

# MICHIGAN POVERTY LAW PROGRAM

2003 MPLP Office Location: Ann Arbor, Lansing

**Service Area:** Statewide

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



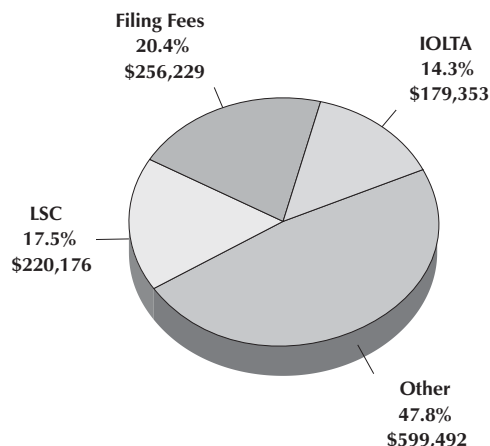
In 2003, MPLP continued to help build and sustain the capacity of local legal aid providers. MPLP gave support to legal services providers in Michigan through technology and advocacy assistance and coordination, as well as substantive law and skills training. MPLP provided 20 days of training for

578 attendees and convened 21 task force meetings in legal practice areas that attracted 253 persons. MPLP also helps local programs with complex cases or co-counsels with them. MPLP worked with the Michigan League for Human Services (MLHS) on the fourth year of the Michigan Advocacy Project (MAP) which addressed issues affecting the elderly, payday lending, access to health care, housing, immigration and family law. Also, with MLHS, MPLP collaborated on the Earned Income Credit ICAN E-FILE project to assist low-income taxpayers in claiming tax refunds to which they are entitled. In 2003, the University of Michigan Law School also maintained its partnership with MPLP in providing advocacy, case work and support for local legal aid programs.

The husband of an elderly alzheimer's patient came to her nursing home each day. He tried to make sure she was taken care of in the substandard facility. Soon, she received a terminal diagnosis and he wanted to remove her from the nursing home. MPLP worked to obtain expedited help from the MiChoice home and community-based waiver program for the couple. As a result, the elderly woman was able to return home, receive medical care at home, and spend her last days with her husband of more than 50 years.

A man who purchased a mobile home under an installment contract fell behind on the payments. He had developed very poor health which forced him to stop working. The seller tried to evict him as if he were a mere tenant, but MPLP demonstrated that he had additional protection under the contract. A settlement was obtained which tacked past-due amounts onto the end of a new agreement. MPLP also assisted this man in getting disability benefits for which he qualified. As a result, he and his family were able to make payments and keep their home.

**MPLP Sources of Funding for 2003: \$ 1,255,250**



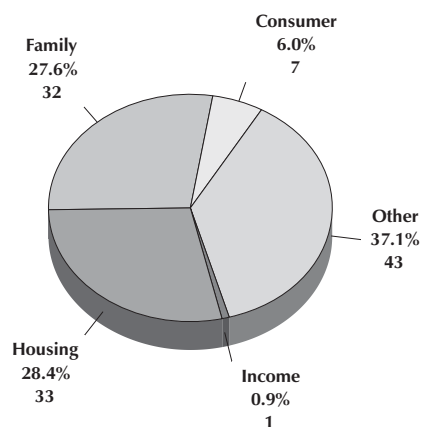
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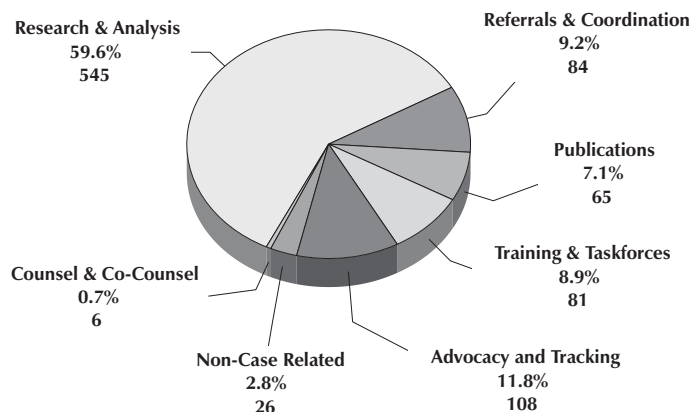
**Community Outreach and Collaboration.** In 2003, MPLP continued a significant role in technology initiatives. MPLP helps support the Legal Services Computer Committee (LSCC) which plans and assists technology planning for the state. With the LSCC, MPLP coordinated the complete implementation of a new case management system, Pika, used by most legal aid programs in the state. MPLP hosted and managed the Pika pilot project and now hosts and manages active installation of Pika for multiple programs. MPLP also launched the statewide client web site, MI.LawHelp.org, and MPLP staff gather, update and post content on the site. MPLP staff continued to work with Western Michigan Legal Services and the court-based Legal Assistance Center to develop on-line pro se materials and forms for their use and the Michigan LawHelp web site. MPLP also added features to the web site so that it can now be navigated in Arabic and Spanish. Much of MPLP's outreach is to other legal aid providers through presentations or responses to requests from advocates for information or other help.

**Pro Bono Support.** MPLP works with the State Bar of Michigan to support the Michigan Litigation Assistance Partnership Project (MI-LAPP). MI-LAPP links the resources of large law firms and corporate law departments with complex cases or those for which local resources are not available. It also includes representation of community organizations through another MPLP/MI-LAPP partner, Community Legal Resources, which recruits law firms to help nonprofit agencies with transactional and corporate needs. In 2003, MI-LAPP referred 148 new cases to the private bar and reached out to community agencies and bar groups to expand pro bono resources in three areas: education and special education, immigration, and QDRO resources for family law cases with pension issues.

MPLP Cases Closed in 2003: 116



MPLP Types of Activity in 2003



MPLP Completed Activities in 2003: 915

