

MICHIGAN MIGRANT LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT, INC.

MMLAP Office Location: Grand Rapids

MMLAP Service Area: Statewide

Service Population: 160,000 individuals living at or below 125% of the poverty level



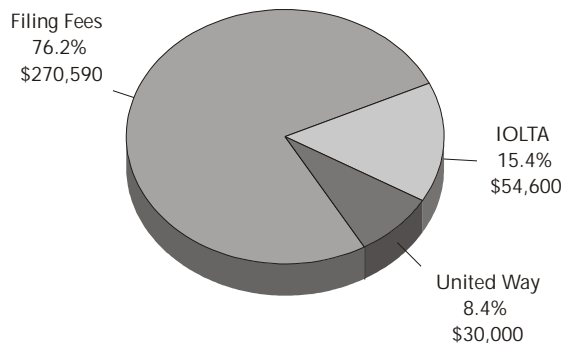
MMLAP's purpose is to provide legal assistance to farmworkers and their families, whether migrating or seasonal, and families recently settled-out from farm work. The farmworker client base exists statewide in both rural and urban areas. Because many farmworkers speak Spanish, MMLAP increased its staff to four bi-lingual case handlers and six

Four farmworkers were not paid for apple picking during their final work period. After complaining about their unpaid hours to the grower, he threatened them with immediate eviction and provided no fuel for cooking or heating. After MMLAP intervened, the grower paid the illegally-withheld wages and stopped trying to unlawfully evict the workers by withholding cooking and heating gas.

summer interns and provides bi-lingual phone assistance. MMLAP is a "mobile" law office that goes to the clients when they cannot come to MMLAP. Because clients lack flexibility to see attorneys by appointment during regular business hours, MMLAP holds satellite office hours, attends special events, and institutes evening office hours in the summer. Most client encounters occur through outreach to labor camps. Clients were also made aware of the agency by MMLAP's presence at agency meetings, festivals, and community activities. The need for immigration advice and representation continues to be a pressing concern. For example, many clients desire legal work authorization and are eligible to apply through a family member. MMLAP thus expanded these services through new funding for an Equal Justice Works Fellow (attorney) with special training in immigration matters.

A family of six farmworkers was not given disclosures required by the Agricultural Worker Protection Act for those working with dangerous pesticides. They were forced to work around toxic substances without protection. In addition, they suffered for nearly 2 months through unbearable housing conditions, also in violation of the Act. MMLAP sued to stop the grower's unlawful actions and obtained a modest settlement that allowed the family to move to another, safer location.

MMLAP Sources of Funding for 2002: \$ 355,190



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Contact: Teresa Hendricks-Smitley, Executive Director • (616) 454-5055

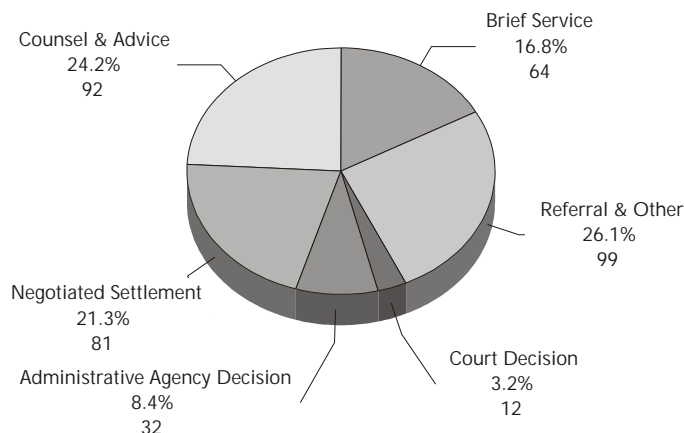
Community Outreach and Collaboration. MMLAP attorneys and summer staff visited migrant labor camps statewide, attended Migrant Resource Council meetings throughout Michigan, and served on an interagency migrant services committee. MMLAP continued to collaborate with local bar associations, the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan, Farmworker Legal Services, and Immigration Assistance Program in Kalamazoo for case referrals and/or co-counseling arrangements. MMLAP continued its statewide trainings and outreach, monthly coordination with Farmworker Legal Services, community legal education and off-site office hours. Staff gave presentations to large audiences throughout the state on pressing issues affecting migrant labor. MMLAP distributed its "Blue book" of legal rights in English and Spanish to work sites and agencies for distribution to farmworkers. Through a national New Voices grant, MMLAP increased outreach to indigenous farmworkers who are especially vulnerable because of unique cultural and language barriers. Heart of West Michigan United Way funding also supported a full-time bi-lingual, bicultural attorney to help this group.

Client Age	
18 & Under	23
19-59	459
60 & Over	44
Groups	0
Total	526

Pro Bono Support. MMLAP continued to use the services provided by WMLS and other legal aid providers in Michigan for general legal concerns of qualifying clients. MMLAP seeks help from Michigan Litigation Assistance Partnership Project (MLAPP) when needed and is also sometimes assisted by the ABA's LAPP program and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Special Counsel Civil Rights for Immigration Related Unfair Employment Practices. Because of the specialized nature of legal remedies for migrants in agriculture, MMLAP relied on private firms who have assisted with complex cases in the past.

Client Ethnicity	
White	4
Black	0
Hispanic	512
Native American	0
Asian	0
Other	10
Total	526

MMLAP Types of Service in 2002



MMLAP Cases Closed in 2002: 526

