

MICHIGAN INDIAN LEGAL SERVICES, INC.

MILS Office Locations: Traverse City and Lansing

MILS Service Area: Statewide

Service Population: 25-50,000 individuals living at or below 125% of the poverty level



MILS focused its legal work on community development in 2001. MILS continues to help tribes gain federal recognition which gives tribal communities the tools they need to provide jobs, health care, job training, decent housing and many other services. MILS helped build a foundation for many other Indian organizations in 2001 by drafting articles of incorporation,

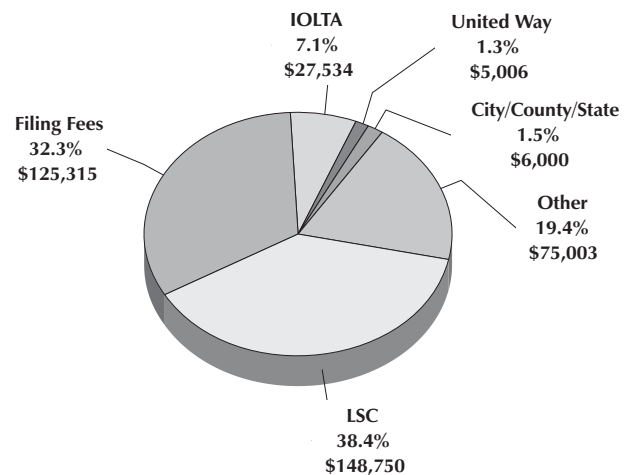
bylaws, gaining federal tax exemption and providing new organizations with advice and counsel.

These organizations will provide physical and institutional focus for tribal people who live in urban settings, separated from their tribal services and environment; delivery of health services to the community; a forum for elders to address concerns regarding economic, social, health and spiritual issues; Native American language classes for young people; presentation of pow wows; establishing a scholarship in the name of a deceased member of the drum group; and other assistance needed by the groups.

A native group needed help to form a non-profit corporation for the benefit of tribal elders, as well as future generations, to address community concerns regarding economic, social, health and spiritual issues. MILS met with the group and assisted with the completion of articles of incorporation, bylaws and obtaining tax-exempt status for the group from the IRS. It is now an established entity providing help to its members.

A child had been in her grandmother's custody for more than two years when the father asked to get his daughter back. The grandmother resisted even though she had always said the child could return as soon as the father was ready to care for the daughter. MILS successfully moved the matter from state court to tribal court for a custody determination. Prior to trial, MILS was able to help the father reach an agreement with the grandmother for conditions that allow return of the child to him and continued contact between the child and the grandmother.

MILS Sources of Funding for 2001: \$ 387,608



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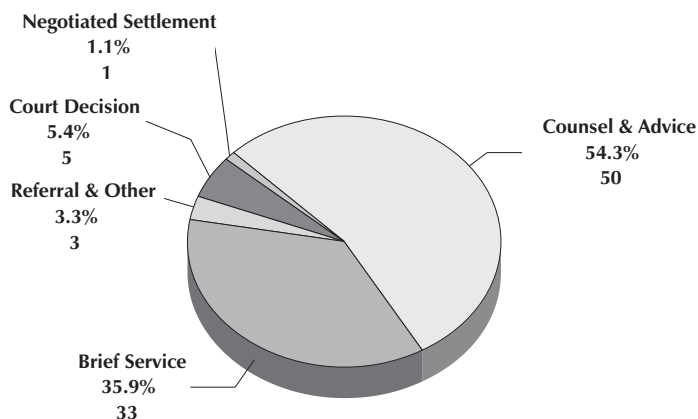
Community Outreach and Collaboration. MILS has provided primary legal support for five tribes that achieved federal recognition. MILS drafted the petitions for, interacted with federal officials, drafted tribal constitutions and codes, and provided day-to-day legal advice to the tribal governments. As a result, all the tribes have improved the lives of their members. Before federal recognition, some of the communities were so impoverished that many homes lacked indoor plumbing. One such community now has its own sewer system and new housing for seniors and families. All the communities have seen dramatic increases in the numbers and percentages of family members who are working. All have increased access to health care, educational benefits, social services, and job training. One tribe has become the largest employer in its county. One community has built a home for domestic violence victims and a civic center. After federal recognition is achieved, MILS continues to work with tribes to help set up their governing systems, including tribal legal codes and peacemaking systems.

Client Age	
18 & Under	0
19-59	80
60 & Over	8
Groups	4
Total	92

Pro Bono Support. MILS continued to use the services provided by the pro bono programs run by the other legal services providers in Michigan and to seek help from programs such as the Michigan Litigation Assistance Partnership Project, the Michigan Legal Services pro bono program, and the pro bono programs of the American Bar Association. MILS also involved the private bar in assisting its clients by seeking advice and counsel from other Indian law practitioners. Because the nature of MILS's work makes it difficult to engage pro bono attorneys to assist MILS clients directly, MILS sought financial donations from attorneys as an alternative.

Client Ethnicity	
White	4
Black	0
Hispanic	0
Native American	87
Asian	0
Other	1
Total	92

MILS Types of Service in 2001



MILS Cases Closed in 2001: 92

