

MICHIGAN POVERTY LAW PROGRAM

MPLP Office Locations: Ann Arbor

MPLP Service Area: Statewide

Service Population: 0 individuals living at or below 125% of the poverty level

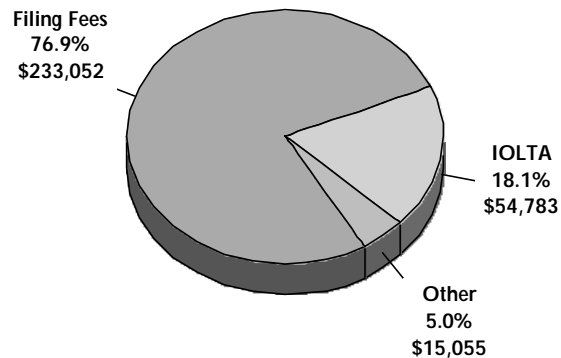


In 1999, MPLP continued to support the work of Michigan's regional legal services agencies, providing services that included case consultation, task forces addressing major areas of poverty law, publications, training sessions, a brief bank, technology support, a website for advocates, legislative tracking and advocacy, and court representation on significant issues. MPLP added an elder law task force in 1999 to the existing task forces on family law, housing law, consumer law, public benefits, and technology. MPLP responded to more than 1,000 requests from local programs for assistance, published periodic issue alerts and quarterly newsletters, and planned or participated as trainers in many training events attended by hundreds of participants. In 1999 there were 29,159 hits on MPLP's web homepage, compared to 9,872 in 1998.

A nonprofit agency purchased and renovated a building for its programs providing emergency shelter and counseling services to homeless youth. After the agency had vacated its prior building, purchased the new building, spent significant funds renovating it, and moved in, a neighbor filed a late appeal of the zoning permit. The city's Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) ruled in favor of the neighbor and invalidated the permit. With the assistance of an MPLP pro bono attorney, the agency won a preliminary injunction preventing enforcement of the ZBA's decision. The case settled with the city issuing a new zoning permit to the community agency.

MPLP handled an employment discrimination case challenging barriers for non-English speakers to unemployment insurance. Several clients had not pursued their claims because the unemployment offices did not provide information or applications in Spanish. While developing litigation challenging the practices, informal negotiation convinced the unemployment agency to change its policies and provide information and assistance in Spanish and Arabic.

MPLP Sources of Funding for 1999: \$ 302,890



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Contact: Robert F. Gillett, Director, LSSEM ! (734) 665-6181

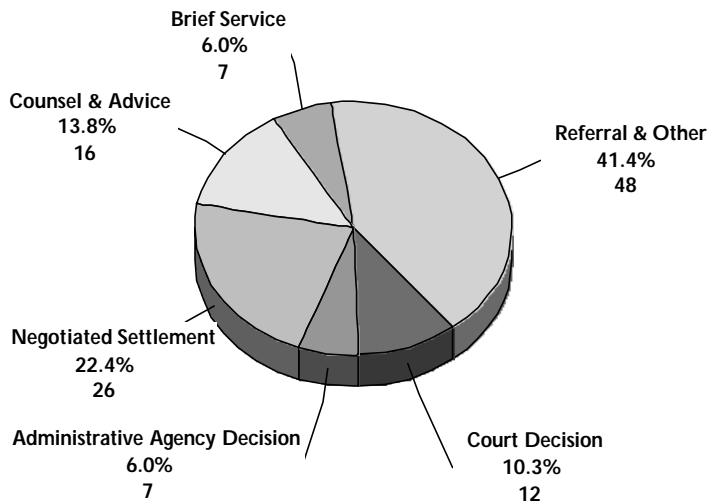
Community Outreach and Collaboration: In 1999, MPLP worked with local legal services programs across Michigan. In addition, MPLP worked directly with a number of statewide and community-based organizations. The statewide advocacy included direct advocacy on legislative and administrative issues including domestic violence, public benefits, housing, consumer, and family law. MPLP also coordinated a "statewide advocates" group so that legal services providers and other advocates for the poor could learn about each other's work and work together on common issues. To support local programs, MPLP began collecting client information pamphlets from around the state and providing model pamphlets. MPLP established a statewide web page (the Michigan Legal Assistance Network) for local programs to post information about their services. MPLP worked with local programs to develop pro se and community legal education projects. MPLP conducted 20 days of training with 495 individuals attending and held 15 half-day mini-seminars with 311 individuals attending. MPLP convened and staffed 23 taskforce meetings that attracted 413 attendees. In addition, MPLP visited three programs to provide training and share information about its services.

18 & Under	53
19-59	66
60 & Over	4
Groups	47
Total	170

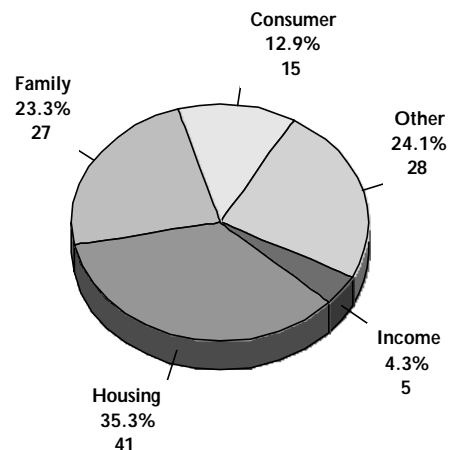
Pro Bono Support: MPLP has worked with the State Bar of Michigan to develop and support the Michigan Litigation Assistance Partnership Program (MI-LAPP), which refers cases and matters to large law firms statewide. MI-LAPP also worked with Community Legal Resources (CLR), based in Detroit, to connect community groups with pro bono attorneys who provide advice and legal representation to nonprofit organizations. In 1999, MPLP worked with CLR to recruit attorneys and client organizations outside of the Detroit area to make CLR a statewide program. MPLP contacted corporate law departments and community organizations to assist in this effort. By the end of 1999, Michigan law firms had accepted

White	59
Black	48
Hispanic	14
Native American	
Asian	2
Other	
Total	170

MPLP Types of Service in 1999



MPLP Cases Closed in 1999: 116



130 cases through MI-LAPP and CLR, including a number of complex cases addressing significant poverty law issues.