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Ashley Campbell  
Kim Crouch  
Justice Anita Earls  
Gonzalo Frias

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Legal Support Center*

Sylvia K. Novinsky  
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Resource Center*

Rachel Royal  
*Project & Finance Manager*

Julissa Corporan  
*Clerk, Wake County  
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*Senior Staff Attorney & Restorative  
Justice Program Director*

Faith Reeves  
*Project Manager/Volunteer  
Coordinator, Wake County Legal  
Support Center*

Jennifer Simmons  
*Director, Equal Justice Alliance  
and Senior Project Manager*

S.M. Kernodle-Hodges  
*Program Coordinator & Clerk,  
Wake County Legal Support Center*

Gwendolyn Waller  
*Office Administrator*

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# NC Equal Access to Justice COMMISSION

## 2023 IMPACT REPORT

Our mission is to overcome barriers to justice and empower North Carolinians to meet legal needs through our leadership, collaboration and problem-solving.

In 2023, the NC Equal Access to Justice Commission saw significant strides in its mission, marked by the launch of the Wake County Legal Support Center, a vital resource hub for self-represented litigants. In its first year, the Center provided assistance to 5,600 visitors, primarily addressing family law matters. Additionally, our commitment to expanding pro bono opportunities and education continued through initiatives within the Pro Bono Resource Center and in collaboration with our diverse network of partner organizations.

This report shines a spotlight on the hard work of the NC Equal Access to Justice Commission team. Without them, none of our achievements, like opening the Wake County Legal Support Center, would be possible. We owe them a huge thank you for their dedication and all they do to make justice accessible for everyone.

## VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

If you are an attorney or paralegal and would like to volunteer, please visit [probono.org](http://probono.org) to view pro bono opportunities.

## SUPPORT OUR WORK



Please consider making a financial contribution to the Pro Bono Resource Center.

[ncprobono.org/support](http://ncprobono.org/support)



Wake County Legal Support Center ribbon cutting, January 9, 2023.



[ncaccesstojustice.org](http://ncaccesstojustice.org)

PO Box 2448  
Raleigh, NC 27602  
919.890.1090



[ncprobono.org](http://ncprobono.org)



[wakelsc.org](http://wakelsc.org)



# Wake County Legal Support Center

**Our mission is to increase access to justice for residents of Wake County by serving as a resource hub for self-represented litigants in civil legal matters.**

The Wake County Legal Support Center, a program of the North Carolina Equal Access to Justice Commission, opened our doors on January 9, 2023. **In one year, we have served over 5,600 visitors.**

Each year, thousands of Wake County citizens must navigate complex legal issues such as eviction and child custody without the benefit of legal representation. A 2022 ABA study showed that 92% of civil legal needs of people in poverty went unmet and 74% of all low-income households experience a civil legal problem each year. The Wake County Legal Support Center helps bridge this gap and provides legal information to guide self-represented litigants to successfully navigate the court system.

**The Need**

**11%** of Wake County residents live in poverty. There is only **1 legal aid attorney for every 8,900** of those eligible to be served.

## Partnering for Impact



State Access and Visitation Coordinator

**1,000+**  
CLIENTS ASSISTED IN MATTERS RELATED TO CHILD CUSTODY AND VISITATION



Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law

**120**  
STUDENT VOLUNTEER HOURS DONATED

**50+**  
CASES FROM CLINICS



Attorney of the Day Program

**125+**  
CLIENTS

**80+**  
ATTORNEY HOURS DONATED



**30+**  
VOLUNTEERS

**10**  
LAW FIRMS

## NORTH CAROLINA PRO BONO RESOURCE CENTER

The Pro Bono Resource Center coordinated voluntary pro bono reporting in 2023 by partnering with the State Bar for attorney reporting. Paralegals also reported for the third year by submitting hours directly to the NC Pro Bono Resource Center. *(Data as of 3/4/24)*

**TOTAL ATTORNEY RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED**

**12,177**

**TOTAL ATTORNEY RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED AT LEAST 1 HOUR**

**8,140**

**TOTAL RESPONDENT PERCENTAGE OF ACTIVE NC ATTORNEYS**

**38%**

**TOTAL RESPONDENT PERCENTAGE OF ACTIVE NC ATTORNEYS WHO REPORTED AT LEAST 1 HOUR**

**25%**

**TOTAL RESPONDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR RECOGNITION IN THE 2023 PRO BONO HONOR SOCIETY**

**1,335**

**RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED 100+ HOURS**

**325**

The North Carolina Pro Bono Resource Center harnesses the power of volunteer legal professionals to target unmet legal needs by promoting, supporting, and developing pro bono opportunities.

## Driver's License Restoration Project



**517 VOLUNTEER ATTORNEYS**

who donated

**855 PRO BONO HOURS**

providing advice letters to **1,789 CLIENTS**

for a total value of **\$213,750**

## Pro Bono Go



The Pro Bono Resource Center launched Pro Bono Go in conjunction with Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy, Legal Aid of North Carolina, and Pisgah Legal Services.

Pro Bono Go is the North Carolina civil justice community's one-stop shop for pro bono opportunities that make a meaningful difference in the lives of North Carolinians in need. It is a statewide, online clearinghouse for pro bono opportunities provided by the state's leading civil legal aid and public-interest legal organizations.

North Carolina legal professionals can visit [probonogo.org](http://probonogo.org) to find and sign up for pro bono programs, projects, clinics and cases that provide free, critical legal services to low-income North Carolinians confronting serious legal problems involving housing, safety, family, income and other basic needs.

Visit [probonogo.org](http://probonogo.org) for more information.

## DLRP Debt Remittance Project

In 2022, PBRC launched the DLRP Debt Remittance Project, which connects clients to attorneys who will handle their motion for relief from court fines and fees. In 2023, this project was expanded.

**7 CLIENTS**

were remitted an average of

**\$930**

resulting in a

**100% SUCCESS RATE**

of fines and fees remitted

## Federal Public Defender Expunction Project



In 2023, our Federal Public Defender Expunction Project served 7 clients, granting them mandatory relief in state court that resulted in a lesser sentence in federal court. This project expanded to serve the Office of the Federal Public Defender, Middle District of North Carolina.

PBRC continues to run a statewide monthly working group for providers working on expunction and license restoration. Members represent all the major providers and participate from as far west as Cherokee County and as far east as New Hanover County.

## Pro Bono Pipeline

PBRC launched a monthly newsletter, Pro Bono Pipeline, in September of 2023.

PBRC continues to convene monthly meetings of pro bono coordinators at the NC civil legal services provider pro bono programs.

## Pro Bono Coordinators' Network

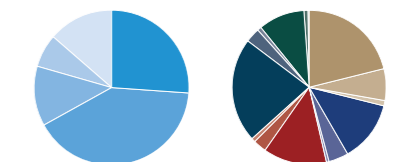
The Pro Bono Resource Center hosts the NC Pro Bono Coordinators' Network, a collaborative of legal services providers, private law firms, corporations, and nonprofit organizations who address unmet legal needs in North Carolina by engaging legal professionals to provide pro bono legal services. The goals of the Network include enhancing communication and collaboration between Network participants and increasing access to justice for all North Carolinians. The Network met four times in 2023—three via Zoom and one in-person meeting. The Network includes 149 individuals and 98 different organizations.

## 2023 FINANCIALS

### Income

CLE Fee-NC State Bar	\$404,985
Grantmaking Support	\$449,338
NC AOC Support	\$161,745
Private Support	\$109,986
Contract Services	\$209,341

**TOTAL INCOME \$1,543,349**



### Expenses

General Operations	\$340,727
GO-Management/Admin	\$107,903
GO-Fundraising	\$18,098

#### Pro Bono Resource Center

Programming	\$203,727
Management/Admin	\$64,986
Fundraising	\$11,378

#### Driver's License Restoration Project

Programming	\$211,321
Management/Admin	\$43,963
Fundraising	\$14,689

#### Wake County Legal Resource Center

Programming	\$351,409
Management/Admin	\$50,847
Fundraising	\$9,884

#### Equal Justice Alliance

Programming	\$158,694
Management/Admin	\$12,817
Fundraising	\$1,005

**TOTAL EXPENSES \$1,601,448**