

Marsy's Law: La Crosse County DA's office, Wis. DOJ to "map" victims' journeys

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LA CROSSE, WI - Marsy's Law for Wisconsin is partnering with the La Crosse County District Attorney's Office and the Wisconsin Department of Justice to conduct a "mapping exercise" in La Crosse 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 help to improve the understanding of the path crime victims face, paving the way for crucial future reforms.

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 La Crosse County. The exercise 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.

The mapping exercise will take place on Wednesday, May 31 from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. at the La Crosse County Administrative Center, 212 6th Street North.

"By identifying all the interactions victims have with the justice system, from crime reporting to post-sentencing, we can better understand how to ensure Marsy's Law rights are being utilized and improve support for crime victims," said **Tim Gruenke**,

La Crosse County Assistant District Attorney. “This discussion will help us better recognize victims’ rights and how to best ensure their experience with the criminal justice system is as compassionate as possible.”

The mapping exercise will be facilitated by David Perlman, who works on special projects for the WI DOJ, Miriam Falk, Assistant Attorney General and Erin Welsh, Deputy Director Office of Crime Victims Services. Additionally, there will be representatives from the La Crosse County Sheriff’s Office, La Crosse County Circuit Court, La Crosse Police Department, Department of Corrections, and victim services organizations including Stepping Stones, Cia Siab, and New Horizons.

Over the past 10 months, Marsy’s Law for Wisconsin and the Wisconsin’s Department of Justice has conducted four Marsy’s Law mapping exercises. These exercises have yielded valuable data for analyzing the amendment’s implementation statewide. Recommendations on best practices will be developed from these findings.

“As we undertake these exercises, we extend our sincere appreciation to La Crosse County stakeholders” said **Nela Kalpic**, Marsy’s Law for Wisconsin State Director. “Our commitment stems from the profound impact Marsy’s Law has already had on Wisconsin’s crime victims. We press on until everyone who suffers from such violence has access to all the rights our Constitution provides.”