



**ELDER
RIGHTS
PROJECT**
civil legal aid for victims

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ERP Marks World Elder Abuse Awareness Day with Events Statewide

Milwaukee--The Elder Rights Project (ERP) is hosting outreach presentations and participating in community discussions throughout the state to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15.

The need for civil legal aid for victims of elder abuse is staggering throughout the nation. Financial abuse and fraud costs older Americans an estimated \$36.5 billion per year. In addition to financial exploitation, seniors increasingly find themselves targets of physical and emotional abuse. According to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), 6,347 reports of elder abuse were made in 2014, a 95 percent increase from 2001. It is also estimated that for each case reported, five remain unreported.

“In just its eighth month of operating, the Elder Rights Project has opened nearly 400 cases for elders in need, and we know that this is just the tip of the iceberg,” said ERP Director Nicole Zimmer. “We will continue outreach in every corner of the state to make sure Wisconsin residents know about this important civil legal aid resource.”

Legal Action of Wisconsin joined with fellow nonprofit law firm Wisconsin Judicare to expand the ERP in November 2016. The expansion was an effort to address one of the most pressing legal needs in the state, as civil legal aid advocates estimated that up to 27,000 elder abuse victims in Wisconsin had no access to civil legal services.

To be eligible for ERP services, an individual must be: 1) a Wisconsin resident, 2) age 60 or older, 3) a victim of crime (elder abuse), and 4) facing civil legal needs related to the victimization.

ERP attorneys can represent elder abuse victims who are facing eviction or foreclosure as a result of abuse. Attorneys can assist elders in obtaining protective orders, such as domestic abuse injunctions and individual-at-risk injunctions. Advocates can also help victims recover from identity theft, and assist them in filing small and large claims to recover money and property wrongfully taken. The ERP also locates trusted, non-abusive caregivers to step in and provide ongoing support and assistance to the elder when needed. The project is funded through the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). VOCA victim assistance grants are provided to private and public agencies to support direct services to victims of crime.

To learn about outreach events in your area, please contact alg@legalaction.org or visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ERPWisconsin.

Potential clients are encouraged to call the statewide toll-free Elder Abuse Intake Line at 844-614-5468.

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Established in 1968, Legal Action of Wisconsin (Legal Action) is a non-profit law firm that ensures equal justice. With offices in six cities, Legal Action serves 39 southern Wisconsin counties. The Elder Rights Project provides free civil legal services to victims of elder abuse, helping victims become safe and independent, stabilize their lives, and meet their emotional and physical needs by resolving their critical civil legal problems. For more information, visit www.legalaction.org.