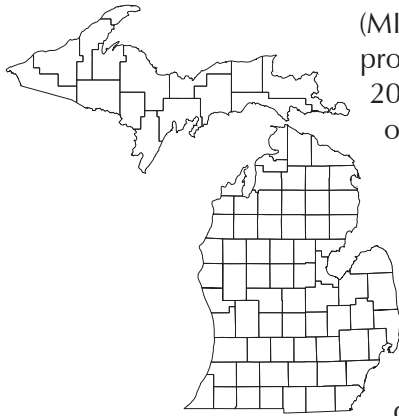


MICHIGAN INDIAN LEGAL SERVICES

2004 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



Michigan Indian Legal Services (MILS) is engaged in work which produces long term benefits. In 2004, MILS continued to focus on helping Native American tribes gain federal recognition. For a tribe, federal recognition provides access to resources enabling them to increase the percentage of tribal members with full employment, lessen dependence on welfare and increase tax revenues and economic activity for the state.

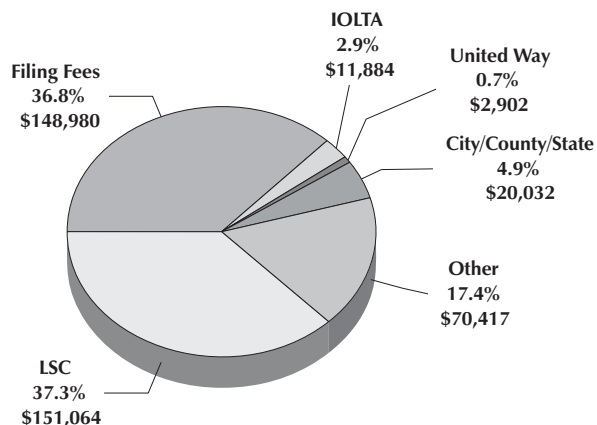
MILS continued to expand its outreach to reservation communities in 2004 to better serve clients and provide direct access to an attorney. During outreach events, clients can be helped on the spot with advice and counsel or receive additional follow-up services.

MILS has partnered with tribes to use their telephone line or Internet connection which has allowed MILS to bring legal research, legal forms, conflict checks and other services to assist clients outside of the main office. This cooperative arrangement has been instrumental in increasing MILS' efficiency and capacity to provide statewide services and immediately help clients in the field.

MILS represents an historic Indian tribe and has been working on the tribe's petition for federal recognition since 2000. During this time, MILS has functioned as the tribe's general counsel in all matters in order to help the tribe navigate the federal recognition process which can often be a lengthy and complex endeavor. MILS attorneys are involved in tribal council meetings, meetings with tribal and federal officials, and do other work toward federal recognition which will help to bring health benefits, economic opportunities, and tribal preservation to the people of the tribe.

Relatives approached MILS wishing to adopt their Indian grand nieces. The clients could not find any other legal assistance that would help them keep the children in the Indian community. MILS filed the adoption petition and represented the clients at the hearing. The children were able to be adopted by their relatives allowing them to maintain important family ties. MILS also assisted after the adoption to make sure the clients obtained the proper birth certificates and other documentation maintaining their tribal heritage.

MILS Sources of Funding for 2004: \$ 405,279



MICHIGAN INDIAN LEGAL SERVICES

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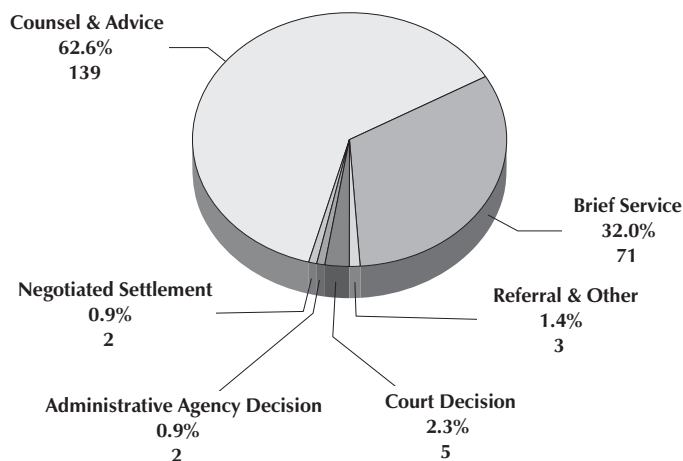
Community Outreach and Collaboration. MILS continues to work in partnership with other agencies in the Michigan Tribal/State Partnership. The Tribal/State Partnership seeks to improve compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and promote better care for Indian children. Agencies and workers who work with the Indian Child Welfare Act often call upon MILS to provide expertise on the subject. MILS and the Family Independence Agency (Department of Human Services) continue to work together to train tribal and state social workers and a small number of attorneys on the Indian Child Welfare Act and its purpose to keep Native American families together. In 2004, MILS participated in the homecoming of Three Fires Pow Wow in Grand Rapids, which was attended by thousands of people. A MILS attorney staffed a display table for two days answering legal questions and giving out information.

Client Age	
18 & Under	3
19-59	202
60 & Over	15
Groups	2
Total	222

Pro Bono Support. MILS involves the private bar whenever possible on a case by case basis but because of the specialized nature of MILS' work, it is difficult to engage general pro bono attorneys to assist MILS clients directly. Typically, MILS encourages other Indian law practitioners to assist clients in need of pro bono services. MILS also involves the private bar by seeking advice and counsel from the Michigan Litigation Assistance Partnership Program (MI-LAPP) and pro bono programs of the American Bar Association. Two MILS attorneys provide pro bono services at a weekly clinic at the Third Level Crisis Center in Traverse City.

Client Ethnicity	
White	13
Black	3
Hispanic	0
Native American	202
Asian	0
Other	4
Total	222

MILS Types of Service in 2004



MILS Cases Closed in 2004: 222

