

# ELDER LAW OF MICHIGAN

2006 ELM Office Locations: Lansing

**ELM Service Area:** Statewide

**Service Population:** 237,519 individuals living at or below 125% of the poverty level



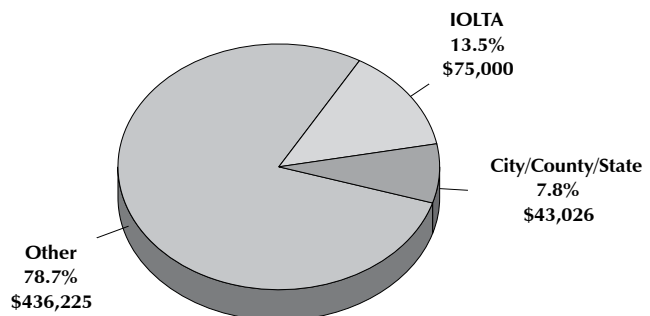
In 2006, ELM's Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors (LHMS) gave advice and help to more than 3,000 low-income seniors with a wide variety of legal problems, a 30% increase over 2005. By providing civil legal services over the phone, ELM is able to overcome many of the barriers seniors face when seeking help for legal problems such as social or geographic isolation, transportation difficulties,

disabilities, or illness. Additionally, LHMS attorneys were able to give brief services to over 19% of the callers. The ELM Pension Rights Project recovered over \$1.2 million for individuals with pension problems as a result of company mergers, closures, or dissolutions which helped sustain many seniors' independence and created a stable home life for many families. ELM also operates the MI CAFÉ Project which helps low-income seniors apply for public benefits. In 2006, MI CAFÉ served over 750 seniors, assisting them in securing Food Assistance and Medicaid benefits, providing vulnerable seniors with better nutrition and often preserving meager income for needed medicines, housing and utilities.

To help educate long-term-care providers about alternatives to guardianship, ELM mailed information to nursing homes and assisted living admissions staff throughout Michigan. ELM also let them know they could refer family members and potential residents to ELM's website for information and encouraged the staff members to join ELM's online discussion program so that they could ask questions and seek help with problems. ELM reaches more clients through educating others who serve low-income persons.

A senior was about to have her utilities shut off because she could not pay her bill. The ELM attorney discovered that the senior was on oxygen and needed electricity to run the machine. The attorney helped her apply for a medical emergency extension in order to get assistance to pay her utility bills. This prevented the senior from having to be relocated or from risking her health by having no power for her home oxygen machine.

**ELM Sources of Funding for 2006: \$ 554,251**



# ELDER LAW OF MICHIGAN

Contact: Kate B. White, Executive Director • (517) 485-9164

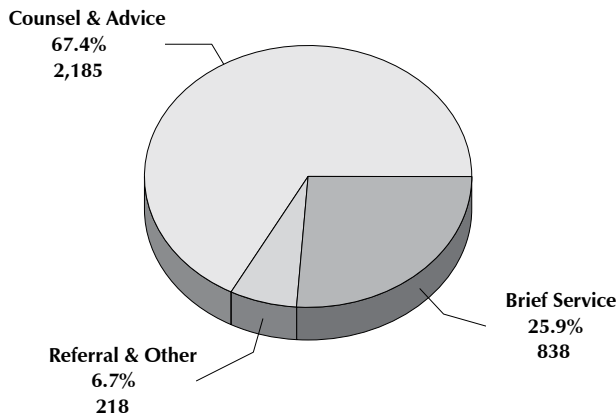
**Community Outreach and Collaboration.** In 2006, ELM programs expanded outreach into Wayne County with 27% of the Legal Hotline and Pension cases coming from Wayne County. The MiCAFE program also expanded its outreach into Wayne County and has helped over 500 low-income older adult households apply for food and health assistance, improving the quality of life for many seniors. The Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors also worked with Office of Services to the Aging and the Governor’s Office to prepare a 5-page insert for a mailing to over 40,000 people in Michigan. The mailing, “Own Your Future” was designed to give general legal education materials to people of retirement age or recently retired. ELM also participates collaboratively in many groups working to expand legal services for the poor including the State Planning Body and the ATJ Campaign Internal Cabinet.

Client Age	
18 & Under	7
19-59	225
60 & Over	3,009
Groups	0
Total	3,241

**Pro Bono Support.** In 2006, ELM increased the number of pro bono and reduced fee attorneys willing to take cases each year to help low-income seniors with their extended legal needs. A few pro bono attorneys also volunteer their time directly to the Legal Hotline working at ELM’s office. Other attorneys take referrals on a case by case basis from their own offices if the senior’s problem can be effectively solved with representation or document preparation. For those seniors who receive pro bono legal help, the legal assistance resolves significant problems in their lives. ELM continues to work with the MI-Litigation Assistance Partnership Project to use pro bono attorneys to assist with the drafting and filing of Qualified Domestic Relations Orders for the Pension Project where the intervention has secured retirement benefits for low-income divorced persons, helping to literally lift families out of poverty.

Client Ethnicity	
White	2,380
Black	795
Hispanic	15
Native American	12
Asian	11
Other	28
Total	3,241

ELM Types of Service in 2006



ELM Cases Closed in 2006: 3,241

