

AG Schimel: Improves criminal justice system transparency with access to data on domestic abuse

Posted on Tuesday, Oct 2, 2018

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

AG Schimel: Improves criminal justice system transparency with access to data on domestic abuse

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Brad Schimel announced the launch of new interactive data dashboards regarding domestic abuse incidents and case processing, in order to improve transparency in criminal justice data for citizens, policy-makers, and researchers. October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

“As a prosecutor for nearly 30 years, I have seen how domestic violence can be lethal for victims, first responders, and the surrounding community,” said Attorney General Schimel. “This data tool is critical for communities, law enforcement, and organizations like End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin to better understand these crimes and how the criminal justice system responds to them. We hope this data will help us prevent domestic abuse and change outcomes down the line. But we must remember, these are just numbers on a page, but real victims of abuse, right here in Wisconsin.”

The interactive data dashboards on domestic abuse are the first Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) dashboards developed offering incident- and case-level data detail and replace the annual reports on domestic abuse previously published by the DOJ Office of Crime Victim Services. The dashboards are divided into three primary areas: law enforcement reporting, charging, and case processing. Users can view information about incidents reported by law enforcement, including the number of incidents, suspects, victims, and arrests by county. Users can also view information about charging and case processing, including the most common and

severe referred, issued, and convicted charges, as well as information about prosecutions, convictions, and sentencing by county and by defendant demographics. View the domestic abuse data dashboards at <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/bjia/domestic-abuse-data>.

Data from 2013-2016 are currently available on the dashboards, and the data will be refreshed at least annually. Additional information regarding the definitions and methodology are available on the dashboard page. Under Wis. Stat. § 968.075 (9), district attorneys are required to annually report domestic abuse law enforcement responses, arrests, prosecutions, and convictions to the DOJ. The data used to construct the dashboards includes only those incidents reported to district attorneys' offices by law enforcement, entered into, and flagged as a domestic abuse case by staff within the district attorney's office. Law enforcement agencies and the district attorneys' offices are responsible for complete and accurate data reporting.

These data dashboards were developed by the DOJ Bureau of Justice Information and Analysis (BJIA), which works to inform criminal justice policy and practice by conducting objective research, analysis, and evaluation of information. BJIA first launched interactive data dashboards in 2016. Other dashboards currently available, which include UCR data from 2013 to 2017, are arrests by location, arrest demographics, offenses by location, offense and arrest data by agency and sex offenses.

Wisconsin DOJ supports many programs to support victims of domestic violence. In July 2018, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin was provided \$500,000 in grant funding from Wisconsin DOJ, through a US DOJ program, to expand the Lethality Assessment Program over the next two years, an evidence-based program that identifies victims of domestic violence who are at high risk for experiencing lethal violence. The Lethality Assessment Program was first developed in Maryland, and provides law enforcement an evidence-based lethality assessment instrument to identify victims of domestic violence who are at high risk of being seriously injured or killed by their intimate partner.

In 2017, DOJ provided nearly \$2.5 million in grant funding, through the U.S. Department of Justice Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) STOP grant, to support prosecutors, advocates, victim/witness services, and law enforcement who are providing services to domestic and sexual violence victims in Wisconsin. Through this grant funding, DOJ supports five regional Violence Against Women resource

prosecutors in Brown, Dane, Eau Claire, Milwaukee, and Waukesha counties. These prosecutors provide training and technical assistance to prosecutors around the state who handle domestic violence and sexual assault cases.

Also, supported through grant funding, DOJ trains law enforcement on the best practices for responding to and investigating domestic violence; provides VAWA funding to the Director of State Courts Office to train judges on domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking; and routinely provides information and trainings to advocates and victim/witness services. DOJ has created an online version of these training materials for overnight and weekend domestic violence shelter staff. DOJ is also working with the American Indians Against Abuse to support tribal domestic violence programs and is developing a tribal law enforcement training program.