

MICHIGAN MIGRANT LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT

2007 MMLAP Office Location: Grand Rapids

MMLAP Service Area: Statewide

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



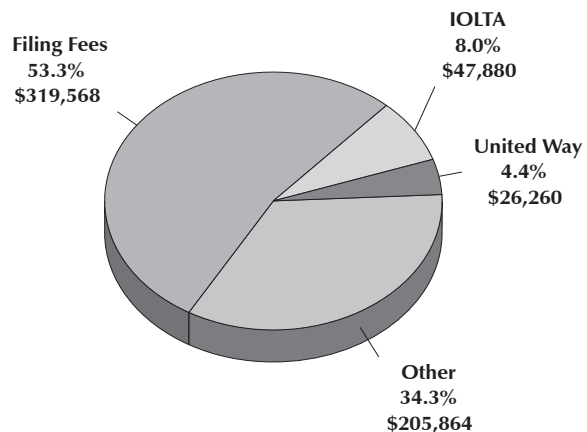
In 2007, MMLAP continued to provide legal representation and information to seasonal workers. MMLAP worked in conjunction with Farmworker Legal Services and other agencies to do outreach to camps to educate workers about the new minimum wage increases for workers in Michigan and changes in drivers license laws. Each summer, MMLAP staff travels

A young migrant mother struggled to buy a trailer on some land by a land contract. When seasonal work dried up, she fell behind on payments and the home went into foreclosure. MMLAP negotiated an agreement with the lender that allowed her to catch up on payments and stop the foreclosure. The foreclosure was dismissed and the deed is now recorded in her name.

to more than 85 migrant camps. MMLAP distributes bilingual educational material on many topics, including some audio versions for persons with indigenous dialects. MMLAP also worked with state and other agencies to address dangerous living and working conditions and seek enforcement of housing violation fines as a deterrent to ongoing violations. MMLAP also participated in discussions through the Interagency Migrant Services Committee about problems with migrant housing and lack of funding for state inspectors. In 2007, MMLAP continued to distribute the annual payouts for back wages from a prior lawsuit on the east side of Michigan to hundreds of workers recruited from Mexico. 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 couple had difficulty working to maintain their income due to extremely bad conditions at work. MMLAP discovered serious problems with lack of drinking water, no bathrooms in the fields and overcrowded living conditions in the worker's housing. MMLAP worked with several state agencies to assure that the housing and working conditions were remedied to reflect safety standards required by law.

MMLAP Sources of Funding for 2007: \$ 599,572



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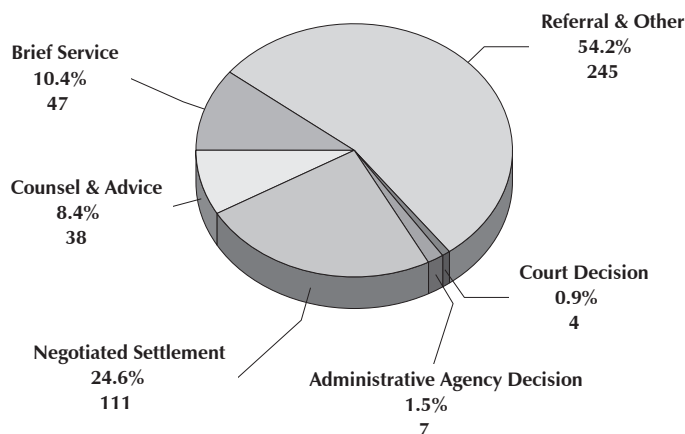
Community Outreach and Collaboration. In 2007, MMLAP visited dozens of camps to speak with farmworker families, and distributed thousands of bilingual booklets about workers' rights and responsibilities while in Michigan. MMLAP also provides booklets to lay service providers so they can share it with their target populations. In addition to the outreach, MMLAP participates with other service providers who encounter migrants, on Migrant Resource Councils, on the Interagency Migrant Services Committee, the Farmworker Legal Services Advisory Board, the West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan, Justice for our Neighbors, and the Immigration Assistance Program/Westside Immigration Advocates of Michigan. MMLAP staff also continue to speak regularly on Spanish broadcast radio taking live calls and as another way to present legal education and information to agricultural workers.

Client Age	
18 & Under	18
19-59	384
60 & Over	50
Groups	0
Total	452

Pro Bono Support. MMLAP recruits private attorney involvement depending on the case. MMLAP has co-counseled cases with private attorneys in Grand Rapids and other locations, particularly for group or complex cases. Given the language barrier and specialized nature of legal remedies for migrants, MMLAP often stays on as lead counsel in such cases. MMLAP also distributes a list of Spanish speaking attorneys who have agreed to review cases in their areas of expertise. MMLAP relies on the pro bono program of Western Michigan Legal Services for clients who are eligible; MMLAP has periodically provided translation assistance for clients referred to LAWM. MMLAP receives pro bono financial donations through the Access to Justice Fund.

Client Ethnicity	
White	4
Black	0
Hispanic	440
Native American	0
Asian	1
Other	7
Total	452

MMLAP Types of Service in 2007



MMLAP Cases Closed in 2007: 452

