

Marsy's Law: Eau Claire County DA, Wis DOJ Collaborate to "map" victims' journeys

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Eau Claire, WI - Marsy's Law for Wisconsin is partnering with the Eau Claire County District Attorney's Office and the Wisconsin Department of Justice to conduct a "mapping exercise" in Eau Claire this week with the goal of helping victims better access their rights. The groups will convene stakeholders from the criminal justice system and victim service organizations to literally map the journey of a victim through the criminal justice system - from the initial call to law enforcement all the way to post-conviction proceedings. Their efforts will pave the way for crucial future reform by helping to improve the understanding of the path crime victims face.

Attendees will be looking closely at how the rights provided to victims under Wisconsin's three-year-old crime victims' rights constitutional amendment, known as Marsy's Law, impacts the criminal justice system and its processes specifically in Eau Claire County. The project will look at who victims interact with at each "touch point" of the criminal justice process to better identify both positive outcomes since Marsy's Law's implementation in 2020 and areas in need of further progress. The group will examine the experiences of hypothetical sexual assault and domestic violence victims.

"Examining the points at which victims interact with the justice system is key to understanding how we can best help victims to exercise their Marsy's Law rights," said **Peter Rindal**, Eau Claire County District Attorney. "This exercise will help us to serve victims better and to provide the most support we can as they navigate the criminal justice system."

“Understanding how victims interact with the stakeholders in the justice system, beginning from the point of a crime being reported all the way to post-sentencing, is a crucial step toward ensuring that Marsy’s Law rights are being utilized effectively, and that support systems for victims are continuously improved,” said **Erin Welsh**, Deputy Director, Wisconsin Department of Justice Office of Crime Victim Services. “By identifying the loopholes in the current system, policymakers can take the necessary measures to fill the gaps and ensure that all victims are treated fairly and receive the assistance they need.”

The mapping exercise will take place from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Wednesday, June 28 at the Eau Claire County Government Center, 721 Oxford Avenue.

“As we engage in these exercises, we extend our sincere gratitude to Eau Claire County stakeholders. Our unwavering dedication stems from the profound impact Marsy’s Law has already made on crime victims in Wisconsin,” said **Nela Kalpic**, Marsy’s Law for Wisconsin State Director. “We persist until every victim has unimpeded access to the constitutional rights bestowed on them.”

David Perlman, a special projects worker at the Wisconsin Department of Justice, will be facilitating the mapping exercise alongside Miriam Falk, Assistant Attorney General, and Erin Welsh, Deputy Director of the Office of Crime Victim Services. In addition to these key participants, others attending will include representatives from Eau Claire County Sheriff’s Office, Eau Claire County Circuit Court, Eau Claire Police Department, Department of Corrections, and victim services organizations such as the Bolton Refuge House and Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association.

Marsy’s Law for Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Department of Justice have conducted five mapping exercises over the past 10 months. These exercises have provided valuable data for analyzing the statewide implementation of the amendment. Based on these findings, recommendations on best practices will be developed.

Media Note: For media who wish to schedule an interview with one of the participants or receive additional information please contact Melinda Koski at mk@platform-communications.com