

ACCESS TO JUSTICE (ATJ) FUND GRANTS

Instructions and Grant Criteria

Introduction

The State Bar of Michigan's Access to Justice Campaign provides leadership in raising contributions for endowment and operations, and the Michigan State Bar Foundation receives and manages these funds as well as the process for awarding grants from these funds. Many other partners, such as legal aid organizations, other nonprofit agencies, judges, local bar associations, corporations, and donors interested in equal justice for all have joined in this effort to increase support for civil legal aid for the poor.

Grants are given for **one-time, innovative projects** that advance the ATJ Fund distribution goals and criteria.

ATJ Grant Criteria and Distribution Guidelines

A. General Distribution Criteria

1. Grants will be made at the discretion of the Foundation. The grants processes will consider the ATJ Fund Overall Distribution Goals and other factors such as the need for both renewable and one-time grants, the availability of other funds, the objectives of any existing state plan, and whether the applicant organization has its donors make contributions through the ATJ Fund and any other support for or coordination with the ATJ Campaign.
2. Eligible programs will include a combination of basic-field programs, those providing a full range of services and those addressing special needs/populations. All grantees must agree to cooperate as directed with the ATJ Campaign in their fundraising efforts.

B. General Priorities for All Foundation Discretionary Grants

1. The Foundation favors proposals that include the following:
 - A. Demonstrate innovation in service;
 - B. Demonstrate regional or statewide coordination of services with other providers;
 - C. Assist in providing relatively equal levels of meaningful access and high-quality assistance to clients throughout Michigan;
 - D. Allocates adequate resources to promote evaluation and accountability;
 - E. Have potential for independent financial and programmatic continuity;
 - F. Demonstrate community support, partnerships, and links with other entities doing similar work;

- G. Demonstrate collaboration and avoid duplication of service;
 - H. Have multiple funding sources;
 - I. Have potential for applicability or replication in other parts of the state;
 - J. Show a history of quality service and fiscal responsibility.
2. The Foundation does not make grants:
 - A. To political campaigns or entities designed primarily for lobbying;
 - B. To support religious activities;
 - C. That jeopardize the Foundation's tax-exempt status.
 3. The Foundation generally does not make grants:
 - A. To individuals;
 - B. To endowment or capital campaigns;
 - C. To repay loans;
 - D. As a substitute for other funds;
 - E. For continuing or multi-year operating support;
 - F. For general overhead costs.

C. Overall ATJ Fund Distribution Goals

1. Assists in providing relatively equal levels of meaningful access and high quality civil legal assistance to low-income clients throughout the state.
2. Results in a more stable funding base for a network of basic field programs providing civil legal services to low-income persons.
3. Helps to assure that resources are available for a full range of civil legal services to the poor, including assistance for special programs.
4. Promotes coordination and improvements in the overall delivery system and assists entities providing training and other support to field programs.
5. Targets appropriate resources toward innovations, strategic collaboration and technical assistance to promote both effectiveness and efficiency.
6. Has defined guidelines criteria which are compatible where appropriate with criteria for other major funding sources, with coordinated application, reporting and evaluation processes, where possible, through the Foundation's grant procedures.
7. Allocates adequate resources to promote accountability and quality in how the funds are used by recipients, including the Foundation's evaluation processes.
8. Implements appropriate procedures for allocating costs to support administrative duties and sustain adequate staffing for management of the Campaign by the SBM ATJ Development Department and relevant others.

Grant Application and Approval Process

The Foundation makes funding determinations on the basis of written applications. Application forms and instructions can be obtained from the Foundation's web site at www.msbf.org. The Foundation may, at its discretion, request supplements to the applications and make on-site visits or require an applicant to appear at a Board or Committee meeting. Application due dates and expected grant decision dates are also posted on the Foundation's web site.

The application must be submitted electronically via e-mail to msbf@msbf.org. Attachments which are not in electronic form should be received in hard copy by 5 p.m. on the due date.

All applicants must sign and follow the Foundation's Grant Assurances. Applications from entities of the State Bar of Michigan should indicate whether they have the approval or authorization of the State Bar Board of Commissioners or Executive Committee for this funding request.

Grant Awards and Payments

Applicants will be notified in writing of the grant decision, any special terms or conditions, and how to make payment arrangements. To receive payment, Foundation funds must be spent only for the items described in the approved grant application or as directed in the grant award letter. Material variances must be approved by the Foundation. Grantees must complete the work for which Foundation funds are granted within substantially the same time frame described in the approved grant application or obtain approval from the Foundation for any substantial changes in the project or its schedule.

Reporting and Evaluation

Grant recipients must provide the following information to the Foundation:

1. A final written report (and interim reports if requested) of how the grant money has been spent, the results achieved and compliance with any special grant conditions, including cooperation with the ATJ Campaign;
2. Copies of all materials resulting from the project and, if requested, a replication outline;
3. Responses to the Foundation's reasonable requests for further information;
4. Acknowledgment of the grant funding as directed by the Foundation.

Additional Information

The Foundation welcomes telephone inquiries about proposed projects or the application process. A description of past grants and typical grant amounts can be found at www.msbf.org.