Gender-Based Violence State Brief

WISCONSIN

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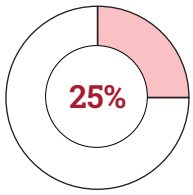
Know Your Numbers

Sexual Violence (SV)

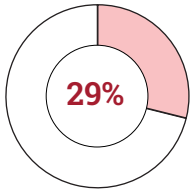
- **43%** of women and **11%** of men have experienced rape, sexual coercion, or unwanted sexual contact in their lifetime. There are over 1.2 million survivors in Wisconsin alone (NISVS, 2023/2024).[1]
- **35%** of women and **12%** of men first experienced sexual violence when they were under the age of 18 (NISVS, 2016/2017).[2]
- **20%** of female high school students experienced sexual violence in the past year (YRBS, 2023).[3]
- **30%** of gay, lesbian, or bisexual high school students experienced sexual violence in the past year (YRBS, 2023).[3]



25% of women have experienced completed or attempted rape in their lifetime (NISVS, 2023/2024).[1]

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

- **32%** of women and **15%** of men have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. There are over 1 million survivors of IPV in Wisconsin alone (NISVS, 2023/2024).[4]
- **2.5%** of postpartum women experienced IPV in the 12 months before pregnancy. **2.0%** experienced IPV during their pregnancy (PRAMS, 2022).[5]
- **11%** of female high school students experienced physical dating violence in the past year (YRBS, 2023).[3]
- **17%** of gay, lesbian, or bisexual high school students experienced physical dating violence in the past year (YRBS, 2023).[3]



29% of women have experienced at least one IPV-related impact* in their lifetime. Prevalence for men is not available in Wisconsin (NISVS, 2023/2024).[4]

Intimate Partner Homicide

Between 2019 and 2023, **111 Wisconsin women** were killed by their intimate partners. The rate of intimate partner homicide was more than **8.5 times higher for Black women** (5.23 per 100,000 women) than white women (0.61 per 100,000 women).[6]

* IPV-related impacts include: being fearful, being concerned for safety, any post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, injury, need for medical care, filed a police report, missing at least one day of work, missing at least one day of school, need for housing, need for victim advocate services, need for legal services, contacting a crisis hotline.

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Stalking

- Nearly **1 in 6 women** has experienced stalking in their lifetime (NISVS, 2023/2024).[7]

Human Trafficking

- Between December 2024 and December 2025, there were **68** victims of commercial sex trafficking identified through police records.[8]
- In 2024, the Human Trafficking Hotline received calls identifying **181** victims of human trafficking (either sex or forced labor trafficking).[9]

Sexual violence, domestic violence, stalking, and human trafficking remain among the most underreported crimes globally.

Today's Key Priorities in GBV Prevention and Response

The first U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence[10] was released in 2023, informed by a comprehensive, national process that engaged survivors, advocates, and other stakeholders. This policy overview is organized around selected National Plan priority areas, with a brief summary describing policies responsive to GBV prevention or survivor support.

KEY: ✓ GBV Responsive ◐ Some elements GBV responsive ✗ Not GBV responsive

Priority Area 1: Prevention

✗ DV training for healthcare workers is not encouraged or required in state policy (2019).[11]

✓ State law requires or encourages training for prevention of human trafficking among specified professions or in specific locations (2024).[12]
Required for commercial drivers licensing (2024).[12]

◐ State law mandates child sexual abuse (CSA) education to either some or all students or some or all staff (2025).[13]
Required for elementary school students. No requirements for school staff.[13]

Priority Area 2: Survivor Support, Safety, and Well-being

- Wisconsin has **71** Domestic Violence Service Providers (2025).[14]
- State policy protects survivors of IPV from insurance discrimination for health insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, and property insurance (2019).[11]

Priority Area 3a: Housing Stability

- State law allows for court/protection orders to remove abusive partners and other violent perpetrators from a shared home (2024).[15]
- State law allows for early lease termination for IPV, SV, or stalking survivors with protections from financial penalty (2024).[15]
  Evidence requirements may differ by state. See state policy for details.[15]
- State law requires landlords to change locks if an individual is a survivor of IPV and/or SV and provides a court order (2024).[15]
  Tenant may be financially responsible for the lock change. See individual state law.[15]
- State law prohibits landlords from evicting survivors due to the GBV they experienced (2024).[15]

State officials conduct an annual point-in-time count to estimate the number of unhoused individuals in each state and locality.

In a single night, there were 442 unhoused IPV survivors counted in Wisconsin (2025).[16]

Priority Area 3b: Economic Security

- ✗ As of 2023, the criminal definition of domestic violence does not include elements of economic coercion or abuse.[17]
- ✗ No existing policy allows survivors to take leave from employment due to the consequences of abuse (2025).[18]
- ✗ GBV survivors are not legally protected against employer discrimination or retaliation against them based on their status as a survivor (2025).[18]
- ✓ State law allows survivors who must leave or quit work due to domestic abuse, personal safety, or harassment-related circumstances to remain eligible for unemployment benefits (2025).[18]
  The claimant may need to show proof of violence or harassment to qualify.[18]

Economic insecurity is both a risk factor for and a consequence of GBV victimization. Some women in Wisconsin are more likely to face economic insecurity than others.

In Wisconsin (2024), among full-time, year-round workers, for every $1 a white man makes,

- a white non-Hispanic woman makes **$0.80**
- a Black woman makes **$0.65**
- an Indigenous woman makes **$0.61**
- a Latina woman makes **$0.61**[19]

Priority Area 4: Online Safety and Security

- ✓ As of 2024, the criminal definition of stalking is inclusive of online tactics (cyberstalking).[20]
  Direct cyber components are included in the legal definition of stalking/harassment.[20]
- ✓ State law criminalizes AI-generated Child Sexual Abuse Materials (CSAM) as part of the definition of CSAM (2025).[21]
- ✓ Additional state online safety laws prohibit unlawful representations depicting nudity (including electronic reproductions of intimate images) and invasion of privacy (including via electronic means) (2024).[20]
  As of 2026, all U.S. states have criminalized nonconsensual distribution of intimate images.[22]

Priority Area 5: Legal and Justice Systems

Survivors of GBV can file for protective orders against stalking (2025).[20]
Survivors of stalking, regardless of their relationship to the perpetrator, can file for protective orders, no-contact orders, or civil injunctions.[20]

The establishment of a Domestic Violence Fatality Review team is not legally mandated or encouraged in this state (2019).[11]

Access to Guns

This state does not have an extreme risk/red flag gun law allowing courts to temporarily limit an individual from purchasing or possessing firearms (2026).[23]

As of 2026, no state law addresses the "boyfriend loophole" in IPV-related firearm restriction/relinquishment (i.e., dating partners may be excluded from enforcement).[23]

Rape Kit Policy

State policy requires existence of a Rape Kit Tracking System (2026).[24]

State policy establishes deadlines for submission and testing of newly submitted rape kits (2026).[24]
See state policy for details.[24]

This state does not have a Victims' Right to Know policy for rape kit progress (2026).[24]

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