



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Administrative Measure to Increase Access to Legal Assistance for Lower Income Individuals Takes Effect January 1, 2018

LANSING, MI, December 21, 2017 – The Michigan Supreme Court approved a recommendation and has adopted explicit rules for limited scope representation (LSR), also referred to as “unbundled” legal services. The new rules are effective January 1, 2018. The Court heard testimony about the measure during its [September public administrative hearing](#).

“Establishing limited scope representation rules will increase access to justice in Michigan,” said Justice Bridget M. McCormack. “By unbundling legal services, low income individuals will be better able to get the assistance they need. This step builds on other courthouse opening-door efforts such as Michigan Legal Help.”

Limited scope representation allows an attorney to provide a narrow scope of services—“unbundled”—instead of the full scope of traditional representation. For example, a client may simply need an attorney to draft pleadings or other documents and not need the attorney to appear in court. Or, perhaps the client only needs the attorney to appear in court for a limited part of the case like drafting a motion and brief and arguing that motion in court.

The State Bar of Michigan Representative Assembly submitted the measure to address the growing problem of unaffordable legal services that exists under the traditional attorney service model. The State Bar outlined the LSR advantages in its 21st Century Task Force Report:

- LSR is less costly because it allows attorneys to provide only the services the client needs instead of operating under the traditional model, thereby putting legal assistance within the reach of many low and moderate income individuals;
- Attorneys benefit from having more paying clients; and
- Courts benefit from increased efficiency due to an attorney’s expertise in an otherwise self-represented litigant’s case.

Michigan also leads the nation in providing online legal assistance to residents who access www.michiganlegalhelp.org. Since 2012, the website has had nearly 12 million page views and almost 4 million visitors who accessed tools such as the recently-launched [Guide to Legal Help](#) which helps users find the best available legal information and lawyers. The program also supports 15 self-help centers statewide.

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