The Oakland County Bar Foundation is dedicated to ensuring access to justice and an understanding of the law in our community.

The specific purposes recited in the OCBF’s Articles of Incorporation include:

1. Improving and facilitating the administration of justice in Oakland County and throughout the state of Michigan;
2. Ensuring to the fullest extent possible that legal services are made available to all members of the public;
3. Promoting legal research and the study of law as well as the diffusion of legal knowledge through support of the Adams-Pratt Oakland County Law Library;
4. Promoting the continuing legal education of lawyers and judges;
5. Educating the public as to their legal rights and obligations, and fostering and maintaining the honor and integrity of the profession of the law.
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The nationally recognized Oakland County Bar Foundation (OCBF) has provided essential and impactful services to the community for more than 40 years. The Foundation has distributed more than $2.6 million in grants to worthy recipients throughout Oakland County and Southeast Michigan. These grants ensure that our residents have access to, and an understanding of, the legal system.

In 2018 and the first half of 2019, the OCBF provided grants in excess of $307,000 as delineated in this report. These grants enable the recipient organizations to provide services to those in underserved communities who might not otherwise have access to legal resources, such as the Southwest Detroit Immigrant and Refugee Center, Legal Aid and Defender Association and Lakeshore Legal Aid. These dollars have a profound and real impact on the lives of our community, especially its children.

In addition to funding organizations that provide legal services, the Foundation continues to fund programs that promote and foster education of our legal system. Such organizations include the Elementary Mock Trial, Youth Law Conference, Constitution Day, Judicial Candidate Fora and many more.

During the 2018-2019 year we saw requests from more new programs that are making a difference in Oakland County. The OCBF funded grants to Jewish Family Services, White Lake Police Foundation, Chaldean Community Foundation, Justice for our Neighbors and the Student Advocacy Center. These programs are all first-time grant awardees, furthering the Foundation’s mission by extending services and resources to programs across the county and surrounding areas.

Of course, the Foundation’s ability to provide these grants would not be possible without the continued support and generosity of our community. Through the OCBF Fellows program and our annual Signature Event, the Foundation continues to raise significant funds to meet the needs of our community.

This year, we were fortunate enough to host the 20th anniversary of our Annual Signature Event at Oakland Hills Country Club in April 2019. It was an exceptional evening as we celebrated 20 years of successful fundraising and community partnership. Through the generosity of our donors and sponsors, we raised more than $238,000 at this one event. Thank you to all our sponsors and attendees who make this event a success every year.

Our sincere gratitude goes to our supporters who help make our mission a reality. Under-served communities in Southeast Michigan need empowerment. With your continued support, we can improve the lives of our neighbors and ensure equal access to justice and an understanding of the law.
As lawyers, we strive to provide our clients with exceptional service and representation. Our clients rely on us for our expertise, advice and problem-solving skills. We’re able to help clients navigate areas in which they may have little expertise and ensure they are equipped to make decisions about issues that significantly impact their lives.

However, as a practical matter, not all residents of Oakland County have the same access to legal services, usually because of limited financial means. These individuals often get lost in the legal system or are otherwise not able to adequately address their legal issues.

The Oakland County Bar Foundation serves to remedy the lack of access to and information about the legal system. We fund programs that enhance the quality of life for people in Southeast Michigan, especially those in underserved communities. These programs can provide people with essential resources they need for themselves and their families, and we are proud to provide a better future for people living in this region.

You too can be a part of the Foundation. As a part of our organization – whether you contribute time as a volunteer or financial support to fund our grant programs – you can do your part to give back to the community in which you live and work. We are stronger when we share our knowledge, our energy and our resources. With more than 40 years of experience helping the citizens of this area and a firm commitment to continue this work into the future, we hope you will join us this year in raising awareness of the challenges facing our fellow residents within the legal system.

With your help, we can identify solutions for the problems people are facing to give everyone the same opportunities we enjoy.
Eighteen nonprofits supported

$238K raised
at the 20th Annual Signature Event

$307K+ in grants awarded
The finances of the Oakland County Bar Foundation (OCBF) continue to be on solid ground. The OCBF realizes that it has a financial responsibility to Oakland County and to the many programs we support and fund in this area. As a result of the generous support of our community, we provided approximately $307,000 in funding to grant recipients from January 2018 through June 2019 while continuing to maintain a healthy balance sheet.

We strive to keep our operating costs to a minimum to maximize the amount of available funds going directly to programs we believe are vital to providing access to legal aid and education in Oakland County and the surrounding area. Our ability to fund such programs relies on the financial support of our community. On behalf of the OCBF and all our grant recipients, thank you.

The Oakland County Bar Foundation has a vested interest in supporting our community, from our neighbors across the street to residents across the region. We are a uniquely valuable regional resource as a funding arm to provide access to justice and an understanding of the law. Your contribution makes a difference in the well-being of people in Southeast Michigan, reaching all ages and backgrounds. Thank you again for your support of our work.

FROM THE TREASURER

DAVID JONES

PROGRAMS SUPPORTED

White Lake Police Foundation
Southwest Detroit Immigrant and Refugee Center
Jewish Family Service Legal Referral Service
OCBA Judicial Candidate Fora
Chaldean Community Foundation
Justice for our Neighbors
Student Advocacy Center
Beaumont Patient Legal Support
LEAF Program
RESTORE Foundation
Student Advocacy Center
Michigan Civic Center for Education
Legal Aid and Defender—Free Legal Information Help Desk

University of Detroit Mercy Federal Pro Se Legal Clinic
CARE House—Intervention and Treatment Program
Family Law Assistance Program
Estate Planning Clinic
Elementary Mock Trial
Youth Law Conference
Senior Law Days
Legal Aid Mini-Clinics
People’s Law College Program
New Lawyer Admission Ceremonies
Circuit-Probate Court Bench/Bar Conference
WHITE LAKE POLICE FOUNDATION

The White Lake Police Foundation was founded in 2017 to promote drug abstinence and crime prevention among children and teens. Their current programs include T.E.A.M., Youth Police Academy, Police Open House, 5k run, Shop with a Cop and Citizen’s Academy.

The T.E.A.M. (teaching, educating and mentoring) program is a transition from the previous national DARE program. This program was developed to replace DARE because it is a more comprehensive educational program for students. The T.E.A.M. program is a school-based, “law-related” program that is taught to grades K–8 by a T.E.A.M. trained officer. Each year, approximately 700 kids graduate from the program.

The grant from the OCBF has allowed the White Lake Police Foundation to design and print 450 workbooks to pass out to middle schoolers in the district. These workbooks are used by the T.E.A.M. officers to facilitate the program throughout the year and are an invaluable resource for each student.

This program has produced healthier, happier, safer and more productive adults throughout the Huron Valley area.

“The White Lake Police T.E.A.M. officers have had a profound impact on students in White Lake Township and the surrounding area. They teach drug, alcohol and crime awareness, but more importantly, they teach students the legal consequences to a young person’s decisions in the future. For many students, this may be the first time they learn about the legal system and how it can impact the direction of their lives.”
T.E.A.M. is a comprehensive, educational, “law-related” program taught to grades K-8

approximately 700 kids graduate from the program each year

T.E.A.M. has produced healthier, safer & productive adults throughout the Huron Valley area.
SOUTHWEST DETROIT IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CENTER

The Pontiac Legal Clinic launched in January 2018 as the third free legal weekly clinic of the Southwest Detroit Immigrant and Refugee Center (SWIRC).

The SWIRC was founded in 2014 after funding ended for free and low-cost legal services in metro Detroit for immigrants and refugees from the Archdiocese of Detroit and Legal Aid. With few places to turn, many immigrants found themselves at the mercy of few providers.

Unlike other not-for-profits that focus strictly on immigration law, SWIRC’s Free Legal Clinic turns no client away, no matter their legal need, ability to pay or immigration status. The Pontiac location stands out as a source of quality legal services offered to marginalized communities in a county where similar services are difficult to find.

SWIRC has grown to more than 20 volunteers and three staff members. In 2018, SWIRC delivered nearly $250,000 worth of services to 916 clients at their three free legal clinic programs. The organization also provided $342,000 worth of services to another 74 clients whom SWIRC presented at immigration courts in multiple locations.

There are nearly 150,000 foreign-born residents in Oakland County. The county boasts the highest percentage of immigrant residents of the five counties that make up metropolitan Detroit. The Pontiac clinic is a weekly free legal clinic that accepts all clients and is based out of the First Presbyterian Church of Pontiac.

More than 128 clients have been helped, and in excess of 320 hours of work dedicated to their cases.

20 + 3
volunteers
staff members

clients served:
990

delivered more than
$590,000
worth of services
IN MAY 2019, a Pontiac-based social worker shared the story of a young mother of five children from Honduras who had been taken into ICE custody. SWIRC attorneys worked with this mother’s family to pull together as much evidence as possible to secure her release and show that she qualified for relief from deportation. Since this mother had lived in the U.S. for more than 10 years and had U.S. citizen children, she was permitted to request cancellation of removal from an immigration judge.

The attorney at SWIRC worked diligently with the ICE officers to impress upon them that this mother was needed at home, she had no criminal record and had a strong case for cancellation of removal.

After four days in jail, this mother was released, transported back to Pontiac and reunited with her family. SWIRC is now working on obtaining her legal documentation to allow her to work legally in the U.S.
JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE
LEGAL REFERRAL SERVICE

The Jewish Family Service LRS is an integral part of the Volunteer Services Department and has been in existence for the past 10 years. This service has helped clients obtain pro bono legal counsel and representation, and has recruited more than 100 active lawyers and dozens of law firms willing to help clients. Since the beginning of the program, LRS has helped nearly 2,000 individuals and families. The clients who are assisted through this program are low-income, and without Jewish Family Service many of them would not be able to receive assistance with child support, elder law or probate needs.

With the help of the OCBF, the LRS program was able to host three trainings for staff social workers to educate them on legal topics that most affect clients. These social workers provide extensive support for clients throughout the legal process, so it is vital that they understand specific areas of law. These social workers also assist the volunteer attorneys during the process—their extensive training and legal understanding helps the attorney focus on the legal matter at hand.

Jewish Family Service also hosted a community event centered around the items that passed on the ballot and how they affect members of the community. This event gave attendees the opportunity to hear directly from experts on the topics and provided an open forum for questions.

“Over the past several years that I’ve been involved with the JFS legal assistance program, it has always impressed me how these legal matters are treated and the appropriate level of gravity. No one at JFS ever judges the people in need; they only offer help. Further, I’ve been impressed with the high level of professionalism brought to these matters in terms of follow up with the volunteer lawyer. The bottom line is that JFS does good for the community, does it with sensitivity, and can provide a multi-disciplinary approach to its clients.”
For 10 years
LRS has been an integral part of the Volunteer Services Department

Since the beginning,
LRS has helped nearly 2,000 individuals & families

LRS has recruited
>100 active lawyers & dozens of law firms to help clients obtain pro bono legal counsel
This program was established in 2006 as a pilot project when the OCBA noticed that there is a steep drop-off in voting when it comes to the non-partisan ballot. The OCBA felt that the legal profession was in a uniquely qualified position to educate the voting public on the qualities and experiences to look for when voting for a judge.

Due to the 2006 success, the OCBA has partnered with the League of Women Voters Oakland Area and the Detroit Free Press to host judicial candidate forums in all judicial races where there are contested seats in Oakland County. This partnership enables information about judicial candidates to be disseminated as widely as possible in their communities, and encourages the active participation of Oakland County citizens in judicial elections as well as assist them in becoming more knowledgeable and informed voters.

The forums are open to the public and are taped so they can be aired on cable TV channels and uploaded to the OCBA YouTube page. Candidates also are asked to complete a questionnaire, which is then made available on the websites of the OCBA and the League of Women Voters.

During the last election cycle, the OCBA and League of Women Voters hosted three general-election forums that were broadcast to the voting communities, helping voters make informed decisions.
OCBA educates the voting public on the qualities and experiences to look for when voting for a judge.

Forums are open to the public & aired on cable channels and on the OCBA YouTube page.

OCBA's 2006 pilot project to alleviate a drop-off in voting when it comes to the non-partisan ballot.
RECOGNITION & THANKS

The great work of the Foundation is sustained through the ongoing generosity and dedication of our fellows, volunteers, donors and event sponsors. That support—both financial and in-kind—makes an impact on the entire Oakland County community through the legal aid programs and legal education initiatives to which the Foundation consistently grants critical funds. Thank you for believing in legal education. Thank you for believing in access to justice. Thank you for believing in the Foundation.

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The Foundation limits the number of fellows to 10 percent or less of the total active membership of the State Bar of Michigan who practice in Oakland County. There are eight levels within the fellows program: fellow ($1,000 pledge), life fellow, patron fellow ($2,500 pledge), life patron fellow, charter fellow ($5,000 pledge), life charter fellow, philanthropist fellow ($10,000) and life philanthropist fellow. There are several unique advantages to becoming a fellow, including inscription on a plaque at the Oakland County courthouse upon completion of the pledge, a commemorative Pewabic tile and an invitation to the exclusive annual Fellows Reception.
DONATE TODAY

The Foundation has grown and evolved year after year – awarding more grant funds, supporting more programs and serving the Oakland County community. But we’re just getting started! And, at a time when many publicly funded legal aid programs are being discontinued, our support is more vital than ever before. With your help, we can provide even more needed funding to local organizations that deliver legal aid and education to our community.

Visit supportocbf.org to enhance equal access to justice today.

In the first half of 2019

**VOLUNTEERS & STAFF WORKED**

**2,531 HRS**

at the Southwest Detroit Immigrant and Refugee Center

The 6th Circuit Court of Oakland County saw

**4,516 GENERAL CIVIL CASES**

in 2018

2018 U.S. Census—

**APPROXIMATELY 1,409,424**

Michigan residents LIVE IN POVERTY