

Sexual Violence Prevention Program State Action Plan

2024-2029



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of HEALTH SERVICES**

Overview

Over the next five years (2024–2029), Wisconsin’s Sexual Violence Prevention (SVP) Program, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) Grant, will partner with state and local organizations to address root causes of sexual violence. This document, informed by many key partners, outlines the focus areas for funding over the next five-year cycle. The following proposed overarching goals for the next five-year program cycle focus on increasing community-level protective factors against sexual violence.

1. Cultivate a sense of belonging and connectedness across funded communities and partners in Wisconsin.
2. Advance local and organizational policy and environmental changes that promote inclusion, positive community norms, and economic stability.

Guiding Principles

We are committed to:

- **Practicing anti-oppression** by questioning and working to change the ways oppression shows up in our thinking, organizational systems, and cultural norms of work and society, with the goal of replacing oppression with equitable ways of sharing power.
- **Recognizing and engaging with intersectionality** by acknowledging that all systems of oppression (for example, racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and heterosexism) are connected and by addressing the root causes of oppression in ways that harness the power of connecting marginalized communities in common cause.
- **Demonstrating cultural responsiveness** by ensuring that the people who are most impacted are at the center of conversations, problem solving, and decision-making and those less impacted are committed to being self-aware, ready to learn, and open to change.
- **Supporting community-defined prevention** by having communities define what strategies work best and what positive impact looks like through authentic community engagement.
- **Uplifting existing efforts and infrastructure** by supporting and enhancing ongoing grassroots prevention work across Wisconsin.
- **Ensuring comprehensive prevention** that takes a trauma-informed approach and connects efforts across and within communities and across the lifespan, and targets policy, systems, or environmental factors that drive sexual violence.

Focus Populations

The SVP Program hopes to build a safer Wisconsin by focusing on preventing violence against those most impacted, including:

- People with disabilities.
- LGBTQIA2S+* individuals, particularly transgender and gender nonconforming Wisconsinites.
- Black, Indigenous, and women of color.

This focus is informed by a combination of factors including prevalence of sexual violence, the need for more intersectional work, and the current societal climate.

*Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning, intersex, asexual, two-spirit

Topical Focus Areas

Between May–August 2023, we held conversations with a variety of partners and consulted with the Advocates of Color Consortium. The Advocates of Color Consortium is a group of BIPOC** advocates in Wisconsin who work or have worked in sexual assault and prevention direct services. Other partners included statewide coalitions, culturally specific service agencies, community-based organizations, local health departments, municipalities, and statewide nonprofits led by and for people with disabilities and LGBTQ+ Wisconsinites. The purpose of these conversations was to identify focus areas for the next five-year cycle of the Sexual Violence Prevention Program, funded by the RPE grant. The conversations included discussions about what work is already happening, what gaps exist, who is the most impacted by this issue, and what strategies should be of focus given the scope and size of the grant.

Through these conversations, several key themes were identified. From these key themes, we surveyed the same partners to rank the possible areas of focus by how impactful they might be and the readiness of communities to implement strategies within those areas. The two emerging priority areas are:

1. **Strengthen economic supports and improve pay equity.** This area of focus includes addressing risk factors like poverty and lack of employment opportunities as well as societal determinants including equitable access to educational, economic, and job opportunities; socioeconomic conditions; housing; and governmental, non-governmental, and corporate policies. Some example policies that tie to this area include family friendly policies like paid family leave as well as pay equity for livable and equitable wages. Desired outcomes could include increased access to employment and increased and equitable income for people and groups most impacted by sexual violence. Possible strategies that support these outcomes include job readiness programming and educational opportunities that lead to employment; policies and practices to support caregiving; work-life balance and overall health; and policies and practices to improve more inclusive and equitable hiring practices.
2. **Create protective environments and promote positive social norms through cultural prevention efforts.** For many communities of color in Wisconsin—including Indigenous, Hmong, Latine, and Black communities—participating in cultural practices is a protective factor that builds resilience, connection to community, increases cultural pride, and promotes sense of self and positive identity development. Cultural practices often take a life course perspective and whole community approach. These efforts are community-led by nature and increase access to culturally responsive services, social supports, and education. Strategies may address risk factors such as societal norms that support male superiority and female inferiority, and support sexual entitlement and adherence to a gender binary system and traditional gender norms. It also addresses sexism and other intersecting forms of oppression. This focus area also includes creating protective environments and promoting positive community norms that allow everyone to safely express themselves physically and culturally in public, communal, and institutional spaces without experiencing discriminatory or prejudiced practices. Positive community environments build acceptance and inclusion and celebrate the strength and power of diversity. This is also tied to community connectedness, which is a protective factor against sexual violence as well as a variety of other health outcomes. Connectedness can be built within many different types of communities, including workplaces and neighborhoods.

**Black, Indigenous, and people of color

Prevention activities will focus on these priorities to address the root causes of violence, particularly through building economic security, assuring access to quality culturally responsive programming, and cultivating supportive social connections and inclusive community environments. Potential outcomes that reflect these goals may include increases in:

- Prevention efforts designed and led by communities of color, people with disabilities, and LGBTQIA2S+ individuals in Wisconsin.
- Economic supports, programming, and policies to address disparities experienced by communities of color, people with disabilities, and LGBTQIA2S+ individuals in Wisconsin.
- Sense of community connection, cultural pride, and positive identity.
- Community and civic engagement and increased leadership of these groups in local and state sexual violence prevention efforts.
- Coordination and alignment of state sexual violence prevention efforts.
- Changes to organizational and local policies to promote economic stability, safety, and to address other community-level risk factors of sexual violence.

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