

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Nadya Rosen • 608-267-0214 • nadya.rosen@drwi.org

Disability Rights Wisconsin Awarded \$600,000 Grant to Represent Survivors with Disabilities

Disability Rights Wisconsin is very pleased to announce that its Victim Advocacy Program (VAP) will be able to expand its legal representation in the areas of family law, victim's rights, and immigration. The United States Department of Justice announced Thursday that it would award the VAP a 3-year Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) grant to provide comprehensive civil legal services to survivors with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence, sexual abuse, dating violence, or stalking. The grant is part of the Legal Assistance for Victims program of OVW. DRW is one of only 59 grantees across the country to receive some of the [\\$35 million](#) dollars awarded this year.

“Survivors with disabilities frequently have their disabilities used against them during the legal process,” said Nadya Rosen, Managing Attorney of DRW’s Victim Advocacy Program. The grant will enable DRW’s VAP attorneys to provide robust representation and hire experts who can help courts and juries understand how a person’s specific disability impacts their lives, and how the disability itself can be unfairly used against them in an abusive situation. Importantly, VAP attorneys will be able to represent survivors in their abuser’s criminal court cases and protect them from unnecessary psychological examinations or inquiry into their medical records.

People with disabilities experience violent victimization at a rate of nearly four times the rate of people without disabilities and people with intellectual disabilities are sexually assaulted at a rate seven times greater than those without disabilities (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics). “Wanting to make an impact in Wisconsin for victims of crimes in these situations and noting the intense need for this kind of help in the requests we receive, DRW created VAP in 2016,” stated Lea Kitz, DRW’s Executive Director. With funding

from the Wisconsin Department of Justice, VAP works to ensure that survivors with disabilities receive the advocacy, legal representation, and services and support they desire to move forward, find justice, and obtain safety and stability. VAP attorneys and advocates have special expertise in both victim service and disability service needs and provide comprehensive support and assistance to clients.

For more information about the services offered by Disability Rights Wisconsin contact 1-800-928-8778 or visit disabilityrightswi.org.

Disability Rights Wisconsin is the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy system for the State of Wisconsin, charged with protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and keeping individuals free from abuse and neglect.