

# CIVIL LEGAL AID IN MICHIGAN

## 2024 Grantee Services Report

The Michigan State Bar Foundation (MSBF) 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. The report explores Michigan’s civil legal aid infrastructure and highlights essential services and outcomes made possible through MSBF funding. It serves as a resource for policy makers and constituents, particularly those living below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines.

### Legal Aid Service Areas

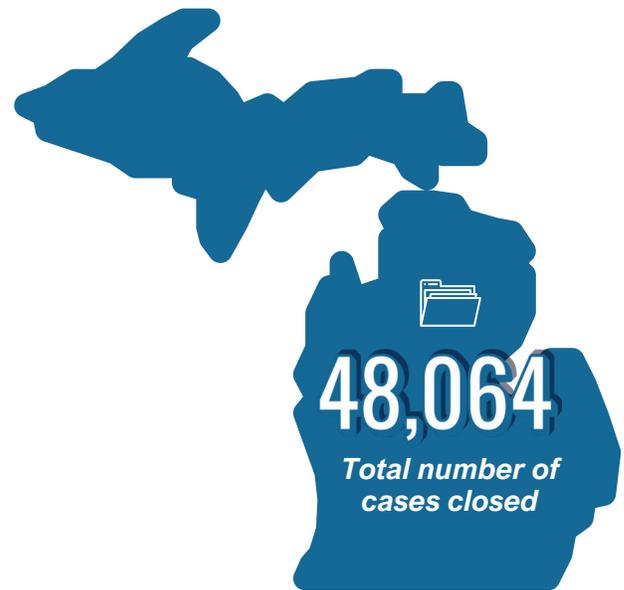
MSBF distributed annual operating grants to 10 Legal Aid programs across the state of Michigan.

#### Regional Programs

- Lakeshore Legal Aid
- Legal Aid of Eastern Michigan
- Legal Aid of Western Michigan
- Legal Services of Northern Michigan
- Michigan Advocacy Program/Legal Services of South Central Michigan
- Michigan Legal Services

#### Statewide Programs

- Counsel and Advocacy Law Line
- Michigan Statewide Advocacy Services
- Michigan Indian Legal Services
- Michigan Poverty Law Program



*97.02% of all Legal Matters had positive outcomes when legal assistance was available*

### Civil Legal Needs in Michigan

Operating grants distributed to Legal Aid programs are a critical source of funding to address the legal challenges faced by low-income households.



Approximately **1.7 million low-income residents** qualified for legal aid in Michigan.



Household income for a family of four living below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines is **\$40,188**.



**One attorney** available for every **4,350 low-income** residents who qualify for legal aid.

**For Help with Civil Legal Matters, Contact**

**Michigan Legal Help** [www.michiganlegalhelp.org](http://www.michiganlegalhelp.org) or *in Spanish* [www.michiganlegalhelp.org/es](http://www.michiganlegalhelp.org/es)

**Counsel and Advocacy Law Line: (888) 783-8190**

# Civil Legal Aid in Action: Serving Vulnerable Populations

Low-income households and families face legal challenges that affects their daily livelihood. The legal services provided by Legal Aid programs is critical to ensure a better quality of life.

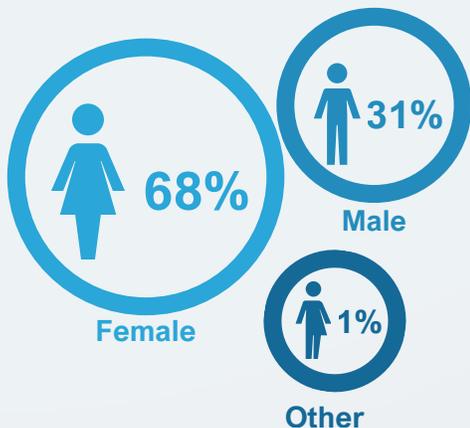
## Who Legal Aid Helped?



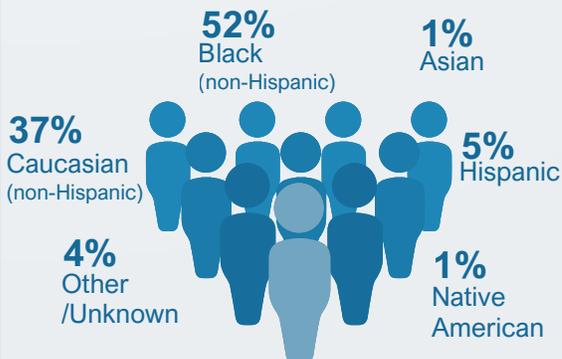
**103,150 people** in households including **40,431 children**



### Gender of Clients



### Ethnicity of Clients



## Legal Aid Transforms Lives



“John”, an older tenant, contacted his local Legal Aid after discovering contaminated water in his apartment—at times black or sandy. Video evidence showed the issue was ongoing and affected others in the senior housing complex. Legal Aid contacted the landlord and provided documentation. In response, the

landlord took immediate action to restore clean water, resolving a serious health hazard and allowing the seniors to remain safely housed.

“Jasmine” contacted a Legal Aid office seeking assistance with the expungement of a misdemeanor conviction from nearly a decade ago. The conviction had prevented her from reentering her profession as a nurse’s aide. Legal Aid connected her with a pro bono attorney, who successfully secured the expungement removing a significant legal barrier and enabling her to resume her career in healthcare.



## 2024 Successful Case Outcomes

Percentages of positive outcomes when clients had legal representation.



# Civil Legal Aid Provides Critical Constituent Services

Legal Aid programs funded by the Foundation coordinate services through a **statewide infrastructure** to provide a continuum of services to assist in solving legal challenges faced by clients.



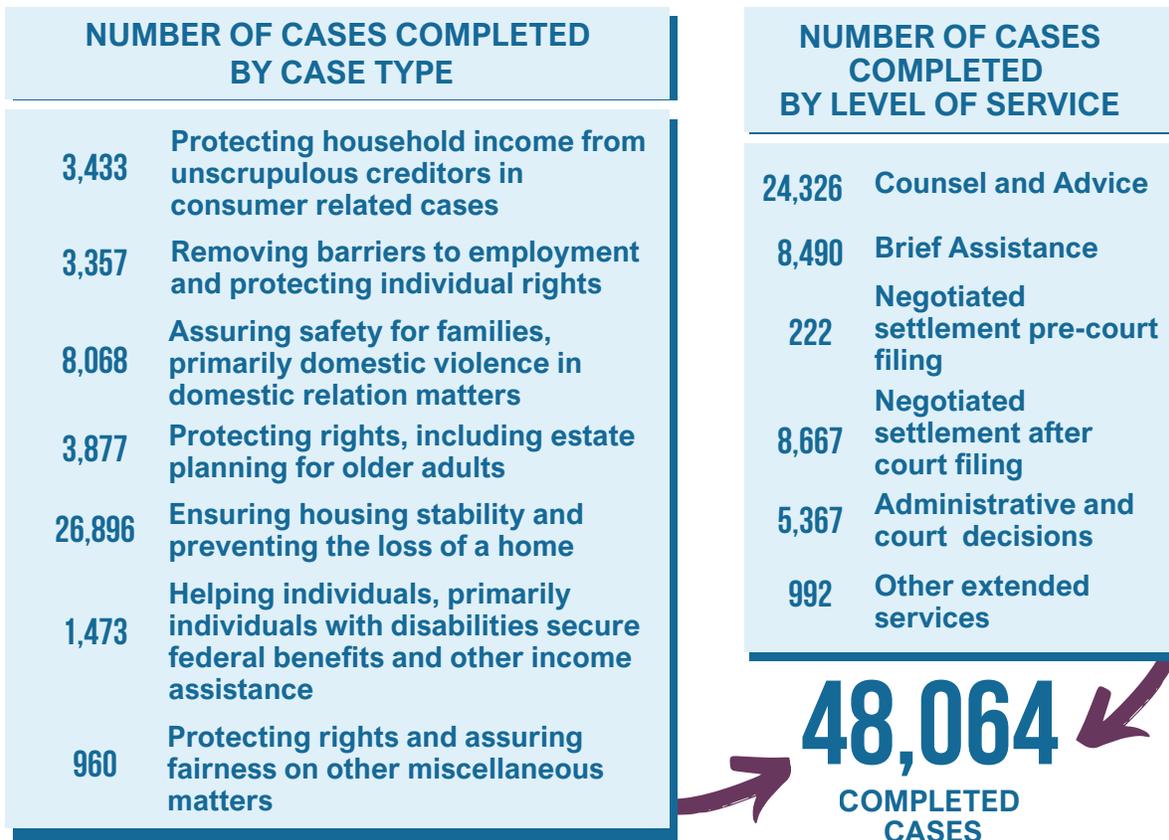
**Michigan Legal Help Program (MLH)** is an online clearinghouse is a resource that provides information on legal topics, links to forms and other self help resources. The website includes a triage and referral function through the Guide to Legal Help, a step-by-step tool directing constituents to the right resources. **In 2024, MLH had nearly 2.1 million unique visitors to its website [www.michiganlegalhelp.org](http://www.michiganlegalhelp.org).**



**Counsel and Advocacy Law Line (CALL)** is a statewide attorney staffed hotline for low-income individuals and families. 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 2024, CALL provided legal advice and referrals for 15,566 closed cases.**



**Nonprofit civil Legal Aid organizations** provide representation on complex cases or when 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. In 2024, private attorneys contributed *16,603 hours* of pro bono assistance to clients seeking help from Legal Aid organizations funded by the Foundation. **The programs completed 48,064 cases as described in the chart below:**



# Investing in Access to Justice and Improving the Administration of Justice

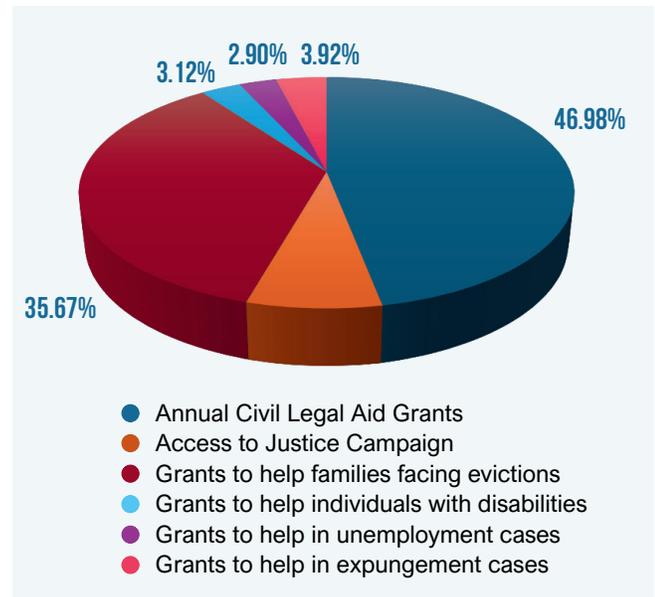
The Foundation provides annual funding to civil Legal Aid programs through a variety of grants and administers the Access to Justice Campaign to raise money from the legal community.

## Civil Legal Aid Grants

Annual operating grants totaling **\$7.8 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 2024, the legal community raised approximately **\$1.23 million** including cy pres awards to support Legal Aid organizations. The ATJ Campaign is a statewide, collaborative fundraising effort administered by the Michigan State Bar Foundation (MSBF) and operated in partnership with the State Bar of Michigan (SBM), to increase resources for 14 civil legal aid programs across the state. 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 provides grants to Legal Aid programs to help families facing eviction (**\$5.91 million**), individuals with disabilities (**\$516,760**), unemployment (**\$480,769**), and expungement (**\$650,000**).

## Project Grants Awards

The Foundation also funds innovative projects to improve the administration of justice. In 2024, the Foundation awarded *Administration of Justice Grants* totaling **\$311,540** to:



- Henry Ford Learning Institute - \$19,950
- Lakeshore Legal Aid - \$94,200
- Michigan Indian Legal Services - \$100,000
- Siena Literacy Center - \$26,390
- Sugar Law Center - \$30,000
- US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants - \$35,000
- Wayne State University Law School - \$6,000

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