



MICHIGAN STATE BAR FOUNDATION

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Foundation Awards Over \$68,000 in Grants to Charitable Projects

The Michigan State Bar Foundation has awarded more than \$68,000 in grants for seven nonprofit projects that educate the public about the legal system and help to improve the administration of justice.

The Foundation is a non-profit charitable corporation established to meet the legal profession's obligations to the public. Since it was set up in 1947, more than \$60 million in grants have been distributed to support civil legal aid for the poor and improvements in the administration of justice.

Foundation President Margaret J. Nichols said the 2004 grant awards "will support a variety of innovative projects that will enhance access to justice and provide education to help people make informed decisions concerning their legal rights and responsibilities."

The grant awards ranged from \$3,000 to \$25,000 and were given to the following:

- The Thomas M. Cooley Law School for their Innocence Project's work to secure DNA testing to identify and release wrongly-convicted individuals from prison. The Innocence Project is one of about thirty projects nationwide whose combined efforts have freed over 113 innocent individuals.
- Elder Law of Michigan Inc. for a senior pro bono mediation project which will train members of the Senior Lawyer's Section of the State Bar of Michigan to help callers of the Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors resolve disputes without litigation.

- Freedom House to continue legal orientation education to help immigrant detainees learn the consequences and options available to them under the law. The orientation works with the Immigration Court and the Department of Homeland Security to deliver information in Michigan's two detention facilities.
- Ohio University Press for publishing a legal history of Michigan authored by distinguished legal leaders and scholars for distribution to educational institutions and libraries in Michigan and the Midwest.
- Legal Services of Northern Michigan for a conference for legal services and domestic violence shelters workers to improve collaboration and identify solutions for emerging domestic violence legal issues in northern Michigan.
- The Salvation Army William Booth Legal Aid Clinic was awarded matching funds to use law school interns to serve additional clients who have overcome substance abuse in solving civil legal problems to remove barriers to self-sufficiency.
- Wayne State University for educational efforts in Michigan related to the 50th anniversary of *Brown vs. Board of Education* through an American Bar Association project under the leadership of current ABA President and former State Bar President Detroit mayor, Dennis Archer.

Many of the Foundation's grants would not be possible without the generosity of the 80% of Michigan's financial institutions that waive all IOLTA (Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts) fees. Support by the many financial institutions and contributions by lawyers, judges, and the public make more dollars available for grants.

To donate or learn more about the Foundation's work, see www.msbf.org.

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