



Justice for All in Michigan

Who uses the civil justice system?

Everyone encounters the civil justice system at some point in their life. If you've ever received a traffic ticket, been contacted by a creditor trying to collect a past due bill, or are divorced, you have interacted with the civil justice system. Problems

Michelle's Civil Justice Story

*Michelle went to the domestic-violence shelter in her town after her husband hit her in front of their two young children. Advocates at the shelter referred her to the local legal-aid office so she could get a lawyer's help at no cost. A legal-aid attorney went to court with Michelle and obtained a **personal protection order**, which prevented her husband from coming near her and her children. Michelle and her children were able to move back into the family home, and the husband was not allowed to come near them or contact them. The legal-aid lawyer and shelter advocates also worked together to enroll the children in **mental-health counseling** to address the trauma they experienced. Michelle and her children are now safe in their home and able to start the healing process.*

that include family matters, debt collection, eviction, foreclosure, public benefits, and more can be resolved through the civil justice system. The stories on this flyer represent common civil legal problems that people confront every day — and how the civil justice system can help.

Did you know that legal aid attorneys reported more than 120,000 cases of domestic violence nationwide?

Access to civil justice means saving lives!

Justice for All in Michigan

Contact Information

General Inquires:
JFATaskForce@courts.mi.gov

Task Force Website:
www.courts.mi.gov/jfa

Where can I go for help with my civil legal issue?

Michigan Legal Help

www.michiganlegalhelp.org/

State Bar of Michigan Legal Resource and Referral Center

www.LRS.michbar.org/

MI-Resolve

www.courts.mi.gov/miresolve



Michael's Civil Justice Story

Michael is a divorced dad who works at a factory near Lansing and lives in an apartment with his two sons. The apartment building recently went through foreclosure, and he heard that the new owner is planning to make him move out, even though there are eight months left on his lease. Michael can't afford to move now, and he doesn't want to move because the apartment is below market price and is walking distance to his kids' school. He wants to know his rights and options, so he goes to the local public library looking for answers. A librarian shows him the Michigan Legal Help website, and he finds an article called "Tenants in Foreclosed Properties" that gives him the information he needs about the law and his rights. He also learns that he can use the Guide to Legal Help on the website to find a free or low-cost lawyer if he needs one in the future. Armed with this knowledge, Michael feels empowered to advocate for his family if his landlord tries to make him leave, and he is less afraid that they will be evicted.

Jason's Civil Justice Story

Jason, a young man in his early 20's, was shocked and heartbroken by the unimaginable death of his girlfriend shortly after she gave birth to their first child. To make matters worse, there had been no opportunity for both parents to sign the paperwork naming Jason as the baby's father, which left him a legal stranger to his son, with no parental rights at all. Even though Jason was working full time, he was just starting out in life and could not afford a lawyer. Jason went to the Legal Assistance Center in Grand Rapids where he talked with someone who cared, listened, and offered him the legal help he needed. Using the information, forms, and guidance he received at the Legal Assistance Center, Jason filed for paternity and custody of his son. He left the Legal Assistance Center feeling hopeful because he had a court hearing scheduled in a few short weeks, and he knew what to do. He was confident about making a life and a future with his son.