

Access To Justice Campaign 2025 Report

We are pleased to provide the 2025 ATJ Campaign Report. The primary purpose of the centralized campaign is to raise unrestricted funds for statewide operations and to promote the equitable distribution of those resources.

2025 was the eighth year for the centralized campaign model of raising funds from the Michigan legal community and distributing to 14 legal aid organizations, including eight statewide and six regional programs. A spreadsheet including 2025 distribution amounts and hold harmless amounts for the 14 participating programs is attached (see 2025 ATJ Campaign Distribution). In addition to distribution, which is based on donations received during the calendar year, the ATJ Campaign calculates and assesses many different elements.

We use the following metrics to create a fuller picture of the Campaign's operation:

- Total amount raised in a calendar year from the Michigan legal community
- Total amount of cy pres received and/or distributed during a calendar year
- Implementation of the hold harmless provision
- Total annual distribution with and without cy pres
- Percentage of State Bar of Michigan members who contribute to the Campaign
- Per attorney giving from State Bar of Michigan members who are MI residents
- Number of firms on Leadership Firm list
- Number of individuals that donated \$1,000 or more

2025 Distribution

The following is a breakdown of total distribution for 2024 and 2025:

Annual ATJ Distribution and Donations received directly by programs

	2024	2025
Cy pres awards	\$457,533	\$199,009
Legal community donations	\$1,223,641	\$1,196,644
Donations received outside campaign	\$8,138	\$6,165
Hold harmless amounts	\$0	\$43,397
TOTAL	\$1,689,312	\$1,445,215

Cy Pres and Hold Harmless

In 2025, the ATJ Fund received \$199,009 in cy pres awards that specifically named the Campaign as a recipient.

The ATJ Campaign hold harmless policy is still in effect. The policy states that hold harmless amounts will be in effect until the campaign has raised more than the hold harmless provisions, not taking into account unique gifts such as cy pres awards, for each participating program for three consecutive years.

Calendar Year ATJ Contributions from the Michigan Legal Community

The following chart provides a full picture of donations from the legal community.

	2024	2025
Statewide endowment	\$3,000	\$3,000
Statewide operations	\$1,061,091	\$1,123,769
Designated operations	\$162,550	\$72,875
TOTAL ATJ Fund donations	\$1,226,641	\$1,199,644

PLUS:

Annual gifts made to the participating programs outside of the ATJ Campaign	\$8,138	\$6,165
TOTAL legal community to participating programs	\$1,234,779	\$1,205,809

Campaign Totals and Designated Donations

Legal community giving was \$28,970 less during calendar year 2025 than 2024. Distribution is based on a calendar year. The Campaign received approximately \$157,500 in January and February that was intended for the 2025 Campaign, including two large firm gifts. We also received five \$10,000 gifts from individual donors in 2026. While intended for 2025, these funds will be distributed to participating programs in 2026.

The ATJ Campaign encourages statewide donations yet honors a donor's wishes to designate and those gifts are distributed pursuant to the Distribution Plan. The ATJ Campaign received \$72,875 in designated donations to the participating programs. \$44,950 of designated donations were for Legal Aid of Western Michigan. LAWM did not join the centralized effort until 2023 and west Michigan has a longstanding history of support for civil legal aid, with specific designations to LAWM. In addition, the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center received \$11,275 of designated contributions. We will continue to message and encourage undesignated donations in 2026.

Gifts made outside of the ATJ Campaign

The participating programs received a total of \$6,165 in donations outside of the ATJ Campaign. Programs have contacted donors to explain their request that donations be given through the ATJ Campaign, and these gifts continue to diminish each year. One donor, who has consistently contributed \$5,000 annually, made contributions through a unique platform with an employer match that could only be designated directly to LAWM. These were considered "gifts made outside the Campaign" for 2025.

Attorney Giving Rates and Participation

Successful fundraising campaigns reach their monetary goals through the generosity of major gifts. Thus, the ATJ Campaign will continue to pursue large law firms and individual major gift prospects to achieve our goals. However, the ATJ Campaign tracks per attorney giving and the percentage of attorneys who participate to measure how Michigan attorneys prioritize giving to the Campaign and to compare Michigan giving rates with other states.

1. Per attorney giving rates

There were 33,961 active State Bar of Michigan attorneys in 2025. The per attorney average giving rate was \$36. Prior to centralizing the campaign, the per attorney giving rate was \$25, so the centralized campaign has experienced a 44% increase in per attorney giving rates.

2. Attorney participation

Approximately 3,677 individuals donated to the campaign in 2025, equivalent to approximately 11% of State Bar of Michigan members living within the state.

3. Leadership Firms

Firms are recognized on a tiered list starting at an average of \$300 per attorney. In 2025, we increased Leadership Firms from 44 to 47 firms. We gained the following firms for per attorney giving:

- Fried, Gallagher, Taylor
- Kline Legal Group
- Troutman Pepper Locke, LLP

The following new firms each contributed \$10,000, as part of the Major Gifts initiative and their donation qualified them for leadership firm recognition:

- Marko Law
- McKeen & Associates
- Meyers Law
- Olsman MacKenzie Peacock
- Ven Johnson Law

There were 5 leadership firms that were recognized in 2024 and not 2025. A few were because of changes in firm leadership, one no longer qualified because the firm did not have two or more attorneys and one made a gift to another foundation by accident. We will continue to engage with these firms to encourage them to give at a leadership level for 2026.

4. Major Gifts Campaign

Bob Riley, Judge Victoria Roberts and Tom Behm helped us launch a major gifts initiative, seeking gifts of \$10,000. Our goal was to get 15 individuals to donate \$10,000. We reached that goal through individual and firm gifts (see above).

We are grateful for the following individuals that donated \$10,000:

Thomas Behm

Thomas Linn

Robert Riley

Louis Corey

Cary McGehee

Hon. Victoria Roberts

George Googasian

Jeffrey Meyers

Richard Soble

Susan Kornfield

Michael Pitt

As part of this initiative, we created a Champions of Impact Giving Recognition, to recognize firms and individuals that give \$10,000+. We are publishing both the Leadership Firm and the Champions of Impact list in the Michigan Bar Journal.

In addition to the major gift initiative, we are encouraging donors to increase their giving levels. In 2025, 78 attorneys gave \$1,000 or more.

Conclusion

While there was a slight decrease in contributions on a calendar year, overall there was an increase in contributions to the ATJ Campaign, because of the significant gifts received in January and February.

At the end of 2025, a new Impact Gifts Manager, Katie Pike, joined our team and Erica Swieringa was promoted to Engagement Manger. A new Development Associate, Kiera Tierney, began in January 2026. We are in the process of filling the Chief Development Officer role. This expanded team will support stronger efforts to acquire new donors, retain annual supporters, and cultivate major-gift relationships, thereby increasing the overall impact of the ATJ Campaign. Additionally, the increased staffing will allow the team to deepen donor education around planned giving opportunities.

In May 2025 the Michigan Supreme Court considered modification to the Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct 6.1 regarding pro bono and financial donations. The State Bar of Michigan, the Michigan State Bar Foundation, Legal Services Association of Michigan and the State Planning Body all agreed on proposed modifications. The requested modifications to this rule would align with the practices of the majority of other states and really support the efforts of the campaign to increase resources through pro bono and financial donations.

We appreciate the MSBF Board and its steadfast support of the Access to Justice Campaign. As the centralized model strengthens resources across all participating programs, we are energized by the progress already underway and optimistic about the continued momentum ahead. Thank you for your dedication as we work together to expand resources and deepen impact for every program we serve.

2025 ATJ Campaign Champions of Impact

We are grateful to the donors whose remarkable generosity—gifts of \$10,000 or more—helped drive this impactful work.

100,000-\$199,999

Honigman

\$50,000-\$99,999

Bodman

Miller Canfield

Miller Johnson

Varnum LLP

Warner Norcross + Judd

\$25,000-\$49,999

Dickinson Wright

Dykema

Ford Motor Company

Foster Swift Collins & Smith

Taft

\$10,000-\$24,999

Thomas R. Behm

Butzel Long

Conlin, McKenney & Philbrick

Louis G. Corey

Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes

George A. Googasian

The Googasian Firm

Gruel Mills Nims & Pylman

Howard & Howard

Kerr Russell

Susan M. Kornfield

Thomas Woodrow and Diane Elizabeth Linn

Mantese Honigman

Marko Law

Cary S. McGehee

McKeen & Associates

Jeffrey T. Meyers

Meyers Law

Olsman MacKenzie Peacock

Michael L. Pitt

Pitt McGehee Palmer Bonanni & Rivers

Rhoades McKee

Robert F. Riley

Hon. Victoria A. Roberts (retired)

Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge

Richard A. Soble

Soble Rowe Krichbaum

Thrun Law Firm

Troutman Pepper Locke

Ven Johnson Law

Cy Pres Awards

Blanchard & Walker

Bursor & Fisher

Firm Hedin

The Miller Law Firm