

INTERIM STATUS BRIEF

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL VIOLENCE, AND SEX TRAFFICKING

The purpose of this study is to provide an evidence-based report on the extent to which women and girls in Beloit, Wisconsin, experience domestic violence, sexual violence, and sex trafficking or sexual exploitation. The report also is meant to be a tool for area organizations and institutions to understand the needs of women and girls in these areas and to identify where efforts are succeeding or where more services and resources may be needed. We know that official reports of domestic violence, sexual violence, and sex trafficking underestimate the extent to which these forms of abuse occur. In addition to official reports from the Beloit Police Department, Rock County Human Services, and agencies of the State of Wisconsin, some of the information included in this report is drawn from 10 interviews with lead staff of seven local social service and advocacy organizations in Beloit and other neighboring areas that provide support for survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, and sex trafficking. This report would not be possible without their time and effort, generosity, support, and commitment. This brief is excerpts from the full report which is available on the Women's Fund website: statelinecf.org/womens-fund/



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Summary of Findings

There were **1,166 reported domestic violence incidents in Beloit** from 2014 to 2016; according to police reports, **75% of the victims are women**.

Although people from all backgrounds and statuses experience domestic violence, it is more than **3 times more likely to occur under high levels of financial strain**.

In the last 3 years, there have been **30% more foster care cases in Rock County** due to the forced separation of children from their homes—often removing them from their mother who is a victim of domestic violence.

All service providers that were interviewed said **finding housing was the biggest challenge for the survivors** of domestic violence they serve.

There were **523 reported sexual assaults in Beloit** from 2014 to 2016; **86% involved women and girls**.

In Rock County, **girls are three-and-a-half times more likely** to experience sexual abuse than boys.

70% of all sexual assault victims in Beloit from 2014-2016 are **younger than 18 years old**.

Many times, service providers are **the only people who believe** sexual assault survivors are telling the truth about what they experienced.

Sex trafficking occurs in Wisconsin, Rock County, and Beloit.

The average age of children being groomed and sold for sex is **between 11 and 14**.

Violence in the Home

Domestic violence (DV) occurs within a systematic pattern of power and control that includes intentional intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, or other abusive behavior by one intimate partner against another. Table 1 reports the number of all domestic violence incidents reported to police in Beloit and the number referred to the district attorneys for prosecution in Wisconsin and Rock County.

- Roughly 30% of reported domestic violence incidents in Rock County occur in Beloit, and the rate of occurrence (based on population) is higher in Beloit than Rock County and Wisconsin overall.
- About 75% of the victims of domestic violence in Beloit are women.
- From 2014-2016, 7% of DV incidents in Beloit involved repeat abuser.
- 9% of reported domestic violence incidents in Beloit involve a weapon.
- These numbers are conservative estimates since not all incidents are reported.
- There is a high number of women DV survivors in Beloit: over 250 in 2014, over 275 in 2015, and nearly 350 in 2016, which shows a continuing rise.

Table 1. Reported Domestic Violence Incidents, Arrests, and Domestic Violence-Related Homicides

	Wisconsin (pop. 5.7 mill.)	Rock County (pop. 160,331)	Beloit (pop. 36,955 in 2010)		
	2012	2012	2014	2015	2016
Reported Domestic Violence Incidents	28,729	1,251	335 <i>75% women</i>	368 <i>77% women</i>	463 <i>75% women</i>
% of Reported Incidents When An Arrest Was Made	71%	88.4%	84%	84%	85%
Domestic Violence-Related Homicides	55	2			

Sources: WI Dept. of Justice, 2014; End Abuse WI, 2012 report; Beloit Police Department Report.

Domestic violence is second only to mental illness as a risk factor for child abuse.

- In the last 3 years, there have been 30% more foster care cases in Rock County due to having to remove children from their homes—often removing them from a parent (usually their mother) who is a victim of domestic violence.
- In Rock County from 2014-2016, 40% of the 116 children who were physically abused were girls.
- The CARE House provides a child-centered approach to investigating, treating, and preventing child abuse. All forensic interviews of children in child abuse cases in Rock County are conducted there.
- Using CARE House data, we can roughly estimate that of the substantiated cases of child physical abuse in Rock County, 22 cases of physical abuse in 2014, 15 cases in 2015, and 10 cases in 2016 represent children in Beloit.
- About 59% of the children served by CARE House have been abused by a family member.



Did You Know?

1 in 3 women (and 1 in 4 men) in the United States have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner.

Intimate partner violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime in the U.S.

Although people from all backgrounds and statuses experience domestic violence, it is more than 3 times more likely to occur under high levels of financial strain (unemployment or underemployment, for example) than when financial stress is low.

In 2012, 55 people died in Wisconsin as a result of domestic violence, and in over 24% of those homicides a gun was involved.

In the U.S., 1 in 15 children witness intimate partner violence each year.





Did You Know?

Nearly 1 in 5 women (and 1 in 71 men) in the U.S. have been raped at some time in their lives.

Over half of female victims of rape report being raped by an intimate partner and 41% by an acquaintance.

Even though a large number of those experiencing sexual violence are in their teens or early twenties, 34% of reported sexual assaults in the U.S. involve victims under the age of 12.

Violence of a Sexual Nature

Although sexual violence affects people of all backgrounds, women and girls are affected the most. Sexual assault is also the most under-reported violent crime in the U.S. because of its traumatic and intimate nature and the prevalence of victim blaming. According to U.S. Dept. of Justice (2012), 65% of sexual assaults are never reported to law enforcement, so we can assume that the reported assaults represent about a third of the actual number. Table 3 reports all sexual assaults reported to police or campus security in Beloit, compared to the state and county.

- In 2010, over 25% of reported assaults in Rock County occurred in Beloit.
- Of all reported sexual assaults in Beloit, approximately 86% involve women or girls, which is consistent with Wisconsin as a whole in 2010.
- Conviction rates in Wisconsin are low at 24%, and 13% in Rock County.

Table 3. All Reported Sexual Assaults

(2010+)

	Wisconsin	Rock Cnty	Beloit			
	2010	2010	2010	2014	2015	2016
Sex Offense Against Child				75	66	37
Forcible Fondling	2,168	88	19	7	46*	49**
Forcible Rape	1,180	53	20	33	47	33*
Forcible Sodomy/Oral Sex	446	21	2	0	4	5
Sexual Assault with Object	118	17	7	1*	0	0
Statutory Rape	931	36	11	19	21	11
Other Sex Offenses	14	0	0	17	22**	30
Total	4,857	215	59	152	206	165
% Female Victims	85%			86%	84%	87%

*One assault occurred in context of DV. **Two assaults occurred in context of DV. Sources: Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance, "Sexual Assaults in Wisconsin, 2010"; Beloit Police Department, Sexual Offenses Report with Victim Information (received August 29, 2017); Beloit College Annual Crime Statistics (2014-2016).

When we look at victims of sexual assault from 2014-2016 from Beloit Police Dept. reports:

- Most victims are in their mid-teens.
- Youths 12-17 make up 43% of all reported sexual assault and rape victims.
- Adults age 18-24 make up 22% of all reported victims of sexual assault.

Children and Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse can be emotionally confusing and traumatic for children because the abuser is most often a family member or someone they know and trust.

- In Rock County, 79% of children sexually abused from 2014-2016 were girls.
- In Beloit, 24% of all reported victims of sexual assault are 10 years old and younger (compared to 22% for Wisconsin as a whole in 2010).
- From CARE House data, we can roughly estimate that of the substantiated cases of child sexual abuse in Rock County, 17 cases of sexual abuse in 2014, 21 cases in 2015, and 17 cases in 2016 represent children in Beloit.
- It was pointed out that most adult clients of the Sexual Assault Recovery Program experienced sexual assault as children or as teenagers.



The Nature of Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking is a growing concern in the U.S. and occurs in Wisconsin, Rock County, and Beloit.

- Sex trafficking occurs when an adult is coerced, forced, or deceived into prostitution — or maintained in prostitution through these means. Anyone held in service through psychological manipulation or physical force is being trafficked.
- According to federal law in the U.S., child sex trafficking occurs when a child (under 18 years of age) is convinced to perform a commercial sex act— regardless of whether or not the trafficker used force, fraud, or coercion.
- Almost one-third (32%) of sex trafficking cases in the U.S. involve youth and children under the age of 18.
- The average age at which a girl in the U.S. is brought into prostitution is 13, and a large number of girls in the commercial sex trade are under 18.
- One of the greatest challenges is that many youth being trafficked do not recognize they are being trafficked.
- Sex traffickers maintain control through violence and coercion, psychological and emotional controls, threats of harm to the victim or their families, false promises of future pay for work already done, debt bondage, threats of arrest with no pay and crippling debt, and manipulation of an individual's disability or alcohol or drug dependency. As a result, young people who are being trafficked are most often controlled without being physically restrained or held captive by their trafficker and may attend school, participate in other social activities, or have contact with neighbors and community members.

Sex Trafficking in Beloit, Wisconsin

Finding information and data on sex-trafficking for the city of Beloit is difficult.

- Because homeless youth are often targets of sex traffickers, looking more closely at homeless youth, who are often running away from experiences of domestic and sexual violence, may provide important information about sex-trafficking in Beloit. A non-profit serving homeless or unaccompanied youth is Project 16:49.
- About 28% of the girls that Project 16:49 has worked with in Rock County have been victims of human trafficking.
- There are an estimated 149 unaccompanied youth in the Beloit School District.
- Project 16:49 also provides transitional living for up to 18 months at the Robin House in Beloit for up to seven women ages 18 and 19 who are still in school.
- Table 5 presents information about the 43 young women who have been residents of Robin House from February 2014 to August 2017.

Table 5. Abuse Experienced by Young Women Residents of Robin House
(2014-2017)

	Domestic Violence	Sexual Assault	Sex Trafficking	Both Sexual Assault and Sex Trafficking
Number of Residents	21	28	26	23
% of Total	48%	65%	60%	53%



Did You Know?

About 63% of sex trafficking cases in the United States involve U.S. citizens.

In 2016, 1 out of 6 runaways reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children have likely been trafficked.

The average age of children being groomed and sold for sex is between 11 and 14.

Current estimates suggest the majority of trafficking victims are women and girls.

