

Compliance to the Scope of Work

Criteria

A. Public Health-oriented understanding of community safety.

Women's Resource Center of Racine, Inc. (WRC) is proposing Legal Advocacy and legal support for victims/survivors and potential victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence is a public health and community concern. In line with public health approaches to community violence, effective care for victims and survivors of domestic violence is multi-disciplinary. The focus of WRC's work and this proposal:

- Serves **those individuals at highest risk for experiencing community and interpersonal violence.**

Victims of domestic violence remain at high risk for experiencing subsequent episodes of violence unless they make changes to their own lives. Survivors face numerous barriers to breaking the cycle of violence for themselves and unless barriers are removed, survivors may return to abusers or enter into other violent relationships to face further revictimization. Legal intervention is frequently required.

- The proposed services are **informed by and respond to the impact of trauma on individuals and the broader community in historically underinvested communities.**

Legal services are trauma sensitive and culturally appropriate. Domestic violence results in trauma, with ongoing abuse imposing trauma for extended periods of time. During the past calendar year WRC provided shelter and services to 521 individuals. 77% of outreach participants were BIPOC. All the shelter residents reported income that placed them below federal poverty levels. Individuals of color, and those experiencing poverty are disproportionately over-represented at WRC. WRC serves some of Racine's most marginalized individuals.

- The purpose of all services and programs offered by WRC is to ***promote healing and resiliency in the targeted population.***

After ensuring safety, the focus of WRC services is to promote healing and resiliency. Addressing legal

situations is one step on the path to healing. Empowerment fosters resiliency, and resiliency permits a future free from violence.

- Through information and education, ***promote community ownership of safety outcomes in residents and neighborhoods.***

A main function of WRC is to provide community education and information about the insidious and dangerous nature of domestic violence.

B. Community Safety Priorities

- This proposal addresses **Intimate Partner Violence.**

Interpersonal abuse has a devastating impact on families and the community. Domestic violence intervention and prevention **is** a matter of life and death.

- This proposal also explores the **disproportionate impact of violence on some groups and communities.**

The target community will be victims/survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking or other interpersonal violence who need legal consultation. These individuals will largely be low-income women, and a high percentage will be individuals of color. Domestic abuse impacts women and especially low-income women disproportionately. These women lack the resources and access to services available to other populations.

Qualifications and Experience

Women's Resource Center of Racine, Inc. (WRC) is the only dedicated full-spectrum provider of emergency and supportive services for victims/survivors of domestic violence in Racine County. WRC also offers shelter to survivors of sexual assault (in collaboration with BeLeaf) and human trafficking (in collaboration with Fight to End Exploitation).

WRC is an active participant in the Racine Violent Crime Reduction Initiative, serving as the voice of victims, providing the group with domestic violence education and local statistics and demographics. Through this collaboration, WRC also offers its SafeStart, teen dating violence prevention program in local COP Houses. Intervention and education at young ages is key to breaking the cycle of violence.

WRC was formed in 1977 by a group of concerned citizens who recognized that domestic violence was dangerous, and victims needed safety and shelter if they were to escape the throes of abuse. WRC, incorporated in 1980, has continuously provided shelter, support services, outreach and community awareness. Victims need much more than a safe place to stay. Advocacy is a mainstay, offering counseling support, safety planning, housing search assistance and anything else needed to break the cycle of violence and become safe and independent. Victims often find themselves with legal entanglements and/or the need to pursue legal interventions to ensure future safety. Obtaining restraining orders is important when individuals leave or attempt to leave an abusive situation. Child support, child custody, separation/divorce, eviction, small claims court, driver license reinstatement, and other legally related situations may present barriers to developing safety and stability. WRC has always provided legal advocacy and is at a point where the need for additional services is required. Services are available to anyone experiencing domestic abuse, including those not residing in shelter.

Respondent Approach to Providing Services

To ensure that victims of intimate violence receive legal advocacy and assistance in seeking legal services, WRC employs individuals knowledgeable of legal procedures and systems relevant to domestic violence. Services are available by agency referral, and by self-referral. This funding will support a Legal Advocate and a Legal Specialist between May 1, 2025, and September 30, 2025.

Victims face many barriers to rising above the trauma inflicted upon them and find it difficult to traverse the legal system. Impoverished women, and women of color are overrepresented in domestic violence shelters and programs. They are least likely to trust the legal system, and may need information, support and encouragement to take necessary and important steps. Addressing legal concerns opens the door to continued healing and building stable, safe and independent lives. This trauma sensitive, survivor driven project promotes breaking the cycle of violence, and sparing entire families from revictimization and devastation.

Legal Advocacy ensures that those already impacted and devastated by domestic violence have access to legal services that protect them from further revictimization and violence. Two mainstays of WRC's services are trauma informed practices and Motivational Interviewing. Both approaches are evidence-based and are known to be effective in working with survivors of violence because they take into consideration the lived experiences of the victims, prevent re-traumatization, and put the client at the center of the decisions being made to secure their future safety. Legal advocacy can serve as a buffer between the "black and white" nature of the law and the raw emotions of victims.

The Legal Advocate and Legal Specialist assist survivors with their legal needs. The purpose of this proposal is to provide expanded, more robust services to those impacted by domestic violence. The program assists survivors with paperwork, refers them for formal legal services, accompanies them to court, and explains the legal process and outcomes. Obtaining restraining orders can save lives, obtaining deserved child support and benefits supports children and is life-sustaining. Divorcing and resolving custody disputes clears the path for future stability. Having driver licenses reinstated improves chances for employment and decreases the possibility of additional legal action. Addressing legal matters alleviates stress. Testifying against an abuser is empowering. Using the legal system to their advantage puts survivors in control of their lives.

Services are available to those residing at WRC, those who contact WRC specifically for Legal

Advocacy, to those residing at Bethany Apartments, those receiving services from Fight to End Exploitation, SAFE Haven of Racine, Transitional Living Center or those who have experienced sexual assault.

Respondent description of how funds will be budgeted for use

WRC anticipates serving a minimum of 150 survivors of domestic violence during the award period. WRC is requesting \$41,403.50 to support Legal Advocacy Services. We are requesting \$21,840 dollars in salary for the Legal Advocate for the six-month award period. The Legal Advocate will work 30 hours per week and will be paid \$28.00 per hour. \$3,276. dollars will pay taxes and benefits for the position. The Legal Specialist will assist the Legal Advocate working 20 hours per week for the grant period at a rate of \$22.00 per hour for a total of \$11,440.00. \$1,716.00 will pay taxes and benefits for the position. Cell phone services for these positions will cost \$320. \$300 will be expended on miscellaneous supplies. The position will require travel to court, to clients and to other agencies and we have budgeted \$127.50 to cover 250 miles at \$.51 each. We are requesting 3 hours a week of supervision for this position at \$30.00 per hour or \$2,340 for six months for a total of =\$41,403.50

Budget Proposal – Separate Document

Prior Experience and familiarity of required services

Women's Resource Center has vast experience in implementing and administering grant awards of this nature. Since the 1980's WRC has received ongoing State assistance from the Department of Children and families to operate its emergency shelter and victim services. It is the current recipient of Wisconsin Department of Justice funding to support a Holistic Healing program and services. WRC is also a long-time recipient of City Emergency Solutions grant funding and State homelessness funding awards. Additionally, WRC has received private funding from foundations (Racine Community Foundation, Otto Bremer Trust, Webb Family Fund, etc.) corporate funders and the United Way of Racine County.

If funded, WRC recognizes its responsibilities and obligations, will implement and conduct programming, submit progress and financial reports and comply with all WCSF requirements.

This program will enhance and expand existing legal advocacy services. Funding will support a legal Advocate and a Legal Specialist, to coordinate legal services. Katie Bolander, J.D. serves as the Legal Advocate. A City Prevention Grant funded these activities last year but has ended. Other funding supplements these activities but the need continues to grow. WRC's current Legal Advocate has been providing legal advocacy in some capacity since her graduation from law school. The current Executive Director provided legal advocacy services in the past, and WRC's CFO is a licensed attorney who worked in the criminal, juvenile and family courts, and is available to advise the program.

Although not a licensed attorney, the Legal Advocate works closely with Legal Action of WI to ensure that documents are completed and that survivors are adequately prepared to appear in court. The Legal Advocate also serves as a liaison to private attorneys, the District Attorney's Office, Victim Witness Assistance Program and law enforcement agencies. In addition to assisting in the preparation of restraining orders, aiding survivors with child support, child custody and other legal concerns, the Legal Advocate informs and educates survivors about the legal justice system. Additionally, the Legal Advocate provides training to agency staff and others about the legal aspects of domestic violence. This position reports to the Executive Director.

Knowledge of the City of Racine 5

Having provided services in the city of Racine for 48 years, WRC knows the city and its resources well, having numerous community partners, including relationships through the local Continuum of Care. The Legal Advocacy Program partners with Bethany Apartments, Fight to End Exploitation, SAFE Haven of Racine, Transitional Living Center, and BeLeaf who refer clients for Legal Advocacy. It is likely that HOPES Center, Racine Vocational Ministry and others may have clients appropriate for services. Efforts will be made to partner with the Marquette Law School, to provide interns and support.