

CIVIL LEGAL AID IN MICHIGAN

2021 REPORT OF SERVICES

This report highlights the work of legal aid programs funded by the Michigan State Bar Foundation.

Our Mission

The Michigan State Bar Foundation provides leadership and grants to improve access for all in the justice system, including support for civil legal aid to the poor, law-related education and conflict resolution.



LEGAL AID SERVICE AREAS

In 2021, the Foundation disbursed approximately \$7.12M in annual operating grants to the following legal aid organizations:

Northern Region

- Legal Services of Northern Michigan

Western Region

- Legal Aid of Western Michigan

Eastern Michigan Region

- Legal Services of Eastern Michigan
- Center for Civil Justice

Metro Region

- Lakeshore Legal Aid
- Michigan Legal Services

South Central Region

- Michigan Advocacy Program/
Legal Services of South Central Michigan

Statewide Services

- Counsel and Advocacy Law Line
- Michigan Immigrant Rights Center
- Michigan Indian Legal Services
- Michigan Poverty Law Program

669%

"For every \$1 invested in Michigan's civil legal aid services during 2019-2020, the people received \$6.69 in immediate and long-term consequential financial benefits." - *2022 Social Economic Impact and Social Return on Investment Study*

CIVIL LEGAL AID OVERVIEW

The Michigan State Bar Foundation provides funding to regional and statewide legal aid organizations throughout Michigan to assist low-income residents and vulnerable populations.



AVOIDING FINANCIAL DISTRESS
A single mother with limited resources was contacted by the Social Security Administration (SSA) about an overpayment and collection which would cause her hardship. Legal Aid determined the best strategy and helped her submit the necessary documents to the SSA. The entire amount of the overpayment was waived.

THE NEED FOR LEGAL AID

 Over **1.7 million low-income Michigan residents** qualify for civil legal aid



One attorney available for every **5,401 low-income residents** eligible for legal aid



74% of low-income households experienced at least **one civil legal aid problem a year** - 2022 LSC Justice Gap Report

WHO LEGAL AID HELPS

\$33,124 Annual household income in 2021 of a family of four living below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines



The funding distributed to legal aid programs helped **112,192 people in households, including 47,140 children**

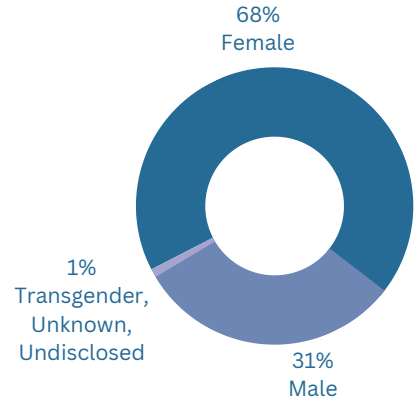


8,350 older adults helped

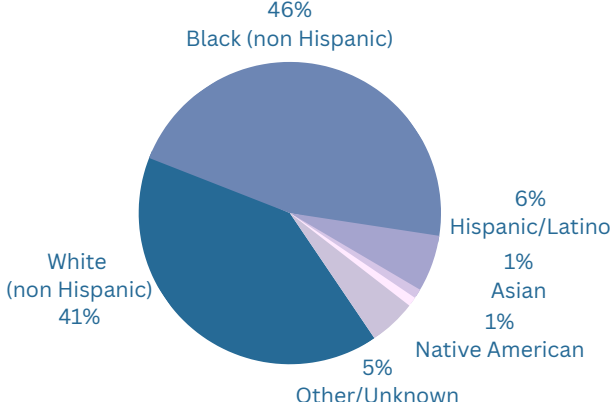


1,698 veterans served by legal aid

GENDER OF CLIENTS SERVED



RACE OF CLIENTS SERVED



LEGAL AID PROVIDES HOPE FOR CLIENTS THROUGH EXPUNGEMENTS

A veteran contacted legal aid for help with an expungement of a criminal record. A pro bono attorney was assigned through a legal aid office, and he was diligent in securing the necessary documents to get the client's record expunged. The veteran was able to graduate from nursing school, obtain his license and gain employment.

2021 SUCCESSFUL CASE OUTCOMES



Percentage of **housing cases** with positive outcomes when represented by legal aid



Percentage of **expungement cases** with positive outcomes when represented by legal aid

CIVIL LEGAL AID PROVIDES CRITICAL CONSTITUENT SERVICES

The Foundation's annual grantees are a lifeline for low-income households to help solve civil legal problems. The programs coordinate services through a statewide infrastructure to provide a continuum of services.



Michigan Legal Help Program is an online clearinghouse providing information on legal topics, links to legal forms and other self-help resources. The website also includes a triage and referral function through the *Guide to Legal Help*, a step by step tool connecting people to the right resources, including referrals to attorneys or a legal aid organization.

- *In 2021, MLH had over 4.2 million visits to its website www.michiganlegalhelp.org*



Counsel and Advocacy Law Line (CALL) is a statewide attorney staffed hotline for low-income individuals and older adults. CALL attorneys advise on housing, public benefits, consumer law, domestic relations, unemployment benefits and other civil matters. CALL provides tailored advice to individuals who call for help and direct referrals to legal aid organizations.

- *In 2021, CALL provided legal advice and referrals for 18,090 closed cases*



Nonprofit civil legal aid organizations provide representation when a case is more complex or an attorney is needed. The legal aid programs in Michigan are integrated within their communities and work closely with community partners to identify clients who need help. Legal Aid organizations provide the infrastructure to facilitate pro bono services and in 2021, private attorneys contributed over 16,380 hours of pro bono assistance to clients seeking help from legal aid organizations funded by the Foundation.

- *In 2021 legal aid programs completed 51,446 cases as described in the chart below.*

NUMBER OF CASES COMPLETED BY TYPE OF CASE

PROTECTING HOUSEHOLD INCOME FROM
UNSCRUPULOUS CREDITORS THROUGH CASES RELATED
TO CONSUMER ISSUES

2,959

REMOVING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT AND
PROTECTING INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

3,404

ASSURING SAFETY FOR FAMILIES, PRIMARILY DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE SURVIVORS, IN DOMESTIC RELATION
MATTERS

8,138

PROTECTING RIGHTS, INCLUDING ESTATE PLANNING
FOR OLDER ADULTS

2,411

ENSURING HOUSING STABILITY AND PREVENTING THE
LOSS OF A HOME

28,344

HELPING INDIVIDUALS, PRIMARILY INDIVIDUALS WITH
DISABILITIES, SECURE FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER
INCOME ASSISTANCE

5,444

PROTECTING RIGHTS AND ASSURING FAIRNESS ON
OTHER MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

746

NUMBER OF CASES COMPLETED BY LEVEL OF SERVICE

COUNSEL AND ADVICE

29,508

BRIEF ASSISTANCE

6,805

NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT PRE-
COURT FILING

3,732

NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT
AFTER CASE FILED IN COURT

7,172

ADMINISTRATIVE AND COURT
DECISIONS

3,516

OTHER AND
EXTENDED SERVICES

713

51,446
COMPLETED
CASES

FUNDING SOURCES

Interest on Lawyers’ Trust Accounts (IOLTA) Attorneys are required to hold deposits made on behalf of clients in a trust account and when that amount is short-term or nominal, they pool it into one account. The interest generated by these accounts is remitted to the Foundation to help with grantmaking.

Filing Fees

MSBF administers filing fee funds for distribution to legal aid programs (MCLA 600.1485).

Access to Justice Campaign

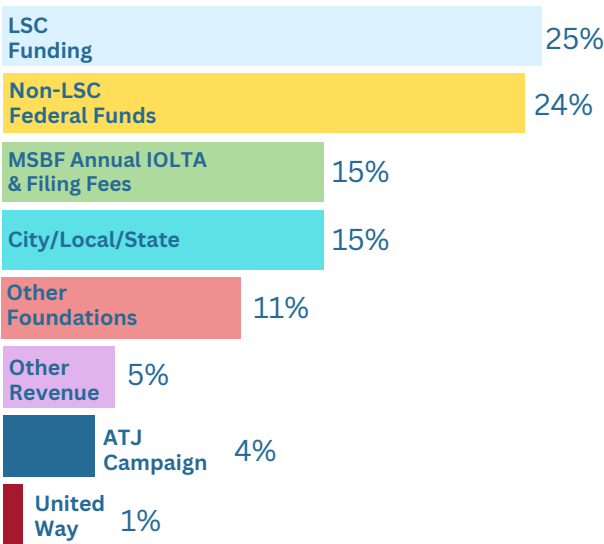
A collaborative centralized campaign, in partnership with the State Bar of Michigan, administered by the Foundation, to raise money from the legal community for 15 civil legal aid organizations throughout Michigan.

Special Initiatives

MSBF receives and manages other funding through state agencies, including federal funding, to help families facing eviction and individuals with disabilities.

LEGAL AID REVENUE IN MICHIGAN

MSBF annual grantees leverage additional resources to provide legal assistance to low-income households.



ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE GRANTS

In 2021, the Michigan State Bar Foundation awarded funding for innovative projects to several entities including:

\$324,000

Distributed in AOJ grants

- Accounting Aid Society
- Avalon Healing Center
- Michigan Immigrant Rights Center
- Maurice and Jane Sugar Law Center for Economic & Social Justice
- Michigan Poverty Law Program
- Southwest Detroit Immigrant and Refugee Center

FOR HELP WITH CIVIL LEGAL MATTERS, PLEASE CONTACT

Michigan Legal Help www.michiganlegalhelp.org or **in Spanish** michiganlegalhelp.org/es

Counsel and Advocacy Law Line : 888-783-8190

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