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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AG Schimel Announces DOJ Will Receive \$1.25 Million
from Federal Government to Fight Elder Abuse**

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Brad Schimel announced today the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) is awarding the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) \$1.25 million to fight elder abuse. The grant program will provide funding to DOJ, in order to train and organize elder abuse response teams in four diverse project sites across the state.

“DOJ’s efforts to support victims of elder abuse are growing and growing,” said Attorney General Brad Schimel. “Our elderly population is increasing rapidly, and so are the crimes that are being committed against them. \$1.25 million will go a long way towards developing a strong multidisciplinary response to elder abuse in our communities.”

The “Abuse in Later Life” grant program focuses on providing training and advanced victim services on elder abuse at project sites in Wisconsin. Funding will support program coordinators at DOJ, costs for train-the-trainer courses, development of a coordinated community response, and local training costs. Also, over \$300,000 will be used directly for elder victim services in each project site. Typically, this grant program offers grantees just \$400,000. OVW awarded DOJ an unprecedented amount, over three-times the original grant request.

“Wise Women Gathering Place appreciates Attorney General Schimel's leadership in working with all the partners to secure this important grant," said Alice Skenandore, Founder and Executive Director of the Wise Women Gathering Place. "We look forward to developing a coordinated community response to elder abuse that will enhance our services to victims of abuse in later life.”

In order to maximize resources and develop a program that reflects the diverse nature of Wisconsin's local jurisdictions, the four project sites will serve urban, rural, and tribal populations in the state: City of Milwaukee, Outagamie County, Door County, and the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. Focusing the program in each of these areas will allow for better replication moving forward.

"The Oneida Police Department appreciates being part of the 'Abuse in Later Life' grant program as it will provide the training and resources for the police department to provide services and resources to our Elders that fall victim to predators," said Oneida Police Chief Richard Van Boxtel. "Partnering with the various agencies to address elder abuse in a coordinated response will make a difference in the lives of our Elders that are victimized and improve their path to recover from victimization."

Within those four project sites, the "Abuse in Later Life" grant program requires the prosecutors, victim service agencies, judges, adult protective services, and law enforcement to attend training, and cross-training, related to elder abuse. The Milwaukee Police Department has already committed to training more than 500 officers.

"Elder abuse involves not only one of our most vulnerable populations but also one that is far too often overlooked," said Milwaukee Chief of Police Alfonso Morales. "The Milwaukee Police Department welcomes the opportunity to work with its system and community partners in a combined effort to address elder abuse through the assistance of this grant."

Other community partners like health care, faith groups, and legal services will also participate in the cross-trainings and community response. All four project sites have a substantial commitment from its main partners, including:

- **Door County:** Sturgeon Bay Police Department, Door County Sheriff's Office, Door County District Attorney, Help of Door County, Inc., and Door County Human Services
- **Oneida Nation of Wisconsin:** Oneida Elder Services, Oneida Police Department, Wise Women Gathering Place, Brown County District Attorney, and Outagamie County District Attorney.
- **Outagamie County:** Harbor House Domestic Programs, Inc., Outagamie County District Attorney, Appleton Police Department, and Outagamie County Health and Human Services
- **City of Milwaukee:** Milwaukee County Department of Aging, Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee County District Attorney, and Community Advocates, Inc.

In August 2017, Attorney General Schimel created the Task Force on Elder Abuse to develop recommendations and resources to address this growing public safety issue. Recently, the Attorney General's Task Force on Elder Abuse recommended new legislation, agency action, and resources for law enforcement to fight elder abuse in Wisconsin.

In addition to the task force's work, Attorney General Schimel has moved quickly to provide public safety tools directly to seniors and their loved ones. DOJ worked with law enforcement, and aging/senior care experts/advocates to raise awareness about elder abuse and encourage citizens to report abuse against seniors. The public awareness campaign, first launched in January 2018 with [radio ads](#), encourages citizens to report suspected elder abuse of any kind, teaches citizens how to recognize elder abuse, and connects victims with helpful resources. In May 2018, Attorney General Schimel launched a new website, www.ReportElderAbuseWI.org. Additionally, a paid online-marketing plan was purchased to provide effective and comprehensive outreach to elder abuse victims.

In August 2018, DOJ released a [training video](#) aimed at educating tellers and other banking professions on how to spot financial elder abuse and report it. DOJ produced the ten-minute training video with assistance from the Wisconsin Bankers Association, Wisconsin Credit Union League, and members of the task force. The video details common red-flags that tellers in financial institutions should watch for when interacting with older adults who are often susceptible to financial exploitation.

In October 2017, Attorney General Schimel expanded [Dose of Reality](#), a statewide prevention campaign designed to raise awareness about prescription drug abuse and its effect on the opioid epidemic, to include resources and information unique to seniors and their caregivers.

Attorney General Schimel also started "[Safe Seniors Camera Program](#)," a new pilot project in Brown, Outagamie, and Winnebago counties. The program provides covert cameras to Wisconsin residents who suspect an in-home caregiver is abusing their loved one. The covert camera is used to provide surveillance over their loved one, who may be being harmed by a caregiver in their residence.

To report suspected financial, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, please [contact your county elder adult-at-risk agency](#) or call 1(800)488-3780. If you witness an act of abuse, neglect, or exploitation that requires immediate attention, please call 911.

The task force is made up of representatives from WI DOJ, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Wisconsin State

Legislature, law enforcement, Wisconsin Court System, Board on Aging and Long Term Care, Wisconsin Bankers Association, crime victim services, adult protective services, senior living facilities, and senior citizen advocacy organizations.

To learn more about elder abuse, go to www.ReportElderAbuseWI.org.