Application: Resolution Services Center of Central Michigan - Mediation Services

Resolution Services Center of Central Michigan
Administration of Justice Grant Program

Summary

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Administration of Justice Grant Application

Completed - May 8 2026

Administration of Justice Grant Application

Organizational Overview

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1. Describe how you learned of this grant opportunity:

We learned about the Administration of Justice (AOJ) grant opportunity through several channels including word of mouth, perusing online grant finder databases, and formally linking up with Fox Creek Fundraising, a reputable fund development services and consulting agency.

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

At Resolution Services Center of Central Michigan (RSCCM), our mission is to foster peaceful, inclusive, and resilient communities by providing accessible and affordable conflict resolution services individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions across all sectors—public, private, and nonprofit. We provide these services to individuals across various income levels by incorporating a sliding fee scale to ensure everyone has equitable access to constructive resolution.

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

The Resolution Services Center of Central Michigan (RSCCM) founded in 1982 as Christian Conciliation Services, adopted its current/DBA name in 2005. In 1988, as part of Michigan's legislative directive— Public Act 260, the organization became one of 16 Community Dispute Resolution Centers funded by the Michigan State Court Administrative Office (SCAO). Our service area includes Clinton, Eaton, Ingham, Isabella, Shiawassee, and Gratiot Counties. Our organization offers, as an alternative to litigation, accessible and affordable mediation, facilitation, training, and restorative practices to help people resolve disputes peacefully. We serve individuals, businesses, community groups, schools, and government institutions.

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

In an era marked by increasing polarization and division, RSCCM continues to offer a platform for dialogue that transcends individual differences. RSCCM's mediator model, encourages participants to engage civilly. Here are a few mentionable on-going achievements:

- Hosting an open house in observance of Conflict Resolution Day on the October 17th 2025 and received proclamations/tributes for our longstanding dedication and creative solutions to conflicts for peaceful and collaborative communities from the Governor, City of Lansing, as well as state and senator representatives.
- Partnering and leading facilitation with the City of Lansing by providing a welcoming space for the community's voice's to be heard and valued in the dialogue towards ending homelessness.
- Reducing community members reliance on the court system, as well as time-consuming and high litigation costs to clients.
- Strengthening local mediation compacity with 30 plus certified volunteer mediators.
- Increasing access to mediation services to populations from all walks
- Serving as a vital resource for neighborhood, businesses, schools, and individuals for resolving conflicts and amicably for example in 2024 & 2025, RSCCM mediated 830+ cases and achieved a 56% agreement rate overall, with divorce mediation reaching a 78% agreement rate in 2024 & 2025.

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)

Not applicable

Project Overview

1. Title of project:

Scaling Up Mediation Services (SUMS)

2. Amount Requested:

$ 78,000

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

07/01/2026

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

06/30/2027

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.

RSCCM seeks to increase its reach, referrals, and impact in mediating disputes outside of traditional courts and litigation. Core objectives include diversifying case types from simple neighbor disputes to complex public matters such as land use, law enforcement complaints, and public policy; expanding access for marginalized groups and diverse neighborhoods; and training the legal community and general public in conflict resolution with the hope that those trained will volunteer at RSCCM. Success will be monitored through caseload volume, referral network growth, partnerships, and participant satisfaction scores. Anticipated outcomes include increased case referrals from courts and community organizations, reduced local court backlogs, strengthened social cohesion, and an improved local capacity through a network of trained, active volunteer mediators ready when called upon.

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	Ethan Campbell	Mediation Manager / Certified civil, domestic, special education mediator
2		
3		
4		

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

This project directly advances RSCCM's mission by expanding access to affordable mediation services for individuals and families who would otherwise face barriers to resolving conflict outside of traditional courts and litigation. While RSCCM does charge a fee for services, we regularly work with people in conflict through an income and expense review to reduce or waive fees when needed. Funding from this project would allow us to offer those reductions more consistently and with less strain on our organization. By prioritizing accessibility and removing cost as a barrier, the project ensures that conflict resolution is available to those who need it most. By offering a structured space for communication, RSCCM empowers participants to work through disputes in a way that is respectful and solution-oriented, which reduces escalation and allows people to remain engaged in their communities with stronger relationships intact.

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

This project directly advances the Michigan State Bar Foundation’s priority of expanding opportunities for conflict and dispute resolution by increasing access to mediation services for individuals who might otherwise rely on the court system or go without support altogether. RSCCM provides a neutral and affordable pathway for resolving disputes, particularly for those who cannot afford legal representation. By helping participants reach mutually agreed upon outcomes, mediation reduces the burden on courts while promoting more timely and equitable resolutions. The project also strengthens community capacity to manage conflict constructively, aligning with the Foundation’s focus on improving access to justice and supporting effective alternatives to traditional litigation.

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

Our center has always been committed to providing affordable and accessible mediation services, so if this project is not approved by the Michigan State Bar Foundation, it will not prevent us from fulfilling our mission. However, it would place a greater strain on our organization to continue offering reduced-cost services at the same level. When we lower or waive client fees, our center absorbs the cost, as we typically anticipate that there will be clients who are unable to pay the full cost. Without this funding, we would likely be able to offer fewer discounts or fee waivers, resulting in fewer community members benefiting from reduced-cost services.

Our team continues to seek grants, donations, and government funding to provide our peacebuilding services through mediation other practices aforementioned.

Needs to be Addressed

1. What are the needs to be addressed?

Across Central Michigan civil disputes, family separation, landlord-tenant disagreements, and neighborhood conflicts directly impact housing stability, relationships, and overall community well-being The primary need for this project and our center is to provide community members with access to high-quality mediation services at an affordable cost. Without a center like ours, individuals in the Central Michigan community, whether involved in a legal dispute or experiencing conflict outside the court system, would often have no option other than private mediation. While private mediators provide valuable services, their fees are typically several hundred dollars per hour and are not flexible. Conflicts that could be addressed early instead become more costly and more difficult to resolve. In contrast, our center charges significantly lower base fees and is consistently able to work with individuals to adjust costs based on their financial situation.

2. What is the target audience?

RSCCM's target audience spans the entire Central Michigan community, with a specific emphasis on those who are impoverished or otherwise lack access to affordable legal support. At the individual level, RSCCM serves people involved in neighbor, landlord-tenant, family, or consumer disputes who want to resolve issues outside the courtroom. Beyond individuals, RSCCM works with organizations and employers, including businesses, HR departments, and nonprofits seeking mediation for workplace disputes and employee conflicts. Educational institutions such as schools and universities are also served, particularly around restorative justice, bullying mediation, and staff training. Government bodies and legal systems, including courts, cities, and local agencies, rely on RSCCM for both mandated and voluntary mediation services. Finally, professionals in healthcare and the public sector, as well as aspiring mediators, seek out RSCCM for training and skill development in conflict resolution.

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

Outreach for this project would be conducted in two primary ways. First, funding would afford the project greater flexibility to advertise fee reductions without directly impacting our operating budget. Second, outreach would be incorporated into standard client interactions, where staff conducting intake calls with individuals preparing for mediation could inform them about the project and determine their interest in participating.

Beyond those two channels, RSCCM would engage the broader community through the distribution of brochures and flyers in high-traffic locations such as libraries, community centers, and neighborhood service centers, as well as by hosting informational sessions at neighborhood association meetings and similar gatherings.

Networking efforts would include sharing information with housing authorities to address landlord-tenant disputes and engaging local leaders, faith communities, police departments, and community organizations to leverage their existing trust within the neighborhoods we serve.

Digital and social media outreach would round out the strategy, using platforms like Facebook to reach older demographics and Instagram or TikTok to engage younger audiences. Traditional media, including local newspaper features and radio spots highlighting successful mediations, would further extend awareness and reinforce RSCCM's presence across Central Michigan.

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

Our service area includes Clinton, Eaton, Ingham, Isabella, Shiawassee, and Gratiot Counties. RSCCM's use of Zoom-based mediation training further extends its reach.

Project Activities

1. How many people will be served?

900

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

The structure of our organization relies heavily on certified volunteer mediators who donate their time to handle cases that come through the center. A significant portion of these volunteers are attorneys who provide their services on a pro bono basis. While they are not offering pro bono legal representation, they are contributing their time and expertise as pro bono mediators.

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

As mentioned above, our organization relies heavily on certified volunteer mediators who donate their time to handle cases that come through the center. As a result, a significant portion of the mediation services made more accessible and affordable through this project would be delivered by volunteers. However, all preparatory work, including scheduling, intake, and related coordination, is completed by RSCCM staff.

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

July – September 2026: Develop project materials, reach out to partners.
October – December 2026: Launch media campaigns, host first workshops.
January 2026 – June 2027: Evaluate data and refine message.

The day-to-day operations would begin with ensuring all RSCCM staff are fully familiar with the project so they can appropriately share information about it with the individuals we serve. In addition, the project would be integrated into our routine outreach and promotion of services.

A key ongoing component would be completing the income and expense analysis form with individuals interested in participating in the project. This would involve staff working directly with clients to review their financial information and determine whether their mediation costs can be reduced or waived with the support of the project.

5. Describe any technology used to undertake this project.

No technology would be used for this project outside of normal calling, emailing, and virtual video calls.

6. Describe supervision for the project.

Resolution Services Center of Central Michigan's (RSCCM) mediation services are powered by a dedicated team of mediators, facilitators, educators, and community advocates who bring decades of combined experience in conflict resolution and restorative practices. Our staff and board work side-by-side to guide individuals, families, schools, and organizations through challenges with compassion, clarity, and respect.

This specific project would be directly supervised by RSCCM's Mediation Manager, who would review all requests related to the program. This would primarily include reviewing the income and expense analysis forms completed by staff and approving any fee reductions or waivers. In addition, RSCCM's Financial Coordinator would provide oversight by tracking all fee reductions and waivers associated with the project.

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

Program feedback evaluation results

Demographics results

A report clients assisted in covering project fees

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		498	498
Education			
Employment			
Family		61	61
Juvenile			
Health			
Housing		139	139
Income maintenance			
Individual rights		34	34
Other*		71	71
Total Cases	0	803.0	803.0

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	Holt, Mason, and Waverly Schools	RSCCM provides trained facilitators to help youth problem solve and better handle conflicts peacefully and constructively.	✖
2	The City of Lansing	RSCCM is recently engaged with Peckham with short-term projects i.e. facilitating dialogs with police officers and youth.	✖
3	The Capital Region Housing Collaborative Continuum of Care	RSCCM partners with the city in facilitating meetings for community dialogues.	✖
4	Regional Courts	RSCCM routinely receive referrals for mediation services	✖
5	Todd Martin Youth Leadership	RSCCM provided the organization conflict resolution training.	✖

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.

The conflict resolution landscape in Central Michigan consists primarily of private mediators and mediation firms operating on a for-profit basis. While these providers offer skilled services, their fee structures place them out of reach for many low- and moderate-income residents who are navigating family disputes, landlord-tenant conflicts, workplace disagreements, or other civil matters. RSCCM occupies a distinct and complementary position as the only nonprofit conflict resolution organization in the Central Michigan, we serve those in the community that private providers cannot affordably reach.

At the statewide level, Michigan is home to 16 Resolution Services Centers. These organizations operate in their respective regions and collectively ensure accessible, community-based conflict resolution across the state. Rather than competing with one another, these centers work as a collaborative network to ensure that residents across Michigan have access to affordable mediation regardless of geography. As a member of this network, RSCCM actively participates in statewide collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

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

RSCCM will coordinate this project through active outreach and relationship-building with community organizations that regularly interact with individuals and families experiencing conflict. As this project expands our capacity to reduce or waive mediation fees, we will communicate that expanded capacity directly to these partner organizations so that their staff refer clients to RSCCM when affordable conflict resolution services are needed.

There are 15 similar nonprofit centers across the state that provide these services. We regularly meet with representatives from these organizations to collaborate and share insights from their experiences. Since all of these centers share a common mission of providing affordable and accessible services, there is a strong base of knowledge and best practices that we can draw from in planning and implementing this project.

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

There has not been specific research conducted for this project; however, we already have established procedures in place. Additionally, the broader field of community mediation has a well-established evidence base. National organizations such as the National Association for Community Mediation (NAFCM) have documented the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of nonprofit mediation models in reducing court caseloads, improving participant outcomes, and delivering services at a fraction of the cost of litigation. RSCCM's proposed project is grounded in this established framework.

Evaluation of Project

1. List three anticipated outcomes of the project.

1	More members of the Central Michigan community will choose conflict resolution
2	RSCCM will be able to provide more clients with fee reductions or waivers (we estimate 200 of our 900 participants)
3	RSCCM have a great reach in our service area in providing conflict resolution and mediation services

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

RSCCM will evaluate the effectiveness of this project through a combination of quantitative tracking and qualitative feedback. On the quantitative side, staff will monitor the number of new mediation requests, website referral sources, workshop attendance, and participant demographics to measure growth in reach and identify which outreach channels are driving engagement. These metrics will allow RSCCM to assess whether the project is successfully expanding access across its target audience, particularly among low- and moderate-income residents who may not have previously utilized mediation services.

To capture the participant experience, RSCCM will collect survey-based qualitative feedback following mediation sessions and workshops, focusing on ease of access, satisfaction with the process, and perceived outcomes. Together, these evaluation methods will provide a clear and ongoing picture of how many people are being impacted, how effectively barriers are being reduced, and where adjustments may be needed to strengthen the project over time.

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

We will primarily share information with community members directly, as well as with other Central Michigan organizations that serve our region. We will develop both physical and digital flyers to promote the project and highlight the affordable services we offer. From there, this information will reach the public and partner organizations, which can then refer individuals in need of conflict resolution services to our center.

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

This project could be readily replicated and implemented by the other 15 centers across the state. We would also be able to assist those organizations by sharing the procedures we use to implement the project and track the necessary metrics.

Administration of Justice Grant Financial Information

Completed - May 8 2026

Form for "Administration of Justice Grant Financial Information

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

Our team continues to seek grants, donations, and government funding to provide our peacebuilding services through mediation practices. We have recently contracted with Fox Creek Fundraising to diversify our revenue by identifying and managing an expanded grant pipeline and provide various methods of consulting on fund development and donor cultivation.

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

None

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	26495			
Personnel - New	23088			
Employee benefits	4839			
Consultant fees				
Travel				
Space	14378			
Equipment	1500			
Supplies	500			
Telephone				
Postage				
Printing/copies	7200			
Audit				
Other				
Total	78000.0	0	0	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.

Program Manager, 40% of time dedicated to project

Program Coordinator (New), 100% of time dedicated to project

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

Space costs of $14,378 represent an allocation of rent for the facilities where mediation services will be conducted. An equipment expense of $1,500 covers the purchase of a computer to support a new staff position being added as part of this project. Printing costs of $7,200 will fund the production of brochures, handouts, and other materials needed to inform and engage the Central Michigan community across the outreach channels described previously.

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	Ingham County Bar Foundation	3000	
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

8. Comments

Please add any comments you wish to provide.

(No response)