



## Wisconsin Department of Justice 2023-2025 Biennial Report

*Pursuant to Wis. Stats. §15.04(1)(d), this report provides department performance and operational information from the 2023-2025 biennium, projects department goals and objectives as developed for the program budget and includes additional required agency-specific information.*

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### **I. Organization**

The Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) is led by the attorney general, a constitutional officer who is elected by partisan ballot to a four-year term. Public safety is the core of DOJ's mission. DOJ fulfills its mission and statutory duties through the work of five divisions and four offices. The main duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Providing legal advice and representation for the State of Wisconsin,
- Investigating crimes that are statewide in nature or importance,
- Providing technical assistance and training to law enforcement officers and prosecutors,
- Assisting victims of crime in exercising their rights and accessing services,
- Providing forensic analysis of evidence for prosecutors and defense upon request, and
- Promoting safe school environments.

### **A. Division of Criminal Investigation**

The Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) is charged with investigating crimes of statewide nature or importance. DCI employs sworn law enforcement officers possessing statewide jurisdiction and charged with the responsibility of enforcing the laws of Wisconsin. DCI Special Agents, Crime Response Specialists, and Criminal Analysts work closely with local, county, tribal, state, and federal law enforcement officials to investigate and

prosecute crimes involving homicide, arson, financial crimes, illegal gaming, multi-jurisdictional crimes, drug trafficking, internet crimes against children, human trafficking, sexual assault, cybercrimes, homeland security, public integrity, and government corruption. DCI also provides focused management of officer involved death investigations, bringing extensive experience and added confidence to investigations involving use of force by law enforcement that results in death. DCI provides expertise, specialized training, and additional equipment and investigative resources to local, state, and federal law enforcement partners during major events or investigations in Wisconsin. Finally, DCI's administrative personnel help the Division be responsive to the citizens of Wisconsin as well as DOJ's criminal justice partners. DCI is organized into five bureaus, each overseen by a director based upon their subject matter and location.

The Field Operations Bureau is responsible for the majority of investigative resources deployed throughout the state by DCI. DCI has regional field offices in the areas of Madison, Milwaukee, Appleton, Eau Claire, and Wausau. Additionally, supervisors and staff work in partnership with other law enforcement agencies at the North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) office in Milwaukee. The Field Operations Bureau also oversees the state's high profile drug programs, initiatives, and specialized investigative task forces such as the Drug Endangered Children program (DEC). Additionally, the Field Operations Bureau encompasses the Lead Instructor Group which facilitates training for members of the division. The bureau's justice program staff plan and coordinate DCI's many conferences, workshops, and schools held for law enforcement organizations throughout the state.

The Special Operations Bureau includes Wisconsin's AMBER, Silver, Green, and Missing Child Alert programs, the Wisconsin Clearinghouse for Missing and Exploited Children and Adults, Wisconsin Crime Alert Network, and gaming enforcement. Special agents assigned to the cybercrimes unit, the technical services unit, the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) and the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force are assigned to this bureau. The crime response specialists, also assigned to this bureau, have a crucial role during officer involved critical incidents, fires/explosions, death investigations, missing children, and other significant events in support of DCI and other law enforcement agencies and criminal justice partners. This bureau is also responsible for activities and programs of the Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center (WSIC). WSIC serves as the Governor's designated primary intelligence fusion center for the state. WSIC criminal intelligence analysts provide analysis and specialized investigative and tactical intelligence support to enhance the efforts of DCI and other law enforcement agencies in Wisconsin. Analysts provide investigative support by identifying suspects, developing investigative leads, examining patterns of criminal activity, gathering, and examining records, and defining the roles of participants in criminal organizations to support prosecutions.

The Human Trafficking and Internet Crimes Against Children Bureau houses multiple focus areas dedicated to investigating online exploitation and to provide digital forensic capabilities for law enforcement in Wisconsin. Within the bureau is the Human Trafficking focus area which investigates cases involving sexual exploitation, labor trafficking, and provides training to law enforcement and the public. The Human Trafficking focus area recently received a grant to form a statewide task force that combines law enforcement with victim advocate groups to combat human trafficking using a victim-centered approach, which has been named the Wisconsin Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force. This bureau also houses Wisconsin's ICAC (Internet Crimes Against Children) Task Force, formed in 1999. The ICAC task force includes a partnership with a growing list of local law enforcement agencies. DCI ICAC personnel provide investigative and prosecutorial assistance statewide, as well as training to law enforcement, prosecutors, and the public. The ICAC Task Force relies upon the Division's Crime Response Unit to provide support and services to victims and families in Wisconsin. This bureau utilizes an electronic storage detection canine and handler that assist agencies in locating hidden electronic media used to store illegal images or other evidence of criminal activity.

The State Fire Marshal's Office – Arson Bureau is overseen by a director, who also serves as the State Fire Marshal. The primary work of the Arson Bureau is conducting investigations of fires and explosions to determine origin and cause. As Deputy State Fire Marshals, special agents use the scientific method to conduct investigations of fires and explosions and classify these events as accidental, natural, incendiary, or undetermined. Deputy State Fire Marshal's work with law enforcement agencies and fire departments throughout the State of Wisconsin as well as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Additionally, the Office of the State Fire Marshal has two accelerant detection canines, trained to alert in areas of fire that may contain potential accelerants. The canines and their handlers, certified by ATF, are used by agents and local law enforcement officers during their investigations. This section provides training opportunities for both fire service and law enforcement in fire investigation. This bureau also includes the DCI Appleton Field Office, Lake Winnebago Area Metropolitan Enforcement Group – Drug Unit, the Native American Drug and Gang Initiative, and the Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement and Response Team.

The Administrative Operations Bureau is responsible for the DCI Public Records Unit. This is a collaborative team operating in conjunction with the department's Office of Open Government (OOG) charged with responding to public requests for records. In addition, they carry out fundamental daily operations including processing financials, managing all DCI records, creating metrics and reports, and assisting with special projects including high profile case support.

The bureau is also responsible for the Digital Evidence Unit (DEU). This unit assists department investigators and local law enforcement agencies by analyzing electronic media and devices using complex forensic and analytical software systems to identify and present evidence of crimes.

## **B. Division of Law Enforcement Services**

The Division of Law Enforcement Services (DLES) provides technical and programmatic assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies, manages the state repository for fingerprint identification and criminal history record information, and operates an around-the-clock computerized telecommunications system linking law enforcement agencies statewide. DLES administers law enforcement training standards, creates and conducts specialized training for law enforcement, manages criminal information reporting systems, administers grant funds that support training, juvenile justice and adult criminal justice initiatives, and collects, shares, and analyzes criminal justice data. DLES is organized into four bureaus.

The Bureau of Justice Information and Analysis (BJIA) supports effective policy development and data-driven decision making through data collection, criminal justice research, analysis, and program evaluation. The BJIA is responsible for managing and enhancing the Wisconsin Uniform Crime Reporting/National Incident-Based Reporting System, Use-of-Force, Arrest-Related Death, Search Warrant, and Treatment Alternative and Diversion (TAD) data collection programs. The Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) for the State of Wisconsin is also housed within the BJIA and is primarily funded through federal grants. The SAC performs a variety of research and evaluation activities on a wide variety of current and emerging criminal justice issues, including expanded data availability and data sharing initiatives. Through research, analysis, and program evaluation, the many programs and projects the BJIA manages and supports contribute to the better understanding of Wisconsin's criminal justice system.

The Bureau of Justice Programs (BJP) administers state and federal grants supporting state and local criminal and juvenile organizations to improve services and public safety for the citizens of Wisconsin. This includes the Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) program, which provides alternatives to incarceration for individuals with substance use disorders, and the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program, which funds initiatives like pretrial services and drug task forces. BJP staff also manage federal and state programs aimed at improving the state's response to elder abuse. This includes collaborating with leading state agencies, statewide organizations, and non-governmental agencies to bridge gaps in coordination of needed services, raise public awareness and advocate for elder justice in Wisconsin. BJP's role includes administering funding, offering training, overseeing program implementation, fostering collaboration, and promoting public awareness.

BJP personnel also staff the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) and the Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission (GJJC). The CJCC assists the governor in directing, collaborating, and coordinating the services of state and local governmental agencies and non-governmental entities in the criminal justice system to increase efficiencies, effectiveness, and public safety. The GJJC serves as the State Advisory Group (SAG) under the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP). BJP staff work in partnership with the GJJC to monitor compliance with the core requirements relating to secure detention of youth, set funding priorities and administer grants to youth serving agencies, and identify and promote improvements to the Wisconsin youth justice system. BJP staff also coordinate drug program, policy, and legislative efforts related to drug initiatives, and conducts the statewide Drug Take Back events twice a year. The primary goals of BJP are to reduce recidivism, enhance public safety, and ensure effective program delivery across the state.

The Crime Information Bureau (CIB) is responsible for managing statewide programs that are critical to the daily operations of law enforcement through the state. The Transaction Information for the Management of Enforcement (TIME) System is the law enforcement message switch and network that provides law enforcement with current information on warrants, driver licenses and vehicle registration, criminal histories, sex offender and corrections status, missing persons, and more. CIB provides public access to Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) and manages the Wisconsin Online Record Check System (WORCS). CIB also issues Wisconsin carry concealed weapon license and manages Wisconsin's Handgun Hotline, which all registered firearms dealers are required to use for background checks when any person requests to purchase a handgun in Wisconsin.

The Training and Standards Bureau is responsible for statewide coordination of specialized training for law enforcement and administers the programs of the Law Enforcement Standards Board (LESB). The Certification and Curriculum program section of the bureau assists LESB in establishing and maintaining professional standards for Wisconsin law enforcement as well as jail and secure detention officers. Bureau staff maintain law enforcement training and certification records and administer mandatory reimbursement for training expenses. Bureau staff also coordinate statewide training opportunities provided by DOJ.

## **C. Division of Legal Services**

The Division of Legal Services (DLS) provides legal representation and advice to the governor, legislature, other state offices, and state agencies. It represents the state in all felony appeals and prosecutes certain criminal and civil matters. The division consists of seven units organized by substantive areas to maximize the advantages of specialization. Each unit is managed by a director.

The Civil Litigation Unit handles a wide variety of matters, such as civil rights, property rights, torts, administrative law, and employment law on behalf of the state, its agencies, the University of Wisconsin System, and individual state employees and agents. Examples of matters handled by this unit include:

- Cases challenging searches, seizures, and uses of force by state law enforcement; conditions of confinement in state correctional and health service institutions; and takings or compensation in eminent domain matters.

- Cases involving First Amendment rights, such as freedom of speech and religion.
- Malpractice actions brought against state and university medical professionals.
- Tort actions brought against state and university employees and agents (i.e., automobile accidents, slip and fall accidents, defamation, and property damage).
- Legal advice and litigation services with respect to state contracts and claims in state and federal court.
- Cases challenging takings or compensation in eminent domain matters.

The Criminal Appeals Unit represents the state in all felony appeals before the Wisconsin Court of Appeals, Wisconsin Supreme Court, 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals, and United States Supreme Court. The unit also represents the state with respect to appeals arising from selected misdemeanors, traffic, and juvenile cases. The unit, in collaboration with the Criminal Litigation Unit, also advises the Governor on extradition matters. The unit works closely with the state's local prosecutors, providing training, support, and legal advice.

The Criminal Litigation Unit prosecutes criminal violations and provides training and advice to prosecutors and law enforcement. The unit has authority to initiate criminal prosecutions for violations of certain statutes including securities, tax, insurance, environmental, banking, and the Wisconsin Organized Crime Control Act. It has at least a 0.5 assistant attorney general position to assist in the investigation and prosecution of noncompliance with Chapter 108 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The unit also handles petitions for discharge by sexually violent persons as defined by Chapter 980 of the Wisconsin Statutes. At the request of district attorneys, members of this unit assist with investigations and prosecutions throughout Wisconsin in homicide, public corruption, election fraud, multi-jurisdictional criminal cases, and other cases where the district attorney needs assistance or is unable to act due to a conflict. The unit provides training, support, and legal advice to local prosecutors and assists with specialized support in the areas of traffic safety and sexual assault.

The Medicaid Fraud Control and Elder Abuse Unit investigates and prosecutes crimes committed against vulnerable adults in nursing homes and other facilities, as well as fraud perpetrated by service providers against the Wisconsin Medicaid program. In conjunction with law enforcement, other state regulatory agencies such as the Department of Health Services, the Department of Revenue, and the Department of Professional Services, the unit investigates, prosecutes, and enforces laws involving:

- Medicaid provider fraud.
- Deceptive, off-label and other illegal marketing of pharmaceutical products.
- Abuse, neglect, and misappropriation involving residents or patients residing in facilities that received Medicaid funds.
- Abuse and neglect of residents in board and care facilities that do not receive Medicaid funding, such as Community Based Residential Facilities (CBRFs) and adult family homes.
- The Medicaid program itself, including but not limited to, fraud, violations of the Fair Claims Act, and issues relating to the health, safety, and welfare of Medicaid recipients.

The Public Protection Unit enforces the laws that protect Wisconsin's consumers and natural resources. The unit enforces state consumer protection laws, which prohibit unfair and deceptive business practices in a wide variety of areas, including advertising, charitable solicitations, consumer credit matters, debt collection, mortgage-related complaints, sales practices, telecommunications, telemarketing, landlord/tenant, and fair housing matters. It has at least one assistant attorney general assigned to the investigation and prosecution of violations arising under Chapter 133 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The unit enforces state laws including those relating to air pollution, water pollution, hazardous substance spills, public nuisance, land use, and public trust in navigable waters. Many of the cases prosecuted are referred to the division by other state agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and the Department of Financial Institutions. Public Protection Unit staff also work with other states, federal agencies (i.e., Federal Trade Commission), and participate in multi-state investigations and enforcement actions.

The Special Litigation and Appeals Unit provides legal advice to the State and its agencies and handles litigation in a wide variety of substantive areas, frequently on issues relating to constitutional law and governmental authority. The complex and sometimes high-profile cases that the unit handles frequently involve challenges to the validity of state statutes and administrative rules. The unit's three primary responsibilities include representing the state in significant or complex litigation of unique importance to the state, representing the state in civil appeals, and drafting Attorney General Opinions.

The Training and Resources Unit provides training and resources across the division. It facilitates both internal division training and external training, such as Statewide Prosecutors Education and Training (SPET) conferences. The unit provides legal resources to the division, including



operating a law library. It also provides technological resources, including overseeing the operation of case management and eDiscovery systems.

#### **D. Division of Forensic Sciences**

The Division of Forensic Sciences (DFS) was established as an independent division in 2019, though the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory (WSCL) was originally established in 1947. DFS employs forensic scientists, technicians, evidence specialists, and crime scene response professionals and offers scientific testing and impartial forensic analysis of evidence for every community in Wisconsin. DFS crime laboratories — located in Madison, Milwaukee, and Wausau — are the only full-service forensic science laboratories in Wisconsin. The DNA Databank stores DNA profiles on all convicted offenders and DNA profiles of certain persons arrested for violent felonies after a judicial finding of probable cause. The state system is connected to the national system to help identify suspects when unknown DNA is found at a crime scene. All three laboratories staff an on-call Crime Scene Response Unit to assist law enforcement at major crime scenes by processing the crime scene and maintaining evidence integrity. Crime scene response staff receive special training to aid in the recognition, documentation, recovery, and preservation of physical evidence. DFS is also responsible for the disposal of weapons and ammunitions seized or surrendered to law enforcement pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 968.20 (3)(a). Descriptions of scientific disciplines in DFS include:

**Drug Identification:** Chemical and instrumental analysis and identification of suspected controlled substances, narcotics, pharmaceuticals, and other ingredients.

**Toxicology:** Identification and quantification of drugs and alcohols found in body fluids and tissues.

**Trace Chemistry:** Examination of trace evidence such as paints, soil, plastics, glass, safe insulation, arson accelerants, fireworks, explosives, and synthetic fiber comparison and identification.

**Firearms/Toolmarks:** Examination of firearms, ammunition, toolmarks, suspect tools, serial number restoration, and distance determination tests.

**Latent Print and Footwear - Automated Fingerprint Identification System:** Development and examination of latent or visible fingerprints, palm prints or footprints, tire tread and footwear impressions, and maintenance of the computerized fingerprint repository.

Forensic Imaging: Specialized forensic photography and video imaging services using specialized lighting techniques, hi-resolution imaging equipment, and computer applications to record and recover information.

DNA Analysis: Examination of evidence for the presence of biological material, develops DNA profile utilizing scientific techniques, and analyzes and interprets the data.

## **E. Division of Management Services**

The Division of Management Services (DMS) is responsible for providing a wide range of operational support to the department. DMS develops and monitors the department's budget; manages personnel recruitment and payroll/benefits; performs accounting and fiscal control; oversees the department's facilities; maintains data security; provides information technology service; coordinates departmental policy and procedure advancement; and advances diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility strategies. DMS is comprised of three bureaus.

The Bureau of Budget and Finance (BBF) develops and monitors the department's statutory and operating budgets. The bureau also processes and records financial transactions and provides support services for grant management, fleet, purchasing, printing, forms and records, and facilities.

The Bureau of Human Resources (BHR) manages personnel processes including recruitment and selection, classification analysis, compensation, performance appraisal, payroll and benefits administration, affirmative action, labor relations, the Employee Assistance Program, and safety programs. BHR plays a key role in the success of DEI initiatives.

The Bureau of Computing Services (BCS) manages the department's information technology infrastructure and assets. The Bureau also develops, supports, and maintains applications for the department's programs.

## **F. Office of the Attorney General**

The Office of the Attorney General oversees the DOJ and fulfills duties as provided by Chapter 165 of the Wisconsin Statutes and the Wisconsin Constitution.

## **G. Office of Crime Victim Services**

The Office of Crime Victim Services (OCVS) provides direct assistance to victims of crime, administers state and federal funding for programs that assist victims of crime, assists victims in understanding and exercising their crime victim rights, and works with allied professionals to enhance services for victims through training and public policy initiatives.

Victims of violent crime and family or household members of deceased victims may have significant out-of-pocket expenses through no fault of their own. The Crime Victim Compensation Fund administered by the OCVS helps pay for unreimbursed eligible expenses that result from the crime, which may include costs of medical and mental health services, lost wages and benefits, and burial expenses for eligible victims and their families who have out-of-pocket expenses. The Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) fund reimburses health care providers for the cost of a forensic medical exam for victims of sexual assault.

OCVS operates the Victim Resource Center, which assists with questions about the statutory and constitutional rights afforded to victims and witnesses of crime as they move through the criminal justice process, and what to do if a victim or witness believes a right has been violated. Victims may also choose to be notified of the progress of cases involving their perpetrators that are moving through the appeals process through the Victim Appellate Notification Services (VANS). Victim Resource Center staff also provide Victim Witness assistance on criminal cases prosecuted by the Department of Justice, engage in informal victims' rights mediation, and provide direct victim assistance to individuals reporting sexual abuse by clergy or faith leaders through the Clergy and Faith Leader Abuse Initiative.

OCVS manages the Safe at Home program. Safe at Home is a statewide address confidentiality program that provides victims of actual or threatened domestic abuse, child abuse, sexual abuse, stalking, and trafficking, or those who fear for their physical safety, with a legal substitute address to be used for both public and private purposes.

OCVS also offers technical assistance and reimbursements to county Victim/Witness Assistance programs. The program provides training, continuing education, and technical assistance to victim services professionals as well as funding for county victim witness programs in district attorneys' offices in Wisconsin. The program sets standards and offers guidance to ensure victims and witnesses understand the criminal justice process and receive appropriate support and information.

OCVS manages and administers a number of federal grant programs and state funding streams, such as the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Violence

Against Women Act (VAWA), Children's Justice Act; and state Sexual Assault Victim Services (SAVS), Child Advocacy Center Grants, and Victims Services Grants. OCVS works to develop public policy changes and coordinates initiatives related to victim services including the Attorney General's Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), Wisconsin's Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI), Wisconsin Crime Victims Council, the Taskforce on Children in Need, the Taskforce on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), the Clergy and Faith Leader Abuse Initiative, and provides operational support to the Wisconsin Crime Victims Rights Board.

OCVS regularly provides training and technical assistance to criminal justice partners and victim services providers and offers ongoing training programs for Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) and child forensic interviewers.

*For more information:*

<https://www.wisdoj.gov/Pages/CrimeVictimServices/crime-victim-services.aspx>

## **H. Office of Open Government**

The Office of Open Government (OOG) is responsible for interpretation and application of Wisconsin's open meetings law and public records law. OOG manages DOJ's public records request process and strives for effective and efficient responses to such requests. OOG provides training and expert legal guidance on the open meetings law and public records law for DOJ staff and by request for the governor, legislators, other state agencies, district attorneys, local government, law enforcement, and members of the public. OOG also responds to citizen inquiries regarding open government issues and provides open meetings law and public record law compliance guides and other open government resources to the public.

## **I. Office of School Safety**

The Office of School Safety (OSS) supports Wisconsin public and private schools, law enforcement, and community-based agencies to implement model school safety practices. OSS provides direct service, consultation, technical assistance, programs and support to school staff, students, law enforcement, and community partners, consistent with a comprehensive school safety framework.

OSS operates the Speak Up, Speak Out (SUSO) threat reporting tipline, which is provided to schools at no cost. OSS staffs SUSO around-the-clock with trained analysts who respond to tips in real time.

OSS delivers no-cost school safety related training that provides school staff, law enforcement, emergency responders and other community partners with the tools and resources needed to implement evidence-based school safety plans and best practices. Training in BTAM, targeted violence prevention, crisis response and recovery, mitigating trauma in school safety drills, and other school security related topics are provided by subject matter experts within the office.

OSS developed and maintains trained crisis response teams across Wisconsin, available for deployment after a crisis event impacts a school. OSS has responded to the needs of Wisconsin communities impacted by school violence, providing direct interventions and support to assist them in returning to school in the aftermath of tragedy and providing continued, ongoing assistance in their recovery.

## **II. Accomplishments**

The following are among the DOJ accomplishments during the 2023-2025 biennium that merit special recognition.

### **A. Keeping our Kids Safe**

DOJ's Office of School Safety maintained a high level of service to Wisconsin schools while bridge funding from 2023 Wisconsin Act 240 was secured and then utilized to keep the office open while a more permanent funding and staffing solution was pursued. The utilization of the 24/7 tipline, Speak Up Speak Out, increased 40.4% from 2022/23 school year to the 2023/24 school year.

DOJ launched the Missing Child Alert in August 2024, broadening the options for alerting the public when a missing child is reported to law enforcement. This alert was created through 2023 Wisconsin Act 272, the Prince Act, named after 5-year-old Prince McCree who went missing in Milwaukee and 10-year-old Lily Peters who went missing in Chippewa Falls. The Missing Child Alert is disseminated through the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network, and a Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) is sent to mobile devices up to a 5-mile radius from the individual's last known location, between 8am-9pm. The alert is also disseminated on Wisconsin Lottery terminals throughout Wisconsin and on Department of Transportation's Dynamic Messaging Boards. DOJ approved and issued a total of 17 Missing Child Alerts for 14 children ages 4 through 17 from the new alert's inception through August 14, 2025.

The Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, led by DOJ's Division of Criminal Investigation, continues to protect children in a digital world. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) runs the Cyber

Tipline, where both Electronic Service Providers, such as Facebook, Snapchat, Google, TikTok and citizens may file reports of online exploitation. The tips received by the Wisconsin ICAC Task Force from NCMEC continue to increase. In 2024, for example, the Wisconsin ICAC Task Force received approximately 11,000 total tips, compared to approximately 7,000 total tips in 2022. Currently, one of the more significant threats to children online comes in the form of sextortion. In 2024, the task force received approximately 230 CyberTips related to sextortion, up from approximately 170 in 2023. In addition to triaging and investigating incoming tips, the Wisconsin ICAC Task Force also works on public education. In the last biennium that included press conferences, distributing new safety information materials to parents and schools, and participating in public education events.

## **B. Supporting Victims of Crime**

2023 Wisconsin Act 241 allocated \$10 million in one-time funding for sexual assault victim services grants, child advocacy grants, and domestic abuse grants. With only one year to help victim service providers best utilize this funding, the Office of Crime Victim Services administered grants that helped victim service providers as federal Victim of Crime Act funding decreased.

DOJ continues work on a statewide initiative that began in 2021 to review reports of clergy and faith leader abuse in Wisconsin. The initiative includes an independent and thorough review of sexual abuse committed by clergy and faith leaders in Wisconsin reported to DOJ, no matter when that abuse occurred. DOJ continues to accept information received from survivors and their families, friends, and advocates. As part of the review, victim advocates and/or sensitive crimes investigators may follow up with survivors to conduct trauma-informed interviews. To the extent that further investigation is necessary to support potential prosecutions, with the victim's consent DOJ refers those cases to local law enforcement and/or district attorneys.

## **C. Tackling the Drug Epidemic**

Since 2019, DOJ has taken action to combat the opioid epidemic and hold accountable those responsible for creating and fueling it. To date, Wisconsin has secured more than \$861 million in legal settlements with drug manufacturers and others for their roles in the crisis. Over the biennium, DOJ announced multi-state actions that include:

- A \$350 million settlement with marketing firm Publicis announced in February 2024 where Wisconsin will receive more than \$6 million to help address the opioid epidemic;
- A \$1.37 billion settlement with grocery chain Kroger announced in March 2025 where Wisconsin will receive \$21.8 million for opioid abatement; and

- A June 2025 announcement that AG Kaul and 54 other attorneys general plan to join a \$7.4 billion settlement with Purdue Pharma and its owners, the Sackler family, for their alleged role in creating and worsening the opioid crisis across the country. Wisconsin would receive as much as \$80.1 from this settlement over the next 15 years.

DOJ partners with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) as well as the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to organize and promote Drug Take Back throughout Wisconsin. Drug Take Back provides a safe, convenient and responsible means of disposal, while also educating the community about the potential abuse and consequences of improper storage and disposal of these medications. Wisconsin has collected a total of 1,369,472 lbs. of unwanted medications since Drug Take Back began in 2010. Wisconsin ranked number one in the country in three of the four Drug Take Back events held over the biennium.

- April 2025 = 56,818 lbs. Wisconsin nationally ranked number 1.
- October 2024 = 55,493 lbs. Wisconsin nationally ranked number 1.
- April 2024 = 55,122 lbs. Wisconsin nationally ranked number 2.
- October 2023 = 53,122 lbs. Wisconsin nationally ranked number 1.

At the annual American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) Symposium in April 2025, the Toxicology Section of DFS was awarded the Forensic Research Committee's Outstanding Evaluation/Validation award for their work on validating new methods on the Triple Quadrupole Liquid Chromatograph/Mass Spectrometers (LC/MS/MS) instrumentation. These new methods expand beyond previously used methods allowing for a greater scope and detection of drugs and metabolites. The addition of LC/MS/MS technology has significantly enhanced the Toxicology discipline's capabilities, enabling the detection of lower concentrations of drugs and identification of emerging novel substances. Several new analytical methods have already been validated for drug classes such as benzodiazepines, fentanyl and their analogs, cannabinoids, nitazenes, stimulants, and hallucinogens.

## **D. Defending the Rights and Freedom of Wisconsinites**

DOJ worked to provide clarity regarding the legality of abortion in Wisconsin and to establish that Wisconsin law does not criminalize abortion in nearly all circumstances. The case, *Kaul v. Urmanski*, was filed June 2022, days after the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. On July 2, 2025, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that the state's 1849 criminal abortion law does not ban abortion.

DOJ also joined multistate actions that challenge actions taken by the federal government that harm Wisconsin including cases on health research funding, education funding, and infrastructure funding.

### **III. 2025-2027 Executive budget program goals and objectives**

DOJ will work to achieve the following goals in the 2025-2027 biennium as outlined in 2025 Wisconsin Act 15, the 2025-2027 Executive Budget.

#### **A. Permanent Staffing for the Office of School Safety**

Act 15 provided 13.0 permanent, program revenue funded positions to enable OSS to continue *current* operations, including operation of the Speak Up, Speak Out Wisconsin (SUSO) tipline, behavioral threat assessments, critical incident response, and grant administration. These 13.0 permanent positions replace 13.0 project positions previously authorized pursuant to 2023 Wisconsin Act 240. While the position authority provided is permanent, the program revenue source utilized is insufficient to fund the positions beyond the current biennium. DOJ will continue to work with the legislature to ensure these positions have a suitable source of funding moving forward.

#### **B. Administration of Victim Service Grants**

Act 15 provided \$20 million in general purpose revenue in state fiscal year 2025-26 for grant funding for community-based crime victim services, intended to supplement federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant funding. In addition, Act 15 also provided \$2 million in general purpose revenue annually for grants to child advocacy centers. DOJ will administer this grant funding and ensure that it is provided to community-based victim service providers as expeditiously as possible.

#### **C. Funding for Cybersecurity and Compliance Enhancements**

Act 15 provided \$7.5 million in general purpose revenue over the biennium “for supplies and services costs to meet federal requirements for criminal justice data and information systems security published by the U.S. Department of Justice in July 2024. The requirements set standards for cybersecurity measures for governmental agencies that access and store sensitive criminal justice information. DOJ will utilize this funding to prioritize the most urgently needed upgrades.

### **IV. Additional reporting requirements**

#### **A. Wis. Stat. § 949.18, Crime Victim Compensation**

- (1) An explanation of the procedures for filing and processing claims under this subchapter.



Victims of violent crime and family or household members of deceased victims may have significant out-of-pocket expenses through no fault of their own. Crime Victim Compensation (CVC) helps pay for unreimbursed eligible expenses that result from the crime. Once a CVC application is received, CVC staff will request the investigative report from the law enforcement agency and determine claim eligibility. The time it takes to determine eligibility varies considerably, depending on the complexity of the claim.

Applicants then receive written confirmation and direction regarding the next steps in the processing of an eligible application. Applicants must then submit documentation of eligible out-of-pocket expenses and available collateral sources of payment. For eligible claims, payments are made as soon as all necessary information is submitted and reviewed. For ineligible claims, a written denial decision and explanation of the appeal procedure is mailed to the applicant.

- (2) A description of the programs and policies instituted to promote public awareness about crime victim compensation.

All victim advocacy positions funded by grants administered through OCVS receive training, either in-person or virtually, related to the CVC program, including how to access this resource, what this resource can and cannot cover, eligibility criteria, and how to advocate for victims using this resource. County victim witness staff receive training on CVC and how it may be utilized in tandem with requests for restitution.

Victim service providers funded by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) are required to assist victims in applying for this program.

- (3) An analysis of future needs and suggested program improvements.

The federal VOCA Fix Act of 2021 increased the federal grant calculation for victim compensation programs to 75% of state funded payments to victims and removed the penalty assessed against states collecting restitution on behalf of crime victims. Initially this significantly increased the overall VOCA Compensation award to Wisconsin, but those federal awards are now decreasing due to underspending state funds. The underspending of state funds is directly related to insufficient CVC staffing resources from the state.

Several changes to the way CVC award payments are made would also improve the responsiveness and administration of the program related to incidents of mass violence. Under current law, an award application may be made only by the crime victim or certain family members of the crime victim. To ensure timely service provision to victims of mass violence a change could be made to allow an award application to be made by a

provider of medical, mental health, or funeral and burial services, en masse, on behalf of victims of mass violence to pay for medical, mental health, or funeral and burial services, subject to the availability of funds and at the discretion of DOJ.

Additional ideas for improvement include changing the definition of “parent of a victim” to include stepparents; expanding the scope of medical providers that are eligible to certify a work disability related to crime victimization; increasing the monetary value of award eligibility for certain awards; and extending the time limit for submitting an award application from 4 years to 10 years from the date of the injury or death.

- (4) A copy of the forms utilized under this subchapter.

*The CVC application can be accessed at the following link:*

<https://www.wisdoj.gov/Pages/CrimeVictimServices/crime-victim-compensation-application.aspx>

- (5) A complete statistical analysis of the cases (claims) handled under this subchapter, including:

- (a) The number of claims filed.

2,213 CVC claims filed from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

2,350 CVC claims filed from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

- (b) The number of claims approved and the amount of each award.

From July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024:

- 2,442 claims paid
- \$3,869,982.31 total paid
- \$1,584.76 average paid per claim
- Amount of each award – Database unable to generate this report.

From July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025:

- 2,664 claims paid
- \$4,462,616.66 total paid
- \$1,674.53 average paid per claim
- Amount of each award – Database unable to generate this report.

- (c) The number of claims denied and the reasons for rejection.

From July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, 420 CVC claims were denied.

- Award unjustly benefits the offender: 1
- Claim not filed within 1-year of crime date: 3
- Crime not reported to law enforcement within 5 days: 22
- Victim delinquent in child support: 69
- No compensable crime occurred: 142
- No cooperation with law enforcement/prosecution: 53
- Victim committed/contributed to a crime/contributed: 106
- Victim knew driver was under the influence: 2
- Victim did not cooperate with CVC: 21
- Database error on one (1) denial generated “null” response.

From July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, 440 denied CVC claims.

- Award unjustly benefits the offender: 1
- Claim not filed within 1-year of crime date: 7
- Crime not reported to law enforcement within 5 days: 19
- Victim delinquent in child support: 88
- No compensable crime occurred: 154
- No cooperation with law enforcement/prosecution: 58
- Victim committed/contributed to a crime/contributed: 95
- Victim did not cooperate with CVC: 18

(d) A breakdown of claims by geographic area, month, age and sex of victim, type of crime committed and other relevant facts.

Unable to generate reports tying geographic area, month, age and sex of victim, type of crime committed, and other relevant factors without disclosing personally identifying information about individual crime victims. When disaggregating data sets, the database is unable to generate necessary reports.

(e) A summary of cases handled under this subchapter.

Reported data above offers a summary of the claims handled each state fiscal year.

(6) The status of existing escrow accounts Wis. Stat. § 949.165.

Current balance is \$12,351.64.

## **B. Wis. Stat. § 949.38, Safe Fund Report**

(1) An explanation of the procedures for filing and processing claims under this subchapter.

The Wisconsin Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) Fund is a program that reimburses health care providers for the cost of a forensic medical exam for victims of sexual assault.

*Further information can be found at this link:*

<https://www.wisdoj.gov/Pages/CrimeVictimServices/sexual-assault-forensic-exam-fund.aspx>

(2) A description of the programs and policies instituted to promote awareness about the awards under this subchapter.

All victim advocacy positions funded by grants administered through OCVS receive training, either in-person or virtually, related to the SAFE fund, including how to access this program, what it can and cannot cover, and how to advocate for victims.

Periodically, the SAFE Fund Administrator will offer training to medical and medical billing providers to help ensure consistent and accurate claims submission.

(3) An analysis of future needs and suggested program improvements.

The Safe Fund is a statutorily mandated program under Chapter 949. The Program currently is administered by a part-time limited term employee (LTE) at 20 hours per week. The workload of this position exceeds the time allocated to an LTE position.

In addition to adequate staffing, program improvements could include increased maximum payments under the SAFE fund, expansion of services to include medical and forensic services related to strangulation, and expansion of eligible costs to include HIV prophylaxis outside of a hospital setting.

The statutory maximum payment that medical providers receive for SANE services via the SAFE fund may disincentivize medical providers from offering SANE services, especially hospitals and medical providers under financial constraints.

(4) A copy of the forms used under this subchapter.

*The WI SAFE Fund Request for Payment form can be accessed at this link:*

[https://www.wisdoj.gov/Crime%20Victims%20Services/SAFEcoverSheet\\_7.2025.pdf](https://www.wisdoj.gov/Crime%20Victims%20Services/SAFEcoverSheet_7.2025.pdf)

(5) A complete statistical analysis of the cases handled under this subchapter, including all of the following:

(a) The number of claims filed.

Total SAFE fund claims filed July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 = 1,450

Total SAFE fund claims filed July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 = 1,604

(b) The number of claims approved and the amount of each award.

Total SAFE fund claims paid July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 = 1,446

- \$1,076,588.22 total.

Total SAFE fund claims paid July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 = 1,572

- \$1,939,241.30 total.

A complete breakdown of claims is available upon request.

(c) The number of claims denied and the reasons for rejection.

Total SAFE fund claims denied July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 = 4

- Occurred outside Wisconsin: 1

- Submitted over 1 year from date of the assault: 2

- Paid in full by insurance: 1

Total SAFE fund claims denied July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 = 32

- Assault did not occur in Wisconsin: 4

- Submitted over 1 year from date of the assault: 2

- Paid in full by insurance: 26

(d) A breakdown of claims by geographic area and month  
FY 2023-2024

| MONTH     | YEAR | CLAIMS |
|-----------|------|--------|
| July      | 2023 | 77     |
| August    | 2023 | 140    |
| September | 2023 | 19     |
| October   | 2023 | 94     |
| November  | 2023 | 171    |
| December  | 2023 | 0      |
| January   | 2024 | 190    |
| February  | 2024 | 220    |
| March     | 2024 | 159    |
| April     | 2024 | 139    |
| May       | 2024 | 119    |
| June      | 2024 | 122    |
| TOTAL     |      | 1450   |

| COUNTY       | CLAIMS |
|--------------|--------|
| Brown        | 83     |
| Dane         | 136    |
| Dodge        | 8      |
| Douglas      | 10     |
| Dunn         | 3      |
| Grant        | 13     |
| Jackson      | 1      |
| Juneau       | 2      |
| Kenosha      | 71     |
| La Crosse    | 154    |
| Manitowoc    | 21     |
| Marathon     | 76     |
| Milwaukee    | 343    |
| Oneida       | 3      |
| Out Of State | 8      |
| Outagamie    | 2      |
| Ozaukee      | 3      |
| Racine       | 75     |
| Rock         | 52     |

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| Sawyer    | 1    |
| Sheboygan | 21   |
| St Croix  | 70   |
| Walworth  | 14   |
| Waukesha  | 47   |
| Winnebago | 233  |
| TOTAL     | 1450 |

FY 2024-2025

| MONTH     | YEAR | CLAIMS |
|-----------|------|--------|
| July      | 2024 | 99     |
| August    | 2024 | 145    |
| September | 2024 | 161    |
| October   | 2024 | 227    |
| November  | 2024 | 108    |
| December  | 2024 | 173    |
| January   | 2025 | 110    |
| February  | 2025 | 90     |
| March     | 2025 | 126    |
| April     | 2025 | 134    |
| May       | 2025 | 123    |
| June      | 2025 | 108    |
| TOTAL     |      | 1604   |

| COUNTY   | CLAIMS |
|----------|--------|
| Ashland  | 1      |
| Barron   | 12     |
| Brown    | 57     |
| Calumet  | 3      |
| Chippewa | 8      |
| Clark    | 6      |
| Columbia | 5      |
| Crawford | 1      |
| Dane     | 99     |
| Dodge    | 25     |
| Door     | 3      |
| Douglas  | 17     |
| Dunn     | 9      |

|             |     |
|-------------|-----|
| Eau Claire  | 36  |
| Florence    | 1   |
| Fond du Lac | 28  |
| Grant       | 8   |
| Green Lake  | 6   |
| Iowa        | 2   |
| Jackson     | 5   |
| Jefferson   | 15  |
| Juneau      | 4   |
| Kenosha     | 80  |
| Kewaunee    | 3   |
| La Crosse   | 22  |
| Lafayette   | 5   |
| Langlade    | 2   |
| Lincoln     | 6   |
| Manitowoc   | 14  |
| Marathon    | 40  |
| Marinette   | 7   |
| Marquette   | 4   |
| Menomonie   | 3   |
| Milwaukee   | 421 |
| Monroe      | 4   |
| Oconto      | 5   |
| Oneida      | 4   |
| Outagamie   | 26  |
| Ozaukee     | 12  |
| Pepin       | 1   |
| Pierce      | 6   |
| Polk        | 8   |
| Portage     | 14  |
| Racine      | 99  |
| Richland    | 1   |
| Rock        | 39  |
| Rusk        | 5   |
| Sauk        | 10  |
| Sawyer      | 2   |
| Shawano     | 4   |
| Sheboygan   | 26  |
| St Croix    | 13  |

|              |      |
|--------------|------|
| Taylor       | 3    |
| Trempealeau  | 2    |
| Vilas        | 4    |
| Walworth     | 21   |
| Washburn     | 3    |
| Washington   | 7    |
| Waukesha     | 56   |
| Waupaca      | 5    |
| Waushara     | 5    |
| Winnebago    | 161  |
| Wood         | 10   |
| Undetermined | 90   |
| TOTAL        | 1604 |