

Assisting Human Trafficking Survivors in Wisconsin: Statement of Support, Intention and Expectations

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF), Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ), End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin (End Abuse), and the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA), (hereafter 'We') are coordinating our efforts to offer a consistent message and guidance for domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy agencies who are funded by DCF and/or DOJ.

We are aware that survivors of human trafficking are sometimes unable to access supportive services from Wisconsin domestic violence and sexual assault programs, that some programs may believe that DCF or DOJ funding prohibits them from serving these survivors or that they are not qualified to provide services. Survivors of trafficking seeking shelter have at times been told that shelter is full only after they have shared the story of their victimization, increasing risk and trauma for these survivors.

We recognize the many intersections of sexual assault, domestic abuse, and human trafficking and acknowledge that each survivor's situation is unique, requiring an individualized approach that addresses the different ways they may have been harmed.

We recognize the challenging environment in which domestic violence and sexual assault programs operate as they strive to meet the complex needs of diverse survivors, with limited resources. We are committed to support Wisconsin domestic abuse and sexual assault programs to serve survivors of trafficking.

- We stand behind best practices and expectations for advocating and providing supportive services to survivors of trafficking. DCF and DOJ funding does not prohibit shelter programs from providing services to survivors of labor and/or sex trafficking.



- Per Wis. Stat. 48.9875, shelter programs can provide shelter services to survivors aged 17 and older, independently if they meet statutory requirements ([see Wis. Stat. 48.9875](#)).
- Domestic and sexual abuse is prevalent among survivors of trafficking. Intake questions can and should open doors to providing services. For example:
 - Are you being hurt?
 - Where do you eat and sleep? (In the same place as the person who hurts you?) Can you decide when to come and go?
 - Is this person the parent of your child (or any of your children)?
- Agencies will assess the level of services they can provide for survivors of trafficking (i.e., crisis response, short-term support, long-term healing) and develop the community partnerships necessary to provide survivors with appropriate services. Directors and Advocates should:
 - Engage in training that develops skills and tools to effectively address the needs of trafficking survivors.
 - Engage in partnerships with other organizations that are experienced in providing effective and appropriate assistance for trafficking survivors.
 - Strengthen relationships and cultivate trust with other agencies to build trauma-sensitive warm transfers and wraparound services to address survivor needs. This includes eliminating the need for survivors to repeat the story of their victimization during screening or intake.

We will work together to provide ongoing support, training, and resources to help domestic abuse and sexual assault advocacy agencies meet expectations for providing services. [View human trafficking information and resources](#) and please reach out to our statewide coalitions, End Abuse and WCASA, for additional resources, assistance, and guidance for best practice when serving survivors.

