

2018

ANNUAL REPORT



ENSURING ACCESS AND FAIRNESS
FOR ALL IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM



Dear Donors and Friends,

We would like to thank our 2018 donors to the Access to Justice Campaign, who raised \$917,633 for fifteen civil legal aid programs throughout Michigan. This commitment reflects how the Michigan legal community values equal justice under the law as a right, not a privilege. Your continual support provides legal help for the more than 2,000,000 people in Michigan who qualify for civil legal aid.

Civil legal aid provides access to an attorney for Michigan's most vulnerable people. Having an attorney helps people escape abusive partners, saves families from eviction and foreclosure, and removes barriers to securing employment. Legal representation is the key difference maker when a veteran is denied hard-earned benefits, or a family faces the loss of a home due to a job layoff or medical catastrophe.

As we build the Access to Justice Campaign, Michigan will be able to expand legal help and access to the justice system for those in need. We are confident we can raise our state's average from \$22 per attorney to the national average of \$75 per attorney in just a few years. When the campaign reaches the national average, the additional resources will allow legal aid programs to hire approximately 30 more legal aid attorneys to help vulnerable families.

Your gift changes lives for the better, and helps to protect a family's home, livelihood and safety. Thank you for your support.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward H. Pappas".

Edward H. Pappas
President, Michigan State Bar Foundation



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Grieco".

Jennifer Grieco
President, State Bar of Michigan

Civil Legal Aid at a Glance

Thanks to your support we can provide access to justice for Michigan's most vulnerable people.



2,000,000

low income individuals
eligible for help



108,193

children and adults in all
households helped by civil legal aid

One civil legal aid
attorney for every

6,459

people living in poverty



12,085

vulnerable older adults helped



46,444

civil legal aid cases



6,638

domestic violence
cases handled



5,847

consumers protected
by civil legal aid

2,126

veterans given free
legal help



18,781

tenants and
homeowners facing
homelessness



Regional Programs:

Michigan's regional programs serve the 2,000,000 people living 125% below the poverty level. Helping low-income clients in every Michigan county, civil legal aid attorneys practice law with a compassionate hand as they preserve homes, protect families and maintain necessary income streams. Their work gives Michigan's most vulnerable a voice in court and moves us one step closer to fairness for all in the justice system.

Client Success Story

Civil legal aid protects vulnerable older adults

An older adult called Legal Aid for help when her son filed an eviction action against her. Legal Aid discovered there had been ongoing abuse and exploitation. After the client's husband passed away, she asked her son to help her purchase a new home, purchase a car, and manage her money. She set up a joint bank account so that her son could assist her. The son put the home and car in his name alone and convinced his mother that it had to be kept that way. The son also began using his mother's money to gamble and when she started seeing multiple overdrafts each month on her account, she confronted her son. Her son became more combative with her. He threatened to have her kicked out of her home and isolate her from her friends. When the client refused to allow her son, his girlfriend, and children to move into her home, he retaliated by filing an eviction action against her. Legal Aid was able to prevent the eviction and filed a civil lawsuit against her son. As a result, the client obtained legal ownership of her home and car, as well as a money judgment against her son so she could recover the money he had illegally taken from her. She is living in her home and surrounded by loving friends.





Client Success Story

Civil legal aid helps families

A client, his wife and their young children were facing immediate eviction from the family home he grew up in. When his mother passed away, his stepfather, who had a home of his own, filed an eviction action stating that he was added to the deed. Legal Aid researched the deed and discovered that the mother's share passed to her family upon her death. Legal Aid filed a Probate action to resolve the deed issue and represented the family to defend the eviction. Legal Aid was successful in both cases and the family was able to remain in their family home.

Our Regions at a Glance

Metro Region

(40.31% poverty)

- Lakeshore Legal Aid
- Michigan Legal Services

Western Region

(20.94% poverty)

- Legal Aid of Western Michigan*

Eastern Region

(15.21% poverty)

- Legal Services of Eastern Michigan
- Center for Civil Justice

Northern Region

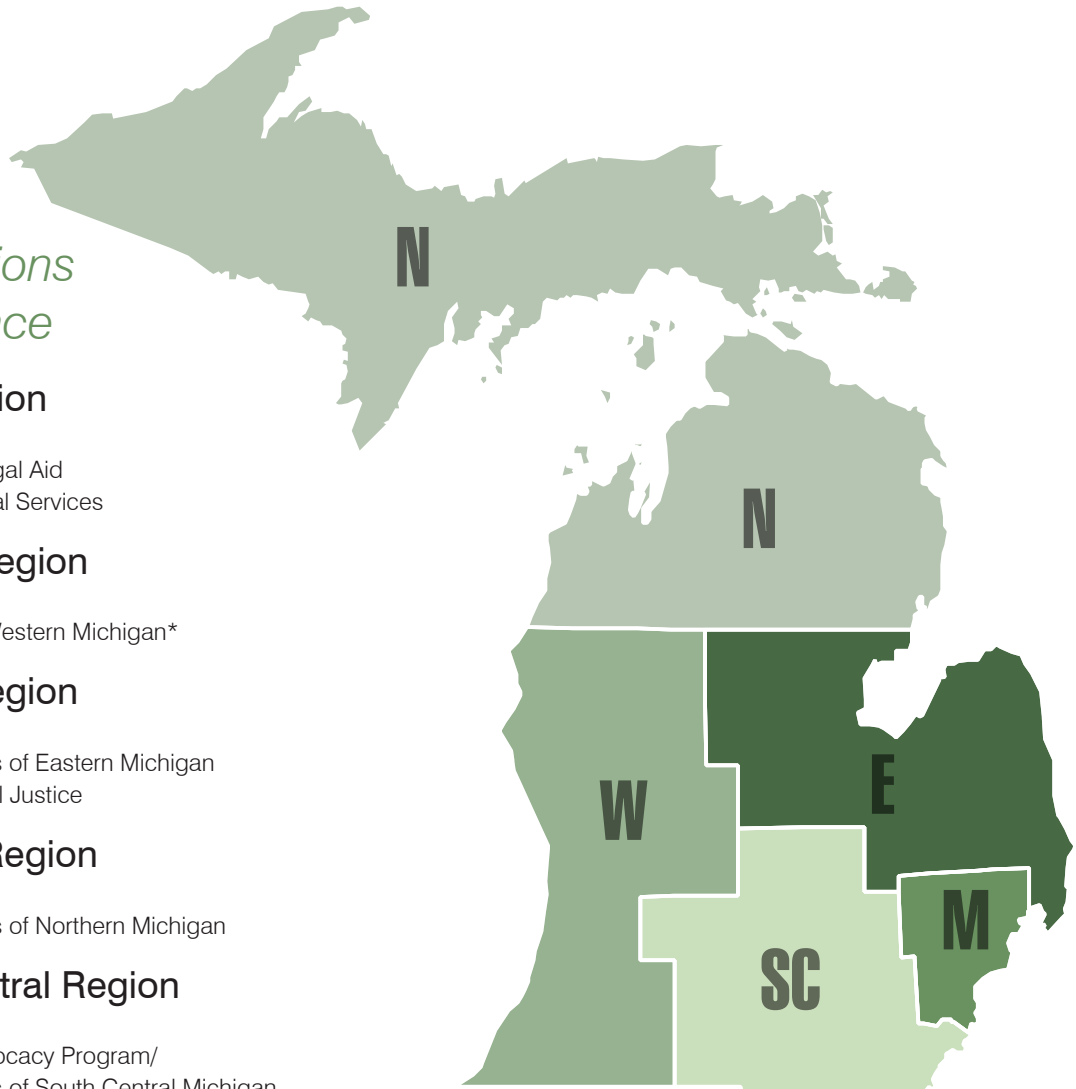
(8.11% poverty)

- Legal Services of Northern Michigan

South Central Region

(15.52% poverty)

- Michigan Advocacy Program/
- Legal Services of South Central Michigan



* Although a participant in the ATJ Campaign, LAWM has decided not to be included in the ATJ Campaign's centralized fundraising effort at this time and the only ATJ Campaign donations it will receive are those that are designated to LAWM.

Statewide Programs

Eight statewide programs provide civil legal services to specific vulnerable populations throughout Michigan.

■ **Community Legal Resources**

Michigan Community Resources (home of Community Legal Resources) provides pro bono legal programs that strengthen nonprofit organizations serving low income individuals and communities. Through legal pro bono referrals, direct legal services, legal clinics, workshops, and educational tools, attorneys from across the state support nonprofits and community-based organizations in improving operations, increasing efficiency, and reducing risk—allowing organizations to focus on their core missions.

■ **Elder Law of Michigan**

Elder Law of Michigan provides pension counseling services and administered a hotline providing free legal services for vulnerable older adults. ELM discontinued hotline services in June 2019.

■ **Farmworkers Legal Services**

Farmworker Legal Services (FLS) provides free legal assistance to migrant and seasonal farmworkers across Michigan with a focus on workers' rights, housing, access to public benefits and education, and civil rights.

■ **Michigan Elder Justice Initiative**

Michigan Elder Justice Initiative (MEJI) seeks to empower, educate, and protect low income older adults and people with disabilities through advocacy, educational efforts, and collaboration with multi-disciplinary partners on the local, state, and national level.

Client Success Story

Civil legal aid protects consumer rights

An older adult called Legal Aid for help when he was sued by the lender of his car loan for almost \$4,000. Although he had purchased auto gap insurance, the insurance failed to pay the lender when his car was totaled in an accident. A Legal Aid attorney represented the client in the lawsuit against the lender, brought the insurance company into the case, and successfully negotiated with counsel for both the lender and the insurance company.

As a result, the insurance company paid the lender. The collection suit against the client was also dismissed. This elderly client was restored to a secure financial situation that permitted him to purchase a replacement vehicle.





Client Success Story

Civil legal aid helps survivors of domestic violence

A local domestic violence shelter referred a mother to Legal Aid after her husband physically assaulted her in front of their two young children. Legal Aid successfully obtained a personal protection order preventing the husband from coming near her or the children. She and the children were able to move back into the family home and the husband was prevented from contacting her by phone or email, or harming her in any way. Legal Aid also helped the woman enroll her children in mental health counseling to address the trauma they experienced. Through the help of Legal Aid and community organizations, the family is safe in their home and able to start the healing process.

■ Michigan Immigrant Rights Center

Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MIRC) is a statewide legal resource center for Michigan's immigrant communities. MIRC provides direct representation, systemic advocacy, technical assistance, and community education for Michigan's immigrant communities.

■ Michigan Indian Legal Services

Michigan Indian Legal Services provides legal services statewide to income-eligible individuals and Tribes, advocates for the rights of individuals, which advances systems of justice, and works to preserve Indian families through state and tribal courts.

■ Michigan Legal Help Program

Michigan Legal Help Program (MLHP) works with judges, courts, lawyers, bar associations, nonprofits, self-help centers, libraries, and many others to promote coordinated and quality assistance for people representing themselves in civil legal matters in Michigan.

MLHP's interactive, statewide website (michiganlegalhelp.org) is a national innovation model that provides legal information and referrals to people who are handling their legal problems without a lawyer.

■ Michigan Poverty Law Program

Michigan Poverty Law Program (MPLP) provides training, case consultation and referral services to civil legal aid attorneys and other legal advocates in the areas of family law, elder law, consumer law, housing law, and public benefits. MPLP also engages in systemic advocacy to help alleviate barriers faced by low-income individuals.

Access to Justice Campaign Results

The centralized ATJ Campaign was officially launched on July 1, 2018, to increase resources for 15 civil legal aid nonprofit organizations in Michigan. The primary purpose of the centralized campaign is to increase resources throughout the state for civil legal aid programs, and to promote the equitable division of those resources.

Funding for civil legal aid in our state comes from a few different sources, including IOLTA accounts, federal dollars, filing fees, local grants and money raised from the legal community. Raising funds from Michigan's legal community is an integral piece to how civil legal aid is funded.

Together, Michigan attorneys can rise above their current rank of 44th in the nation in giving to civil legal aid. Based on the number of attorneys in Michigan and national data regarding per attorney giving in other states, the ATJ Campaign has an opportunity to significantly increase resources and make access to an attorney a reality to the more than 2 million people living in poverty.

You can help us reach our goals

\$918,000

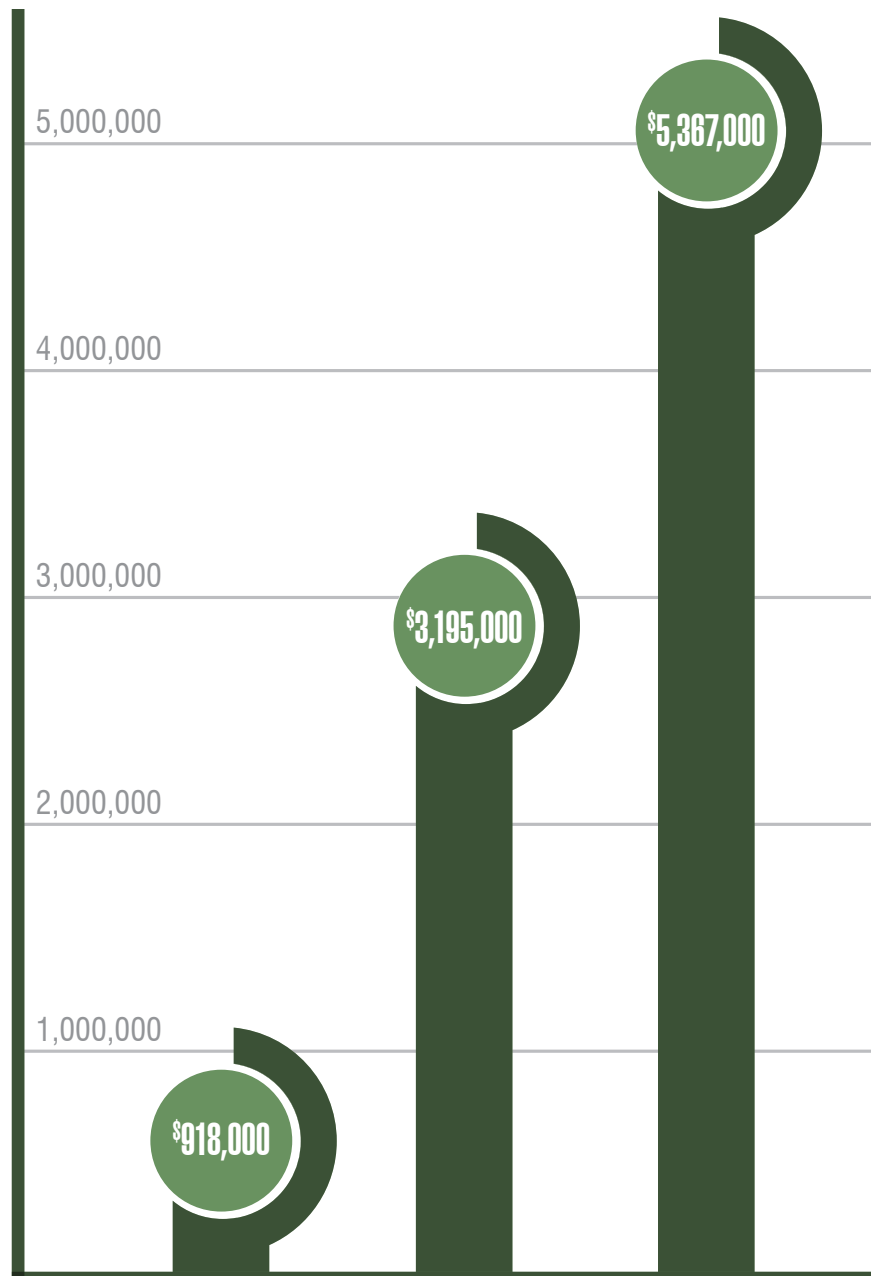
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\$3,195,000

(short term goal based on national average)

\$5,367,000

(long term goal based on national average of states with a statewide campaign)



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Thank you to the following 40 Leadership Firms. The tiers reflect the per attorney amount given to the ATJ Campaign by the firms in 2018. We commend the leadership role these firms have taken by investing in civil legal aid and supporting access to justice for Michigan's most vulnerable people.

\$1,000 and above per attorney

Soble Rowe & Krichbaum LLP

\$750-\$999 per attorney

Gruel Mills Nims & Pylman PLLC

Hooper Hathaway, PC

\$500-\$749 per attorney

Barr Anhut & Associates

Conlin, McKenney & Philbrick, PC

Curtis Curtis & Brelinski, P.C.

Glenn A. Saltsman, PLC

Goethel Engelhardt, PLLC

Kline Legal Group, PLC

McShane & Bowie PLC

Miller Johnson

Palmer Rey PLLC

Pear Sperling Eggan & Daniels, PC

Rhoades McKee PC

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\$300-\$499 per attorney

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\$1,000-\$2,499

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