

Application: CBHJ, Standardized AOT Decision Support Tool for Judges

Wayne State Center for Behavioral Health and Justice
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

1. Describe how you learned of this grant opportunity:

This grant opportunity was found through a web search of applicable grant applications available for the proposal.

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

We deliver actionable data, person-centered research and evaluation, and collaborative technical assistance at the behavioral health / criminal legal intersection to empower community partners to adopt high-impact care solutions.

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

The Center for Behavioral Health and Justice (CBHJ) is a center within the School of Social Work at Wayne State University. The CBHJ was first established in 2018 by Dr. Sheryl Kubiak. The CBHJ provides local communities, organizations, and behavioral health and law enforcement agencies across Michigan with expertise, evaluation, support, training, and technical assistance to optimize diversion of individuals from jail and prison through the implementation of best and innovative practices at every intercept of the criminal justice continuum. We currently have seven initiatives: jail diversion and stepping up technical assistance, treatment ecosystems, crisis response and stabilization, assisted outpatient treatment and courts, harm reduction, youth justice and Well Wayne stations.

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

The Center for Behavioral Health and Justice (CBHJ) at Wayne State University has several major accomplishments. It is leading statewide justice-behavioral health reform by turning research into real policy and operational changes across jurisdictions. It works to expand diversion from jail and prison and into treatment. It has created a multi county opioid treatment ecosystem and is improving the crisis response system. The CBHJ's AOT initiative received a grant from the Michigan Mental Health Diversion Council to create an AOT Toolkit. The AOT Toolkit went live in 2021 and has had views from every county in Michigan, every state in the United States, and even international views. We have provided evaluation and technical assistance to 10 CMHs in Michigan to lay the foundation for Assisted Outpatient Treatment programs.

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)

11/2024, Wayne State University Law School, \$6,000 The Law School will be hosting an expungement fair and these funds will assist in developing a curriculum for undergraduate students to be trained to assist attendees in navigating the expungement process. Approved.

6/2023, Wayne State University Law School Clinic Program, \$6,000, Funds to support the Wayne Law Expungement Fair, approved

Project Overview

1. Title of project:

Standardized AOT Eligibility Guidance Tool for Judges

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.

This pilot project will test two Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) eligibility guidance tools designed to support judicial decision-making. The need addressed is inconsistency and potential bias in AOT determinations across probate courts. Probate judges with demonstrated AOT expertise will use the tools during AOT hearings to collect data assessing the tools' ability to predict whether statutory AOT criteria are met. Findings will inform refinement of the tools for broader use by judges with varying levels of AOT familiarity. Anticipated outcomes include improved consistency, increased objectivity, and more equitable AOT orders across jurisdictions.

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	Sheryl Kubiak, PI	Dr. Kubiak will oversee the project, data collection, and evaluation and will provide support for the project within the School of Social Work at Wayne State University.
2	Jennifer Kimmel, Project Manager	Mrs. Kimmel, LMSW, will oversee project staff and resources, serve as lead liaison to five pilot sites, and lead reporting and communication of results.
3		
4		

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

This project advances our organization’s mission by strengthening fair, consistent access to Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) for individuals with serious mental illness (SMI). AOT has been shown to increase engagement in needed mental health care while reducing arrests and incarceration. By promoting a standardized, objective approach to AOT determinations, this project helps ensure that eligible individuals receive timely treatment rather than cycling through the criminal justice system. In doing so, it supports recovery, improves public safety, and advances systemic diversion from incarceration to community-based mental health care.

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

This project advances the Michigan State Bar Foundation’s priorities by improving the fair and effective administration of justice in probate courts. By educating judges and providing structured guidance tools, the project ensures that Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) orders are issued strictly based on statutory criteria—protecting civil rights and reducing bias or misunderstanding in AOT decisions. Because individuals subject to AOT orders are predominantly low-income and Medicaid-eligible, this project promotes equity by ensuring legal decisions are not influenced by poverty or unmet social determinants of health. Ultimately, the project strengthens judicial consistency, due process, and equal access to justice.

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

If the Michigan State Bar Foundation denies this grant request, the project would likely be delayed rather than discontinued. Lack of funding would slow evaluation of the tools' judicial applicability and limit their integration into probate court workflows. This would delay training opportunities for judges and postpone assessment of the tools' validity in AOT hearings, ultimately slowing progress toward greater consistency, fairness, and efficiency in AOT decision-making across probate courts.

Needs to be Addressed

1. What are the needs to be addressed?

Judges who are new to the bench or lack experience with Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) hearings often receive little to no formal training in mental illness. Despite this, they are expected to evaluate expert testimony and apply complex statutory criteria when determining whether to order AOT. This creates a knowledge gap that can lead to inconsistent or unclear decision-making. The proposed tools are designed to bridge this gap by helping judges systematically interpret and apply expert testimony without substituting for judicial discretion or clinical expertise.

2. What is the target audience?

The primary target audience is probate judges who hear AOT petitions. A secondary, indirect audience includes individuals who are petitioned for involuntary mental health treatment and benefit from fair, consistent adjudication.

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

The Center for Behavioral Health and Justice (CBHJ) will leverage existing relationships with probate judges to recruit participants and seek referrals to additional interested judges. CBHJ will also work with the behavioral health administrator at the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) to identify and recruit judges for participation.

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

This will pilot 5 Probate Judges in Michigan. If validated, the tools can be used statewide. Judge Tomlinson, who is a probate judge in St. Clair County, and Judge Mack, who hears AOT cases statewide on assignment, have both indicated interest in participating. We will continue recruitment efforts to locate at least one metro and one urban county probate judge. This will provide a variety of county demographics.

Project Activities

1. How many people will be served?

The general public via direct services to five probate judges will participate in the pilot by using the tools during their existing Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) dockets. The project anticipates application of the tools in approximately 350 AOT hearings. While judges are the direct participants, individuals subject to AOT petitions will be indirectly served through more consistent and objective judicial decision-making. No services in this project will be provided by pro bono attorneys. Attorneys are not involved in the study.

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

No services in this project will be provided by pro bono attorneys. Attorneys are not involved in the study.

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

Five probate judges will participate in the pilot by using the tools during their existing Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) dockets. Participating probate judges will volunteer their time to use the tools during AOT hearings and assist with related data collection as part of the pilot project. The project anticipates application of the tools in approximately 350 AOT hearings. While judges are the direct participants, individuals subject to AOT petitions will be indirectly served through more consistent and objective judicial decision-making.

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

- Months 1-3 CBHJ staff will reach out and recruit judges to participate in the pilot. Current relationship with Judges and CMHs who have relationships with their county Judges will be utilized for recruitment. Judges who agree will be trained on how to use the tools and data collection methods. After trained, judges will start to use the tools during their already scheduled mental health petition docket.
- Months 3-8 judges will utilize the tools during mental health hearings and collect data. CBHJ will check in with judges and provide technical assistance as issues arise.
- Months 7-8 CBHJ will interview and/or survey judges on their thoughts of the applicability and feasibility of the utilization of the tool
- Months 9-11 data analysis
- Month 12- final report writing and dissemination of findings

5. Describe any technology used to undertake this project.

Judges may use paper or computers (excel sheets) to complete the tools, depending on their preference. Data team will use SPSS to analyze the data.

6. Describe supervision for the project.

Sheryl Kubiak, PhD will be principal investigator for the project and will provide supervision over the data analysis and methodology.

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

1. Initial AOT Only guidance tool for Judges
2. Extend AOT guidance tool for Judges

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	700		700
Other*			
Total Cases	700.0	0	700.0

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	Judge Milton Mack, (ret), Governor's Mental Health Diversion Council	Support in proposal and participating	✓
2	Judge John Tomlinson, St Clair Probate Judge	Support in proposal and participating	✓
3	Judge Sue Dobrich, Retired Probate Judge, Chief Judge of Cass County, Project Director of the Michigan Judicial Council	Support in proposal and participating	✓
4	Stacy Krasinski, Bay Arenac Behavioral Health Authority	Support in proposal	✓
5	Traci Smith, CEO Macomb County Community Mental Health	Support in proposal	✓

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.

To date, no other organizations in Michigan or nationally have developed comparable tools or guidelines specifically designed to assist judges in evaluating Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) eligibility. While some jurisdictions provide general education or training on mental health law, these efforts do not offer structured, decision-support tools for use during hearings. Our organization has developed a related eligibility guidance tool for Community Mental Health (CMH) agencies, which was pre-piloted to help frontline staff identify when an AOT referral and psychiatric assessment may be appropriate. The CMH tools received high clinical agreement rates and showed promise for validation. This project builds on that work by extending structured guidance into the judicial setting, where such resources do not currently exist. The proposed project avoids duplication because no other organizations in Michigan or nationally are undertaking similar efforts. Currently, there are no structured tools or judicial guidance resources designed specifically to support judges in determining Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) eligibility during hearings. Rather than duplicating existing programs or trainings, this project fills a documented gap in the administration of justice by introducing an original, evidence-informed tool tailored to judicial decision-making. As such, the project complements existing mental health and legal initiatives while addressing an unmet need within probate courts.

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

CBHJ will coordinate project activities through its existing relationships with probate judges across Michigan. Project staff will contact judges by phone or email to discuss participation, scheduling, and implementation of the tools during AOT hearings. CBHJ will also coordinate, as appropriate, with court administrators to ensure alignment with court procedures and minimize disruption to existing workflows.

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

There are no known entities outside the service area conducting projects similar to this one. As such, there is no external model currently available for direct replication or adaptation. In developing this project, CBHJ researched established mental health assessment and screening tools, such as the PHQ-9. While those tools assess mental health symptoms or diagnoses, this project adapts the structured, evidence-informed approach of such screenings to evaluate statutory eligibility for Assisted Outpatient Treatment, rather than clinical diagnosis.

1. List three anticipated outcomes of the project.

1	Consistency in ordering AOT across jurisdictions
2	Unbiased AOT orders
3	Better understanding of meeting qualifications of AOT orders by the CMHs and Judges, as they will be using similar tools to assess needs.

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

Data team will calculate the percent agreement between the tool recommendation and judicial judgement/ruling situations using Cohen's Kappa statistic. : Data team will provide descriptive statistics, measures of central tendency and variability for both Initial AOT Only and Extend AOT Decision Support Tools for Judges. Mean scores will be compared across outcome groups (i.e., granted orders versus non-granted orders) using t-tests or analysis of variance tests to assess whether higher scores are associated with stronger legal decisions for AOT orders. We also seek to define a set of "cut points" to estimate a probability of a score relating to an actual AOT order. We will estimate the sensitivity and specificity and predictive values for the tools to identify a reference or standard for decision making. Internal consistency within each item in the tool will be estimated using statistical tools like Cronbach's alpha. Data team will use correlations or simple regression models to test construct validity by examining associations between tool scores and external indicators (i.e., hospitalization history, crisis contacts) where possible.

Quantitative results will be paired with findings from focus groups to provide a full picture of feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary validity of the AOT Decision Support Tools for Judges.

The number of people impacted will be measured by the number of quantitative data points from the judge's use of the tools during their mental health hearings.

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

Project findings will be shared with participating probate judges and the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO). In addition, CBHJ will develop a written brief summarizing the results and post it on the AOT Toolkit, a publicly accessible website that provides education and resources related to Assisted Outpatient Treatment. This approach ensures both direct feedback to stakeholders and broader public access to project outcomes.

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

If the project's Tools are validated, it may be replicated in other jurisdictions. Following completion of the pilot, CBHJ will prepare a manuscript detailing the study design, methodology, and findings. CBHJ will also make replication guidance available and will be open to consultation with other entities interested in testing or implementing the tools in their own settings.

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.

This is a time limited project that will not require additional funding after the project ends.

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

There are no matching fund requirements for this project.

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	54600			
Personnel - New				
Employee benefits	14883			
Consultant fees				
Travel	1426			
Space				
Equipment				
Supplies				
Telephone				
Postage				
Printing/copies				
Audit				
Other	7091			
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.

Dr. Sheryl Kubiak, Dean, School of Social Work, PI, not a new position, (3%) will oversee the project, data collection, and evaluation and will provide support for the project within the School of Social Work at Wayne State University

Jenny Kimmel, Project Manager, not a new position, (10%) will oversee project staff and resources, serve as lead liaison to five pilot sites, and lead reporting and communication of results.

Edita Milanvoic, Data Manager, not a new position, (3%) will oversee and provide supervision to data team staff. Ensuring resources of data team are optimized and effective.

Autumn Gold, Project Coordinator, not a new position, (15%) day-to-day project coordination including site implementation, coordinating technical support for Tool use, and support of scribing and reporting.

Trevor Whitehead, Data Analyst, not a new position, (20%) will assist in data collection and evaluation. Will develop data collection strategy, provide technical assistance related to data and analyze quantitative data for feasibility testing for five sites that will pilot the AOT eligibility protocol.

Amani El-Edlebi, Data Assistant, not a new position, (20%) will support qualitative coding and qualitative data analysis of focus group interviews with frontline CMH staff about experiences with AOT eligibility protocol. Support input of data into data collection tools.

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

Mileage \$2,263 is included to support site participation and support of data collection efforts.

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

There has not been a change in source of funding in the last year. This is an additional project for the CBHJ. We are looking to diversify our funding, as we are a grant based research facility. Currently, our grant funding for the AOT/Courts initiatives is through the Michigan Mental Health Diversion Council/State of Michigan. The grant has been steady for the past several years in supporting our work.

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

	Source	Amount Requested	Amount Committed
1	n/a		
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

8. Comments

Please add any comments you wish to provide.

The total budget for the proposed one-year period (07/01/26 – 06/30/27) is \$78,000. The budget is summarized below.

Personnel \$69,483

Personnel costs are estimated to be \$69,483 for the one-year period. These costs include: project leadership and strategy by Principal Investigator Sheryl Kubiak, Ph.D. (2%); project development, implementation, and day-to-day management including development of data use agreements and project reporting by Project Manager, Jennifer Kimmel, LMSW (10%); oversight of data resources, and collection, analysis, and reporting by Data Manager, Edita Milanovic, LMSW (3%); day-to-day coordination of project including serving as key point of contact for judges and courts, support of data collection, and project reporting by Project Coordinator, Autumn Gold, LLMSW (15%); development of evaluation and data collection plan and all data reconciliation, analysis, and reporting by Data Analyst, Trevor Whitehead, MSW (20%); and assistance with data collection, cleaning, coding, and reporting by Data Assistant, Amani El-Edlebi, MSW/MPH (20%).

Travel \$1,426

Travel costs are estimated to be \$1,426 for the one-year period. These costs are limited to in-state mileage for project personnel to travel to/from court sites, as needed.

Indirect Costs \$7,091

The approved rate of 10% has been applied.