



# Building Program Partnerships

Collaborating with Maryland Court Self-Help Centers to Help  
Narrow the Justice Gap

DECEMBER 2018



# Introduction

GOALS

# Terms

- ▶ **SRL; Self-represented litigant:** a person who is not represented by a lawyer
- ▶ **Pro se:** a person who is not represented by a lawyer
- ▶ **Limited scope representation:** lawyer and client agree to limit the scope of the lawyer's involvement in the matter





How many family law cases have at least one party that is **not** represented at the time the answer is filed?

- ▶ 95%
- ▶ 81%
- ▶ 75%
- ▶ 30%

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Why are litigants unrepresented?



# Why is access to legal help important?

- ▶ Complex system
- ▶ Difficult to navigate without training
- ▶ Justice should be the same whether or not a person has money for a lawyer
- ▶ Stakes are high in civil matters
  - Children
  - Housing
  - Income
- ▶ Result should not depend on a person's ability to pay



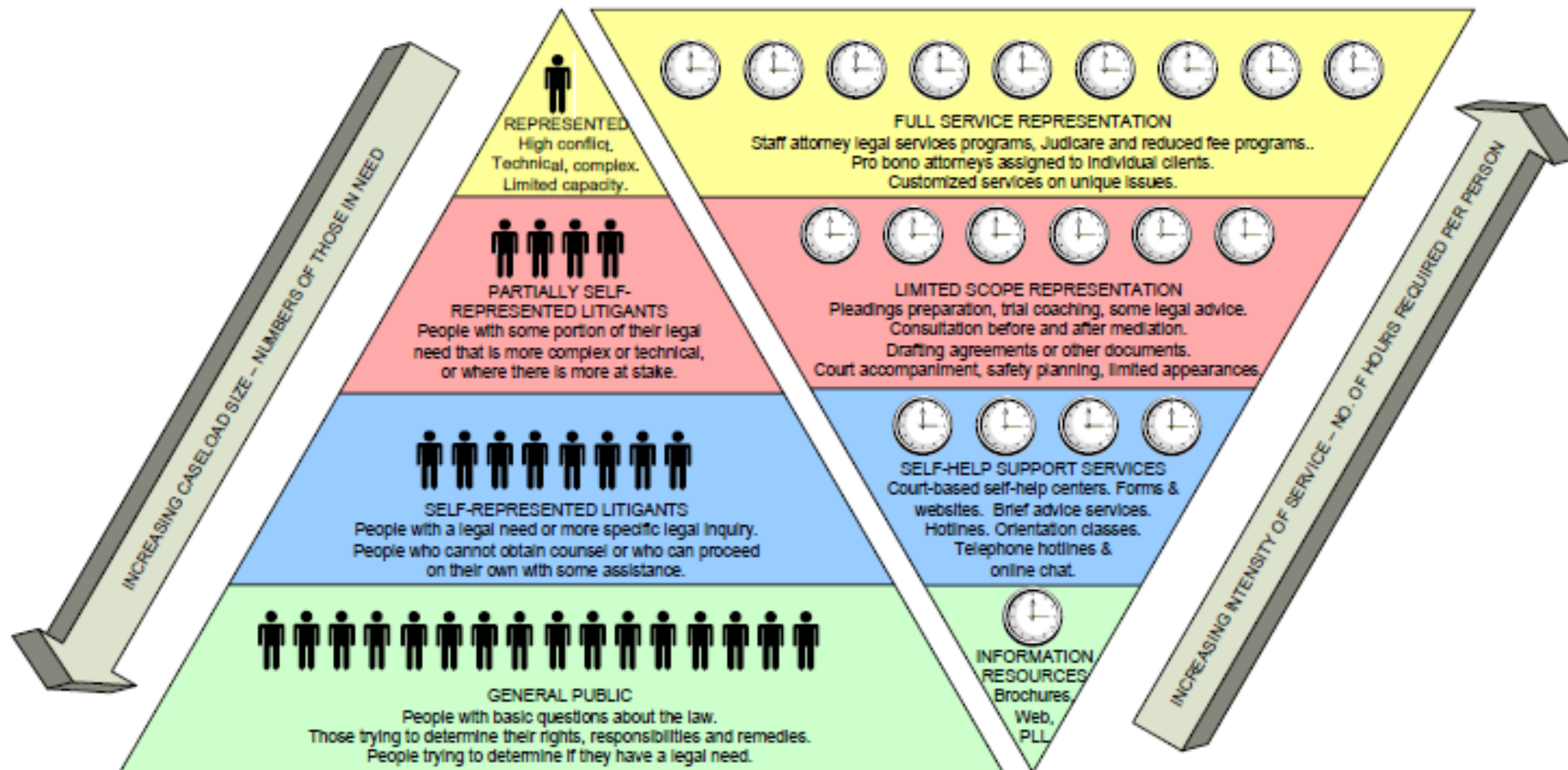
“The Judiciary is committed to providing equal access to justice for all of the people of Maryland. While ideally all litigants would have access to legal representation, we know this is not the case for many who come before Maryland’s courts.”

- Chief Judge Mary Ellen Barbera



# The Civil Legal Services Delivery System

## LEGAL SERVICE PROVIDERS



## LEGAL CONSUMERS

# Maryland Court Self-Help Centers

## 1. **Maryland Courts Self-Help Center:** Remote Services

- ▶ All civil

## 2. **District Court Self-Help Resource Centers:** Walk-In

- ▶ District Court only

## 3. **Family Law Self-Help Centers:** Walk-In

- ▶ Family Law only



# What are Maryland Court Self-Help Centers?

Self-Help Centers provide FREE legal advice and information for individuals who do not have a lawyer.



# What are Maryland Court Self-Help Centers?

- ▶ Self-help center lawyers **DO NOT REPRESENT**; they help litigants represent themselves.
- ▶ Self-help center lawyers **CAN REFER** litigants to a lawyer or legal services organization if they CANNOT or SHOULD NOT represent themselves.
  - ▶ Referrals include free and low-cost legal services providers, the MSBA, and local bar associations not individual practitioners.

# Where are Maryland Court Self-Help Centers?

Walk-In

Remote Services



# Who staffs Maryland Court Self-Help Centers?

- ▶ Attorneys
  - ▶ Staff
  - ▶ Vendor
  - ▶ Pro Bono
- ▶ Court Staff



# What kind of help do self-help centers offer?

Self-Help Centers Offer Help with:

- ▶ Completing COURT FORMS
- ▶ Learning HOW TO FILE court documents
- ▶ Preparing for TRIAL, COURT HEARINGS, or MEDIATION
- ▶ Understanding court DOCUMENTS
- ▶ Finding a LAWYER

- ▶ District Court Self-Help Resource Centers
- ▶ Family Law Self-Help Centers
- ▶ Maryland Courts Self-Help Centers

## Self-Help Centers

Self-Help Centers provide **FREE** limited legal help in **civil** cases for people who do not have a lawyer.



Maryland Courts Self-Help Center

PHONE 410-260-1392 or CHAT

[Learn more >>](#)



District Court Self-Help Centers

 Locations in Glen Burnie, Salisbury and Upper Marlboro

[Learn more >>](#)



Family Law Self-Help Centers

 Walk-in assistance in most Circuit Courts

[Learn more >>](#)

### FREE ONLINE CLASSES

Learn about divorce, rent court, and small claims. [View the schedule.](#)

### SELF-HELP

Maryland Courts Self-Help Centers  
Free legal help with your civil matter



410-260-1392  
8:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. Monday-Friday



# District Court Self-Help Resource Centers

LEGAL HELP IN PERSON FOR DISTRICT COURT MATTERS

- ▶ 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
- ▶ Monday - Friday
- ▶ Walk-in legal help in Baltimore City, Cambridge, Glen Burnie, Salisbury and Upper Marlboro



# District Court Self-Help Resource Centers

## LEGAL HELP IN PERSON FOR DISTRICT COURT MATTERS

Lawyers at the Centers in Baltimore City, Upper Marlboro, Salisbury and Glen Burnie may help with **civil DISTRICT COURT matters only**:

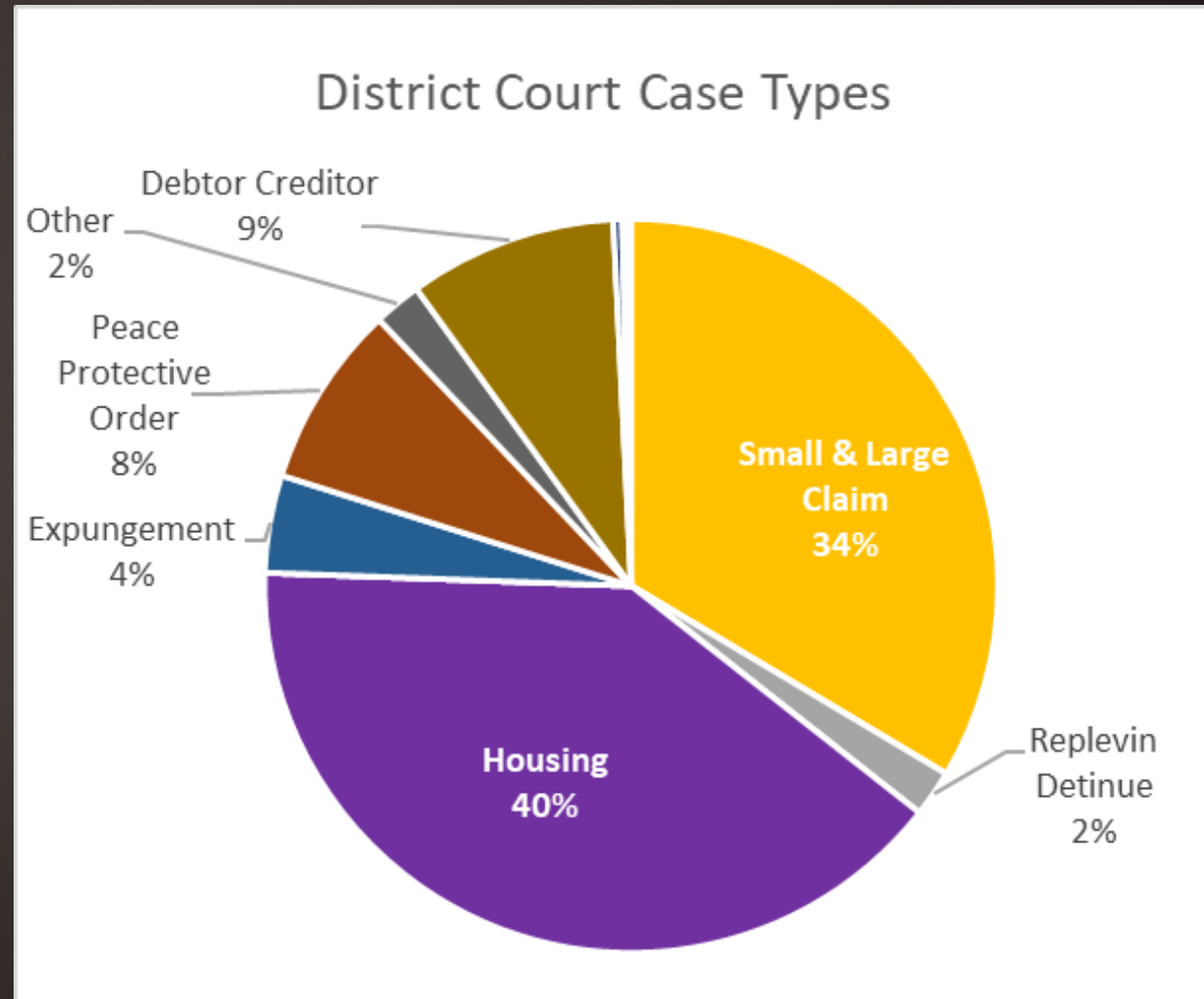
- ▶ *Landlord/Tenant*
- ▶ *Small and Large Claims*
- ▶ *Consumer Matters: car repossessions, debt collection, credit card cases*
- ▶ *Return of Property (replevin and detinue)*
- ▶ *Domestic Violence/Peace Orders*
- ▶ *Expungement*

# District Court Self-Help Resource Centers

LEGAL HELP IN PERSON FOR DISTRICT COURT MATTERS

## October 2018 Case Types

- Baltimore City
- Glen Burnie
- Salisbury
- Upper Marlboro



# Family Law Self-Help Centers

LEGAL HELP IN PERSON FOR FAMILY LAW MATTERS

Centers may operate under a name other than Self-Help Center, such as “family law legal clinic” or “pro se assistance,” but they all provide similar services.



# Family Law Self-Help Centers

LEGAL HELP IN PERSON FOR FAMILY LAW MATTERS

Staff provide help in:

- ▶ Divorce
- ▶ Custody
- ▶ Child support
- ▶ Domestic violence (protective orders)
- ▶ Name change
- ▶ Other family law case types

# Family Law Self-Help Centers

LEGAL HELP IN PERSON FOR FAMILY LAW MATTERS

- ▶ Hours vary
- ▶ Available in most Circuit Court locations



# Maryland Court Self-Help Center: Frederick

- ▶ Courts are co-located
- ▶ Serves litigants with civil District and Circuit Court Matters
- ▶ 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday

# Maryland Courts Self-Help Center

LEGAL HELP VIA PHONE AND LIVE CHAT

- ▶ 8:30 am - 8 pm
- ▶ Monday - Friday
- ▶ 410-260-1392
  - ▶ For Spanish press 4
- ▶ Click to chat
  - ▶ [mdcourts.gov/selfhelp](http://mdcourts.gov/selfhelp)
  - ▶ Chat icons on many court pages and the People's Law Library





# Maryland Courts Self-Help Center

LEGAL HELP VIA PHONE AND LIVE CHAT

Lawyers help with a full range of CIVIL case types (Circuit and District)

- ▶ Landlord and Tenant
- ▶ Small and Large Claims
- ▶ Consumer matters - car repossessions, debt collection, credit card cases
- ▶ Return of property (replevin and detinue)
- ▶ Expungement and Shielding of Records
- ▶ Domestic Violence/Peace Orders
- ▶ Family Law (divorce, custody, child support, guardianship)
- ▶ Foreclosure

# MARYLAND COURTS

*Fair, Efficient, & Effective Justice For All*

Site Search Search

Advanced Search Search Tips

COURTS

SELF-HELP

E-SERVICES

LAWYERS

MEDIA

COMMUNITY

## Is Your Court Open?

To get the latest information about court closings and delays, check under "Latest News" on the home page or visit our Closings/Delays page.

Check out the website's new design

### Is Your Court Open?

Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake's Lower Shore Career Development Center honors adult drug treatment court program

New Rules Regarding Guardianships

HOW TO...

LEARN ABOUT...

**MDEC** Maryland Electronic Courts



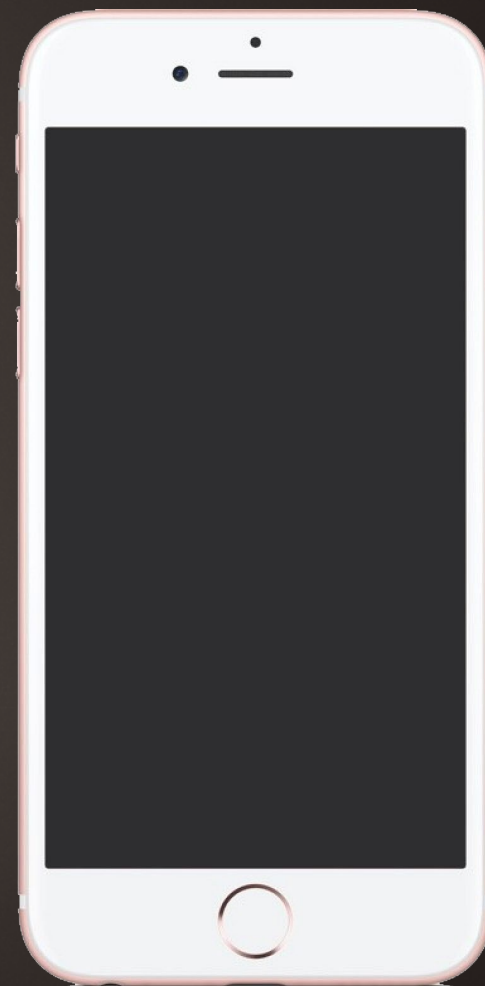
# Maryland Courts Self-Help Center

LEGAL HELP VIA PHONE AND LIVE CHAT

- ▶ 8:30 am - 8 pm
- ▶ Monday - Friday

**410-260-1392**

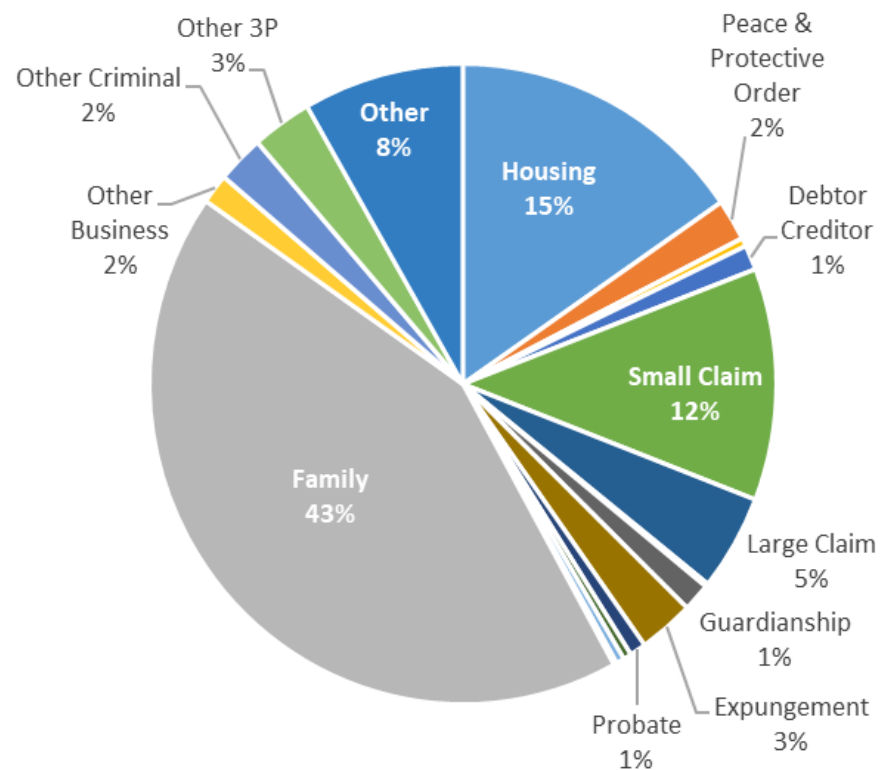
- ▶ *Talk to a lawyer for free*
- ▶ *Open until 8pm*



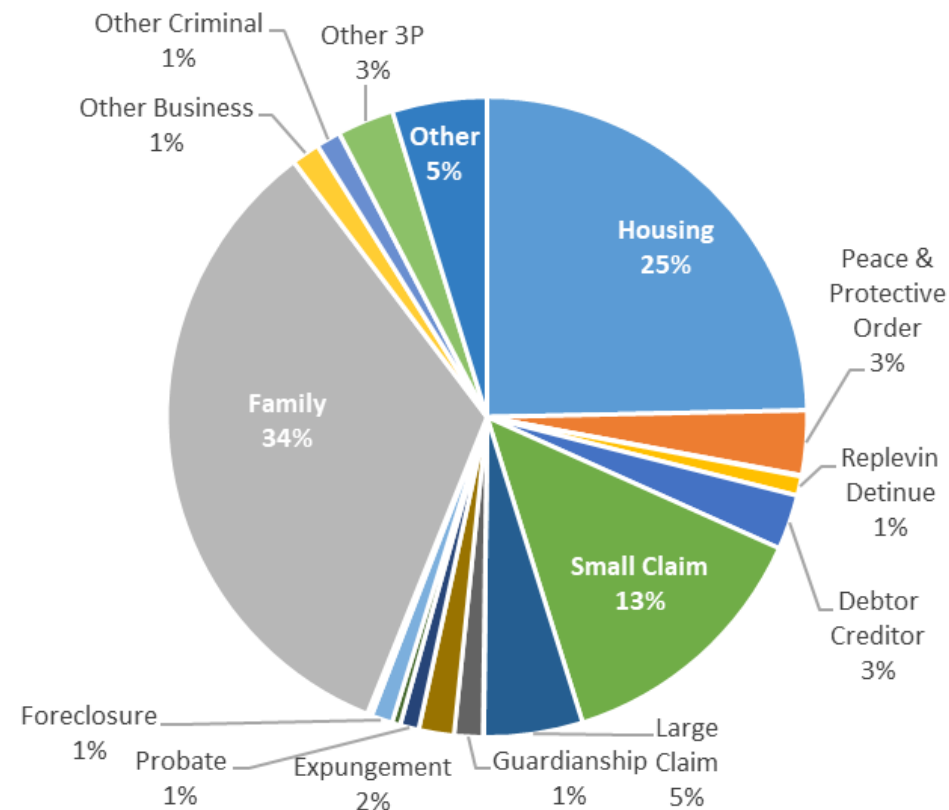
# Maryland Courts Self-Help Center

LEGAL HELP VIA PHONE AND LIVE CHAT

Chat - October 2018



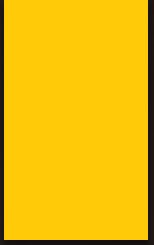
Phone - October 2018







When should a litigant be referred  
to a self-help center?



What is the best way to connect a litigant to a self-help center?





How can your program integrate  
with a self-help center?

# How can your program integrate with a self-help center?

- ▶ Working together with partners can significantly enhance access to justice for litigants without counsel.
  - ▶ Mediation
  - ▶ Legal service providers
  - ▶ Social service organizations
  - ▶ Non-profit organizations





Questions?

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410-260-1256