



## MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

*John Nevin, Communications Director*

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Michigan Legal Self-help Celebrates 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Adds New Toolkits to Website, Sees Spike in Number of Visitors Accessing Information**

LANSING, MI, September 6, 2016 - The [Michigan Legal Help Website](#), created to help people handle simple civil legal problems without an attorney, provides information and assistance to individuals representing themselves. Information and accompanying forms about family law, taxes, housing, employment, estates, and more, plus videos and 59 toolkits are among the subject matter available online to help individuals navigate Michigan's court system.

Between the launch of the site in August 2012 and August 2016, the website has had 8.4 million page views, 2.58 million visitor sessions, and 1.8 million users. In July 2016, visit rates averaged 21,000 per week.

“With the addition of new resources, Michigan Legal Help is providing a helping hand to residents who need assistance with many different legal questions,” said Supreme Court Justice Bridget McCormack. “With this service, Michigan is a national leader in helping all residents access our legal system.”

New resources added to the Website include:

- Food Stamp Calculator Toolkit
- I Wasn't Paid for My Work: Wage Claims Toolkit
- I Need to Make a Will Toolkit
- Small Estates: Transferring Property When Someone Dies Toolkit
- Two new articles about Child Protective Services: “CPS and Your Family” and “Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry.”

Many existing toolkits have been updated or modified. Forms previously known as “Automated Online Interviews” have been renamed “Do-It-Yourself” tools.

LiveHelp, a chat-based feature where visitors can get assistance navigating the website (but no legal advice), is available weekdays from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. In July 2016 alone, LiveHelp agents conducted 427 chats and replied to 237 after-hours emails. In the first two quarters of 2016, users started 77,851 Michigan interviews, and from these interviews, 38,594 sets of forms were completed – an average of 214 per day.

Information and assistance to individuals is also available through local self-help centers in the following counties: Alcona, Allegan, Calhoun, Macomb, Marquette, Monroe, Muskegon, Oakland, Oscoda, and two centers in Wayne. Livingston County will have a new center this fall.

-MSC-