

MSBF Project Grant Committee

Staff Recommendations

CONFIDENTIAL

October 2025

Autism Alliance of Michigan

Know Your Rights: Empowering Michigan Families on Special Education Rights

Amount Requested: \$50,000

Amount Recommended: \$50,000

Anticipated Time Period: 11/1/2025 – 10/31/2026

Autism Alliance of Michigan (AAoM) proposes a statewide initiative to educate families on their legal rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), with a focus on the state complaint process. The project includes ten “Know Your Rights” workshops across Michigan, targeting parents, caregivers, and community partners. The workshops will provide practical tools for filing complaints and navigating special education systems.

Following a request for budget clarification, AAoM confirmed that consultant fees will support limited-term legal and advocacy expertise to ensure workshop content is accurate and aligned with IDEA. Equipment costs cover portable technology and accessibility tools for statewide delivery. Other expenses include modest promotional materials and refreshments to support engagement. Evaluation design support was listed under “audit” and will be used to develop and analyze pre/post surveys. These costs are discrete, project-specific, and aligned with standard training practices.

Staff recommends full approval of this grant request.

Justice Speaks Legal Aid

Bridging the Gap: Innovative Legal Pathways to Family Preservation

Amount Requested: \$52,500

Amount Recommended: \$52,500

Anticipated Time Period: 1/1/2026 – 12/31/2026

Justice Speaks Legal Aid is a newly formed nonprofit focused on preventing unnecessary foster care placements by providing legal tools and social support to families in crisis. The project combines legal representation, caregiver education, and

case management to help families arrange temporary caregiving during times of illness, incarceration, or homelessness.

While this is a first-time applicant, the organization is led by highly respected legal professionals and has already secured a matching grant from the Oakland County Bar Foundation. The proposal addresses a substantive legal area not currently covered by annual grantees and includes a strong evaluation plan.

Staff recommends full approval of this grant request, with the reminder that all Administration of Justice grants are reimbursement-based and contingent on expenses incurred and outcomes produced.

Michigan Health Improvement Alliance (MiHIA)

Clean Slate Collaborative

Amount Requested: \$53,625

Amount Recommended: \$0

Anticipated Time Period: 12/1/2025 – 11/1/2026

MiHIA, in partnership with the Great Lakes Expungement Network (GLEN), proposes a regional expungement initiative targeting nine counties in the Great Lakes Bay Region. The project aims to connect 75 individuals to legal support for criminal record expungement.

Prior to submission, GLEN reached out for access to the MSBF grant system and met with Mary Gladstone-Highland, Director of Grants. She advised that a competitive proposal would need to be innovative, non-duplicative, and include a strong implementation plan with clear legal partnerships.

Upon review, staff found the proposal to be duplicative of services already funded in the region. There is no evidence of active legal partnerships in the service area, and GLEN does not appear to have the organizational infrastructure to manage a grant of this size. The proposal relies heavily on MiHIA as a fiscal sponsor, but MiHIA would not be directly implementing the work.

Staff recommends not funding this proposal at this time.