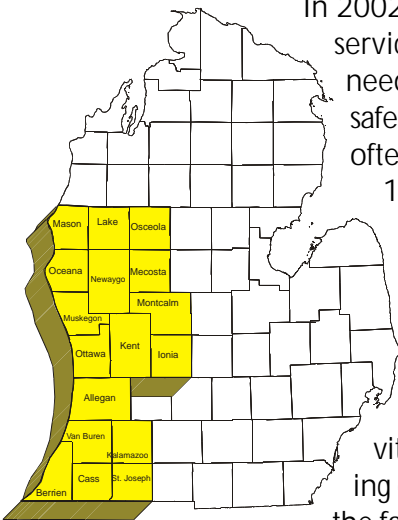


WESTERN MICHIGAN LEGAL SERVICES

WMLS Office Locations: Big Rapids, Grand Rapids, Holland, Kalamazoo, Muskegon, Niles, and St. Joseph

WMLS Service Area: Allegan, Berrien, Cass, Ionia, Kalamazoo, Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, Ottawa, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties

Service Population: 272,332 individuals living at or below 125% of the poverty level



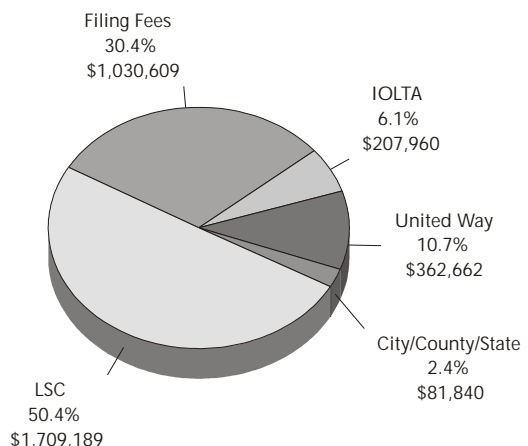
In 2002, WMLS provided a variety of services that often affected client needs as basic as food, shelter and safety. Clients and their family were often at risk for homelessness in 1,800 housing matters handled by WMLS. WMLS also litigated to conclusion 715 family law cases involving recent physical spouse abuse, child abuse, or the defense of a custody matter, establishing vital individual rights and providing desperately-needed security to the families involved. A WMLS staff

A woman was duped into signing the title to her home to a bail bondsman when she tried to obtain a small bond to help her grandson. Later, when she applied for City assistance for needed improvements, the deed to the bondsman was discovered. A pro bono attorney sued the bail bondsman and obtained a settlement giving the woman back clear title to her lifetime home as well as funds to compensate her for losing her homestead tax status for several years.

attorney secured a Soros Justice Postgraduate Fellowship to work with ex-offenders on the civil legal barriers which prevent them from successfully reestablishing themselves in the community. Clients contacted WMLS through toll-free telephone numbers and referrals from human service agencies. WMLS used satellite locations such as local courthouses and welfare offices to increase access by clients. WMLS also offered telephone advice and brief service via a hotline in several counties.

An elderly woman refinanced her long time home based upon a promise of a lower monthly payment. Instead, she faced huge fees and a significantly increased mortgage payment beyond her ability to pay. She soon fell behind on her payments. In a federal lawsuit, WMLS asserted that the loan violated consumer statutes. As a result, the lender agreed to refinance the loan without fees. This senior now has affordable payments and is able to keep her home.

WMLS Sources of Funding for 2002: \$ 3,392,260



WESTERN MICHIGAN LEGAL SERVICES

Contact: Michael C. Chielens, Executive Director • (616) 774-0672

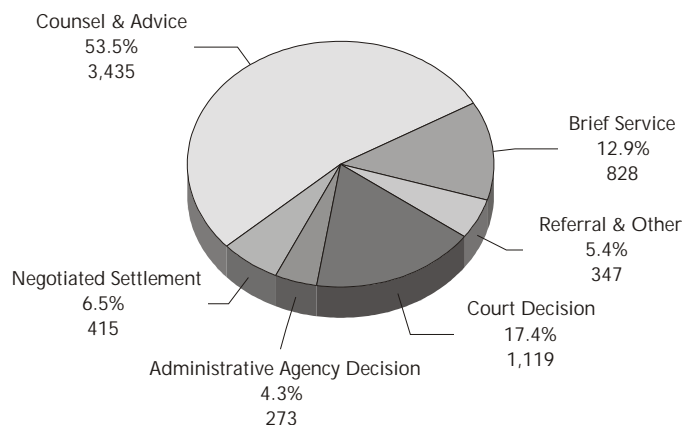
Community Outreach and Collaboration. WMLS staff members trained community agency professionals in poverty law issues, accepted case referrals, and served on the boards of local and state agencies. WMLS staff also serve on boards of community organizations and often make presentations to various community agencies and groups. WMLS co-sponsored an Elder Abuse training with Adult Protective Services, the state police, and the sheriff's and prosecutor's offices in Ottawa and Muskegon Counties that was attended by 100 senior network staff members. WMLS and the Grand Rapids Bar Association opened the Legal Assistance Center in March and served over 2700 patrons with pro se legal issues. More than double that amount received information and referrals over the phone by LAC staff and volunteers. The Center will soon offer Web-based legal forms that can be filled out online and downloaded and filed with a court. WMLS staff also helped draft three major reference books and other materials for LAC patrons on various legal topics. Additional was spent by WMLS staff on training volunteers who assist at the Center.

Client Age	
18 & Under	54
19-59	5,693
60 & Over	670
Groups	0
Total	6,417

Pro Bono Support. WMLS reached a milestone in 2002 by collecting over \$200,000 in pro bono donations for the first time. WMLS raised \$205,267 in contributions from almost 800 attorneys and judges through the statewide Access to Justice Fund for WMLS. WMLS also maintained a pro bono panel to help with individual cases throughout the service area. Volunteer lawyers also provide types of other help. For example, Grand Rapids Bar Association volunteers work with WMLS on the Legal Assistance Center and Kalamazoo Bar Association attorneys conduct evening intake for WMLS at Kalamazoo community centers several times each month.

Client Ethnicity	
White	3,954
Black	1,478
Hispanic	295
Native American	72
Asian	32
Other	586
Total	6,417

WMLS Types of Service in 2002



WMLS Cases Closed in 2002: 6,417

