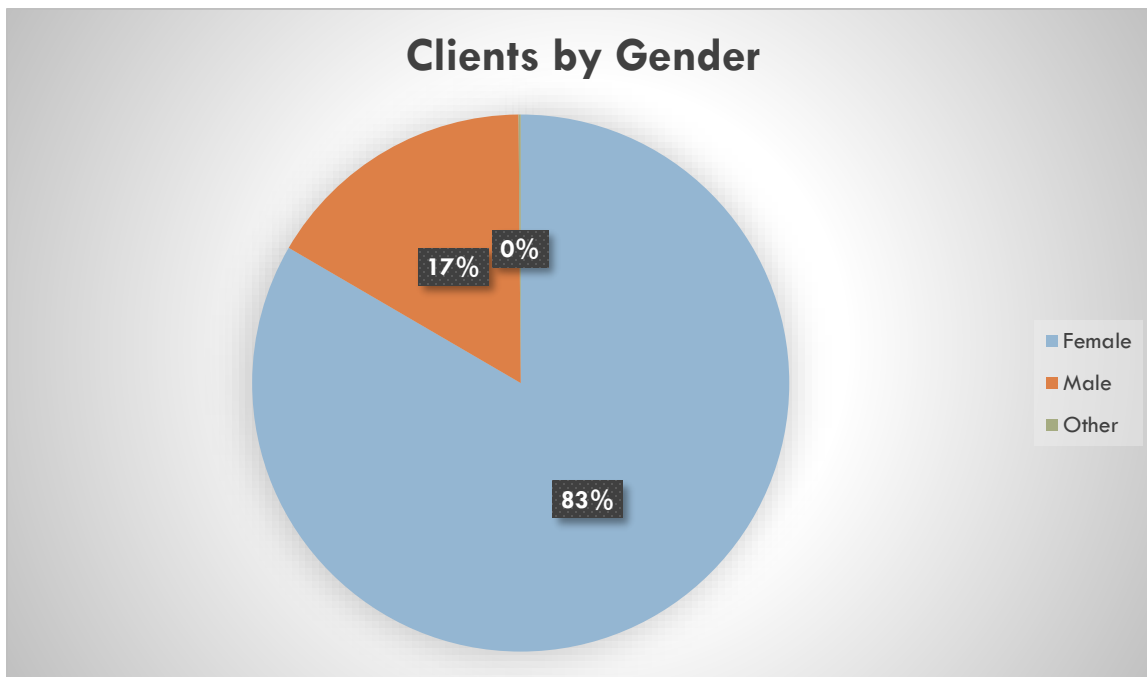
## **Clients Served**

*Mrs. O's daughter was found shot dead in a burned-out car, the victim of a suspected domestic violence homicide. A detective came to Mrs. O's home and said that her grandchildren were at District 7, the children's alleged father was arrested in relation to the crime, and Mrs. O should come and pick up the grandchildren. From there things just got harder. While the alleged father is the primary suspect in the homicide, he was released as the investigation is still ongoing. The alleged father had an initial no-contact order with the children but while Mrs. O was pursuing guardianship, he showed up at her home and managed to gain entry to her home while wielding a knife. Mrs. O's adult son was at the home at the time and managed to talk the father into dropping the knife and leaving. Kids Matter Inc. helped Mrs. O obtain temporary guardianship of the children, benefits and health care. Mrs. O did not learn until after the homicide that paternity had not been established for her grandchildren, and the paternity action is delaying other legal proceedings. Because the children's mother is deceased, there is no party other than the alleged father to the paternity. Mrs. O consistently worries that the paternity action will turn into a custody dispute as the criminal investigation lags. In addition to direct representation in Children's Court, Kids Matter provided legal assistance with obtaining and correcting the children's birth certificates, school enrollment, and other services.*

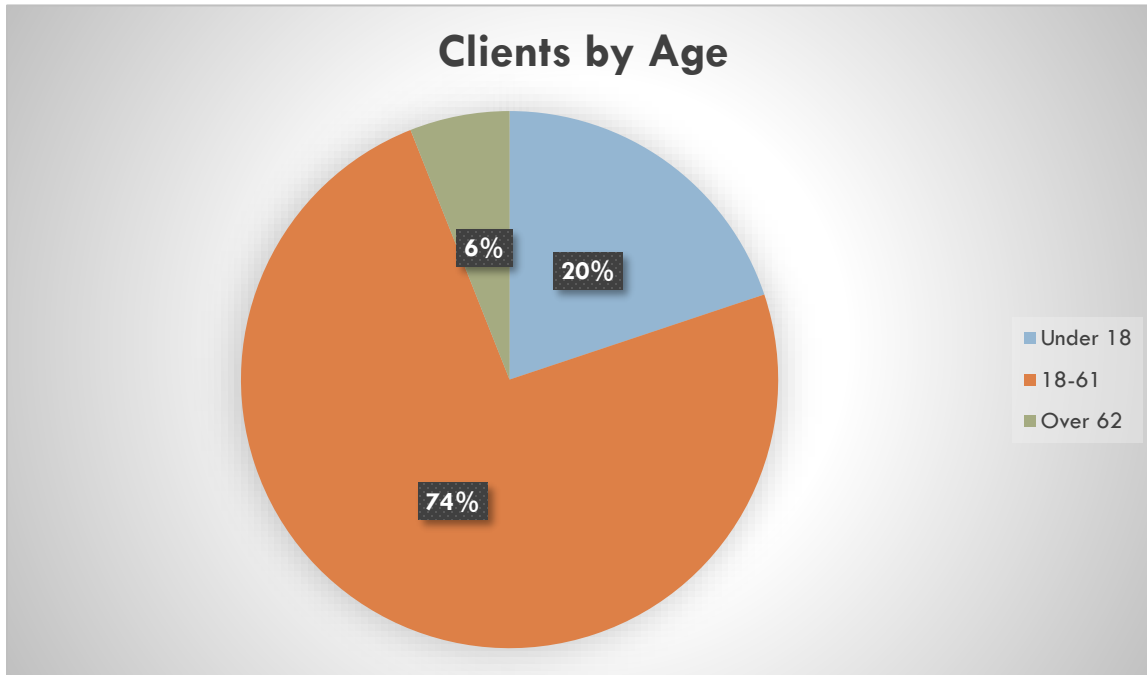
The lack of attorneys willing and able to take domestic violence and sexual abuse cases is not the only factor that prevents clients from being able to get the legal help they need. Lack of money is a huge obstacle faced by domestic and sexual abuse survivors, who may be cut off from financial resources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

In 2023-2024, DVSA funds were used to help at least 765 TANF-eligible individuals and their families, providing 1,001 services ranging from limited advice to full representation in civil litigation. The following charts provide demographic information about the clients assisted through this program.

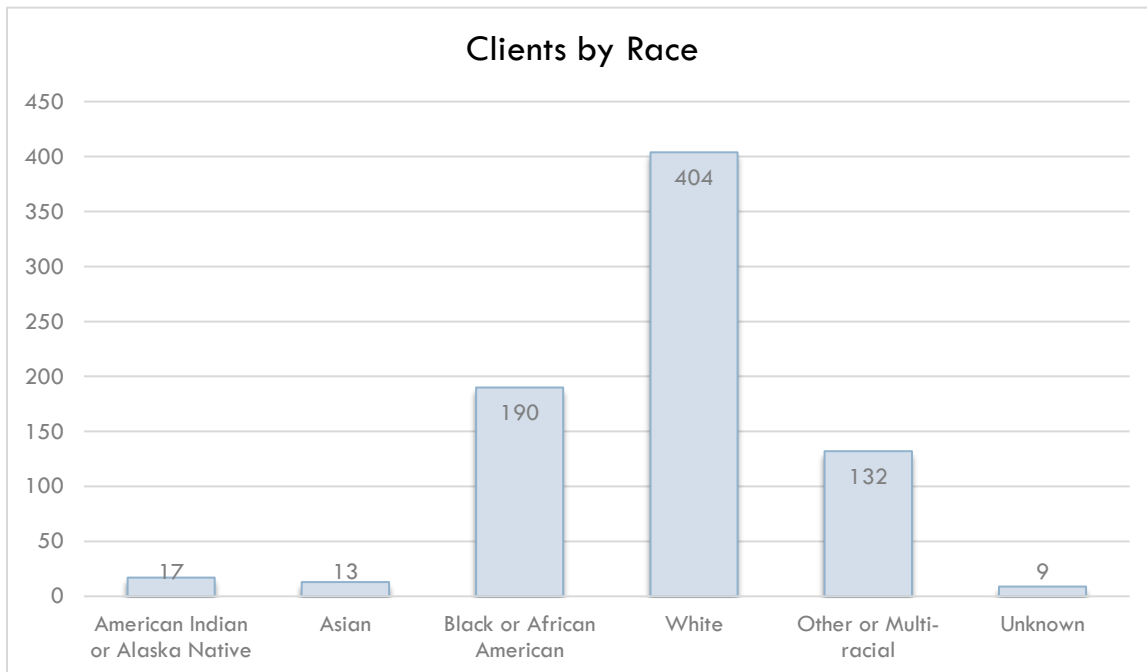
**Chart 1: 2023-2024 DVSA Civil Legal Services Clients Served by Gender**

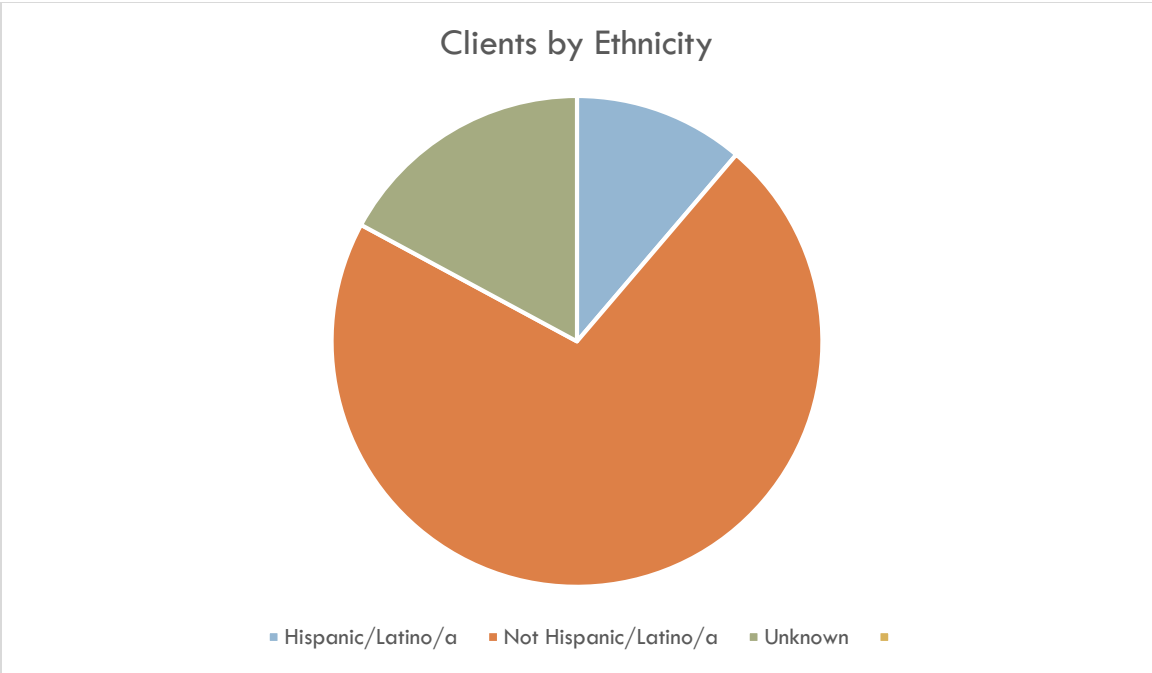


**Chart 2: 2023-2024 DVSA Civil Legal Services Impact by Age**



**Chart 3: 2023-2024 DVSA Civil Legal Services Clients Served by Race/ Ethnicity**





In order to provide the most accurate information about services, WisTAF asks grantees to track only the individuals directly served with grant funds during the grant period. The easiest way for grantees to do so is to report only cases closed during the period. This means that any reporting is necessarily conservative, since there are always open cases carried from one reporting period to the next. Our 2023-2024 DVSA grantees reported that was the case in this funding cycle. Many had opened cases for TANF-eligible individuals with DVSA funds during the grant period but had not been able to bring some cases to their conclusion within the grant cycle, given the complex nature of cases and the limitations on court access and scheduling.

**Services & Outcomes**

*Domestic abuse changed K.C.’s life. Her husband, J.D., convinced her to quit her well-paying job and stop paying the mortgage on her own house, so she could build a dream home with him in rural, northern Wisconsin. As financial stress mounted, J.D. became increasingly controlling and physically abusive. He set up cameras around the property to monitor her. He effectively isolated K.C. from family and friends. He threatened that if she tried to divorce him, he would “hide her dead body ... remote in the rural acres” never to be found. The abuse continued for years. But then K.C. sought professional legal help. Funded by Wisconsin’s Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse (DVSA) Civil Legal Services program, her attorney helped her file for divorce. After a court battle, she obtained her fair share of the co-owned assets. DVSA grant money was crucial in covering K.C.’s legal fees and expenses, allowing for a strong defense against J.D.’s*

*claims. Now, K.C. is still working through her trauma. But she stood up to her abuser and is rebuilding her life, employed and living in safety. Civil legal aid was instrumental in protecting her rights and achieving a fair result.*

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 to undertake domestic 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 17 civil legal services categories, each of which measured multiple types of case outcomes for services provided and funds successfully received or recovered for clients. Grantees reported 1,001 client services provided with 2023-2024 DVSA funding. Most cases addressed multiple legal issues, resulting in multiple services per case.

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

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

~ U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia

## Financial Impact: Funds Received or Recovered

*Wisconsin Judicare helped “Kelsey,” a 25-year-old mother of two, with filing for divorce in a rural northern county. Kelsey began seeing her now ex-husband when she was 16 years old and had, since that time, experienced physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. The attorney, advocates and staff worked with Kelsey to make sure she was safely housed, stable and well informed about her options and the progress of her case. In the end, Kelsey was granted a divorce by the court that awarded her sole custody and primary placement of her children, child support at the rate of \$1,182 per month, and the right to claim both children every year for the tax credit.*

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 2023-2024, DVSA grantees reported that they **helped their clients receive or recover at least \$1.7 million as a result of the legal services provided through this program.**

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 those services enhanced the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families' 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](mailto:jbrown@wistaf.org) / 608.257.6844 or
- Rebecca L. Murray, Executive Director [rmurray@wistaf.org](mailto:rmurray@wistaf.org) / 608.257.2841

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*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](http://www.wistaf.org).*

**Appendix Table 1: 2023-2024 DVSA/TANF Civil Legal Services Grant Applicants and Requests**

PRIMARY APPLICANT	GEOGRAPHIC AREA SERVED	REQUEST
Center Against Sexual & Domestic Abuse (CASDA)	Superior, Douglas, Bayfield, and Ashland Counties in northwestern Wisconsin	\$57,772
Centro Legal	Primarily the greater Milwaukee area	\$80,000
End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin (RISE)	Statewide	\$50,000
Golden House	Brown County	\$71,000
HAVEN, Inc.	Lincoln County	\$20,000
Indianhead Community Action Agency	Primarily Burnett, Washburn, Sawyer, Rusk, Taylor, and Clark Counties	\$50,000
Kids Matter Inc.	Legal representation in Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties; Statewide legal information and county specific procedural information	\$40,000
Legal Action of Wisconsin	39 counties of southern Wisconsin	\$75,000
LOTUS Legal Clinic	Milwaukee and statewide	\$35,240
Rainbow House Domestic Abuse Services, Inc.	Marinette and Oconto Counties	\$22,500
The Women's Center	Southeastern Wisconsin	\$15,000
Wisconsin Judicare, Inc. (dba Judicare Legal Aid)	33 counties of northern Wisconsin	\$75,000
Women and Children's Horizons	Kenosha County and surrounding area	\$30,000

## Appendix Table 2: 2023-2024 DVSA/TANF Civil Legal Services Grant Awards

GRANTEE AGENCY	2023-2024 DVSA GRANT AWARD AMOUNT
Center Against Sexual & Domestic Abuse (CASDA)	\$42,091
Centro Legal	\$57,513
End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin (RISE)	\$20,687
Golden House	\$36,596
HAVEN, Inc.	\$19,427
Indianhead Community Action Agency	\$48,795
Kids Matter Inc.	\$39,036
Legal Action of Wisconsin	\$66,093
LOTUS Legal Clinic	\$20,000
Rainbow House Domestic Abuse Services, Inc.	\$21,958
The Women's Center	\$14,569
Wisconsin Judicare, Inc. (dba Judicare Legal Aid)	\$63,234
Women's and Children's Horizons	\$0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ 450,000</b>