



## INVESTING IN CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FOR ABUSE VICTIMS

### THERE IS A COST-EFFECTIVE SOLUTION

Timely and appropriate legal assistance for abuse victims can make the difference between a person who is able to start down the road to recovery and one who is more vulnerable to further abuse.

- Victims get the benefit of timely and appropriate legal assistance to protect their rights
- Adult victims lose less time from work, and all victims use fewer law enforcement, health and other services
- Courts benefit from clear and complete legal papers, reducing delays, confusion and costs for everyone

### OUR PROPOSAL

- Appropriate a modest \$3 million in GPR funding over the 2013-2015 biennium to provide legal assistance that helps low income Wisconsin abuse victims resolve their civil legal issues in Wisconsin courts and agencies.
- The Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation (WisTAF) is willing to act as the program administrator at no cost to the state to review grant applications from community based organizations throughout the state that wish to provide the services authorized. WisTAF has over 20 years of experience with reviewing grant applications for legal services to low income clients, including targeted legal services funding from the State of Wisconsin.

### WISCONSIN'S CHALLENGE

- **38,803** victims served by Wisconsin's domestic violence agencies in the 12 months prior to September 2012.
- **28,539** domestic abuse incidents reported to Wisconsin law enforcement and referred to district attorneys' offices in 2011.
- **6,411** domestic abuse restraining order petitions filed in Wisconsin's circuit courts in 2012.
- **90%** of domestic abuse victims have to go without legal assistance to help them with their restraining order petition or injunction hearing. Most are also on their own dealing with the legal fallout related to any children, the marriage or assets.
- **\$100 million** in estimated annual economic costs from domestic abuse in Wisconsin for health care, lost productivity and lifetime earnings according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Costs for law enforcement and county courts are also substantial.
- **1,698** children in unsafe conditions had to be removed from their homes by Child Protective Services in 2011.
- **957** child abuse temporary restraining orders were filed in Wisconsin courts in 2012
- Most people seeking child abuse restraining orders or juvenile guardianships must do so without legal assistance.
- **\$46 million** in estimated annual economic costs from child abuse in Wisconsin for health care, lost productivity and government services according to data from a CDC study. Adoption subsidies and other state/county program costs will significantly raise this estimate.