



# Domestic Abuse Program Report

## Federal Fiscal Year 2021

(October 1, 2020–September 30, 2021)

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) Domestic Abuse Program administers state and federal funding dedicated to providing emergency shelter and support services for survivors of domestic violence and their families. The goals of the DCF Domestic Abuse Program are:

- Provide accessible, trauma-sensitive, culturally-responsive crisis, safety and support services for victims/survivors of domestic abuse and their children
- Educate the community about issues related to domestic abuse
- Promote a coordinated community response to domestic abuse
- Promote the social change necessary to end domestic abuse

DCF administers nearly \$13 million annually to local programs provide for core support services (described on page 2) and as well as services to children and underrepresented groups including immigrants and refugees. Nearly \$1.9 million is also administered for prevention, training, and technical assistance.

DCF contracts with:

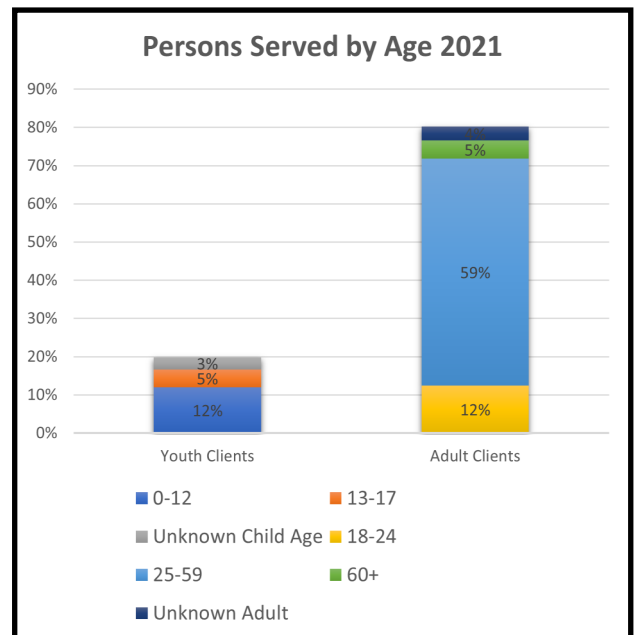
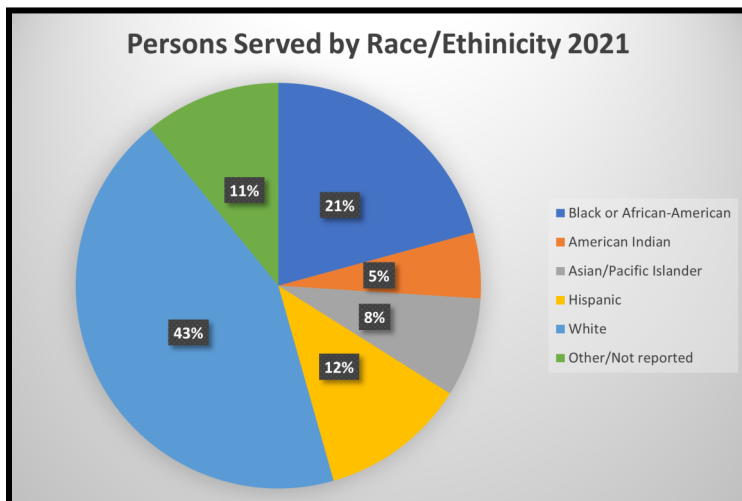
- 63 nonprofit agencies
- 11 federally-recognized tribes

Domestic abuse services are available in all 72 counties and 11 federally-recognized tribes in Wisconsin.

## Domestic Violence Impacts All of Wisconsin

Local domestic violence programs provide lifesaving services to survivors and their children. The majority of individuals and families served receive community-based services such as advocacy, counseling, and legal support.

**People of all ages are impacted by domestic violence. In fact, almost 1 in 4 of clients served by Wisconsin’s Domestic Violence Programs are under the age of 18.**



# Services of Domestic Abuse Programs

All domestic abuse programs that receive a Basic Services grant provide the below core services. Services are completely confidential, voluntary, and free of cost.



**24-Hour Crisis Line:** Programs provide or contract for immediate, live access to trained staff or volunteers on a crisis hotline so that survivors have access to assistance any day, any time.



**Information, Referral and Follow-up Services:** Programs have linkages and provide information and referral to community resources for those services which are needed and requested by survivors, but not provided directly by the program.



**Advocacy and Counseling:** Programs provide survivor-driven information, support, assistance, accompaniment, and intervention. These services may include individual support and safety planning, support groups, legal advocacy, and/or individual therapy.



**Community Education:** Programs educate individuals and organizations about issues surrounding domestic abuse. Many programs provide education to youth of all ages through programming in schools. Community education may include information about available services, information about abuse, prevention of domestic abuse, and the need for social change.

<u>People Served in FFY 2021</u>	
People Served.....	38,840
Crisis Line Calls.....	101,002
Shelter Services.....	5,075
Counseling/Advocacy.....	33,765
Legal Advocacy.....	15,285
Community Education.....	2,885
<b>Presentations reached</b>	
.....	26,197 Youth
.....	35,356 Adults

## Domestic Abuse Shelter Services

Wisconsin's 42 domestic abuse shelters are located throughout the state and provide residential and support services for survivors and their children fleeing violent homes. Shelter programs also provide emergency transportation to shelter and arrange for the education of school-aged children.

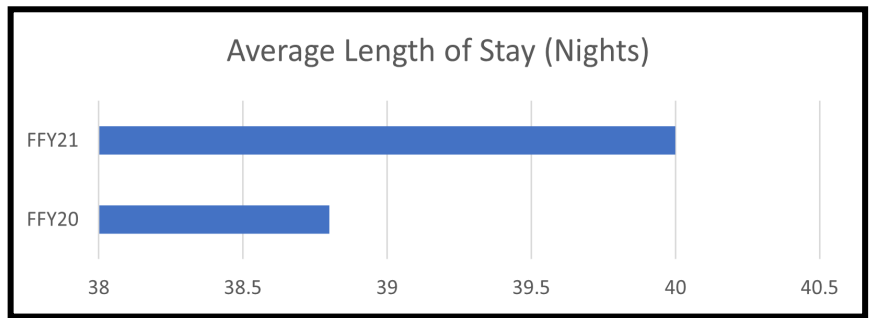
**5,075 people received safe shelter in FFY 2021. Over 41% of those people were children and youth, most of which are under the age of 12.**

**In FFY 2021, 22,682 requests for shelter went unfulfilled because the shelter was full.** This number reflects *adults only*.

Thirty-three shelter programs had to turn people away because shelter was full.

As safe, affordable housing becomes more difficult to obtain, shelter stays are becoming longer.

With the length of stay increasing, there are less available beds for survivors in crisis.



## Domestic Abuse Prevention

The Domestic Abuse Program advances primary prevention to promote healthy, respectful, nonviolent relationships and reduce the likelihood that anyone will become a victim or perpetrator of domestic violence. In partnership with End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, DCF supports prevention strategies including local youth programming, a Teen Ambassador Program, and a statewide media campaign.



*“I loved the focus on empowering yourself to make the changes you want to see in our society.”*

-Teen Summit Participant

- Youth-based primary prevention programs are offered by local domestic violence programs and address topics such as: root causes, culture shifts, healthy relationships, and leadership.
- **Teen Ambassador Program (TAP):** TAP builds a strong community of teens that support one another in the movement to end teen dating violence. There are currently approximately 188 participating youth from across the state.
- **Dare 2 Know:** A statewide media/social-marketing campaign that incorporates robust messages about the prevention of domestic and dating violence and the promotion of healthy, non-violent relationships.
- **Statewide Teen Summit:** The Summit is the largest and most diverse event of Wisconsin’s domestic abuse movement, bringing youth, parents, educators, activists, and mentors from all over Wisconsin to learn about healthy relationships, teen dating violence, and sexual assault within a larger anti-oppression framework. The Teen Summit includes educational and enthusiastic plenary speakers, as well as topic-related workshops and performances and plenty of opportunities for teens to network with peers from around the state on a deeper level.

## Evaluating Program Impact

Domestic abuse programs measure outcomes of services through confidential feedback surveys completed by survivors.

In response to two questions answered by 11,678 survivors in the reporting period:

- 10,565 (90.47%) survivors responded that as a result of receiving services, they know more ways to plan for their safety.
- 9,953 (85.23%) survivors responded that as a result of receiving services, they know more about community resources.

**Research has demonstrated that increasing survivors’ knowledge of safety planning and community resources leads to their increased safety and well-being over time.**

Programs may also evaluate effectiveness by collecting information from survivors on achieving personal goals, having a better understanding of their rights and options, satisfaction with services, and feeling more hopeful about the future.

Focus groups, advisory councils, and structured interviews are other ways programs connect directly with survivors to get feedback.

## Innovative Practices During Covid-19

To end the cycle of violence, domestic violence programs, along with the communities they serve, identify and implement innovative and promising practices. During the COVID-19 pandemic, everyday practices had to shift in order to promote survivor safety. These shifts continue to be refined as programs move forward with services to survivors.

**Virtual Services:** Programs had to quickly adjust to new models of providing services – including options to work remotely and provide services via technology. In some circumstances, technology has eliminated some barriers to access that previously existed (transportation, busy schedules, needing child care, etc.). With technology, support groups, individual counseling, and legal assistance can more easily be provided to survivors who live anywhere in Wisconsin. Unfortunately, for some survivors, there are barriers to obtaining internet or capable technology that prevent them from being able to benefit from virtual services. In these situations, programs and advocates continue to meet needs while maintaining other safety precautions (wearing masks, maintaining social distance, etc.).

**Communal Living:** The risk of coronavirus in communal living environments remains significant, and yet, shelter is still being provided because without it many survivors and their families' lives would be at greater risk. Shelter programs have developed COVID-19 protocols including increased hygiene practices, maintaining social distance, and utilizing masks continues to help manage the risk of coronavirus.

**Education:** When schools have been closed due to COVID-19, domestic abuse programs have supported families to make sure educational needs are being met. Some shelter programs, increased staff to assist with virtual learning or have provided additional devices for children in shelter. Families were provided with funding to purchase any needed tools to make virtual learning a possibility.

**Basic Needs:** The strain brought on by COVID-19 and the aligned economic challenge only increases the risks and severity of abuse many survivors are experiencing. Survivors safety depends on basic needs being met, such as housing, food. Domestic abuse programs respond to requests for rental assistance, energy assistance, and food.

**Outreach:** Not everyone is safer at home. Programs had to work harder than ever to make sure survivors knew they were open and available to assist. Communicating confidentially with survivors when they were home with their abusers added complications to making sure that safety plans could be made and followed.

***"I appreciate having the zoom feature and texting as ways of keeping in communication with my advocate. It's especially been helpful with respect for the Covid restrictions, but also in other ways."***

- Program Participant

For more information on the DCF Domestic Abuse Program, please go to:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/>

Find a listing of local programs at End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin at:

<https://www.endabusewi.org>

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