

From: [Shannon Barry](#)
To: [Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Support for item 90563 approving the allocation of \$2,080,000 to support community based social service organizations as recommended by the Community Development Division
Date: Monday, December 1, 2025 3:35:09 PM

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Dear City of Madison Finance Committee Members,

I am writing to you in support of agenda item 5 (90563) approving the allocation of \$2,080,000 to support community based social service organizations to provide Crisis Intervention and Prevention Services as recommended by the Community Development Division.

DAIS works to make the City of Madison and Dane County a safer, more just, more equitable place for people who have experienced domestic violence, their children, and the people who love them. Since 1977, DAIS has worked to empower those affected by domestic violence and advocate for social change through support, education, and outreach. From almost the very beginning, the City of Madison has financially supported DAIS.

We applied for city funding to help DAIS keep our domestic violence shelter open 24/7, thriving, and available to survivors of domestic violence at high risk of serious injury or death and who need lifesaving emergency shelter and comprehensive support services for themselves and their children.

We want to offer our unequivocal support the staff recommendation to the Finance Committee and the Common Council to provide DAIS with \$315,000 in 2026 and for the next three years to support the DAIS Shelter Program.

We appreciate acknowledgement and support from RFP reviewers that the DAIS shelter, as the only domestic violence shelter in all of Dane County, is a vital part of the web of community resources dedicated to keeping vulnerable city residents safe. The Shelter Program, which at its core is a **homicide prevention** program, is where clients with multiple barriers and at highest risk of severe violence or death can temporarily stay for safety, recovery, and support.

The approved funding levels are less than we had requested, but it would still be a 5% increase over our current contract with the city. Perhaps just as important, City Council approval of the staff recommendation would be a powerful statement of support, a

commitment to the survivor community that the City stands with them and will remain a reliable partner as each survivor starts their journey toward a life free of violence.

The importance of a decision by the City to maintain its support for the DAIS Shelter cannot be overstated. This is an anxious time for the survivor community and those of us who serve them. Unless something significantly changes, DAIS expects to see its government revenue plummet in the next two years.

As context, in 2023, DAIS received a total of roughly \$1.9 million from federal, state, and local government sources. At this time, we've been told that several grants DAIS is receiving now will end in January 2026, with more ending in 2027. We now expect that in 2027, DAIS will receive only \$1.2 million from government sources, or a \$700,000 loss of government funds since 2023. This would be 37% drop in government funding over four years.

A decisive action by the City to support continued shelter funding would be viewed as a proverbial stake in the ground, a commitment to stem the tide of declining financial support for domestic violence services.

Other indicators point to the critical need for the City to support the continued availability of a 24/7 domestic violence shelter staffed by trained, dedicated and compassionate staff.

- Demand is on the rise. Calls and texts to the DAIS Helpline continue to rise. In the most recent one-year time period, 8,647 persons contacted DAIS advocates. This is 1,400 more than just three years ago. The number of persons contacting DAIS for the first time increased by 700 over the last three years.
- Lethality is growing. DAIS advocates have sensed an increase in the seriousness of harm survivors are enduring at the hands of their abusers. The recent lethality report by End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin would validate these observations – in 2024, Dane County reported 10 domestic violence deaths, which is double the number in 2023 and even higher than the preceding 5 years.
- Our support and services work. Survivors continue to come to DAIS for the support, services, and safety they need. We hear from survivors that our staff are compassionate and helpful, and the time survivors spent in shelter made a difference in their lives.

In conclusion, we welcome and support the staff recommendation to provide DAIS with \$315,000 next year to support the DAIS shelter program.

- The funding continues the city's long-time commitment to financially support the DAIS 24x7 shelter dedicated to securing the safety of the most vulnerable and at-risk survivors of domestic violence.
- The funding is necessary not only because of rising demand for services, but because of withering support from other government funders.
- City funding will provide a stable financial base that DAIS can rely on for the next four years, as we turn our attention to finding other funders who will to do their

part to sustain vital services to survivors.

On behalf of all of us at DAIS and the survivors we serve, thank you for your consideration.

Warmly,
Shannon Barry

Shannon Barry, MSSW
Executive Director
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers
DAIS (Domestic Abuse Intervention Services)
2102 Fordem Avenue, Madison, WI 53704

(608) 251-1237 ext. 307 (p) | (608) 284-2134 (f)
shannonb@abuseintervention.org | abuseintervention.org
Facebook: [Domestic Abuse Intervention Services](https://www.facebook.com/DomesticAbuseInterventionServices)
Twitter: [@DAISofDaneCo](https://twitter.com/DAISofDaneCo)
Instagram: [DAISofDaneCo](https://www.instagram.com/DAISofDaneCo)

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