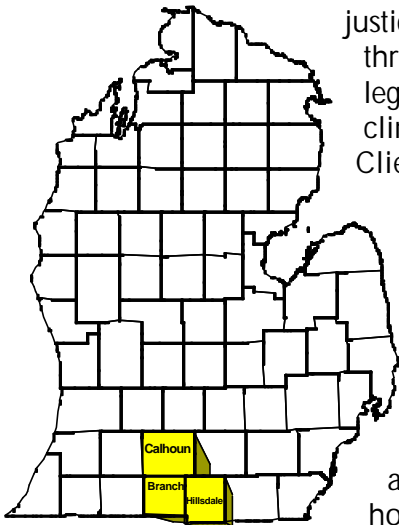


LEGAL SERVICES ORGANIZATION OF SOUTHCENTRAL MICHIGAN

LSOSM Office Locations: Battle Creek, Coldwater, and Hillsdale

LSOSM Service Area: Branch, Calhoun, and Hillsdale Counties

Service Population: 40,180 individuals are living at or below 125% of the poverty level



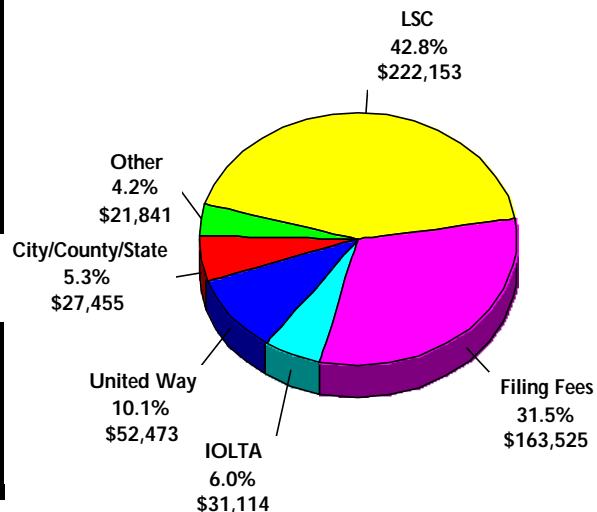
The number of low-income Michigan residents provided access to the justice system in LSOSM's region through legal representation, legal education, and pro se clinics increased in 1998. Client access, speed of service, and quality of service were improved with the advent of the new telephone hotline system. LSOSM used a combination of a toll-free hotline and walk-in assistance to assess the legal problems of people applying for assistance. The hotline offered immediate

A mother and father had a custody arrangement where they alternated possession of the family home each month rather than move the children. LSOSM represented the mother who wanted to modify the custody order due to the father's heavy drinking, emotional abuse of the children, and the house being left in a shambles after each of his "custody months." In order to demonstrate these circumstances to the court, LSOSM assisted the mother in a 1½ day trial and succeeded in winning sole custody for the mom.

eligibility screening and legal advice four days per week, and walk-in hours were available one day per week, including at area senior centers. This variety of intake methods helped to assure that all clients are able to access LSOSM's services.

LSOSM helped an elderly woman who had no close relatives and had been unable to maintain her home. The property had fallen into severe disrepair and was finally condemned. The woman was ordered to vacate the home, but she did not want to move from her home of 40 years. LSOSM delayed the eviction until determining that repair was not financially feasible and then convinced the woman to move. LSOSM also obtained a reversal of an earlier denial of the woman's application for subsidized housing and obtained a lease for the new premises. In addition, LSOSM filed a motion to assure clear title so the house could be sold and removed from her responsibility.

LSOSM Sources of Funding for 1998: \$ 518,561



LEGAL SERVICES ORGANIZATION OF SOUTHCENTRAL MICHIGAN

Contact: Jeanne M. McGuire, Executive Director ! (616) 965-3951

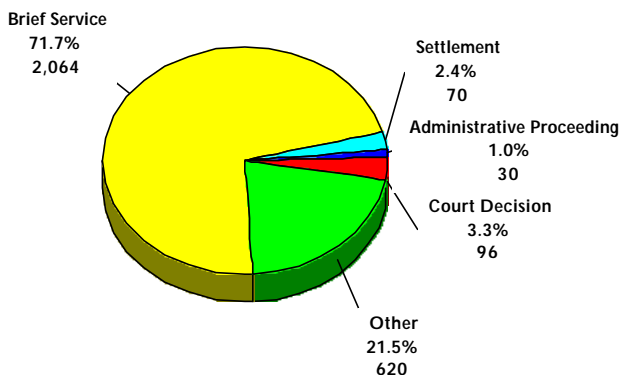
Community Outreach and Collaboration: LSOSM is a critical link in the community's justice system, providing legal education programs approximately three times per month on topics such as landlord-tenant, consumer, and estate planning law. A typical program involves discussion by a staff member or outside expert. Handouts and brochures were always provided and questions encouraged. LSOSM entered into a collaboration with other human service providers to present day-long community legal education sessions on relevant topics. The community legal education program provides low-income people, at risk youth, and human services organizations with information to prevent or minimize legal problems. In 1998, LSOSM held 20 community legal education presentations attended by more than 300 people. LSOSM's monthly pro se family law clinics taught clients to handle their own relatively simple family law actions, such as divorce or change in child support or visitation. In 1998, LSOSM expanded the clinics to include parenting time and change of domicile for divorced parents, driver's license restoration, and small claims.

18 & Under	13
19-59	2,596
60 & Over	271
Total	2,880

Pro Bono Support: In 1998, 60 attorneys agreed to provide legal representation, at no charge, to low-income clients referred to them by LSOSM. These lawyers closed 68 cases for LSOSM clients. They assisted mothers trying to obtain child support, helped elderly clients preparing wills and other end-of-life plans, and enforced consumer rights against less reputable merchants. LSOSM expanded the options for lawyer volunteers by offering opportunities to assist with new client intake, pro se family law clinics, and community legal education presentations including bankruptcy and housing issues. Judges also participated in community legal education programs.

White	2,132
Black	681
Hispanic	39
Native American	18
Asian	10
Other	0
Total	2,880

LSOSM Types of Service in 1998



LSOSM Cases Closed in 1998: 2,880

