

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



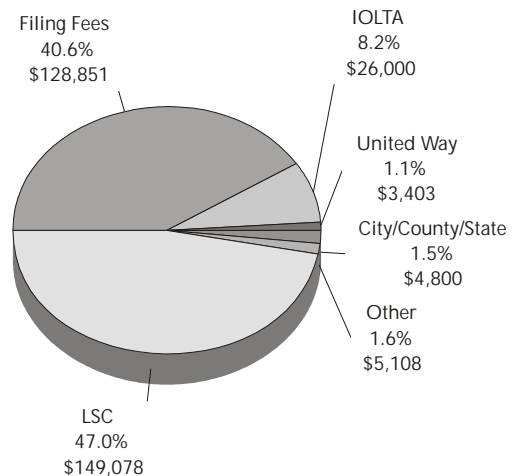
In 2002, MILS continued its emphasis on helping tribes gain federal recognition. Federal recognition gives tribes the tools they need to raise their members out of poverty. Before federal recognition, some of the communities are so impoverished that many homes lacked indoor plumbing. One such community now has its own sewer system and new housing for

seniors and families. Federal recognition helps tribes increase the percentage of tribal members with full employment, lessen dependence on welfare, increase tax revenues for the state, and increase economic activity, which benefits tribal members and the surrounding communities. MILS helped build a foundation for many other Indian organizations in 2002 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. MILS also partnered with state and tribal social workers to find ways to protect at risk Indian children and provide training about the Indian Child Welfare Act.

A mother and her sons fled a mentally and verbally abusive relationship. Without enough money to pay for housing they were forced to live in a crowded setting with extended family. MILS successfully helped the mother complete the process that gave the family access to Tribal assistance funds. This provided the mother a basis to obtain a loan to purchase a modest home in which to raise her sons.

MILS helped a Cultural Learning Center (CLC) obtain nonprofit corporation status. CLCs assist urban Indian people who are separated from tribal services with such things as health services and a culturally-appropriate community meeting place. MILS helped this CLC by drafting and filing Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, as well as applying for tax-exempt status. Now the area will benefit from this CLC which will host and facilitate many community services.

MILS Sources of Funding for 2002: \$ 317,240



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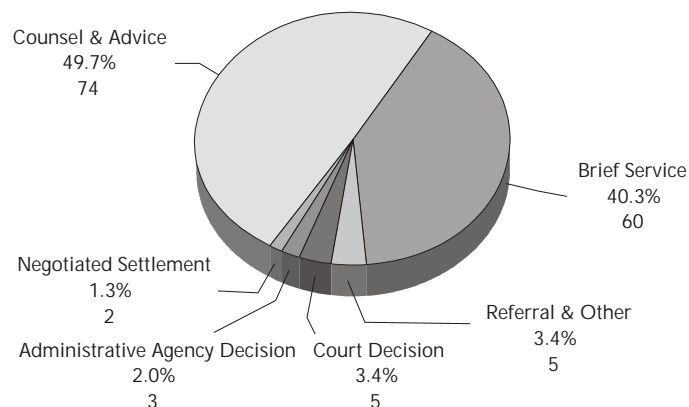
Community Outreach and Collaboration. MILS is part of the PIKA case management pilot project, a new system being used by most Michigan's legal aid programs to allow secure access to case management from any computer with access to the Internet. With the switch to PIKA, the client database is instantly available to advocates so that clients are able to talk to an attorney during their initial call to MILS. An Internet Voice connection between MILS' two offices allows clients talk to attorneys from either MILS office depending on their availability and workload. MILS continued the comprehensive needs assessment it began in 2001. By the end of 2002 MILS visited 9 reservations, 4 Indian organizations and met with several Indian outreach workers. At each location MILS assembled a group of people knowledgeable about the legal needs of the local community such as tribal council members, tribal judges and attorneys, social workers, police officers, heads of departments and housing officials. MILS will use the input to determine its future work priorities.

Client Age	
18 & Under	1
19-59	141
60 & Over	5
Groups	2
Total	149

Pro Bono Support. Because the specialized nature of MILS' work, it is difficult to engage general pro bono attorneys to assist MILS clients directly. MILS seeks financial donations from bar members as an alternative. MILS also involves the private bar in assisting its clients by seeking advice and counsel from other Indian law practitioners, the Michigan Litigation Assistance Partnership Project, the Michigan Legal Services pro bono program, and the pro bono programs of the American Bar Association.

Client Ethnicity	
White	6
Black	1
Hispanic	2
Native American	136
Asian	0
Other	4
Total	149

MILS Types of Service in 2002



MILS Cases Closed in 2002: 149

