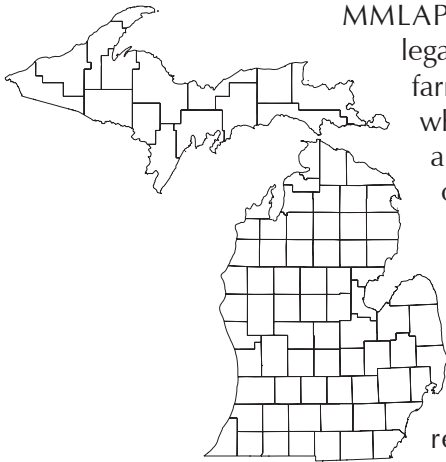


# MICHIGAN MIGRANT LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT

2008 MMLAP Office Location: Grand Rapids

**MMLAP Service Area:** Statewide

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

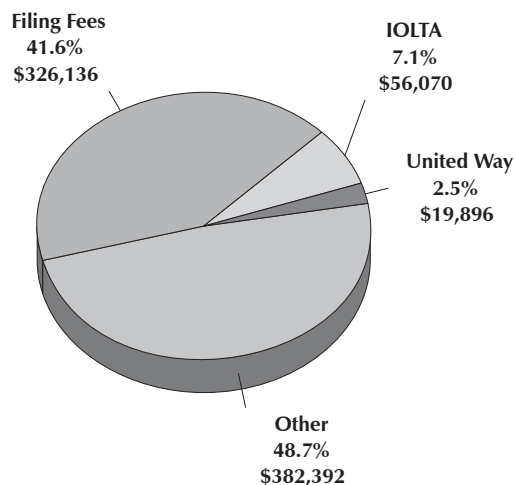


MMLAP's purpose is to provide legal assistance to low-income farmworkers and their families, whether migrating or seasonal, and families recently settled-out from farm work. This often involves enforcing wages and other rights under the Agricultural Worker Protection Act and other laws, as well as specialized agricultural labor problems regarding working arrangements, workplace safety, independent contracting scams, unpaid bonuses and safe housing. In 2008, MMLAP worked cooperatively with pro bono lawyers and a legal service provider from another state on a multi-jurisdiction lawsuit to assure the rights of those with H2B work visas in the same way that agricultural workers holding H2A visas have workplace protection. MMLAP also developed the Registro de Horas Trabajadas to distribute to the migrant camps to educate workers on how to properly document their earnings, whether by piece rate or hourly work, given the incremental increases in Michigan Minimum wage. MMLAP continued to distribute annual payouts for back wages from a prior lawsuit to hundreds of seasonal workers. MMLAP also cooperates with relevant state agencies regarding violations of the law regarding worker safety issues that it learns about while assisting clients.

A group of former migrant workers went to work at a local restaurant which paid them less than the minimum wage. MMLAP attorneys intervened with the employer, obtaining the wages the workers were legally entitled to. In addition, the employer agreed to host MMLAP for a "Know Your Rights" presentation to their entire workforce.

Seven workers were promised suitable housing and plentiful work in Michigan, but when they arrived they were crowded into a single trailer and did not receive the amount of work they were promised. MMLAP, along with Farmworkers Legal Services as co-counsel, brought a claim for violating disclosures and overcrowded housing and negotiated a settlement that returned the workers' lost income and resolved their housing problems.

**MMLAP Sources of Funding for 2008: \$ 784,494**



# MICHIGAN MIGRANT LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT

Contact: Teresa Hendricks, Executive Director • (616) 454-5055

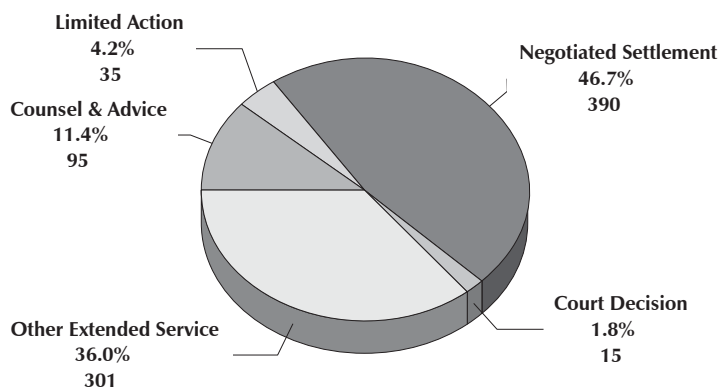
**Community Outreach and Collaboration.** Each summer MMLAP staff travels around 22,688 miles and visits around 85 migrant camps during outreach. MMLAP participates with other agencies who encounter migrants on Migrant Resource Councils, the Interagency Migrant Services Committee, the Farmworker Legal 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. MMLAP goes “on air” in the summer to take live calls from listeners regarding legal issues. MMLAP places public service announcements in the Spanish press. MMLAP makes the “Know your Rights” book and “Registro de Horas” available to lay service providers so they have legal information in English and Spanish and can share the booklet with their target population. MMLAP also distributes the FLS Calendar that contains information about legal rights of farmworkers.

Client Age	
18 & Under	43
19-59	766
60 & Over	27
Groups	0
Total	836

**Pro Bono Support.** MMLAP refers clients to the local Legal Assistance Center and refers eligible clients to Legal Aid of Western Michigan’s pro bono department. If clients have a non-priority legal issue or a fee-generating case, they receive a list of private attorneys who agree to take phone calls and provide advice or other assistance. MMLAP also distributes a list of Spanish speaking attorneys who have agreed to review cases in their areas of expertise. Co-counsel arrangements are made with private attorneys in large group cases, class actions and impact work. Given the language barrier and specialized nature of legal remedies for migrants, MMLAP stays on as lead counsel in such cases. MMLAP receives attorney financial donations through the Access to Justice Fund.

Client Ethnicity	
White	14
Black	5
Hispanic	811
Native American	0
Asian	1
Other	5
Total	836

MMLAP Types of Service in 2008



MMLAP Cases Closed in 2008: 836

