

# Access to Justice Fund Grants

## 2004



### Fourth Round of ATJ Fund Grants Awarded to 6 Nonprofit Agencies

On September 30, 2004, the Michigan State Bar Foundation awarded the fourth round of grants from the Access to Justice Fund. The State Bar of Michigan and the Michigan State Bar Foundation thank those lawyers, judges and others whose generous contributions to the Access to Justice Campaign made these grants possible.

The State Bar of Michigan's Access to Justice Campaign raises endowment and current operating funds to improve access to justice for low-income people with civil legal needs in Michigan. The Michigan State Bar Foundation receives, manages, and distributes the funds. Donations from lawyers and judges for the ATJ Fund are one method of satisfying the State Bar's voluntary pro bono standard.

Since 2000, a total of \$165,000 in ATJ Fund grants supported 19 innovative projects to help serve low-income families who have no where else to turn. These projects include; protection from family violence, recourse from unscrupulous contractors, access to medical care, support for children, and other critical civil legal needs.

This year, a total of \$35,000 will support the following 6 projects in Michigan:

**EMU/Washtenaw County Legal Resource Center (LRC)** received \$9,000 toward start-up costs of a community legal assistance center. The LRC will use attorney-supervised paralegal students from Eastern Michigan University to help pro se patrons with legal forms, provide legal information and make referrals to legal aid, local lawyer referral, and non-legal community support agencies.

**Underground Railroad's Civil Legal Assistance Program** was awarded \$9,000 to expand services through a collaborative of six domestic violence shelters in mid-Michigan to assist low-income victims

needing legal help with domestic violence and other family law problems. The award will leverage a federal grant for the project.

**Elder Law of Michigan** received a grant of \$7,000 for the Michigan Caregiver's Legal Hotline to provide legal information, advice, brief services, and referrals over the telephone to low-income persons who face legal issues related to caring for an elder. The grant will help toward matching dollars needed for federal funding.

**University of Detroit Mercy School of Law** received \$3,000 for the Mobile Law Office Outreach Project, a donated motor home, which travels to low-income neighborhoods including non-English speaking communities. This project offers legal advice, counsel, and intake for additional representation and uses attorney-supervised law students and pro bono lawyers to assist with legal education presentations and other services.

**Lakeshore Legal Aid** was awarded \$5,000 for the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Education Outreach Project to work with other agencies in updating legal education and pro se materials for grandparents raising grandchildren and to develop training on this topic for human service personnel who work with seniors.

**Free Legal Aid Clinic** at Wayne State University received a grant of \$2,000 toward costs of software and purchase additional monitors for the donated computers, which will increase the number of work stations available for attorney-supervised law students assisting low-income clients with family law matters.

For more information including possible tax benefits for ATJ Fund contributions and options for lifetime gifts and bequests, visit [ww.atjfund.org](http://ww.atjfund.org) or contact Candace Crowley or Lesa Smith at the State Bar of Michigan at (800) 968-1442.