

CIVIL LEGAL AID IN MICHIGAN

2023 REPORT OF SERVICES

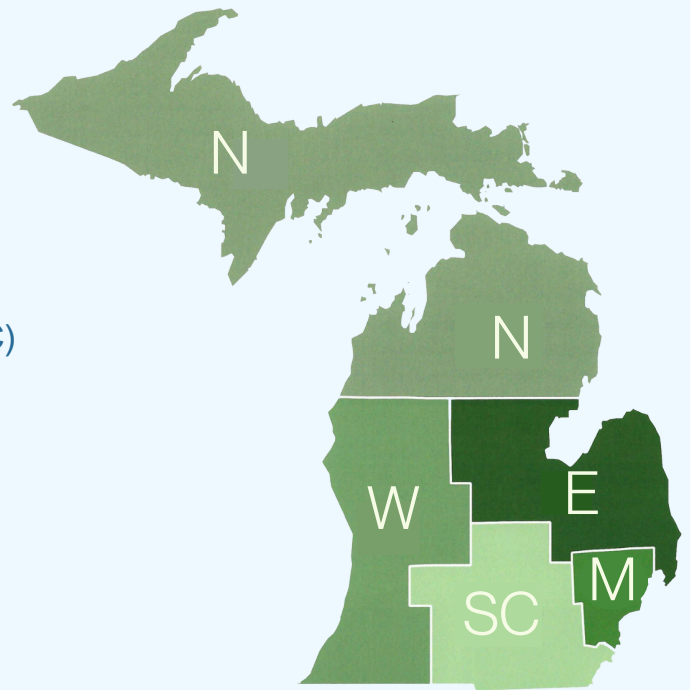
The Michigan State Bar Foundation provides leadership and grants to improve access for all in the justice system, including support for civil legal aid, law-related education and conflict resolution. ***This report highlights the work of nonprofit legal aid programs funded by the Foundation.***

LEGAL AID SERVICE AREAS

In 2023, the Foundation distributed annual operating grants to 10 legal aid organizations throughout the state of Michigan.

Regional Programs

- Legal Aid of Eastern Michigan (E)
- Lakeshore Legal Aid (M)
- Michigan Legal Services (M)
- Legal Services of Northern Michigan (N)
- Michigan Advocacy Program/
Legal Services of South Central Michigan (SC)
- Legal Aid of Western Michigan (W)



Statewide Programs

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

Total Number of Cases Closed by Legal Aid

55,329

In 2023, **97.56%** of all **Legal Matters** had positive outcomes when legal assistance was available.

Legal Aid Helps to Transform Lives



A mother of two children faced the possibility of losing her family's home after the death of her father. The home held many cherished memories and was a source of stability for her and her children. Through Legal Aid, she was assigned a dedicated pro bono attorney, who donated over 45 hours to find a solution to her legal problem. The attorney opened a probate case and successfully transferred the house title to her name. The mother was able to keep her home and continue providing a safe environment for her children.

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.



Nearly **1.69 million low-income Michigan residents** eligible for legal aid because incomes are below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines (**\$39,000 for a family of four**).



There is only **one legal aid attorney** available to help **every 4,407 low-income Michigan residents** who qualify for legal aid.



74% of low-income households in America experienced at least **one civil legal problem** in the previous year.
- 2022 Justice Gap Report

Who Legal Aid Helped?



The funding distributed to Legal Aid helped **131,056 people** in households including **59,684 children**.

60+

9,529 older adults provided with legal assistance



1,025 veterans helped by Legal Aid

Gender of Clients Helped



- Male - 45.10%
- Female - 54.38%
- Transgender, Unknown, Undisclosed - .52%

Ethnicity of Clients Helped



- Caucasian (non-Hispanic) - 31.27%
- Black (non-Hispanic) - 57.55%
- Hispanic - 4.83%
- Native American - 1.13%
- Asian - .57%
- Other/Unknown - 4.65%

2023 Successful Case Outcomes

Percentages of positive outcomes when clients were represented by a Legal Aid Attorney.



97.56%
All Legal Matters



98.66%
Housing Stability



90.95%
Family Stability



96.85%
Expungement



90.00%
Unemployment

CIVIL LEGAL AID PROVIDES CRITICAL CONSTITUENT SERVICES

The Foundation’s annual grantees coordinate services through a statewide infrastructure to provide a continuum of services to help solve the legal problems clients face.



Michigan Legal Help Program is an online clearinghouse that provides 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 2023, MLH had nearly 2.17 million unique visitors 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 2023, CALL provided legal advice and referrals for 16,462 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 2023, private attorneys contributed 11,038 hours of pro bono assistance to clients seeking help from legal aid organizations funded by the Foundation.

- *In 2023, the legal aid programs completed cases as described in the charts below:*

NUMBER OF CASES COMPLETED BY CASE TYPE

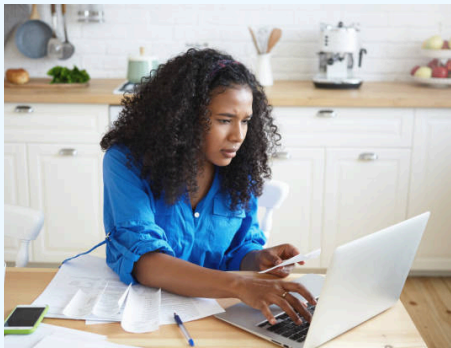
3,246
Protecting household income from unscrupulous creditors through cases related to consumer issues
3,912
Removing barriers to employment and protecting individual rights
7,833
Assuring safety for families, primarily domestic violence, in domestic relation matters
2,187
Protecting rights, including estate planning for older adults
35,710
Ensuring housing stability and preventing the loss of a home
1,657
Helping individuals, primarily individuals with disabilities secure federal benefits and other income assistance
784
Protecting rights and assuring fairness on other miscellaneous matters

NUMBER OF CASES COMPLETED BY LEVEL OF SERVICE

29,137
Counsel and Advice
6,140
Brief Assistance
502
Negotiated settlement pre-court filing
12,259
Negotiated settlement after court filing
5,287
Administrative and court decisions
2,004
Other extended services

55,329
Completed Cases

Legal Aid Helps Changes Lives



A young woman, Anna, contacted legal aid when her tax refund was intercepted and her wages were garnished. She discovered that ten years ago when she was 11 years old, a default judgment for a debt had incorrectly been entered against her. She had unsuccessfully tried to file a motion to set aside the judgment and object to the garnishment. Legal Aid represented her and demonstrated that it was not her debt and that the judgment had improperly been entered against her. The judge set aside her judgement and ordered that all funds, totaling \$2,600, be refunded to her within 60 days.

INVESTING IN ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND IMPROVING THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Annual Grants and Distributions

The Foundation provides annual funding to civil legal aid organizations through a variety of grants and administers the Access to Justice Campaign to raise money from the legal community.

Civil Legal Aid Grants

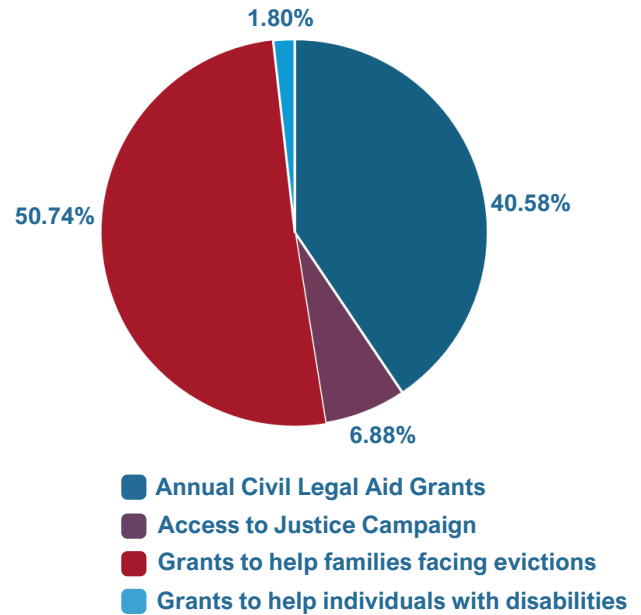
Annual operating grants totaling **\$7.05 million** funded through the Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) Program and a portion of Filing Fees pursuant to MCLA 600.1485.

Access to Justice (ATJ) Campaign

In 2023, nearly **\$1.2 million** was raised from the legal community including cy pres awards to support legal aid organizations. The ATJ Campaign is a collaborative centralized campaign, administered by the Foundation in partnership with the State Bar of Michigan to increase resources for 14 regional and statewide legal aid organizations. 100% of the donations received are distributed to the participating programs based on poverty populations and need.

Special Grants Initiatives

MSBF receives funding from MSHDA and MDHHS and provides grants to legal aid programs to help families facing eviction (**\$8.8million**) and individuals with disabilities (**\$312,000**).



Project Grants Awards

The Foundation also funds innovative projects to improve the administration of justice. In 2023, the Foundation awarded *Administration of Justice Grants* totaling **\$219,000** to:

- Detroit Justice Center - \$45,000
- Justice for our Neighbors - \$15,000
- Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence - \$23,000
- Michigan Legal Help - \$30,000
- Michigan Legal Help - \$100,000
- Wayne State University Law School - \$6,000

For Help with Civil Legal Matters, Contact

Michigan Legal Help www.michiganlegalhelp.org or *in Spanish* www.michiganlegalhelp.org/es
Counsel and Advocacy Law Line: (888) 783-8190

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