

Application Summary and Budget Submission
FY2026 Region VII Area Agency on Aging Proposal



LEGAL SERVICES
of Eastern Michigan

Prepared for:
County Board of Commissioners

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Legal Services of Eastern Michigan (LSEM)
FY2026 Region VII Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Proposal
Three-Page Summary: Legal Assistance and Elder Abuse Prevention Programs

Organizational Background and Mission

Legal Services of Eastern Michigan (LSEM) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit civil legal aid organization that has been serving low-income and vulnerable populations since 1951. The organization is guided by its mission: "to provide civil legal services for those who need it the most and have the least access." LSEM focuses its legal advocacy on issues that impact basic human needs, including housing, income security, healthcare access, and personal safety. Core legal practice areas include elder law, housing, public benefits, consumer rights, family law, and employment.

LSEM serves 14 counties across mid-Michigan, including Arenac, Bay, Clare, Genesee, Gladwin, Gratiot, Huron, Isabella, Lapeer, Midland, Saginaw, Sanilac, St. Clair, and Tuscola. Additionally, through partnerships with the Region VII Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and the Valley Area Agency on Aging, LSEM provides senior-focused legal services in all 10 Region VII AAA counties and in Shiawassee County. Across all programs, the organization serves over 6,000 older adults annually, with an increasing share of those clients residing in the Region VII AAA area.

The organization operates within a flexible eligibility framework that aligns with the requirements of each grant. While most programs prioritize clients at or below 125% to 200% of the federal poverty level, some—including grants for seniors, veterans, and individuals receiving unemployment benefits—do not impose income limits. Under Region VII AAA guidelines, LSEM uses 185% of the federal poverty level as a targeting benchmark, in keeping with the agency's definition of "greatest economic need."

LSEM's recently adopted Strategic Plan outlines a vision of an inclusive legal system where every person has equal access to justice, regardless of economic or social status. Strategic goals include expanding access in rural and underserved areas, enhancing support for seniors, veterans, and individuals with disabilities, and addressing barriers related to language, culture, and digital access.

Current Programming and FY2025 Impact

LSEM was awarded its first Region VII AAA grant in FY2025 to provide Legal Assistance and Elder Abuse Prevention services across all 10 Region VII AAA counties: Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Huron, Isabella, Midland, Saginaw, and Tuscola. From the grant's inception on October 1, 2024, through May 31, 2025, LSEM provided direct legal services by closing 210 cases and assisting 143 seniors. Services included critical support such as estate planning (wills, powers of attorney, and Lady Bird deeds), housing stabilization, eviction defense, and elder abuse prevention.

Of the cases opened through the end of May 2025, 157 clients were at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. LSEM also reached 53 minority clients and 22 veterans, reflecting targeted outreach to historically underserved populations. These numbers reflect LSEM's commitment to equity, access, and responsiveness to need across the Region VII AAA service area.

To support these efforts, LSEM reassigned two (2) experienced staff attorneys to focus exclusively on the Region VII AAA counties, enhancing local presence and enabling more consistent engagement with rural and underserved communities. In-person presentations have been conducted at senior centers, community halls, and housing facilities in at least six (6) counties, including Midland, Saginaw, Gladwin, Sanilac, Tuscola, and Isabella. Presentation sites have included Gladwin Council on Aging, Eleanor Frank Senior Center, Ivan Middleton Hall in Vassar, First Ward Community Center in Saginaw, Brady Senior Center, Marlette VFW, Lexington Community Center, East Side Manor in Sandusky, Caro Dining Center, Eleanor Frank Senior Center (Saginaw COA), Isabella Health & Wellness Expo, Chesaning Senior Center, St. Joseph Church in Mayville, and the Saginaw County Senior Picnic. Additional presentations and outreach events are currently being planned for other Region VII counties throughout the year.

Additionally, over 50 virtual legal education and outreach events were held last year by LSEM organization-wide to ensure accessibility for individuals unable to attend in-person sessions due to mobility, transportation, or health-related challenges. Recognizing that nearly one-third of Michigan households face digital access limitations, LSEM also continues to prioritize in-person mobile clinics, home visits, and paper-based communication strategies.

Target Populations and Outreach Strategy

As part of the Region VII AAA grant application process, applicants are asked to describe how they will target and provide services to older adults in the following categories: those with the greatest economic need, low-income, elderly and minority individuals, those unable to perform activities of daily living, and those with cognitive impairments. LSEM has designed its outreach and service model to directly address these priorities as outlined by Region VII AAA.

LSEM targets its services to older adults experiencing the greatest economic need, as well as those facing barriers related to geography, disability, cognitive functioning, or social isolation. In accordance with Region VII AAA guidelines, LSEM prioritizes outreach and services to the specified key groups.

To reach these populations, LSEM partners with food banks, housing agencies, adult foster care programs, memory care centers, and senior centers. It also maintains collaborative relationships with behavioral health agencies, veterans groups, and culturally specific service providers. Staff conduct home visits and mobile clinics for clients who cannot travel, and tailor intake and communication methods to support accessibility. LSEM has invested in the Levitate digital messaging platform to soon improve outreach

to community stakeholders, complementing its traditional and in-person service approaches.

Culturally competent and linguistically appropriate legal services are delivered through individualized case plans. Educational efforts are bolstered by translated materials, plain-language legal guides, and training sessions for caregivers and service partners. Topics commonly addressed include advance directives, powers of attorney, Medicaid planning, housing preservation, elder abuse prevention, and protection from financial exploitation.

LSEM Program Model and FY2026 Goals

LSEM's legal services model integrates legal advocacy with broader human service delivery. Services are offered by a team of 20 attorneys, 6 paralegals, and 17 support staff across multiple offices. Legal assistance is provided in person, by phone, online, through mobile clinics, and via home visits, ensuring flexibility and responsiveness to client needs. LSEM does not use a formal priority scale but instead trains staff to recognize urgent legal threats and refer clients to appropriate resources. This triage model ensures timely assistance to those at highest risk of harm.

For FY2026, LSEM estimates it will serve approximately 375 seniors through direct legal representation and brief services. The organization also expects to reach up to 700 seniors through elder abuse prevention education and outreach efforts. These services aim to reduce the risk of abuse, eviction, exploitation, and unmet healthcare or estate planning needs. All efforts are guided by LSEM's recent Legal Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan, which emphasize service expansion in rural and high-need communities.

LSEM's work is supported by an extensive network of community partners, including healthcare systems, Adult Protective Services, disability networks, and local aging and housing organizations. These collaborations facilitate warm referrals, co-hosted education events, and integrated service delivery. Internally, LSEM fosters quality and accountability through regular staff meetings, case reviews, cross-training, and Continuing Legal Education (CLE) sessions on elder law, Medicaid, and trauma-informed lawyering.

Conclusion

Legal Services of Eastern Michigan is honored to continue its partnership with Region VII AAA. Through this FY2026 grant, LSEM seeks to build on its successful programming to ensure that older adults across the 10-county Region VII service area have access to the legal tools they need to live safely, independently, and with dignity. Whether through direct representation, legal education, or systemic collaboration, LSEM remains committed to upholding justice and improving quality of life for the seniors who need it most.

REGION VII AREA AGENCY ON AGING

SUPPORT SERVICES BUDGET SUMMARY

Agency: Legal Services of Eastern Michigan

Budget Period: 10/1/2025 to 9/30/2026

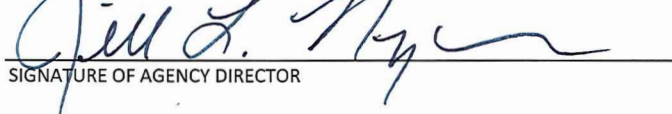
PLANNED EXPENDITURES

SERVICE CATEGORIES

Program Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Legal Services	Elder Abuse						TOTAL	Admin
Salaries	130,716	38,776	0	0	0	0	0	169,492	14,750
Fringe Benefits	37,099	10,641	0	0	0	0	0	47,740	2,740
Personal Svc. Contracts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Travel/Conferences	2,500	500	0	0	0	0	0	3,000	0
Supplies	1,070	109	0	0	0	0	0	1,179	1,179
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occupancy	4,727	1,109	0	0	0	0	0	5,836	5,836
Communications	1,675	393	0	0	0	0	0	2,068	2,068
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	177,787	51,528	0	0	0	0	0	229,315	26,573
Program Income (minus)								0	
NET COSTS	177,787	51,528	0	0	0	0	0	229,315	26,573
FUNDING SOURCES									
Area Agency Funds (90%)	85,876	12,161						98,037	
10% Local Match	9,542	1,351	0	0	0	0	0	10,893	
Local Match (10%)	9,542	1,351	0	0	0	0	0	10,893	
Cash	9,542	1,351						10,893	
In-Kind	0	0						0	
Other Resources	82,701	37,408	0	0	0	0	0	120,109	
TOTAL FUNDS	178,119	50,920	0	0	0	0	0	229,039	

0 0 0 0 276

CERTIFICATION:


SIGNATURE OF AGENCY DIRECTOR

6/23/25
DATE

Page 2 of 4

Agency: **Legal Services of Eastern Michigan**

SALARIES		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Other
Position/Title	FT*	Legal Services	Elder Abuse	0	0	0	0	0	TOTAL	Admin	In-Kind	Resources
Staff Attorney (Roth)	X	51,120	12,780						63,900			30,445
Staff Attorney (Littleton)	X	31,750	6,350						38,100			7,541
Admin Support (TBD)	X	37,600	9,400						47,000			48,532
Directing Attorney (Meilink)	X	2,871	2,871						5,742			7,764
Chief Financial Officer	X	2,360	2,360						4,720	4,720		4,720
Executive Director	X	3,040	3,040						6,080	6,080		6,080
Grants Manager	X	1,975	1,975						3,950	3,950		3,950
									0			
									0			
									0			
									0			
									0			
									0			
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FULL-TIME WAGE TOTAL		130,716	38,776						169,492	14,750	0	109,032
PART-TIME WAGE TOTAL		0	0						0			
TOTALS		130,716	38,776	0	0	0	0	0	169,492	14,750	0	109,032

169,492

FRINGE BENEFITS											
Amount for Full-Time	37,099	10,641						47,740	2,740		8,338
Amount for Part-Time	0							0			
TOTALS	37,099	10,641	0	0	0	0	0	47,740	2,740	0	8,338

*FT--Full time employee, place "X"

167,815.00

49,417.00

SUPPORT SERVICES BUDGET DETAIL

Agency: Legal Services of Eastern Michigan

SERVICE CATEGORIES

Personal Svc. Contracts				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Other
				Legal Services	Elder Abuse	0	0	0	0	0	TOTAL	Admin	In-Kind	Resources
											0			
											0			
											0			
TOTAL Personal Svc Contracts				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Travel	Total Miles	Rate	ota	Legal Services	Elder Abuse	0	0	0	0	0	TOTAL	Admin	In-Kind	Resources
Mileage	4,478	0.67	#	2,500	500						3,000			233
			0								0			
			0								0			
Conferences														
											0			
											0			
											0			
TOTAL Travel/Conferences				2,500	500	0	0	0	0	0	3,000	0	0	233
Supplies				Legal Services	Elder Abuse	0	0	0	0	0	TOTAL	Admin	In-Kind	Resources
Office Supplies				1,070	109						1,179	1,179		
											0			
											0			
											0			
											0			
TOTAL Supplies				1,070	109	0	0	0	0	0	1,179	1,179	0	0
Equipment				Legal Services	Elder Abuse	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
											0			
											0			
											0			
TOTAL Equipment				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occupancy				Legal Services	Elder Abuse	0	0	0	0	0	TOTAL	Admin	In-Kind	Resources
Space (Rent, Utilities, etc...)				4,727	1,109						5,836	5,836		438
											0			
											0			
TOTAL Occupancy				4,727	1,109	0	0	0	0	0	5,836	5,836	0	438
Communications				Legal Services	Elder Abuse	0	0	0	0	0	TOTAL	Admin	In-Kind	Resources
Phone/Internet				1,675	393						2,068	2,068		2,068
											0			
											0			
											0			
TOTAL Communications				1,675	393	0	0	0	0	0	2,068	2,068	0	2,068

[illegible]

SUPPORT SERVICES BUDGET DETAIL

Page 4 of 4

Agency: Legal Services of Eastern Michigan

I. Local Cash Match Detail

Service	Source	Dollar Amount
Legal Servcies	MSBF	10,893
TOTAL Local Cash Match		10,893

Total Local Cash match must equal Budget Summary page: 10,893
0

II. Local In-Kind Match Detail

Service	Source	Dollar Amount
TOTAL Local In-Kind Match		0

0

III. Other Resources Detail

Service	Source	Dollar Amount
Legal Services	LSC	109,216

TOTAL Other Resources		109,216

0