

Law School-Based Legal Services



A Summary of Programs Available Through Michigan's Law Schools

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This is a publication of the
STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN
JUSTICE INITIATIVES DIVISION
306 TOWNSEND STREET
LANSING, MI 48933-2083



Law School Clinics: A Valuable Public Resource

Michigan's six law schools each offer clinical programs as part of their curriculum. Law school clinics offer counsel or instruction in a particular field of law and provide low-income persons with an opportunity to obtain legal representation. Under Michigan Court Rules, law students may provide direct representation to clients while under the supervision of experienced attorneys. Expert faculty members, talented students, and the vast resources available to law schools, combine to make law school clinics a valuable community resource.

The Justice Initiatives Division of the State Bar of Michigan created this brochure in an effort to inform the public about legal services that are available through Michigan's law schools. Clients are often referred to these programs through legal aid organizations, legislators, attorneys, and judges.

A Summary of Programs Available Through Michigan's Law Schools

Ave Maria School of Law

Asylum and Immigration Rights Law Clinic

In this clinic, students provide legal assistance to asylum seekers and immigrants. This legal assistance includes representing asylum seekers in both affirmative and removal proceedings, helping battered women self-petition under the Violence Against Women Act, and writing appellate briefs for the Board of Immigration Appeals. Students, under the supervision of clinical faculty, perform client interviewing and counseling, conduct research, draft pleadings, and appear in court.

Ave Maria School of Law
Contact: Professor Bridgette Carr
3475 Plymouth Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105-2550
Phone: (734) 827-7930
e-mail: bcarr@avemarialaw.edu

Michigan State University College of Law

Rental Housing Clinic

The Rental Housing Clinic (RHC) is operated with the approval and support of the Law College's faculty and administration, and is a cooperative venture with the city of East Lansing. The RHC is staffed with second- and third-year law students who provide legal counseling, representation, and education to tenants and landlords experiencing rental-housing difficulties. The RHC provides advisory services to landlords and tenants, and it provides education and training on rental housing matters for Ingham, Eaton, and Clinton counties. The RHC attempts to ameliorate landlord/tenant issues through its efforts by making a student-drafted model lease available to area landlords.

MSU College of Law - Rental Housing Clinic
Contact: Professor Mary Ann Pierce
541 E. Grand River Avenue
East Lansing, MI 48823
Phone: (517) 336-8088
e-mail: pierce21@law.msu.edu
Website: www.law.msu.edu/rhc

Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic

The Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) provides legal assistance to low-income taxpayers. The clinic's goal is to provide low-cost, high-quality legal assistance to low-income taxpayers in the Greater Lansing area who have cases or controversies with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or who are non-filers, and also provides tax consultation and ancillary return preparation for persons for whom English is a second language (ESL). The tax clinic is committed to serving the needs of individuals and increasing public awareness and understanding of tax laws through user-friendly literature and understanding of tax laws through user-friendly literature and community-education sessions. Law students who have met prerequisites for enrollment in the Tax Clinic are permitted to represent low-income and ESL clients under the supervision of licensed attorneys.

MSU College of Law - Tax Clinic
Contact: Professor Michele Halloran
541 E. Grand River Avenue
East Lansing, MI 48823
Phone: (517) 336-8084
e-mail: hallor11@msu.edu
Website: www.law.msu.edu/taxclinic (tax self-help materials available here)

Indigenous Law & Policy Center

Law students, under attorney supervision, provide legal services to tribal governments in an effort to assist them in attaining their judicial and governmental goals. Two of the clinic's objectives are to allow students to obtain a greater understanding of the applicable federal and tribal administrative law processes and to provide students with practical experience in working with tribal court judges through research, writing, and experience. In addition to the clinic work, the Center anticipates sponsoring indigenous law conferences and symposia at the MSU College of Law, as well as working to obtain legal internships for law students with local firms and tribal governments in the field of Indian Law.

MSU College of Law - Indigenous Law & Policy Center
541 E. Grand River Avenue
East Lansing, MI 48823
Phone: (517) 336-8088
Website: www.msulawclinics.org

Chance at Childhood Law & Social Work Clinic

This clinic is a joint program offered by the MSU College of Law and the MSU Graduate School of Social Work. Both law students partner up with graduate social work students gain practical experience by advocating for children. Through this collaborative effort, students work in teams to bring their expertise to the practice of child welfare. The clinic provides three primary services: (1) legal representation to children; (2) consultation to practitioners and community members; and (3) training of students seeking careers in child welfare. Students may serve as guardian ad litem in domestic relations matters, and as a lawyer for children in delinquency cases.

MSU College of Law – Chance at Childhood Law & Social Work Clinic
541 E. Grand River Avenue
East Lansing, MI 48826
Phone: (517) 336-8008
Website: www.law.msu.edu

Small Business/Nonprofit Law Clinic

This clinic was established for students who wish to develop special expertise in transactional business law practice. Clinical residents/law students provide legal services exclusively to small businesses and nonprofit organizations in an effort to assist the client in attaining their organizational goals and compliance with federal, state and local laws. Law students may gain experience interviewing and counseling clients, negotiating with attorneys and the parties, planning, dispute resolution, and monitoring and advising compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

MSU College of Law – Small Business & Nonprofit Law Clinic
541 E. Grand River Avenue
East Lansing, MI 48826
Phone: (517) 336-8008
Website: www.law.msu.edu

Thomas M. Cooley Law School

The Sixty Plus, Inc. Elderlaw Clinic

Sixty Plus operates as a general civil law firm located on campus at the Cooley Center. Its caseload encompasses a full spectrum of legal matters including: will preparation, powers of attorney, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, pension benefits, divorce, grandparent visitation, landlord/tenant, consumer rights, probate, property and housing, wills and trusts, and guardianships/conservatorships. The legal services are delivered by student interns, under the supervision of clinical faculty, from the initial in-take interview through final disposition of the case. The clinic serves approximately 1,000 clients annually with the highest priority of service to those with the greatest economic and social need.

The Sixty Plus, Inc. Estate Planning Clinic

This clinic is designed to meet the high demands of end of life planning for elderly persons of modest means. It focuses on powers-of-attorney, health care directives, wills, and trusts for persons with small to moderate estates.

Sixty Plus Clinics

Contact: Professor Kiberly E. O'Leary

Thomas M. Cooley Law School

300 S. Capitol Avenue, 6th Floor Suite

Lansing, Michigan 48933

Phone: (517) 334-5760

e-mail: olearyk@cooley.edu

Hours of operation are 9:00 am to 4:30 pm and by appointment (No walk-ins; please call).

The Cooley Innocence Project

In January 2001, Cooley initiated an Innocence Project for the State of Michigan, which is part of an Innocence Network organized to allow a sharing of resources with other projects around the country. Nationally, the work of the Innocence Projects has been credited with the release of wrongfully accused prisoners mainly through the use of DNA testing. The mission of the Cooley Innocence Project is to identify, provide legal assistance to, and secure the release of persons who are wrongfully imprisoned for crimes they did not commit. The Project operates as a law school clinic in which students work with practicing criminal defense lawyers to seek the release of wrongfully convicted prisoners in the state of Michigan.

The Project screens cases for strong evidence of factual innocence and assigns appropriate cases to volunteer criminal defense attorneys. It has organized a group of over 160 criminal defense practitioners statewide to take cases into court on a pro bono basis. Cooley students have the opportunity to be intricately involved in various aspects of the program such as creating screening procedures, reviewing case files, applying screening devices, investigating facts, interviewing involved persons, writing case histories, doing case analysis and preparing written case evaluations.

There is no charge for services provided by the Project, and the program receives no government funding. It is maintained entirely by Cooley Law School, with a supporting grant from the Michigan State Bar Foundation and private donations. To help keep the project going and to take part in its beneficial mission, you can make donations payable to: Thomas M. Cooley Law School Innocence Project, 300 S. Capitol, PO Box 13038, Lansing, Michigan 48901.

Thomas M. Cooley Law School
Contact: Professor Kathy Swedlow or Professor Norman Fell
300 S. Capitol Ave. 6th Floor Suite
Lansing, Michigan 48933
Phone: (517) 334-5764
e-mail: swedlowk@cooley.edu or felln@cooley.edu

The Innocence Project takes inquiries by mail only. A letter to The Cooley Innocence Project at the above address is sufficient to start the process.

University of Detroit Mercy School of Law

Immigration Law Clinic

The Immigration Law Clinic provides law students with a unique and intensive, hands-on learning experience representing clients before the U.S. Immigration Court and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The Immigration Law Clinic works in close cooperation with Freedom House, a Detroit-based nonprofit organization well-known nationally and internationally for its comprehensive range of services for persons seeking asylum. Law students are assigned a client who is seeking asylum in the U.S., interview that client, prepare a detailed asylum application, and conduct a trial before the U.S. Immigration Court, which decides whether the client will be granted protection in the U.S. Students also staff the Mobile Law Office which allows the Immigration Law Clinic to better serve immigrants and their families in the neighborhoods in which they reside.

Immigration Law Clinic
Contact: Michael C. Bryce
University of Detroit Mercy School of Law
651 E. Jefferson
Detroit, MI 48226
Phone: (313) 596-0235
e-mail: brycemi@udmercy.edu

Mediation Clinic

Recognizing the importance of ADR in the practice of law, a new Mediation Clinic has been initiated at UDM through the offices of Oakland County Mediation and Martin Reisig, Esq. The Mediation Clinic is unique in that to participate in the clinic the students need to already be court-approved mediators. In other words, they have to have already completed the 40 hour mediation training course and have done the requisite mediations to qualify. UDM works with Oakland County Mediation and with NRC Wayne County Mediation to ensure students are able to do the 40 hour mediation training and qualify for the clinic. When the students join the mediation clinic they participate in a long series of mediations throughout the semester at various State District courts. In addition, Professor Reisig takes the students through advanced mediation techniques in the classroom component of the course. The Mediation trainings and Mediation Clinic allow the students to develop their empathy and listening skills and allows them to consider a moderately different career path.

Mediation Clinic
University of Detroit Mercy School of Law
651 E. Jefferson
Detroit, MI 48226
Website: <http://www.law.udmercy.edu/currentstudents/academic/mediation.php>

Mobile Law Office

The clinical program at UDM is now aided by the addition of a Mobile Law Office (MLO). After purchasing a 29 foot RV, the law school had it revamped into a rolling law office. The MLO goes out to community and other centers to conduct interviews assist on cases that the UDM clinics handle and also make appropriate referrals for other matters. Students and faculty also go out with the MLO to conduct educational presentations on various legal problems facing the community, including consumer fraud. In addition to the UDM clinical students who participate with the MLO, pro bono attorneys from the Catholic Lawyers Assn., Compuware's General Counsel's office and other organizations are getting involved. This allows the students to learn a great deal not only from their professors, but also from participating practicing attorneys. The MLO has vastly increased the outreach capability of the UDM clinical program and expanded the educational impact.

Mobile Law Clinic

University of Detroit Mercy School of Law

651 E. Jefferson

Detroit, MI 48226

Website: <http://www.law.udmercy.edu/currentstudents/academic/mobilelaw.php>

Urban Law Clinic

The Urban Law Clinic at UDM has been representing indigent clients now for forty years (1965-2005). The present Urban Clinic provides services that include representation in the areas of consumer law, SSD, SSI, Medicaid and Medicare, mortgage law (predatory lending) and debt collection matters. Students in the clinic represent seniors in the Detroit area who are over 50 years of age. Students conduct interviews and investigations, draft complaints, motions, orders and memoranda of law. They also advocate in administrative hearings, and at trials in both State and Federal courts. In order to reach out to the community on many of these issues the students in the Urban Law Clinic also go out with the Mobile Law Office to community, church and senior centers to interview and counsel potential clients.

Urban Law Clinic

University of Detroit Mercy School of Law

651 E. Jefferson

Detroit, MI 48226

Website: www.law.udmercy.edu/currentstudents/academic/urbanlawclinic.php

Set up a Tuesday morning or Thursday afternoon appointment by calling (313) 596-0262.

University of Michigan Law School

Child Advocacy Law Clinic

In the Child Advocacy Law Clinic (CALC), students represent children, parents, or the state child protection agency in child abuse and neglect cases. With close support and supervision of an interdisciplinary faculty, law students address the complex legal, social, emotional, ethical, and public policy questions of state intervention in family life on behalf of children. Law students work together with practicing professionals, faculty, and students in the fields of social work, psychology, pediatrics, and psychiatry. Over the past 25 years, CALC student attorneys have been responsible for securing permanent homes for more than 1,000 children.

Child Advocacy Law Clinic
Contact: Professor Anne N. Schroth
University of Michigan Law School
625 S. State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1215
Phone: (734) 763-5000
e-mail schroth@umich.edu

Civil Litigation Clinic

In the Civil Litigation Clinic (CLC), students serve as lead counsel on cases that are referred to the clinic by state court judges, federal magistrates, the local legal aid office, the county bar association, and former clients. The CLC takes cases in the areas of landlord-tenant, consumer law, domestic violence, family law, employment discrimination, torts, contracts, bankruptcy, asylum and refugee issues, and prisoners' civil rights. Students, under the supervision of faculty, do all of the work for their clients, including interviewing, counseling, research, discovery, negotiation, motion practice, bench and jury trials, and appeals.

Civil Litigation Clinic
Contact: Paul D. Reingold
University of Michigan Law School
625 S. State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1215
Phone: (734) 763-4319
e-mail: pdr@umich.edu

Criminal Defense Clinic

Student attorneys carry a misdemeanor caseload and also work on post-conviction cases and out-of-state capital cases. Students take classes on criminal law and procedure and participate in an intensive series of trial skills workshops, focusing

on the defense attorney's need to cross-examine effectively. Each semester, many of the misdemeanor cases are tried by students before a judge or jury. In several recent cases, student attorneys challenged the trend toward bringing criminal charges against women in domestic violence cases.

Criminal Defense Clinic
Contact: Professor Bridget McCormack
University of Michigan Law School
625 S. State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1215
Phone: (734) 763-4319
e-mail: bridgetm@umich.edu

Criminal Appellate Practice Clinic

Criminal Appellate Practice students represent convicted felons on appeal. Each student is assigned to help represent an indigent defendant in the appeal of his or her felony conviction, under the supervision of attorneys from Michigan's State Appellate Defender Office. Students learn to prepare polished appellate briefs that are filed with the Michigan Court of Appeals and the Michigan Supreme Court. This clinic seeks to improve students' understanding and skill in all phases of appellate advocacy, including determination of relevant facts and competing interests, legal research, developing a theory of the case, and effective written and oral presentation. Students review trial transcripts and lower court records, interview clients in prison (with the instructor), develop a strategy for appeal, conduct legal research, and help draft briefs on appeal. Student feedback is provided by frequent individual meetings with the instructors, as well as oral argument before a panel of attorneys experienced in criminal law.

Criminal Appellate Practice Clinic
University of Michigan Law School
625 S. State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1215
Phone: (734) 764-9344

Environmental Law Clinic

The Environmental Law Clinic (ELC) operates in conjunction with the National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes Natural Resource Center in Ann Arbor. Cases are drawn from the center's docket of judicial administrative, and legislative proceedings. In addition to practice skills, the ELC provides students with practical experience in a wide range of natural resources and environmental matters such as wetlands management, clean water protection, and endangered species protection.

University of Michigan Law School

National Wildlife Federation
Great Lakes Natural Resource Center
213 West Liberty Street, Suite 200
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Phone: (734) 769-3351
e-mail: greatlakes@nwf.org

Legal Assistance for Urban Communities

In the Legal Assistance for Urban Communities Clinic (LAUC), law students help nonprofit corporations in and around Detroit develop affordable housing, attract commercial and industrial investment, and rebuild the fabric of once-vital neighborhoods. Students negotiate with city attorneys and other counsel, draft and review contracts, create nonprofit corporations, form partnerships and other legal entities, and close on multi-million-dollar development loans. Their efforts have produced more than 600 units of affordable housing since LAUC was founded in 1991.

Legal Assistance for Urban Communities
Contact: Rochelle E. Lento
University of Michigan Law School
625 S. State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1215
Phone: (734) 647-4069 (Ann Arbor office) or (313) 822-9646 (Detroit Office)
e-mail: rlento@umich.edu

Pediatric Advocacy Clinic

This clinic is a medical/legal collaborative for law students and pediatric providers to improve the health of low-income children and their families. It provides students with on-site legal advocacy assistance and training, by engaging in a variety of activities, including direct casework; consumer/professional education and training; and public policy advocacy. Working with healthcare providers, students will identify and prioritize legal practice areas; design and conduct trainings for medical providers; structure and prioritize future clinic services; and represent the clients referred through the program.

Pediatric Advocacy Clinic
Contact: Anne Schroth or Bridget McCormack
University of Michigan Law School
625 S. State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1215
e-mail: schroth@umich.edu or bridgetm@umich.edu

Wayne State University Law School

Civil Rights Litigation Clinic

In this class, students assist in the representation of an indigent prisoner who has filed a civil rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 in the U.S. District Court. The student interviews the client, takes and defends depositions, prepares written discovery and motions, argues in federal court, and otherwise prepares for trial.

Civil Rights Litigation Clinic
Contact: Prof. Erica Eisinger
Wayne State University Law School
471 W. Palmer Street
Detroit, MI 48202
e-mail: e.eisinger@wayne.edu

The Civil Rights Litigation Clinic accepts clients on referral from the pro bono panel of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Criminal Appellate Practice

In this class, taught by a member of the State Appellate Defender Office, each student prepares a criminal appellate brief on behalf of a client who has been convicted of a felony after a jury trial. The students interview the client, present a mock oral argument to a panel of experienced criminal appellate practitioners, and ultimately have their brief submitted to the Michigan Court of Appeals.

Criminal Appellate Practice
Contact: Adj. Prof. Gail Rodwan
Wayne State University Law School
471 W. Palmer Street
Detroit, MI 48202
Phone: (313) 256-9833, x 228
e-mail: gail@sado.org

The Criminal Appellate Practice Clinic accepts cases from the State Appellate Defender Office (SADO).

Disability Law Clinic

Students assist low-income individuals with disabilities in a range of issues, including social security/SSI, special education, and Medicaid/Medicare. The clinic aims to help its clients obtain the services and supports clients needs to live in their own homes rather than in institutional settings. The clinic offers students an intensive exposure to administrative advocacy, while helping one of Detroit's

most underrepresented populations. Students participate in all aspects of the clinic's operations, from intake, case acceptance, and individual client representation, to community education and law reform efforts.

Disability Law Clinic
Contact: Prof. David Moss
Wayne State University Law School
471 W. Palmer Street
Detroit, MI 48202
Phone: (313) 577-3970
e-mail: david.moss@wayne.edu

Free Legal Aid Clinic

The Free Legal Aid Clinic (FLAC) is Wayne State University Law School's oldest and largest live-client clinic. FLAC originated as a student-run nonprofit organization and continues today in partnership with the law school and the Legal Aid and Defender Association. FLAC provides legal assistance in state court on family law matters, such as custody, support, visitation, and divorce. Students interview clients, investigate facts, draft pleadings, to negotiate with opposing counsel, appear in court, and may participate in all phases – even up to the final judgment.

FLAC is a collaborative venture with the Legal Aid and Defender Association, Inc. (LAD) of Detroit and is located at Penobscot Building, 645 Griswold Street, Detroit, MI 48226. Prospective clients need to meet the income and asset guidelines of the Legal Services Corporation and should contact LAD's intake unit at (877) 964-4700.

Nonprofit Corporations and Urban Development Law Clinic

Students serve the legal needs of community-based organizations working to improve the urban environment and better the lives of metro Detroit residents, one neighborhood at a time. This is a transactional clinic where students assist nonprofit organizations that develop affordable housing, job training, or other services by drafting articles of incorporation, bylaws, and applications for tax-exempt status.

The Nonprofit Corporations and Urban Law Clinic accepts clients on referral from Community Legal Resources (CLR), which is located at:
220 Bagley Avenue, Suite 900
Detroit, MI 48226
Phone: (313) 964-4130
e-mail: CLR@michiganlegal.org

Michigan's Law School Clinics

Ave Maria School of Law

Asylum and Immigration Rights Law Clinic

Michigan State University College of Law

Rental Housing Clinic

Low Income Taxpayer Clinic

Indigenous Law & Policy Center

Chance at Childhood Law & Social Work Clinic

Small Business & Nonprofit Law Clinic

Thomas M. Cooley Law School

The Sixty Plus, Inc. Elderlaw Clinic

The Sixty Plus, Inc. Estate Planning Clinic

The Cooley Innocence Project

University of Detroit Mercy School of Law

Urban Law Clinic

Immigration Law Clinic

University of Michigan Law School

Child Advocacy Law Clinic

Civil Litigation Clinic

Criminal Defense Clinic

Criminal Appellate Practice Clinic

Environmental Law Clinic

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