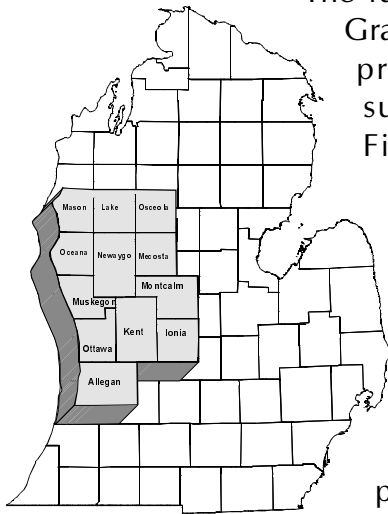


LEGAL AID OF WESTERN MICHIGAN

LAWM Office Locations: Big Rapids, Grand Rapids, and Muskegon

LAWM Service Area: Allegan, Ionia, Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, and Ottawa Counties

Service Population: 173,861 individuals living at or below 125% of the poverty level

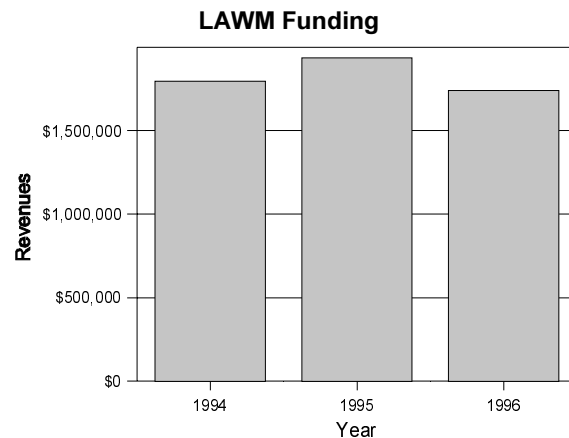


The fundraising activities of the Grand Rapids Bar Association produced revenue which supplemented IOLTA and Filing Fees funds, helping LAWM to maintain staff and services after the 1996 federal funding cuts, including providing legal assistance in the 24% of LAWM's cases which involved an administrative hearing or court proceeding in 1996. In

A woman with mental health difficulties had been forced out of her home by an abusive husband. Because of her worsening condition she was unable to return to her home without medical support. LAWM represented her in a divorce and negotiated a fair division of the couples modest assets while facilitating receipt of disability assistance which allowed her to receive much-needed medical care.

order to sustain services, LAWM significantly upgraded its computer capabilities. A private law firm donated ten computers and LAWM purchased some computers and new or upgraded voice mail systems. The LAWM Director also participated in meetings with other legal aid programs to consider possible collaboration; further discussions continue with several legal services providers. Clients were able to contact LAWM through the toll-free WATS line and through LAWM's connections with a wide variety of human and social service agencies. Outside of the three counties where LAWM's offices are located, client intake was handled at a wide variety of satellite locations and over the telephone.

A low functioning man had a hard time keeping his apartment clean. The situation was made more difficult by poor maintenance by the landlord who was evicting the man. LAWM negotiated a settlement in which the landlord made repairs for which he was responsible and a social service agency provided housekeeping assistance so the tenant could better maintain his apartment. The man was able to stay in his now safer home.



LEGAL AID OF WESTERN MICHIGAN

Contact: Michael C. Chielens, Executive Director • (616) 774-0672

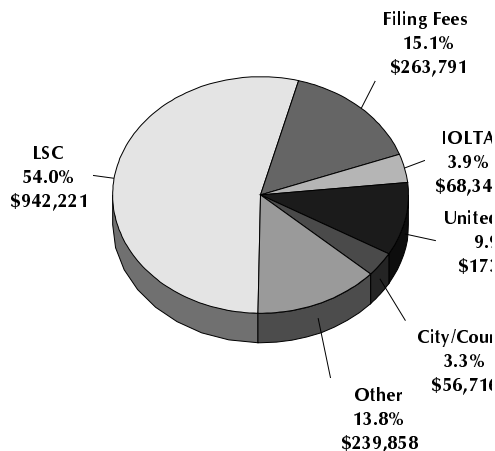
Community Outreach and Collaboration. LAWM enjoys a valuable relationship with many area agencies. For example, the Grand Rapids Urban League's Housing Assistance Center and the United Way's First Call for Help refer cases to LAWM and each agency receives requests for assistance from LAWM. Both agencies' staff have been trained by LAWM on landlord/tenant issues. Staff members serve on the boards of local and state agencies. LAWM produced numerous legal information materials and published a Spanish language version of its information pamphlet which is being broadly distributed. LAWM services are spread evenly throughout its service area. As a result of its extensive outreach efforts and advertising, rural counties receive a level of service that is commensurate with their percentage of the eligible client population and intake is handled at sites throughout the service area, such as in the basement of the County Courthouse and at a Senior Citizens Community Center.

Client Age	
18 & Under	53
19-59	4,374
60 & Over	529
Groups	0
Total	4,956

Pro Bono Support. During 1996 LAWM set a record by referring 355 cases to pro bono attorneys. Attorneys are recruited annually and indicate the number of cases they are willing to accept. Attorneys who are unable to accept referrals are encouraged to financially support the work of LAWM. Local law firms and individual lawyers donated \$132,000 to LAWM in 1996 to help mitigate the shortfall created by the federal budget cutback which resulted in \$305,000 less in federal funds for LAWM. A staff attorney organized a Grand Rapids Bar CLE presentation on Social Security Disability practice, used pro bono lawyers as presenters and made a special pitch for private attorneys to join LAWM's pro bono panel.

Client Ethnicity	
White	3,367
Black	1,280
Hispanic	240
Native American	34
Asian	35
Other	0
Total	4,956

LAWM Sources of Funding for 1996: \$ 1,744,389



LAWM Cases Closed in 1996: 4,956

(Number of Clients Served: 4,750)

