

MICHIGAN MIGRANT LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT

2006 MMLAP Office Location: Grand Rapids

MMLAP Service Area: Statewide

Service Population: 160,000 individuals living at or below 125% of the poverty level



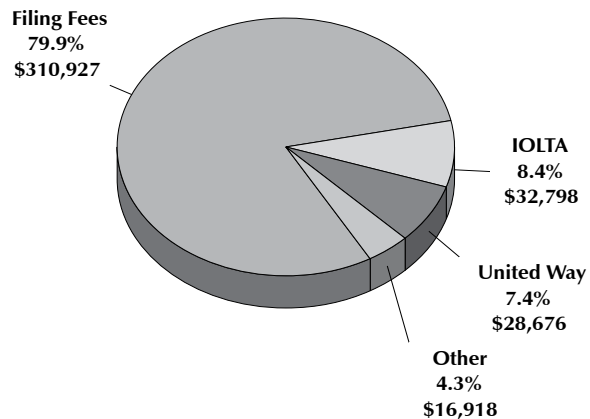
Clients access MMLAP's services through a toll-free number, by visiting the office or through summer outreach where bi-lingual attorneys and law clerks often visit migrant camps to distribute legal educational materials to farmworkers. In 2006, MMLAP visited 153 camps and distributed 2,753 bilingual booklets about rights and responsibilities migrant agricultural workers have while in Michigan.

Four migrants worked for an apple grower and were not paid the minimum wage for their picking. MMLAP helped the workers show that the farmer, who had not provided a statement of the terms and conditions of the job as required by law, forged the workers' signatures on the documents. This resulted in the workers receiving the wages legally owed to them.

These booklets are also available in audio format in several dialects of native Mexican Indians who speak neither English nor Spanish, including some which do not have written forms of communication. In addition, in July, 2006, the minimum wage increased and many farmworkers were not getting the information from their employers. MMLAP worked cooperatively with Farmworker Legal Services and other agencies to provide legal education to clients on topics such as the applicability of new minimum wage increases to agricultural workers, including creating and distributing law-related educational flyers in Spanish to educate clients about the new wage rates and dates of their effect. MMLAP also works with other service providers who regularly encounter migrants through participating in trainings, task forces and joint meetings to better understand and track legal issues affecting migrants.

A migrant teenager staying with another family needed surgery, but the hospital refused to operate when her parents could not sign the medical permissions because they were temporarily picking fruit in another state. MMLAP helped them have a guardian appointed for their daughter. The guardian was able to sign the papers, allowing the girl to have the needed surgery.

MMLAP Sources of Funding for 2006: \$ 389,319



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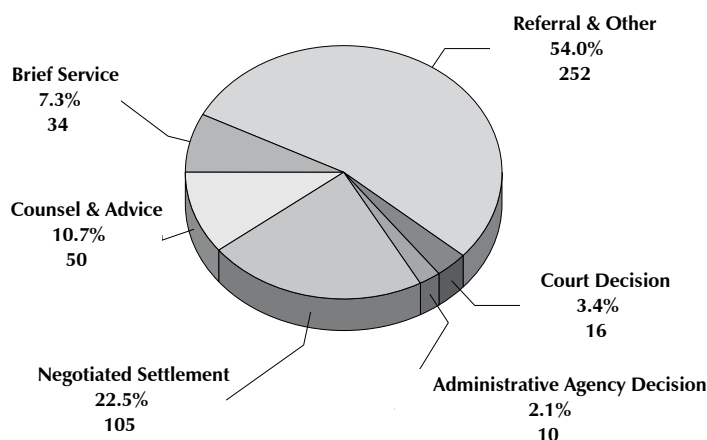
Community Outreach and Collaboration. MMLAP regularly meets with or collaborates with many other providers who serve migrants including Migrant Resource Councils, the Interagency Migrant Services Committee, the Pesticide Advisory Committee, the Farmworker Legal Services Advisory Board, the West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and Westside Immigration Advocates of Michigan. MMLAP and other training partners educated dozens of attorneys, law clerks, interns and volunteers on immigrant legal issues, national origin discrimination, spotting unhealthy living or working conditions, and educating migrants on changes in the law that affect migrants. MMLAP staff also continues to speak regularly on Spanish broadcast radio as another way to get legal education and information to migrant agricultural workers.

Client Age	
18 & Under	8
19-59	418
60 & Over	41
Groups	0
Total	467

Pro Bono Support. Because of the specialized nature of legal remedies for migrants and language barriers, MMLAP recruits pro bono attorneys on a case by case basis. MMLAP has also co-counseled cases with private attorneys in Chicago, Grand Rapids, Holland, Pennsylvania, Florida and Texas. Often, MMLAP stays involved in the case in some capacity. MMLAP refers eligible clients to the pro bono program of Legal Aid of Western Michigan and also works with Farmworker Legal Services to give clients a list of Spanish speaking attorneys for those clients ineligible for MMLAP legal services. MMLAP also receives financial contributions from lawyers through the Access to Justice Fund.

Client Ethnicity	
White	0
Black	3
Hispanic	455
Native American	0
Asian	0
Other	9
Total	467

MMLAP Types of Service in 2006



MMLAP Cases Closed in 2006: 467

