



2015-2016 Public Policy Agenda

Published December 4, 2014



OVERVIEW

The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Inc. (WCASA) is a membership agency comprised of 50 sexual assault service providers (SASPs) across the state, other organizations, and individuals working to end sexual violence in Wisconsin.

Informed by the membership-based Public Policy Advisory Committee, WCASA developed this Public Policy Agenda consistent with our mission, philosophy, and agenda-setting criteria. However, this is a living document. We encourage legislators, sexual assault survivors, SASPs, and others to contact us with other public policy ideas throughout the 2015-2016 legislative session.

Mission

- To create the social change necessary to end sexual violence.

Philosophy

Our mission is based on the following philosophy:

- We believe it is a basic human right to live free of sexual violence.
- We believe that everyone has a role and a responsibility in this work.
- We do not do this work in isolation. We believe in the importance of collaborations and alliance building.
- Our work is driven by survivors' voices. Survivors and all those affected by sexual violence deserve compassionate services, dignity, privacy, and respect.
- We believe that this work is based in a feminist perspective that sexual violence is rooted in oppressive power relations.
- We believe that sexual violence is any unwanted sexual contact (verbal and/or physical), including rape, incest, child sexual assault, ritual abuse, acquaintance rape/assault, intimate partner or marital rape, sexual harassment, exposure, and voyeurism. Sexual violence refers to acts of violence where sex is used as the weapon.
- We believe that diversity and safe, accessible services are fundamental to social change.
- We believe in the power of advocacy, education, prevention, and driving public policy as agents of social change.

Agenda-Setting Criteria

WCASA prioritized the following issues and policy positions on the Public Policy Agenda according to these criteria, listed in no particular order:

- Impact on survivors of sexual violence
- Alignment with WCASA's long-term interests
- Substantial agreement among members, as represented by the membership-based Public Policy Advisory Committee
- Lack of adequate coverage by allied organizations
- Ability to achieve a meaningful policy outcome
- Timeliness



AGENDA

Tier 1, Leadership Issues

Tier 1 issues are those in which WCASA works to become the recognized leader in the state. WCASA considers these issues the highest priority of the public policy and communications coordinator. Tier 1 issues should be the subject of active engagement by WCASA members.

- **Sexual Assault Services Funding**
 - Advocate for increased funding for the Sexual Assault Victim Services grant program and its grantees.
- **Victim Accompaniment**
 - Advocate for legislation providing survivors the right to be accompanied by a trained sexual assault advocate throughout the various stages of the medical and criminal justice processes: the sexual assault forensic exam, law enforcement interviews, and court proceedings.
- **Public Reporting**
 - Advocate for an annual public reporting system of data related to sexual assaults, such as reporting sexual assaults to law enforcement, arrests, referrals for prosecution, and, among other possibilities, convictions.

Tier 2, Participant Issues

Tier 2 issues are important to WCASA but are well covered by other allied organizations that are recognized leaders on the matter. On such issues, WCASA will contribute to the collaborative work led by these organizations, and WCASA will engage our membership selectively and strategically, where members' contributions can produce a meaningful policy outcome.

- **Sexual Violence Prevention**
 - Advocate for legislation or administrative policies providing for sexual violence prevention in schools.
 - Advocate for legislation or administrative policies providing for child sex abuse prevention.

- **Reproductive Health**
 - Advocate for legislation or administrative policies that protect or advance women’s reproductive health, including, but not limited to, access to emergency contraception.
- **Human Trafficking**
 - Advocate for legislation or administrative policies that would reduce or eliminate human trafficking.

Tier 3, Potential Leadership Issues

Tier 3 issues are those on which WCASA would likely lead (i.e., they would become tier 1 issues) if WCASA chooses to work on them. However, these issues are not fully consistent with the Public Policy Agenda setting criteria at this time. These issues can become higher priorities when events warrant.

- **Costs Beyond SANE Exam**
 - Advocate for legislation or administrative policies that would provide additional ways in which the state can help cover the costs sexual assault survivors incur beyond the forensic medical exam.
- **Healthy Sexuality**
 - Advocate for legislation or administrative policies providing for sexual violence prevention education that promotes healthy sexuality, including, but not limited to, improving the Healthy Youth Act.
- **Waiting Period and Ultrasound**
 - Advocate for legislation or administrative policies that eliminate the requirement that sexual assault survivors must report their sexual assault to law enforcement in order to avoid the currently required ultrasound and 24-hour waiting period before having an abortion.
- **Housing**
 - Advocate for legislation or administrative policies that lessen the proof requirements in housing law, such that sexual assault survivors can terminate a rental agreement more easily if a sexual assault advocate informs the landlord that the tenant is a survivor of sexual assault.
 - Current law requires a copy of certain court documents (e.g., an injunction or criminal complaint) to terminate a rental agreement.

Tier 4, Monitored Issues

Tier 4 issues are important to WCASA. These issues can become higher priorities when events warrant. WCASA will monitor these issues and possibly issue statements, sign joint letters initiated by allies, and other actions. These issues may become more detailed as the legislative session progresses.

- **Economic Justice**
- **Racial Justice**



If you have any questions or would like to discuss other public policy matters related to sexual assault, please contact:

Dominic W. Holt, M.S.W., M.F.A.
Public Policy & Communications Coordinator
Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA)
2801 West Beltline Highway, Suite 202
Madison, WI 53713
608-257-1516 ext. 113
dominich@wcasa.org