

# MICHIGAN POVERTY LAW PROGRAM

MPLP Office Location: Ann Arbor, Lansing

**Service Area:** Statewide

**Service Population:** Legal services programs in Michigan



In 2001, MPLP continued its strong support for field programs throughout the state and its commitment to increase advocacy for low-income families. Two key staff were hired: a litigation coordinator and a managing attorney who also filled the newest position of consumer support attorney.

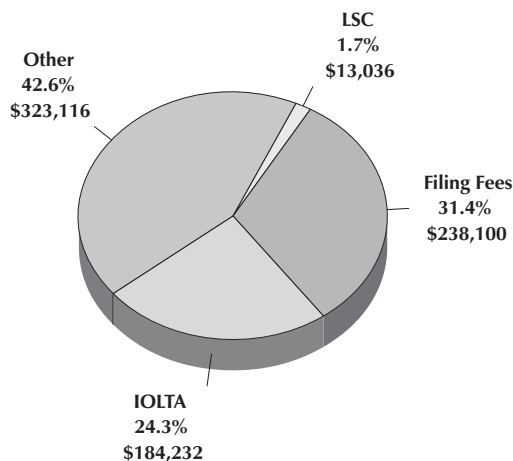
MPLP closed 95 cases, co-counseled or consulted on many others, directed still more to pro bono resources, responded to more than 800 requests from local programs for assistance, and published issue alerts and quarterly newsletters. MPLP continued to provide a quality, varied training agenda for field advocates that

included 18 days of training with 783 individuals attending and 11 half-day mini-seminars with 172 individuals attending. MPLP convened and staffed 22 task force meetings on various substantive law and skills topics for 358 attendees. During 2001, MPLP and the Michigan League for Human Services made significant progress through advocacy on issues affecting the elderly, low-income housing, family law, and health care. The University of Michigan Law School continued its role as part of MPLP, assisting with advocacy, case work and support for field programs.

Besides producing its own publications, MPLP staff regularly give input for the publication projects of others. In the housing area, two examples of this kind of work in 2001 were the feedback MPLP housing advocates gave on a model landlord-tenant summary proceedings answer that one legal aid program developed and on a guide to the public housing planning process for homeless advocates that another program created. These resources can now also be shared with other programs.

A non-resident mother and her three children were victims of severe physical and sexual abuse by the husband/father. After they escaped to various shelters, MPLP helped the mother file her own successful application for residency. MPLP also helped her renew her work authorization and obtain counseling on stabilizing her family. This resilient woman has now received help for her children to begin recovery from the abuse. She also obtained employment and now supports herself and her children.

**MPLP Sources of Funding for 2001: \$ 758,484**



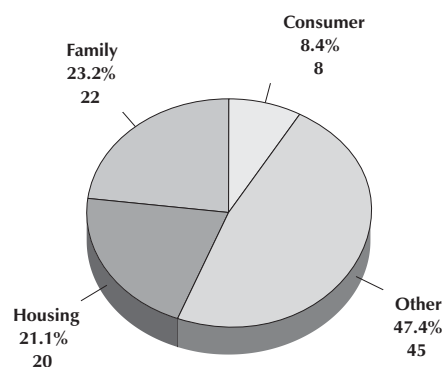
# MICHIGAN POVERTY LAW PROGRAM

Contact: Robert F. Gillett, Director • (734) 665-6181

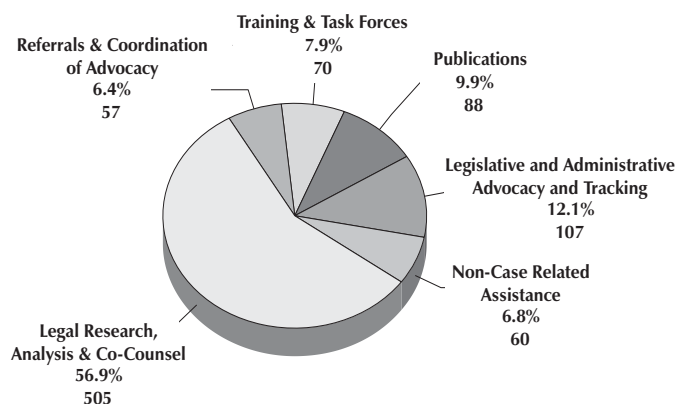
**Community Outreach and Collaboration.** In 2001, MPLP continued to play a significant role in staffing statewide technology initiatives, including upgrading case management systems ; gathering, updating and posting community legal education materials from around the state; and coordinating other web-based client and advocate resources. MPLP’s web site recorded over 2.4 million hits and more than 130,000 user sessions. MPLP also developed a uniform set of computerized intake questions for field program use on elder law, housing, income and family law topics. In November 2001, MPLP worked with Farmworker Legal Services to sponsor a training to assist battered immigrants, under the Violence Against Women Act. MPLP’s publications attorney also worked with the Legal Assistance Center of Kent County to develop on-line pro se materials. MPLP also joined with the Michigan League for Human Services (MLHS) and the Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm to provide requested information to legislators to help in their work to specifically exempt home heating credit income from garnishment. Much of MPLP’s outreach is to other legal aid providers who ask MPLP’s specialists for assistance or through presentations by MPLP staff at other legal aid program offices.

**Pro Bono Support.** MPLP has worked with the State Bar of Michigan to develop and support the Michigan Litigation Assistance Partnership Program (MI-LAPP), which seeks to link the resources of large law firms and corporate law departments with complex cases and representation of organizations. Another MPLP MI-LAPP partner is Community Legal Resources, which locates volunteer law firms to help nonprofit agencies with transactional and corporate needs. In 2001, MI-LAPP referred 79 new cases to the private bar. Law firms throughout Michigan devote significant resources to these often complex cases. As MPLP’s MI-LAPP administrator, the newly-hired litigation coordinator will help recruit even more pro bono lawyers for MI-LAPP in the future.

MPLP Cases Closed in 2001: 95



MPLP Types of Activity in 2001



MPLP Completed Activities in 2001: 887

