

Application: Disability Rights Michigan/Expanding Medicaid Impact Litigation

Disability Rights Michigan
Administration of Justice Grant Program

Summary

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Administration of Justice Grant Application

Completed - Apr 21 2026

Administration of Justice Grant Application

Organizational Overview

1. Describe how you learned of this grant opportunity:

From Bob Gillett, former director of the Michigan Advocacy Program.

2. If you are not an annual grantee of the Michigan State Bar Foundation, please briefly describe your organization's mission:

DRM is the independent, private, nonprofit, and nonpartisan protection and advocacy organization authorized by federal and state law to advocate for and protect the legal rights of people with disabilities in Michigan. Designated by the governor of Michigan as this state's Protection & Advocacy ("P & A") System, DRM exists to protect the legal and human rights of Michiganders with developmental disabilities and mental illness. 42 U.S.C. §§ 15041 and 10801.

3. If you are not an annual grantee of the Michigan State Bar Foundation, please briefly describe your organization's history:

DRM has been Michigan's designated Protection & Advocacy System for over forty years. DRM maintains a statewide intake and referral system, monitors and investigates instances of abuse/neglect in institutional settings, monitors and investigates Social Security representative payees, and brings class action and other systemic litigation to further the rights of Michiganders with disabilities.

4. If you are not an annual grantee of the Michigan State Bar Foundation, please briefly describe your organization's major achievements:

Several of DRM's recent (within the last 4-5 years) litigation and advocacy achievements (those most relevant to this proposal) are listed here: <https://www.drmich.org/services/advocacy-litigation/>.

5. List the dates, purposes and outcomes of any prior applications for Michigan State Bar Foundation funds submitted within the last six years. (Date, Title of Project/Purpose, Approved/Denied/Pending)

N/A

Project Overview

1. Title of project:

Expanding Medicaid Impact Litigation & Advocacy

2. Amount Requested:

\$ 187,500

3. Anticipated beginning date (mm/dd/yyyy):

10/1/2026

4. Anticipated completion date (mm/dd/yyyy):

9/30/2029

5. In 125 words or less, describe a brief summary of the grant request covering the needs to be addressed, methods, target audience and anticipated outcomes.

A private donor is proposing to fund half of an attorney position at Disability Rights Michigan (“DRM”) for five years. The attorney will primarily work to address the colossal unmet needs of Medicaid beneficiaries receiving services through Michigan’s behavioral/mental health system. DRM is seeking funding for the other half of the position. This Bar Foundation proposal is for three years of that funding; DRM will secure separate funding for the other two years. The estimated full annual cost of the position is \$125,000, meaning that the total funding requested over three years is \$187,500, or \$62,500 per year.

6. List names/titles and describe the qualifications of key staff members or volunteers responsible for the project.

	Name/Title of Key Staff or Volunteer	Function/Qualifications
1	Nick Gable/Director of Litigation	Oversee the litigation/advocacy to be conducted using grant funds.
2		
3		
4		

7. Describe how this project furthers the mission of your organization

DRM’s Medicaid work directly and concretely benefits individuals with disabilities, many of whom depend on Medicaid for life-sustaining care, services, and community integration. Due to the intersection between disability and poverty, as well as the low-income nature of Medicaid itself, nearly all of these recipients are well below 200% of poverty and cannot afford to hire an attorney. Legal Services programs do not generally handle systemic Medicaid cases, and the number of Legal Services attorneys representing Medicaid recipients in CMH matters is vanishingly small. DRM is the only organization in Michigan with the litigation capacity and technical expertise necessary to handle these cases.

8. Describe how this project advances the stated priorities of the Michigan State Bar Foundation

The project advances the Bar Foundation's priority of increasing access to public benefits (here, Medicaid and Medicaid-funded services), which, as set forth above, is a major unmet need in Michigan.

9. What will happen to this project if the Michigan State Bar Foundation denies the grant request?

Unknown. DRM will attempt to pursue other funding, but this is the most promising option as of now.

Needs to be Addressed

1. What are the needs to be addressed?

Lack of access to Medicaid coverage and Medicaid-funded services.

2. What is the target audience?

The litigation and advocacy to be conducted aims to benefit individuals receiving Medicaid coverage and services through the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services and its mental/behavioral health contractual agents.

3. What outreach will be undertaken to inform the audience of this project?

DRM conducts outreach as part of its litigation and advocacy work (pre, during, and post) to ensure that as many recipients as possible benefit from any reforms achieved. DRM also works closely with other disability rights organizations, many of whom have provided letters of support for this grant.

4. List the counties in which services will be provided or indicate statewide.

Statewide.

Project Activities

1. How many people will be served?

Thousands. Impossible to estimate because will depend on the specific litigation/advocacy undertaken

2. Describe any services in this project that will be provided by pro bono attorneys.

N/A

3. Describe any services to be done by other volunteers.

N/A

4. Describe the timeline for major activities in this project.

DRM anticipates addressing outstanding systemic issues immediately upon hiring the new attorney. Work will continue through the term of the project.

5. Describe any technology used to undertake this project.

Ordinary litigation-related technology, including a case management system and potentially an e-discovery vendor.

6. Describe supervision for the project.

DRM's Litigation Director will directly supervise all project work.

7. If applicable, list up to three materials that will result from this project.

Not generally applicable, though DRM creates copious amounts of technical assistance/outreach materials as part of its systemic litigation and advocacy.

8. If applicable, how many people will be served? Complete chart below. (Enter numbers without punctuation: 1000 rather than 1,000.00)

Type of legal problem	Cases closed after limited service	Cases closed after extended service	Total projected cases closed
Consumer/finance			
Education			
Employment			
Family			
Juvenile			
Health			
Housing			
Income maintenance			
Individual rights			
Other*			
Total Cases	0	0	0

Collaboration/Coordination

1. Describe the support this project has from other individuals or organizations in your community.

	Organization/Individual	Describe Support	Upload Letter of Support
1	MI Elder Justice Initiative	See attached letter	✓
2	Arc MI	Same	✓
3	1in6 Support	Same	✓
4	MI-DDI	Same	✓
5	MiSILC, Autism Alliance, WACA, Jan Lampman	Same	✓

2. If other organizations in your area perform services or meet needs in a way similar to those you have proposed, describe how your proposed project avoids duplication with other organizations.

DRM is the only organization in this area pursuing the type of litigation and advocacy described in the proposal. The organizations listed above provide supporting roles adjacent to the litigation brought by DRM.

3. Describe how you will coordinate activities with other organizations.

DRM involves other organizations in all stages of its litigation. For example, DRM works with other organizations pre-litigation to identify issues and identify plaintiffs; during litigation (for example, where nearly every major advocacy organization in Michigan supported approval of the Waskul settlement); and during implementation of litigation successes (for example, DRM is currently working with many of these organizations to implement the Waskul settlement statewide).

4. Have you researched and utilized the information from other similar projects in developing this project? If so, describe.

N/A

Evaluation of Project

1. List three anticipated outcomes of the project.

1	Increased access to behavioral/mental health Medicaid services
2	Increased access to Medicaid coverage
3	Increased accountability within the Medicaid/behavioral/mental health system and strengthened relations with community partners.

2. Describe how you will evaluate the effectiveness of the project and include how you will measure the number of people impacted.

The litigation brought will be based on an identification of the most pressing needs in the state that are legally cognizable. It is fairly easy to identify the number of individuals favorably benefited in class action/quasi class action litigation. Implementation of settlements/court orders will ensure an accurate assessment of the results achieved.

3. Describe to whom dissemination of project information or results will be made and how such dissemination will occur.

Results will be shared with the organizations (and others) identified above, as well as directly with Medicaid recipients via DRM outreach.

4. If this project can be replicated, describe the ways you will assist others in the process.

DRM regularly co-counsels with other organizations and will bring knowledge gained here to bear elsewhere.

Administration of Justice Grant Financial Information

Completed - Apr 22 2026

Form for "Administration of Justice Grant Financial Information"

1. Describe how the project will be funded after these grant funds are spent.

DRM is actively pursuing new funding with the hope that this project will be the basis for a new permanent attorney position.

2. Describe any matching funds requirements from other sources for this project.

As set forth above in the application and in the full proposal attached in the "Other Documents" section, a private donor is proposing to fund half the position for 5 years on condition that DRM fund the other half with new money.

3. Complete the chart below to reflect the project's estimated budget detailed by major line items. Include only what you are requesting for this project under the MSBF funds column. (Enter numbers without punctuation – for example, 1000 rather than \$1,000.00. In addition, you will need to manually total rows, but columns will total)

Category	MSBF Funds	Other Funds	In-kind Support	Total
Personnel - Existing				
Personnel - New	187500	437500		625000
Employee benefits				
Consultant fees				
Travel				
Space				
Equipment				
Supplies				
Telephone				
Postage				
Printing/copies				
Audit				
Other				
Total	187500.0	437500.0	0	625000.0

4. Please describe the personnel costs above, including positions, whether or not it is a new position and projected percentage of time that the staff will spend on this project.

This application is to fund a new attorney position (to be titled "Civil Rights Attorney" or "Senior Attorney" depending on experience). All of the attorney's time will be devoted to this project.

5. If you requested funding for consultant fees, space, equipment or other expenses, please describe.

N/A

6. Please list any funding sources that have changed in the last year, including source of funding and amount.

N/A

7. List the other anticipated funding sources for this project by name and amount.

	Source	Amount Requested	Amount Committed
1	Edward Krugman (the private donor)		312500
2	Our own interest on atty fee awards (possible, though not ideal, source for the other two years)		125000
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

8. Comments

Please add any comments you wish to provide.

The full proposal is set forth in the attachment included in the "Other Documents" section, and an itemized budget (breaking down the annual cost of the new attorney) can be provided on request.