



# MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

*John Nevin, Communications Director*

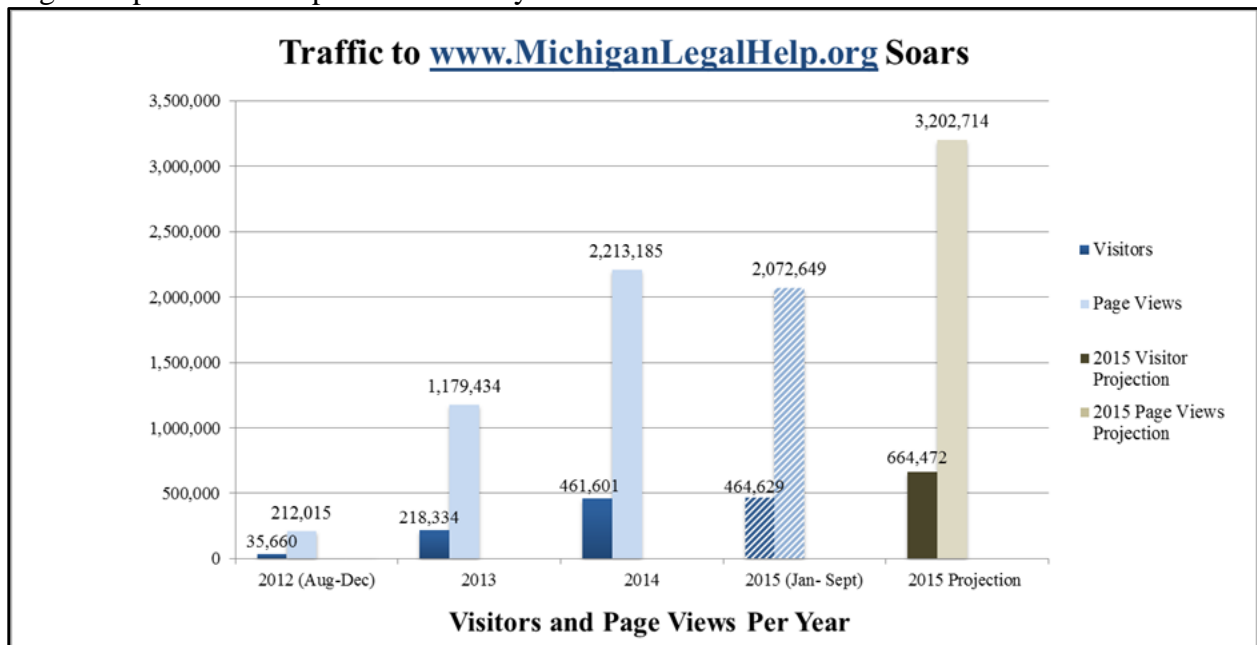
Ph: 517-373-0129 Twitter: @MISupremeCourt FB: facebook.com/misupremecourt

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Legal Self-Help Website Attracts More Than 1.6 Million Visitors Two New Self-Help Centers to Open This Fall

LANSING, MI, September 29, 2015 – The Michigan Supreme Court announced today that use of the Michigan Legal Help website has grown dramatically, facilitating increased access to the state’s court system. Since [www.michiganlegalhelp.org](http://www.michiganlegalhelp.org) was launched in August 2012, the website has had 5,645,811 page views and 1,638,853 visitor sessions.

“Michigan Legal Help is opening the doors of our court system to thousands of families,” said Supreme Court Justice Bridget McCormack. “Representing yourself is not easy, but Michigan Legal Help can make it possible in many cases.”



The Michigan Legal Help website and local self-help centers provide information and assistance to individuals representing themselves in simple civil legal matters. Eight Michigan Legal Help Self-Help Centers are open in Oscoda, Allegan, Oakland, Wayne, Muskegon, Monroe, Marquette, and Calhoun counties. New Self-Help Centers are slated to open in Macomb County and southwest Detroit this fall.

Michigan Legal Help is helping self-represented litigants successfully complete cases. A recent report found that in 2013, 48 percent of Michigan divorces were filed by self-represented plaintiffs, 42 percent of divorce cases had no attorney involvement, and 68 percent of cases had one or more self-represented litigants. The report noted that whether or not litigants have an attorney, all cases reach judgment about 75 percent of the time.

The website also includes links to lawyer referral services, self-help centers, legal aid programs, and other community resources. Find additional information at [www.michiganlegalhelp.org](http://www.michiganlegalhelp.org).

## What's Popular at [www.michiganlegalhelp.org](http://www.michiganlegalhelp.org)?

- Interactive “interviews” that use visitors’ answers to simple questions to fill out state-approved forms necessary to process a legal matter from start to finish. These interviews have been completed 113,604 times (August 2012 through June 2015).
- LiveHelp, a chat-based feature where web visitors get assistance navigating the website and answers to questions that do not require legal advice. LiveHelp is available 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and is staffed by LiveHelp agents from area law schools including University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Western Michigan University Cooley School of Law. More than 5,000 users have already accessed this feature.
- Family Law, with Divorce Toolkits, and the Automated Divorce Form Interview pages were accessed most frequently. Other popular content includes: Housing Tools; Expungement Toolkit; Find a Lawyer; Child Support Toolkit; and Court Information.
- The most frequently viewed videos include these titles:
  - Going to Court,
  - How to Serve Divorce or Custody Papers,
  - What to Do if You’ve Been Sued, and
  - How to Apply for a Personal Protection Order
- New toolkits were recently added including:
  - I Need to Revoke (Undo) My Husband’s Paternity
  - I need to Revoke (Undo My Paternity of My wife’s Child), and
  - Small Estates: Transferring Property When Someone Dies
- Ayuda Legal, a Spanish language version of the Michigan Legal Help website was launched in September 2014. Videos, Michigan Legal Help toolkits and interviews are available in Spanish and more translated content is being added, including most recently “Protection from Abuse” interviews. Cards and flyers about Ayuda Legal are being distributed to courts, legal aid offices, and community service agencies around the state.