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## **NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Office of School Safety Holds Additional Critical Incident Response Team Trainings Around the State**

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) today announced that the Office of School Safety (OSS) is holding additional trainings for those interested in joining one of the twelve Critical Incident Response Teams (CIRTs) around the state. CIRTs are designed to provide all Wisconsin K-12 public, private, charter and tribal schools with access to a regionally based team to support them if a critical incident ever occurs at their school.

“The Office of School Safety provides Wisconsin schools with tools and information that can help keep kids safe and minimize trauma,” said AG Kaul. “Having trained, regional critical-incident response teams is one part of OSS’s comprehensive approach to school safety.”

OSS considers a school-related critical incident to be a sudden and unexpected incident or sequence of events which can cause trauma within a school community that may overwhelm the normal coping mechanisms of the school. School crises may be a large-scale incident, or a smaller-scale incident that may be more individualized and affects a small group of people. Examples of critical incidents in schools include threats or acts of violence, natural disasters, serious injuries to students or staff, suicide, weather-related disasters, community turmoil, intruders, an Amber Alert, and hate crimes.

The mission of the CIRT program is to minimize the psychological impact of a school critical incident; provide resources to help stabilize the school community; work to identify individuals that may require long-term mental health services after a critical

incident occurs; and offer support to school administrators and educators. Wisconsin is the first state to implement regionally based CIRTs on a statewide basis.

Each of Wisconsin's 12 regional CIRTs is made up of volunteers who are part of a multi-disciplinary team. These teams include law enforcement officers, school administrators, counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, teachers, school safety experts, and representatives from other related professions.

Every CIRT member must attend a training session put on by OSS. Training will equip team members with techniques rooted in best practice for response after a critical incident occurs. It will also facilitate uniformity in response and support for all schools throughout the state that may deal with a critical incident.

Priority registration will be given to participants serving in [CESA Regions](#) 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 12. Trainings will be held in Verona, Wis., Jackson, Wis., and Superior, Wis. throughout the spring/summer. For more information on the CIRT trainings click [here](#).

OSS was initially supported by more than \$2 million in federal grant funding from the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance. OSS is currently supported by more than \$1.8 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding which will end in December of 2023. DOJ has requested that the legislature permanently fund OSS in the next biennial budget.