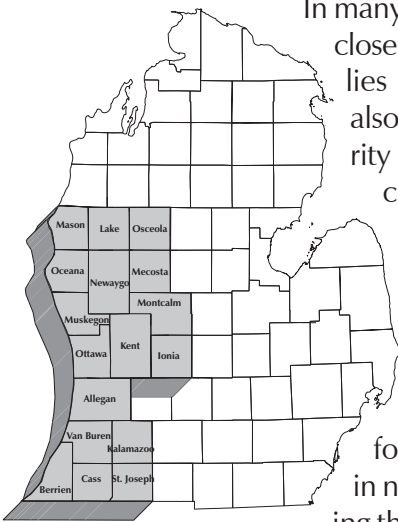


WESTERN MICHIGAN LEGAL SERVICES

2003 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: 261,773 individuals living at or below 125% of the poverty level



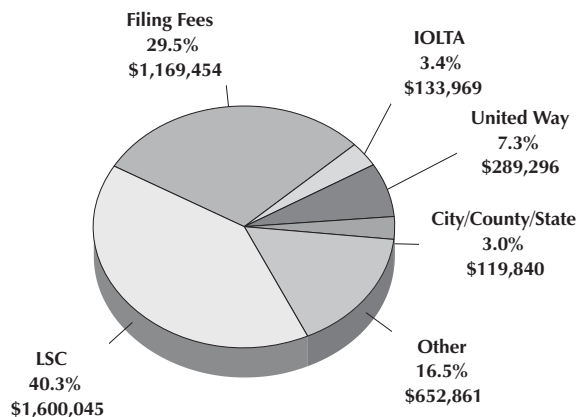
In many of WMLS' 1700 housing cases closed in 2003, WMLS helped families avoid homelessness. WMLS also provided much-needed security to families in 785 family law cases which were litigated to conclusion and involved recent physical spouse abuse, child abuse, or the defense of a custody matter. WMLS argued 221 hearings before the Social Security Administration for disabled persons desperately in need of an advocate, often helping these clients receive or maintain

A woman was forced to live in unsanitary conditions because the septic system kept backing up, also causing much damage to her personal belongings. The landlord failed to correct the problem despite repeated warnings, and the city condemned the home. WMLS represented the woman and obtained an order to require the landlord to repair the premises and reimburse the woman for her damaged belongings. She now lives in a repaired, safe dwelling.

critical health care and provide stable income maintenance. The WMLS staff attorney and Soros Justice Postgraduate Fellow continued work to resolve civil legal barriers which prevent ex-offenders from reestablishing themselves productively in the community. In 2003, WMLS successfully argued a case in the Michigan Supreme Court that determined that a third party could not seek custody or visitation with a child whose mother was married at the time of the child's conception and birth.

A mother of two found a job as a bus driver. Soon, the bus company fired her, incorrectly claiming she had a criminal record. As a result, the Work First program, which provides assistance to low-income persons if they are training for or have a job, terminated her benefits. WMLS helped the woman obtain documents to prove the criminal record actually belonged to someone else. Both Work First and the bus company also reinstated her. This mother was then able to keep her job and support her family.

WMLS Sources of Funding for 2003: \$ 3,965,465



WESTERN MICHIGAN LEGAL SERVICES

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

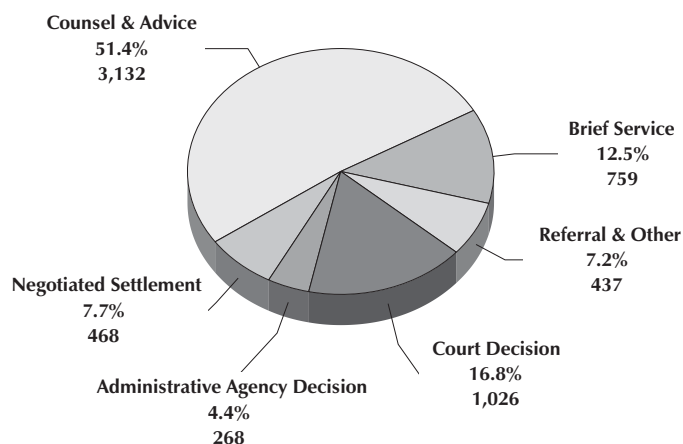
Community Outreach and Collaboration. Although the majority of clients initiate contacts by calling local offices for appointments, WMLS uses many other outreach avenues. These include meeting clients at courthouses, shelters, community action agencies, senior centers, in addition to providing walk-in emergency assistance and receiving referrals from other service providers. The various outreach sites strengthen WMLS's relationship to other human service agencies within the community and are opportunities to provide clients with more access to legal services. WMLS staff attorneys assisted with cases for formerly homeless women in transitional housing shelters. Many of the women had been suddenly evicted from their homes or had become homeless as a result of a divorce or domestic violence situation. The advice given by WMLS on housing and family law matters helped educate these women about keeping a stable housing situation.

Client Age	
18 & Under	78
19-59	5,304
60 & Over	705
Groups	3
Total	6,090

Pro Bono Support. WMLS pro bono program receives valuable donations of both time and money from attorneys. In 2003, the program raised over \$180,000 in donations, and 225 cases were closed by pro bono attorneys. Seventy-four percent of pro bono closed cases were resolved after litigation in court or before an administrative agency. WMLS works directly with the Grand Rapids Bar Association to provide legal services at the Legal Assistance Center. WMLS also continues to support the Kalamazoo County Bar Association pro bono clinics and KCBA attorneys conduct evening intake for WMLS at Kalamazoo community centers several times each month. In 2003, over 30 pro bono lawyers and human services personnel attended a legal resources web site presentation produced collaboratively by WMLS, MPLP, ProBono.net and the Kalamazoo Public Library.

Client Ethnicity	
White	3,875
Black	1,508
Hispanic	285
Native American	109
Asian	29
Other	284
Total	6,090

WMLS Types of Service in 2003



WMLS Cases Closed in 2003: 6,090

