

# Dept. of Children and Families: Emergency funds available to domestic violence survivors

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(MADISON) – The strain brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the aligned economic challenge have increased the risks and severity of abuse many domestic violence survivors are experiencing. To support families whose safety is at risk, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) has launched the [Living Independently Through Financial Empowerment \(LIFE\)](#) program using emergency funding allocated to the state through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

“The ongoing pandemic has underscored that not everyone is safer at home,” said DCF Secretary Emilie Amundson. “While there are many barriers to seeking safety, we know that financial security is one of the main barriers. By providing this critical funding, we hope to help survivors become financially empowered to live independent, violence-free lives.”

Survivors’ safety often depends on basic needs being met, such as housing and food. The LIFE program will support this safety by providing temporary financial assistance totaling \$3,500 over a three-month period (\$1,500 in month one and \$1,000 in months two and three). To be eligible for direct financial assistance, applicants must:

1. Be experiencing domestic violence or the threat of domestic violence, or be fleeing a domestic violence situation;
2. Be a parent of a child under 18 -OR- be pregnant;
3. Be 18 years of age or older;
4. Be a U.S. citizen or qualified non-citizen;
5. Be a resident of Wisconsin (unless the applicant is a migrant worker); and

6. Currently receiving another public benefit or received a public benefit at some point in the prior 12 calendar months -OR- has income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Applicants can apply via phone or in person at a [Wisconsin Works \(W-2\) agency](#). For the applicant's safety, all applicant and case information will be kept strictly confidential.

Other assistance is available to help domestic violence survivors regardless of LIFE program eligibility. To find the nearest domestic abuse help line or agency, visit [End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin's Get Help Map](#).

Advocates can help the department spread awareness of this critical program by downloading and sharing social media content and graphics from DCF's [Public Awareness Tool Kit](#).

To learn more about domestic violence, visit DCF's [website](#) or follow @WisDCF on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).