

**Michigan State Bar Foundation**  
**Project Grant Committee**  
**Summary of Virtual Meeting: March 2, 2026**

Present: Robert F. Riley, Chair; Lori A. Buiteweg, Alisha Cieslak, Hon. Shauna Dunning, Chad Engelhardt, Reggie Pacis, Dana M. Warnez, Peter H. Webster. Staff Members, Jennifer Bentley and Mary Gladstone-Highland

A total of approximately \$897,500 in current year funds is available for grants through 9/30/2026.

***A. CAN Council***

A Task Force to Protect Children

Amount Requested: \$20,000

Amount Recommended: \$20,000

The CAN (Child Abuse and Neglect) Council requests \$20,000 to launch and train a new multidisciplinary task force focused on identifying and responding to Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children across four counties. The project funds a two-day training conference for law enforcement, prosecutors, CPS, medical professionals, and MDT partners, with the goal of improving regional protocols and collaboration to better identify and protect victims.

The committee discussed the proposal as a new, short-term, innovative training initiative aligned with MSBF priorities.

MOVED, SUPPORTED AND CARRIED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF UP TO \$20,000 AOJ FUNDS TO THE CAN COUNCIL TO CONDUCT TRAINING AND DEVELOP A MULTIDISCIPLINARY TASKFORCE TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE VICTIMS OF COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN, WITH REIMBURSEMENT BASED ON ACTUAL COSTS OF THE TRAINING.

***B. Legal Aid and Defender Association***

Veterans Legal Clinic

Amount Requested: \$50,000

Amount Recommended: \$0

Legal Aid and Defender Association seeks \$50,000 to expand its existing legal services for Veterans by increasing onsite assistance at medical facilities and adding a Veteran-to-Veteran pro bono component.

The committee discussed concerns that the proposal largely extends an established service model rather than introducing short-term, innovative, or project-specific work, and that it would duplicate services currently being provided.

MOVED, SUPPORTED AND CARRIED TO RECOMMEND DENIAL OF THE FUNDING REQUEST FROM LEGAL AID AND DEFENDER ASSOCIATION FOR THE VETERANS LEGAL CLINIC.