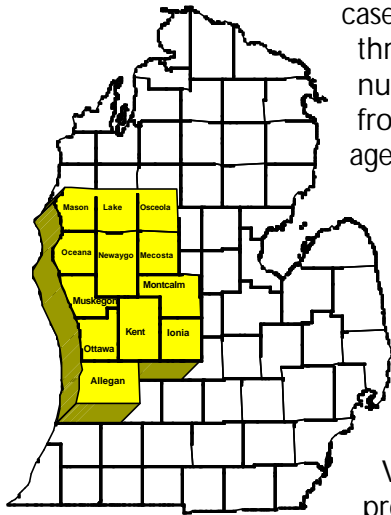


LEGAL AID OF WESTERN MICHIGAN

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

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

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



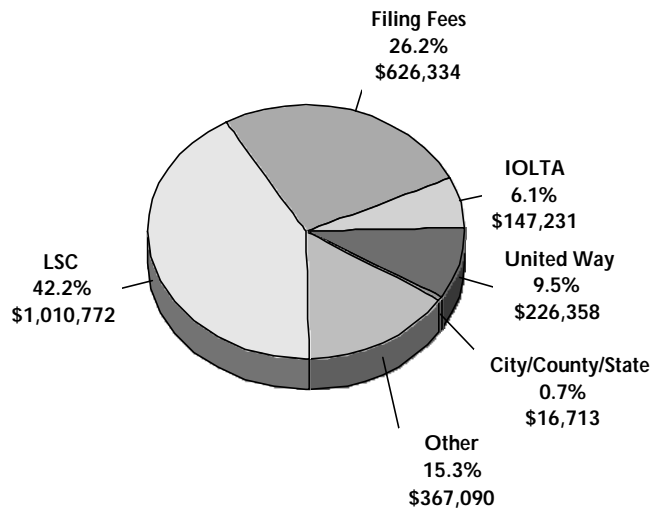
In 1999, LAW M closed nearly 4,400 cases. Clients contacted LAW M through toll-free telephone numbers and through referrals from human and social service agencies. LAW M conducted client intake at its four offices and at various satellite locations. Emergency intakes were done by telephone for clients in rural counties. LAW M received a \$259,000 grant under the Violence Against Women Act program to collaborate with seven domestic violence shelters

and reach underserved populations in the 12-county service area. Two local law firms, Schenk Boncher and Smith Haughey, made a significant contribution of office furniture.

A 62-year-old disabled woman who lived in a nursing home needed assistance in changing her guardian. The woman wanted a different family member appointed because her current guardian moved her out of the county away from all her family and friends and refused to let her see her friends or leave the nursing home. The guardian would not allow her to make even the simplest decisions about her day-to-day life. After a contested hearing, the court removed the guardian and appointed the client's choice as the new guardian. The client is now doing well in a new living environment, closer to family and friends.

A woman shared a home with several people. One of her roommates illicitly used her Social Security number to open up 14 different credit accounts. After she moved out, the woman began receiving the bills at her new address. Initially, every creditor refused to believe that she was not at fault and would not give her relief. A LAW M attorney intervened and provided each creditor with copy of her driver's license, signature, and an explanation of how the charges were incurred. So far, 12 of the 14 creditors have voided the charges and cleared her credit, and two are reviewing the matter.

LAW M Sources of Funding for 1999: \$ 2,394,498



LEGAL AID OF WESTERN MICHIGAN

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

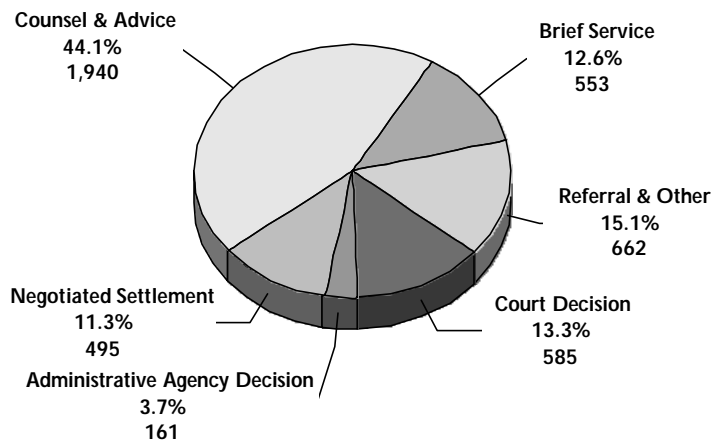
Community Outreach and Collaboration: LAWAM attorneys visited community centers, senior citizen centers, transitional housing shelters, and domestic violence shelters to advise clients in various legal matters: foster care, family law, landlord-tenant law, estate planning, elder law, and domestic violence. By keeping close contacts with social service agencies such as the Grand Rapids Urban League's Housing Assistance Center, United Way's First Call for Help, and Every Woman's Place, LAWAM nurtured its relationship with the community by training agency professionals in poverty law issues and accepting case referrals. Staff members furthered this relationship by serving on the boards of local and state agencies. LAWAM services were spread throughout its 12-county service area, providing crucial legal services to remote areas. Rural counties received a level of service commensurate with their percentage of the eligible client population in the LAWAM service area.

18 & Under	37
19-59	3,856
60 & Over	501
Groups	2
Total	4,396

Pro Bono Support: LAWAM's 1999 pro bono program raised nearly \$150,000 in pledges from local attorneys. Pro bono attorneys also closed 238 cases in 1999, and 241 new cases were referred to the growing list of volunteer attorneys. Domestic relations and basic bankruptcy seminars were offered to recruit new volunteer lawyers. In addition, the Grand Rapids Bar Association and LAWAM have partnered to start the Legal Assistance Center in the new Kent County Courthouse when it opens in mid-2001. Both organizations will staff the center, which will offer information and referral, self-help services, and selected case intake.

White	2,977
Black	1,135
Hispanic	210
Native American	32
Asian	32
Other	10
Total	4,396

LAWAM Types of Service in 1999



LAWAM Cases Closed in 1999: 4,396

