

Proposed Wisconsin State Crisis Intervention Program Plan

Description of the Problem:

According to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, suicides account for the majority of firearms-related death in Wisconsin.¹ An analysis of data from 2015 to 2022 reveals a consistent pattern in the causes of firearm fatalities, with a notable surge in homicides beginning in 2020 that contributed to an overall increase in firearm-related deaths in subsequent years (Figure 1). Despite this increase in homicides, suicides have consistently dominated firearm deaths, constituting 66% of cases on average. In contrast, homicides accounted for 30%, while legal interventions, accidents, and undetermined causes made up the remaining 4%. Notably, even amidst the rise in homicides, the state has seen an average of 211 more suicides by firearm each year, underscoring the critical issue of firearm-related suicides in Wisconsin.

Between 2015 and 2022, firearms were the most prevalent method used for suicide, claiming 51% of all such deaths (Figure 2). Following firearms, suffocation and drug poisoning were significant, claiming 26% and 12% of suicide cases, respectively. Other methods, including

Firearm Deaths Occurring in Wisconsin by Manner of Death 2015-2022									
Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics									
Manner of Death	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022*	Grand Total
ACCIDENTAL	10	7	8	6	5	7	11	4	58
HOMICIDE	175	191	164	147	149	249	291	286	1652
LEGAL INTERVENTION	6	9	18	10	16	13	11	7	90
SUICIDE	423	456	436	419	421	440	490	530	3615
UNDETERMINED	1	7	6	7	4	5	1	14	45
Grand Total	615	670	632	589	595	714	804	841	5460
*DATA FROM 2022 IS PROVISIONAL AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE									

Figure 1

¹ Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics. (2023). *Suicides in Wisconsin by method, 2015-2022*.

cutting and various forms of self-harm, made up the remainder. On average, firearm-related suicides claimed 452 lives annually during this period.

Suicides in Wisconsin by Method 2015-2022									
Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics									
Row Labels	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022*	Grand Total
Cutting	21	28	27	18	22	17	15	20	168
Drug Poisoning	123	92	108	105	85	86	109	111	819
Firearm	423	456	436	419	421	440	490	530	3615
Nondrug poisoning	35	41	33	27	32	24	21	30	243
Other	48	46	58	40	50	48	52	41	383
Suffocation	222	204	274	283	229	241	229	198	1880
Grand Total	872	867	936	892	839	856	916	930	7108

*DATA FROM 2022 IS PROVISIONAL AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Figure 2

In 2022, the Wisconsin Hospital Association reported 747 firearm-related injuries in the state.² As depicted in Figure 3, accidental injuries accounted for 49%, while 7% were self-inflicted. This data highlights the lethal efficiency of firearms in suicide attempts, given the low survival rate of those with self-inflicted gunshot wounds. To mitigate firearm-related fatalities and injuries, there is a pressing need for education and awareness regarding gun safety, recognition of mental distress signs, and the availability of support resources for individuals at risk of suicide.

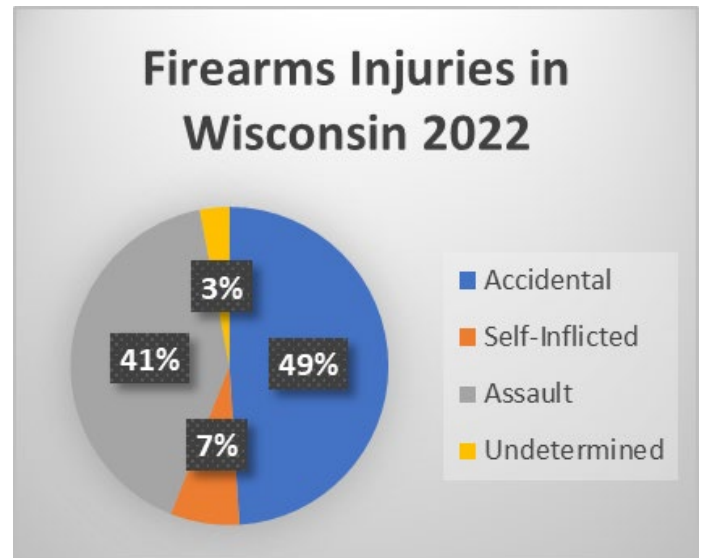


Figure 3

² Wisconsin Hospital Association, WHA Information Center. (2023). *Firearms Injuries in Wisconsin, 2022*.

Wisconsin SCIP Plan Priorities and Framework:

In response to alarming firearm-related statistics, Wisconsin has developed a strategic Statewide Crisis Intervention Program (SCIP) plan, anchored in a three-tiered priority framework. This framework, informed by research from the Bureau of Justice Programs (BJP), as well as input from external stakeholders and the Wisconsin Crisis Intervention Advisory Board (CIAB), prioritizes initiatives based on their potential for implementation within existing structures. By delineating these priorities, Wisconsin's SCIP plan aims to address the multifaceted challenges of firearm-related violence and suicides through targeted prevention, response, and research efforts, paving the way for a safer Wisconsin.

Priority 1: Suicide Prevention

Suicide prevention is at the forefront of our SCIP plan, reflecting the critical issue of firearm-related suicides, especially in rural communities. Key initiatives include:

- **Enhancing Training and Awareness:** Expanding access to existing programs, such as those offered by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and UW Health, focused on mental health discussions and reducing access to lethal means. Supplemental support from national organizations like CALM (Counseling on Access to Lethal Means) is also considered.
- **Expanding the Gun Shop Program:** Building on the success of the Gun Shop Program, which allows for voluntary, temporary safe storage of firearms during mental health crises, to further suicide prevention efforts, particularly among veterans.

- **Addressing Farmer Suicides:** Investigating the rising trend of farmer suicides by collaborating with stakeholders interested in researching the contributing factors, including firearm access and mental health stigma.

Potential Projects:

- Fund initiatives aimed at suicide prevention and reducing access to lethal means.
- Broaden the reach of the Gun Shop Program through partnerships with local organizations.
- Develop and disseminate educational or media campaigns focused on suicide awareness and prevention.

Priority 2: Community-based Prevention, Response Facilitation, and Harm Reduction

Wisconsin's plan recognizes the critical need for effective mental health crisis response, which varies significantly across Wisconsin's counties. According to Wisconsin's Department of Health Services (DHS), almost all counties in Wisconsin are compliant with DHS 34, a statute that requires counties to have access to mobile crisis response units, a 24-7 call line for mental health support, and stabilization resources. Although most counties are compliant, not all systems are equally effective. Many counties' mental health support services operate entirely on volunteer staff, have little/no operational funding, or rely on contracted response teams that do not respond physically to crises. BJP intends to help counties meet their highest needs by creating a list of eligible expenses allowed under SCIP, assisting each participating county to have the greatest impact on their communities. This approach will also allow for the funding, and potential creation, of community-based violence intervention programs which could include diversion models for individuals with minor firearms offenses; violence interruption models for areas with

high response demand; postvention models for victims and families of gun violence or suicide; or proactive educational approaches. Key areas of focus for these potential opportunities include:

- **Enhancing County-Level Resources:** Assisting counties in enhancing their crisis response capabilities, tailored to specific county needs. Examples of how counties could use SCIP funding are listed below in the potential projects section.
- **Expanding Violence Intervention Programs:** Beyond self-harm, the SCIP plan addresses community harm by developing preventative community-based violence interruption models or diversion models specifically designed for individuals with non-violent firearms offenses. Funds could also be used to support proactive educational initiatives on the risks of firearm use in conflicts.

Potential Projects:

- Support the enhancement of county-level mental and behavioral health response resources. Examples of such enhancements could include, but are not limited to:
 - Promoting existing mental health support programs to their communities.
 - Providing staffing to better support response programs.
 - Purchasing equipment or supplies to aid response by mental health and other professionals, such as secure transportation, medical supplies, additional beds, gun locks, gun safes, educational materials, program awareness materials, postvention supplies, or other eligible expenses.
 - Engaging in a planning process for starting new support programs.
 - Providing updated training opportunities for responders and other professionals.
- Provide supplemental funding for Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for first responders and related professionals.

- Facilitate the creation of educational initiatives and programs aimed at preventing gun violence in the community.
- Fund diversion programs for nonviolent firearm offenses.
- Fund postvention programs for victims of gun violence and/or their surviving families.

Priority 3: Research and Data Collection

Acknowledging the data deficit in firearm-related issues, our third priority supports research in areas critical to understanding and mitigating gun violence. A subgrant opportunity will be created to fund research, and based on BJP research to date, it is possible that requests for funding will cover a broad range of research that will help the Wisconsin CIAB target future funding to relevant and impactful programs.

Potential Research Project Topics:

- Investigate the relationship between firearm use and domestic violence incidents in Wisconsin.
- Explore the trajectory of stolen firearms and the crimes they facilitate.
- Examine the precedents of firearm suicides, such as legal actions or personal crises.
- Analyze firearm safe storage practices and their impact on household safety.

Wisconsin Crisis Intervention Advisory Board (CIAB):

To guide the strategic direction and ensure the effective implementation of the SCIP federal grant, the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) has formed the CIAB, leveraging the expertise within the state’s existing Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). The CIAB consists of members from the CJCC’s Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) subcommittee, enhanced by additional representatives from the public sector, law enforcement,

and victim advocacy groups to fulfill federal grant requirements. This strategy utilizes the subcommittee's existing knowledge in grant administration and its broad network of state and local officials as well as nonprofits, aiming to extend the SCIP funds' reach across Wisconsin effectively.

DOJ staff from BJP are tasked with overseeing SCIP grant planning, implementation, compliance, and reporting while facilitating a collaborative effort with the CIAB to ensure the program's success.

Wisconsin CIAB Members:

Mark Abeles-Allison

County Administrator, Bayfield County

Holly Audley

*Assistant Administrator,
WI Department of Health Services*

Nick Bakken

*Sociology & Criminal Justice Professor,
University of Wisconsin - La Crosse*

Sara Benedict

Criminal Justice Director, Dunn County

Sheila Carlson

*Behavioral Health Officer,
Green Bay Police Department*

Colleen Clark

*Criminal Justice Council Coordinator,
Dane County*

Kristy Gusse

*OWI Treatment Court Program Director,
Waukesha County*

Melvin Juette

*Deferred Prosecution Program Director,
Dane County District Attorney's Office*

Kit Kerschensteiner

Disability Rights Wisconsin Director

Heather Kierzek

*Evidence-Based Programs Manager,
Office of Director of State Courts*

Elliott Levine

Circuit Court Judge, La Crosse County

Andrea Loscher

*Justice Systems Program Coordinator,
The Women's Community, Inc.*

Jo Deen Lowe

Chief Judge, Ho-Chunk Nation

Robert Mann

*Healing to Wellness Court Project
Coordinator, Ho-Chunk Nation*

JC Moore

*Judicial Court Commissioner,
Milwaukee County*

Tamra Oman

Statewide Director, EXPO of Wisconsin

Adam Plotkin
*Legislative Liaison,
Office of the State Public Defender*

Jessica Skemp
*Assistant District Attorney, La Crosse
County*

Beth Robinson
*Criminal Justice Treatment Services
Deputy Director, Outagamie County*

Kelli Thompson
*Private Practice, Office of State Public
Defender (formerly)*

Nick Sayner
*Chief Executive Officer,
JusticePoint, Inc.*

Lance Wiersma
*Division of Community Corrections
Administrator, WI Department of
Corrections*

Patti Jo Severson
*Gundersen Health System Educator,
La Crosse County*

Lisa Yeates
*Department of Corrections Regional
Chief, Kenosha County*

The Wisconsin CIAB comprises a diverse group of professionals committed to improving justice and public safety across the state. This assembly of dedicated individuals brings a wealth of experience and insight to the CIAB and will make significant contributions to the program's goals and objectives in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin's SCIP Budget Plan:

Wisconsin DOJ will ensure the following SCIP grant budget requirements are met, in accordance with BJA policy:

- The state may use 60% of the funding: \$2,499,812.
- The state must pass through directly to locals: \$1,200,314.
- The state must pass through \$466,228 in funds to state courts that provide criminal justice and civil justice services as the "less-than-\$10,000 jurisdictions" within the state and/or subaward the funds to such jurisdictions. The less than \$10,000 pass-through requirement is eligible for a waiver, with limitations.

- The state may use up to 10% of the total award for administrative costs: \$416,635.

Figure 4 displays the SCIP plan’s principal projects, categorized by their specific priorities and preliminary funding estimates. These figures are adaptable, subject to refinement as BJP gains better insights into each project’s statewide demand. To effectively disseminate SCIP resources, BJP will provide subgrant opportunities primarily to local and county government agencies, though some may be suited to academic institutions and nonprofits. Government agencies are encouraged to partner with a variety of organizations, including research institutions, suicide prevention nonprofits, and community-based youth organizations, to maximize the impact of SCIP initiatives across Wisconsin.

Priority	Project Name	Potential Applicants	Estimated Amount
(1) Suicide Prevention	Gun Shop Program	Counties, on behalf of gun shops	\$100,000
	Training on reducing access to lethal means	Counties or local agencies, veterans' organizations, etc.	\$149,719
(2) Community-based Prevention, Response Facilitation, and Harm Reduction	Community-based intervention programs focused on gun violence	Counties or local governments	\$1,200,000*
	County-led Response / Harm Reduction	Counties, tribes	\$2,000,000*
(3) Research and Data Collection	Research focused on gun violence	Universities, state agencies, locals, nonprofits	\$300,000
	BJP Administration	Wisconsin DOJ	\$416,635
Total SCIP Funding			\$4,166,354

Figure 4

* Subgrants funded under this opportunity will count toward the 40% pass-through and less-than-\$10,000 requirements.

Wisconsin DOJ’s Subaward Process:

BJP administers subgrants using an electronic web-based system called Egrants. Subgrantees are required to complete an application and then quarterly programmatic and financial reports in the Egrants system and to complete BJA’s Performance Measurement Tool

(PMT) reports for Byrne JAG and other federal grants. The Byrne SCIP grant will be administered using the same procedures and reporting requirements as Byrne JAG.

To reinforce the importance of collaboration across the criminal justice system, BJP typically gives priority to counties that demonstrate in subgrant applications that they have a local CJCC or similar oversight body. If appropriate, such preference could be used to award subgrants under the Byrne SCIP grant.

Before subawards are made, BJP will submit all required information regarding the subgrant applications to BJA for approval. Upon approval, BJP will make awards. Although subgrants are typically awarded on an annual basis, the four-year performance period available under the Byrne SCIP program would allow BJP to award subgrants for two years, providing applicants with certainty that funding will exist for a longer period of time to implement multi-year projects. This will allow local organizations and agencies to firmly establish their programs, assess challenges and successes, establish best practices, and share information with others in the state who may want to replicate that program model.

BJP staff will update appropriate stakeholder groups as necessary on the progress of initiatives. Additionally, subgrant recipients will occasionally attend subcommittee meetings and work group meetings to report out and discuss their projects. BJP staff will ensure alignment between projects and strive to provide transparency for how grant funds are spent. The extensive reporting requirements and integration of grant discussions in subcommittee meetings allow BJP staff to oversee a continual feedback loop that will be used to inform discussions with the CIAB about the next year's funding plan.

Wisconsin DOJ's Capabilities and Competencies:

As the statewide administering agency (SAA) for justice assistance programs under several federal funding initiatives including the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program, Wisconsin DOJ operates the Statistical Analysis Center which performs a variety of data analysis on crime and arrests and other research on criminal justice system issues. The Statistical Analysis Center also administers the State's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, which includes the Wisconsin Incident-Based Reporting (WIBRS) system. Finally, Wisconsin DOJ has primary responsibility for carrying out the state coordination of automated justice information systems among state and local criminal justice agencies.

As SAA, the Wisconsin DOJ's mission is to increase public safety by providing support for state and local government agencies, non-profit programs, and communities, conducting meaningful justice system planning, sharing data and information, and developing appropriate linkages to justice system programming in order to have a positive, long-term impact on improving Wisconsin's justice system while promoting the safety of its citizens. Wisconsin has received funding from the BJA under the Byrne Program since 1988. Funding made available under this federal initiative provides subgrants to local units of government and state agencies for programs designed to develop resources to reduce drug trafficking, address substance abuse disorders, reduce violent crime, and enhance evidence-based decision making. Wisconsin DOJ encourages applicants for funding made available through the Byrne JAG program to work closely with other agencies within, and serving, the criminal justice system to promote collaborative, comprehensive and evidence-based strategies designed to address community and statewide substance abuse and violent crime problems.

Many local and state criminal justice programs and basic law enforcement capabilities have been significantly and positively affected by the availability of funding made available

through the Byrne JAG Program. Efforts in Wisconsin continue to emphasize integration and coordination by all facets of the criminal justice system and Byrne SCIP will be included in those efforts moving forward. In line with the BJA's priorities for evidence-based programming and strategic planning, the State of Wisconsin continually evaluates its planning process as it relates to the allocation of Byrne JAG funding. Wisconsin DOJ believes in the importance of strategic planning and the replication of evidence-based decision making and associated programs. In difficult economic times, planning is especially critical to maximize the impact of grant funding and focus on programs that are evidence-based and have been proven effective.

The FY 2021-2025 Byrne JAG Strategic Plan is based on Wisconsin's approach for the development of a comprehensive process that includes local community involvement, input from a planning committee of criminal justice professionals, and the use of data and research to enhance program design and implementation, and to assess and evaluate Byrne JAG investments. The Byrne JAG strategy continues to evolve based on the results of input from local CJCCs as well as an assessment of state data/trends and state and federal resources. The overall funding priority areas were established and finalized in the 2021 meetings of the state CJCC. BJP staff will manage the Byrne SCIP grant responsibilities by using the CJCC structure and planning tools and procedures that are similar to those used to administer the Byrne JAG program.

Wisconsin DOJ staff in BJP along with colleagues in the Bureau of Justice Information and Analysis (BJIA), and the Crime Information Bureau (CIB) all have significant experience in working collaboratively with advisory bodies to identify an issue, research and analyze it, and identify possible solutions involving data collection, funding, or data sharing activities that will make an improvement. The three bureaus participate in national grant programs that require

working closely with technical assistance providers and serving in a liaison role between the federal and local governments. The three bureaus administer several core programs that serve as the backbone of the criminal justice grants administration efforts in Wisconsin: Byrne JAG, National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP), Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI), and State Justice Statistics (SJS). Other discretionary and state grants also help support and round out the core objectives of these federal grants. The staff will collaborate with each other and other agencies to find areas of alignment among the various federal grant programs to maximize the impact of the federal funds to reduce gun violence. Together these three bureaus will provide the CIAB with all the information and guidance necessary to administer and monitor the dissemination of Byrne SCIP grant funding. They will also be able to conduct training and assistance to ensure that all SCIP stakeholders are able to meet their obligations under this grant program.

Wisconsin's SCIP Data Collection Plan:

Wisconsin DOJ staff in the BJP and BJIA have experience completing federal reporting in both PMT and JustGrants. Staff will use that expertise to guide the efforts of Byrne SCIP subgrantees. Wisconsin DOJ sub-grantees are required to submit narrative performance measurement data quarterly in Egrants, as well as submitting quarterly statistical data through PMT.

The Wisconsin DOJ has utilized REDCap to design web-based data collection programs to aid in evaluating data for state and federally funded subgrants. These programs developed in REDCap have been used to collect detailed program-related metrics and fiscal information which can then be aggregated and entered directly into JustGrants or PMT. The Wisconsin DOJ has also

developed the Comprehensive Outcomes, Research, and Evaluation (CORE) Reporting System that collects participant-level information from community-based treatment courts and diversion programs in order to evaluate program outcomes. The CORE system is currently being upgraded to enhance data collection and evaluation efforts by adding new programs, such as pre-trial diversion and pre-booking. It is possible that both REDCap and the CORE system could be used to collect data for the Byrne SCIP subgrants. The data allows local programs to assess their data for program improvement and allows Wisconsin DOJ to assess data for statewide evaluation of progress on particular programs or, more specifically, objectives within those programs.

Subgrant award documents will explain the reporting requirements. They will also include special conditions that notify subgrantees that they must take measures to safeguard the constitutional rights of any individual who is subject to a crisis intervention program or initiative. Wisconsin DOJ will provide training on any state systems used to administer or report on subgrants, such as Egrants, REDCap, or CORE, and will encourage subgrantees to participate in training on federal systems such as PMT.