



State of Wisconsin
2017 - 2018 LEGISLATURE

LRB-0982/P2
EAW:kjf

PRELIMINARY DRAFT - NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION

1 **AN ACT to create** 46.40 (2m) (c), 49.823 and 165.257 of the statutes; **relating to:**
2 the authority of the Department of Children and Families, Department of
3 Justice, and Department of Health Services to allocate federal grant money for
4 civil legal aid.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill provides explicit authority for the Department of Health Services, Department of Children and Families, and Department of Justice to allocate federal block grant funds for the purpose of providing civil legal aid to the extent authorized by federal law.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

5 **SECTION 1.** 46.40 (2m) (c) of the statutes is created to read:
6 46.40 **(2m)** (c) *Allocations for civil legal aid.* 1. The legislature recognizes that
7 the difficulty that low-income, indigent, vulnerable, and at-risk populations face in
8 fulfilling basic human needs, including food, shelter, clothing, heat, medical care,

1 safety, and child custody may be caused or compounded by lack of access to civil legal
2 services. The legislature further recognizes that providing these populations with
3 free or reduced-fee civil legal services to fulfill these needs can be an effective way
4 to eliminate or reduce the dependency of members of these populations on public
5 assistance or other government programs.

6 2. To the extent authorized by federal law, the department may allocate federal
7 block grant money that it administers and that is intended to benefit low-income,
8 indigent, vulnerable, or at-risk populations for the purpose of providing civil legal
9 aid to qualified individuals.

10 **SECTION 2.** 49.823 of the statutes is created to read:

11 **49.823 Funding for civil legal aid. (1)** The legislature recognizes that the
12 difficulty that low-income, indigent, vulnerable, and at-risk populations face in
13 fulfilling basic human needs, including food, shelter, clothing, heat, medical care,
14 safety, and child custody may be caused or compounded by lack of access to civil legal
15 services. The legislature further recognizes that providing these populations with
16 free or reduced-fee civil legal services to fulfill these needs can be an effective way
17 to eliminate or reduce the dependency of members of these populations on public
18 assistance or other government programs.

19 **(2)** To the extent authorized by federal law, the department of health services
20 and the department of children and families may allocate federal block grant money
21 that it administers and that is intended to benefit low-income, indigent, vulnerable,
22 or at-risk populations for the purpose of providing civil legal aid to qualified
23 individuals.

24 **SECTION 3.** 165.257 of the statutes is created to read:

