



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Michigan Legal Help Celebrates 5th Anniversary, Prepares to Launch ‘Guide to Legal Help’ Tool in September

LANSING, MI August 31, 2017 - [Michigan Legal Help](#), created to help self-represented litigants navigate simple civil legal problems without an attorney, is celebrating its fifth anniversary. This innovative program is helping Michigan be a national leader in opening the doors of our justice system to more people. In addition to the website, Michigan Legal Help provides information and assistance to individuals through local self-help centers in 14 counties (two in Wayne County).

“The value this website brings to families and communities statewide is not measured in dollars but in access to justice,” said Justice Bridget McCormack. “I am very proud that the program educates the self-represented on court processes and procedures, increases access to justice, and serves as a model for similar initiatives across the country.”

In September, Michigan Legal Help plans to offer a new Guide to Legal Help tool, which will enable litigants to use an advanced logic tree to help identify a visitor’s legal problem and what services they qualify for. The finder then directs the user to the most appropriate resources to resolve their problem, given what is available in the community.

Also in September, Michigan Legal Help and its Director Angela Tripp will receive a 2017 Access to Justice Awards from the Michigan State Bar Foundation. The award honors persons who have significantly advanced access to justice for the poor in Michigan. Since its inception in 2011, eight people have been honored with the award.

In July 2017, visits to the website averaged 29,000 per week. During its first five years, the website has had 11.6 million page views and 3.87 million visitors. For more details regarding usage of Michigan Legal Help services, visit their [website](#).

The 15 legal self-help centers statewide allow visitors to access computers, printers, internet, and legal information (but not advice). Last year, Michigan Legal Help opened new sites in Saginaw, Livingston, Alpena, and Grand Traverse counties and plan to open locations this year in Jackson, Genesee, and Cass counties. The complete list can be found [here](#).

The legal help [website](#), which provides information and accompanying forms about family law, taxes, housing, employment, and estates, as well as videos and toolkits, also features a Help chat-based forum to assist users.

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