

# **LEGAL AID OF NORTH CAROLINA**



## **ACCESS TO JUSTICE CAMPAIGN**

**CAMPAIGN MANUAL**

# CAMPAIGN MANUAL

## LEGAL AID OF NORTH CAROLINA ACCESS TO JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

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# ABOUT LEGAL AID OF NORTH CAROLINA

**Legal Aid of North Carolina** is one of the nation's premier legal aid programs. The first statewide legal aid program in North Carolina was founded in 1976 by members of the North Carolina Bar Association. Since 2002 LANC has been an independent provider of free civil legal services serving the entire state. Today it counts as its supporters attorneys, judges, state and county bar associations, private foundations and government entities.

With a staff of 105 attorneys, Legal Aid handles 20,000 cases each year. By securing protection for victims of abuse, helping children secure needed medical care, insuring that families are able to keep their homes by avoiding foreclosure or eviction, helping parents make the welfare to work transition, protecting the elderly against fraud and helping children gain access to special education programs. Legal Aid's work to overcome systemic barriers that prevent poor people from stabilizing their families helps thousands more. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Legal Aid helps to insure that justice, the most vital of democratic commodities, is secured for the most vulnerable in our community.

## **Mission**

LANC values its status as an independent, non-profit, North Carolina-based community institution that pursues its mission vigorously and with integrity. Since its inception, that mission has remained unchanged:

*“ Legal Aid of North Carolina is a statewide, nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services in civil matters to low-income people in order to ensure equal access to justice and to remove legal barriers to economic opportunity.”*

## **A Short History of Legal Aid of North Carolina**

*1960's Legal Aid of Forsyth County founded in 1962. O.E.O Legal Services funded 1965.*

*1965 Greensboro Legal Aid founded.*

*1976 Legal Services of NC est. by NCBA, funding through the Legal Services Corporation.*

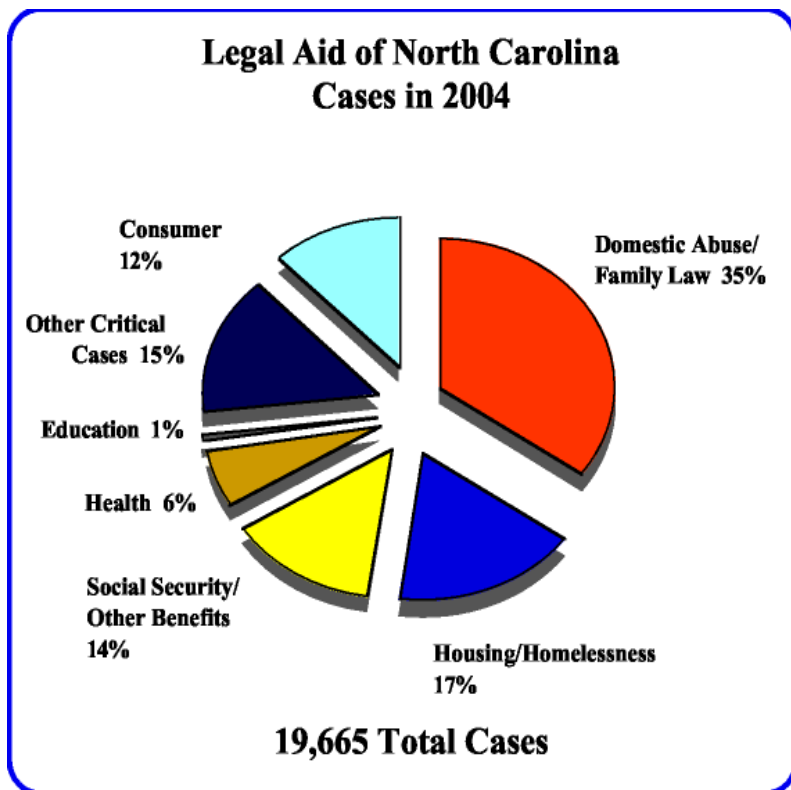
*2002 Legal Aid of North Carolina created from a merger of local legal aid programs.*

*2005 The Access to Justice Campaign is created to insure access to justice for more North Carolinians.*

## Purpose

Legal Aid is the stitching that holds the safety net together. It provides critical legal help to the whole spectrum of low-income families and individuals, from the youngest to the oldest, of all ethnic origins, and across a wide range of critical legal problems. In a complex society and a justice system that requires skilled and experienced counsel, poor families and individuals need the help that only Legal Aid can provide. Consider:

- Protective orders are available to victims of domestic violence, but without an attorney victims are unable to secure the home, child support, or custody. Studies indicate that representation by an attorney is the most successful way of ending abuse.
- While public and private insurance programs cover the costs of children's health care, these benefits are often denied and families need an attorney to secure needed medical help.



- Individuals making the transition from welfare to work often need an attorney to help with legal problems such as eligibility for child care or health insurance to ensure that they are successful.
- When an elderly couple faces foreclosure, or a family is being wrongfully evicted from its home, Legal Aid is the only agency that can step forward to give the kind of help that can keep them from homelessness.
- When predatory lending practices and consumer fraud schemes lure unsuspecting low-income persons into illegal purchases and contracts, a lawyer is often the only one who can save them from a severe and lasting financial crisis.

## Governance

Legal Aid of North Carolina has a 27-member board of directors to guide the organization as it fulfills its mission. It determines overall program direction and policies. It develops long-range strategies and plans, sets program priorities and develops and oversees policies in critical areas like personnel and finance. The board is made up of respected representatives of the North Carolina bar and important community-based organizations.

## **Staff & Volunteer Attorneys**

The total staff complement of 235 that includes 105 attorneys, as well as paralegals, clerical and administrative support staff. Average experience for Legal Aid attorneys is 10.4 years. Many of our staff have been formally recognized for their contributions to our state and communities. All of our current staff actively serve the bar and their communities by membership and participation on state and local bar associations and community organizations.

In addition to representing over 20,000 families and individual clients in the courts and administrative hearings, through its community legal education and outreach program, Legal Aid reaches many thousands more.

Legal Aid is also able to build upon the strong tradition of community self-help and voluntarism that has always characterized North Carolina. Each year more than 3000 private attorneys serve on the pro bono panel through Legal Aid's volunteer lawyer program. In 2004, North Carolina attorneys took over 6000 new cases accounting for over 5000 hours of their professional time. Each year Legal Aid recognizes outstanding pro bono contributions by state and community attorneys and law firms.

### **Community Leadership & Collaboration**

Legal Aid is an important part of North Carolina's problem solving network of public and private organizations. And, because many of the problems facing low-income families cannot be resolved by Legal Aid alone, it takes a leading role in creating collaborative strategies to address far-reaching and systemic problems. Legal Aid collaborates regularly with community organizations, state and county agencies to effectively address the many issues confronting disadvantaged persons.

### **LANC's Reach Into The Community (a small sampling)**

NC Justice Center

NC Housing Coalition

NC Coalition Against Domestic  
Violence

70+ Women's Shelters Around  
the State

Eastern Band of the Cherokee

Lumbee Economic Development  
Corporation

NC Association of Community  
Development Corporations

United Way Agencies

NC Department of Justice

NC Division of Aging

Greensboro Housing Coalition

In Asheville, Legal Aid of North Carolina participates in a free weekly community meal, the "Welcome Table." The community meal was initiated by several local churches in response to the area homeless who became "visible" to the community after a large vacant manufacturing plant burned down. The meal takes place every Wednesday and is open to anyone. Most of the weekly guest are low income families, seniors on a fixed income, and homeless individuals. Area social services and health care agencies, including Legal Aid, are available each week during the mealtime for consultation. The LANC Asheville Office has been a regular weekly presence at the meal and has assisted over sixty people, as actual cases, with legal information, advice, referral or representation since the end of July 2005.

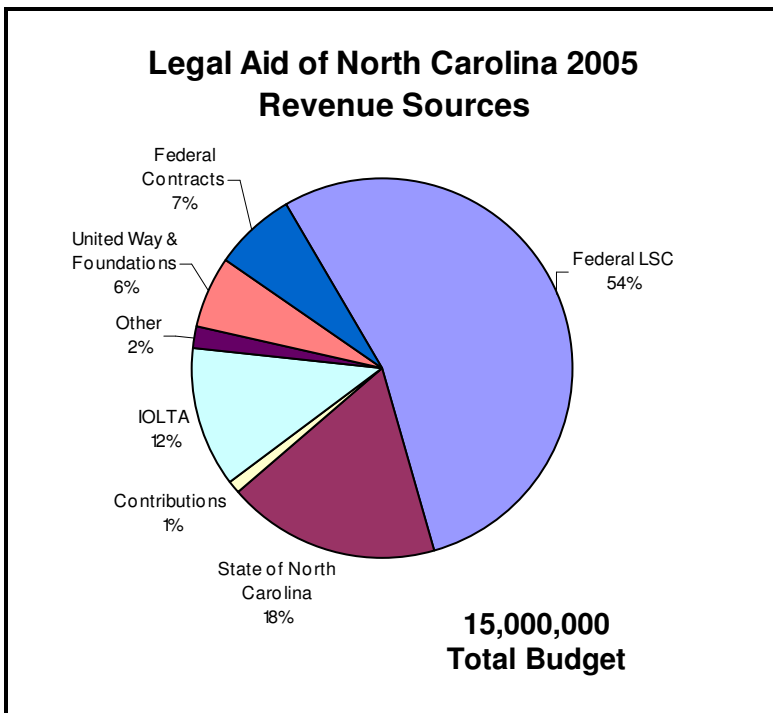
In Raleigh, LANC was the principal course planner and organizer of a combination community seminar and CLE on fair housing. The event was held in April at the Raleigh Civic and Convention Center. Approximately 200 people representing community groups from every part of the city attended, including about 40 lawyers. The seminar was sponsored in conjunction with the City of Raleigh Fair Housing Hearing Board. The event received publicity for the CLE portion from the NC Academy of Trial Lawyers. The City of Raleigh promoted the event through newspaper ads and other media PSA's. Presenters included: Charles Meeker, Mayor of Raleigh; Rep. Deborah Ross, State Representative and former ED of the NC ACLU; Jon Hooks, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, Wash., DC; Michael Allen, Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, Wash., DC; Stella Adams, NC Fair Housing Center; Sherry Lyons Brooks, NC Human Relations Commission; and Bill Rowe, NC Justice Center. Materials included a substantial legal manual with sample forms and pleadings, prepared specifically for the event, pertinent to fair housing law as well as informational materials from the participating agencies. The State Bar approved 6 hours of CLE credit for participating attorneys.

In December 1, 2005, Legal Aid of Winston-Salem hosted a luncheon for distinguished members of the community in order to introduce our new practice area – education. The program featured the local staff and Lewis Pitts, of Advocates for Children's Services. The focus of the event was to obtain new education clients by explaining the nuances of Personal Education Plans (PEP's) and why they are so important to today's students. Under North Carolina law, any student who receives a 1 or 2 on an end-of-grade test, or is at risk of academic failure, is entitled to a PEP. A PEP helps to ensure that each student receives a sound, basic education -- a right guaranteed by our State Constitution. Participants included Forsyth County judges, employees from the Department of Social Services, the Housing Authority of the City of Winston-Salem, Child Support Enforcement, the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Salvation Army, and the Boys and Girls Club. Also, in attendance were local attorneys and ministers, as well as the Forsyth County Sheriff and one member of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School Board. The event was the beginning salvo of our effort to reach out to the community about the importance of PEP's. Within their respective organizations, our guests had personal contacts with many of the people we were aiming to serve. It was our expectation that, after hearing our presentation, the attendees would refer clients to us who were in need our assistance in obtaining a PEP from their respective schools.

## Funding & Finance

The Legal Aid of North Carolina has a history of prudent and responsible fiscal management. The board of directors maintains exemplary financial controls and annual audits attest to the effectiveness of the organization in managing its fund.

In 2004, LANC operated on a budget of \$15M. In real dollar terms, this is less than 60 % of its budget in 1986 (\$6.5M). To make up for the loss of real dollar funding from the federal Legal Services Corporation, and to maintain a critical level of funding, LANC is successfully diversifying its sources of support.



The largest single source of support continues to be the federal Legal Services Corporation, it accounts for more than half of the LANC budget. (Last year this totaled 54%.) The State of North Carolina provided 18% and IOLTA accounted for another 12%. Local foundations, county governments, and United Way accounted for 6%. Contracts with federal agencies totaled 7% and contributions from law firms and individuals came in at 1%.

This level of funding allowed LANC to serve nearly 20, 000 clients last year, but an estimated 5,000 had to be turned away for lack of resources.

LANC, like other non-profit organizations annually submits applications for new grants, resubmits applications for others and attempts to secure or renew contracts for services. The new Access to Justice Campaign will not replace these efforts, but will complement them and provide much needed additional revenue.

## Legal Aid Client Cases

Many of the cases we handle are compelling testimony of the brutality of poverty and the daily indignities suffered by our clients. This small handful of stories doesn't contain all the most compelling, but it is representative of our 20, 000 cases. Legal Aid provides powerful and life-altering solutions to the critical legal issues that confront poor people. We hope these stories describe the work of Legal Aid and gives you a sense of the critical need for our work.

### CONSUMER PROTECTION



Mr. Brown, a seventy-year old Durham county resident, was notified by his bank that his account had been placed in suspense and that his money had been sent to a creditor to pay off an old debt. Due to the sudden withdrawal of this money, Mr. Brown was unable to pay the remainder of his bills for his basic needs and additionally had incurred over \$100 worth of bank charges due to insufficient funds checks.

A law firm collecting debts for a creditor had caused the sheriff's department to place a levy on Mr. Brown's account and had removed \$1272 to pay off an old judgment. The law firm's action was an unconstitutional seizure of the client's funds as the law firm did not give any notice to Mr. Brown that they intended to levy on his bank account. In addition, the firm obtained no court order allowing the execution. LANC was able to negotiate with the law firm that had undertaken this action for a return of all of the client's money and for damages in the amount of \$1536.75. Mr. Brown was very happy to receive his money back and to know that some justice was done.

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Meghan Melloy, the Farmworker Unit's Jesuit Volunteer, arrived in Raleigh in late August expecting to work with Spanish-speaking farmworkers. Instead, during her first evening visiting labor camps in rural North Carolina, she and two other Unit advocates discovered a group of workers from Thailand in a motel/labor camp. The Unit soon returned to the motel with volunteer Thai interpreters, and determined that although the workers possessed H-2A visas, they were victims of labor trafficking.

Each of the workers, subsistence farmers from rural northern Thailand, had mortgaged his farm and home to raise the equivalent of ten years wages to pay the recruiters for the chance to get an H-2A visa. Many of the loans were arranged by the recruiters. Each worker was promised a visa to do farmwork for 3 years in North Carolina and expected to pay back the loans in about a year. However, upon receiving the visas, the workers discovered they expired in less than 3 months. Upon reaching the U.S., the employer seized their passports, by his own admission to prevent their "escape". Although the employer promised to seek extensions on their visas, as the fall progressed the workers had less and less work. In late October the employer sent them to New Orleans to work in hurricane reconstruction. There, they camped out, without utilities, in the same buildings they were cleaning out, and were then not paid for most of their work. Most were transported by the employer back to North Carolina, where a supervisor with a gun kept watch over them and threatened to shoot anyone who came to help them.

The Farmworker Unit managed to help these workers to leave the employer and is currently representing them. After the clients left, some of their families in Thailand received threats from the recruiters. Co-counsel are Boat People SOS.

## EDUCATION RIGHTS



When her daughter, in the first grade was declared to be "at risk" and potentially BED by the local school staff, or client contacted a local LANC office. The school had placed her child in a segregated educational setting (the special ed class for the full day; no time in the regular ed classroom) even though the child had not yet been evaluated for eligibility for special education services. LANC helped the mom get a competent evaluation and testing results that both mom and school were satisfied with; this included an independent psycho-educational evaluation conducted by a third party.

The new evaluation determined that the child qualified for special education services as Other Health Impaired and not BED. Significantly, the child is now placed in the regular classroom setting for the entire school day with appropriate curriculum modifications to reflect her special needs contained in her IEP. She progressed to 3rd grade (August 2005) and is succeeding.

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

When Phil and Kathleen Bridges moved into a house in Alamance County they thought they had found a quiet place to enjoy life with their grandchildren. The house had a deck and porch and the Bridges enjoyed being outside with family. Then an Asphalt Plant moved in approximately 500 feet from their home and "all our peace and quiet, hopes and dreams were gone" says Mrs. Bridges. They never know when the plant will run, and when it does, the smell is unbearable, the noise wakes them up at night and dust blows all over their property. Mr. Bridges first tried using local ordinances and appealing to local officials, without success. They talked to their neighbors, but the community is primarily low-income and no one had the money to hire an attorney. It wasn't until they heard about LANC's Environmental Poverty Law Project that the community finally obtained representation.



The case is now in mediation with a jury trial scheduled for mid-2006. The filing of the lawsuit against the plant has already had positive effects, including a sense of empowerment for the community.

## TENANTS RIGHTS

During the fall, our clients rented mobile home under a one-year lease. Rent was \$500 per month and the clients paid a \$500 security deposit. The clients vacated the premises after living there for 5 months due to the landlord's failure to repair the uninhabitable conditions. Among other defects, three windows were missing from the home and the furnace did not work properly, resulting in excessive utility bills.

Space for Picture

LANC sent a demand letter to landlord, citing landlord's violation of NC law regarding LL's duty to provide fit and habitable premises, and requesting a full refund of rents paid as well as the security deposit. Landlord's attorney responded, and after review of the facts, issued clients a check in the amount of \$3000.

## MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE PREVENTION

Mr. and Mrs. Howard, an elderly couple, and their teenage son enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle until Mrs. Howard's advancing health problems, interfered with her ability to continue working as a nurse. During her recovery from two emergency surgeries, Mrs. Howard's employer terminated her employment and, cancelled her much needed medical insurance. The family was forced to survive on Mr. Howard's \$600 month Social Security Retirement income and could not afford its \$450 monthly mortgage payment, the mounting medical bills, and basic necessities such as heat and food.

After they got several months behind in their mortgage payments and received a notice of the mortgage company's intent to foreclose on the family residence, the family contacted the local LANC office. The local LANC attorneys in conjunction with LANC's Mortgage Foreclosure Project (MFP) attorneys discovered that the Howard's had been the victim of a predatory loan scheme called "flipping" when they refinanced their home to get needed cash for repairs and expenses.

Flipping occurs when a mortgage company encourages borrowers to frequently refinance their mortgage loans, generating greater profit for the lender by raising the interest rate or charging more fees and encouraging foreclosure by making loans more expensive. The Howard's, who previously had owned their home free and clear, started out with a \$29,250 loan at 13.44% interest with at \$350.87 monthly payment for 30 years. Less than 3 months later, the mortgage company "flipped" them into a second, \$41,686 loan at 9.91 % interest with at \$445.67 monthly payment for 30 years. LANC attorneys brought this illegal loan practice to the attention of the mortgage company in defense of the pending foreclosure. In addition to dismissing its foreclosure action, the mortgage company waved \$19,000 of the previous loan debt, paid the past due property taxes, reduced the interest rate to 6.00%, and lowered the Howard's monthly payment to \$212 for 15 years. With this settlement, thanks to LANC attorneys and Mrs. Howard's improving health and return to work, the Howard's saved their home and can now afford their monthly mortgage payment and other household expenses.

## DISABILITY RIGHTS

Horatio Bristol, a fifty-one-year old disabled veteran and long-time public housing resident, suffers from chronic paranoid schizophrenia. His condition had been well-managed for many years with medication. Earlier this year, however, he developed the early onset of diabetes as an adverse reaction to one of his anti-psychotic medications, and it had to be discontinued without a withdrawal period. He then had severe problems adjusting to his new medication. It produced a psychotic episode which resulted in a 48-day hospitalization for intensive treatment. Upon release, he continued to have adjustment problems, and as a result, he became manic and delusional, and exhibited some wholly uncharacteristic behaviors. When neighbors complained about these behaviors resulting from his disability, the Morganton Housing Authority terminated his lease. On the day of his eviction hearing in Small Claims Court, his case manager at the local mental health program brought him to our office. The magistrate ruled for the MHA and we appealed to District Court.

Pending the appeal, we requested that the PHA reasonably accommodate Mr. Bristol's disability as required under the Fair Housing Amendments Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 by affording him the opportunity to receive continued treatment for his underlying condition to enable him to correct or control the behaviors at issue, and to transfer him to another apartment complex within the MHA. It readily agreed to this accommodation and dismissed the summary ejectment action. "Mr. B" is doing very well in his new apartment and continuing his treatment.



## DISABILITY RIGHTS



Ms. Smith had to stop working when her arthritis became too severe. She immediately applied for disability payments from Social Security, but while waiting for her benefits to begin, her income was insufficient for her to keep up payments on her credit card account. Fortunately, she had been paying the bank monthly premiums on a “Credit Protector” policy of the last ten years. She had been advised that this policy would pay her monthly credit card bill if she was disabled for a short time, and would pay off the balance of the account if, as appeared to be the case, she was permanently disabled.

However, when Ms. Smith called the bank to file a claim for benefits under the policy, she was told that her policy had been canceled, retroactive to the beginning of that month, and that she would get a notice of the cancellation with her next credit card bill. Frustrated, Ms. Smith took no further action to file her claim for Credit Protector benefits.

The creditor bank brought suit against Ms. Smith on the credit card account alleging that she had not paid her credit card bill. She sought help from the local LANC and her LANC attorney helped Ms. Smith file a counterclaim against the creditor bank alleging consumer fraud and bad faith insurance settlement practices. The parties agreed to a settlement under her bank forever waived its right to claim Ms. Smith owed them anything on the account and agreed to repair her credit record.

## Legal Aid of North Carolina Statewide Projects



### **Advocates for Children's Services (ACS)**

Represents children, who are often involved in guardianship proceedings or, mistakenly, in criminal justice situations, whose real needs are the medical, psychiatric, special education, and foster care/adoption services they have been denied and to which they are entitled under federal and state law.

### **Domestic Violence Prevention Project**

### **Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative (DVPI)**

Provides comprehensive legal assistance to battered women and victims of domestic violence. The DVPI strives to strengthen the working relationships between legal services and the various domestic violence shelter and counseling programs throughout the state.



### **Environmental Poverty Law Project (EPLP)**

Empowers low-income residents and communities of North Carolina faced with environmental justice issues by providing extensive community education and high quality legal representation.



### **Farmworker Unit (FWU)**

Through extensive outreach to isolated labor camps, the unit educates the many thousands of migrant workers present in North Carolina about their rights under their contracts and their rights to decent living conditions and a safe working environment.



### **Mortgage Foreclosure (Prevention) Project (MFP)**

Aggressive defense of foreclosure actions and analysis of the loan process to uncover and litigate abusive lending practices saved hundreds of homes and \$7,000,000 of equity in the first two years of the project. The MFP team acts on referrals from LANC offices and community organizations throughout North Carolina.



### **Katrina Relief Project**

Toll-free hotline, set up within days of the disaster, that provides legal services to the thousands of victims of Hurricane Katrina who have migrated to North Carolina.



*Senior Advocates*

### **Senior Advocates**

Our new unit for 2006 that will provide legal assistance to senior citizens of North Carolina via a toll-free Senior Hotline. The unit will organize, support and train our existing corps of advocates who provide legal assistance to seniors and will ensure a standard of high-quality advocacy in every region

## LEGAL AID OF NORTH CAROLINA

- More than 2.2 million people in North Carolina qualify for Legal Aid help, approximately 25% of the state's population.
- North Carolina ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> among all states in total funding for Legal Aid programs in the US.
- Current funding permits Legal Aid of North Carolina to provide approximately only one attorney for every 25,000 eligible clients, while there is one attorney for every 500 persons in the general population.
- LANC provided counsel in nearly 20, 000 cases in 2004. But the need is much greater. For instance, approximately 46, 000 cases of domestic violence were heard in North Carolina Courts in 2004.

<b>Total Funding per Eligible Client (TFEC)</b>		
<u>State</u>	<u>TFEC</u>	<u>Rank</u>
Maryland	%51.43	1 <sup>st</sup>
Virginia	\$25.62	16 <sup>th</sup>
Florida	\$24.06	18 <sup>th</sup>
Tennessee	\$19.14	28 <sup>th</sup>
West Virginia	\$15.98	36 <sup>th</sup>
South Carolina	\$15.70	37 <sup>th</sup>
Georgia	\$15.70	38 <sup>th</sup>
<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>\$14.62</b>	<b>42<sup>nd</sup></b>
New Mexico	\$11.05	50 <sup>th</sup>

<b>Bar Campaigns in Other States</b>		
<u>Campaign</u>	<u>Annual Total</u>	<u>Giving Standard</u>
Arizona	\$490,000	2 Bill Hrs.
Maryland	\$342,000	1 Bill Hr.
Michigan	\$950,000	NA
Nebraska	\$161,000	NA
Oklahoma***	\$688,000	1 Bill Hr.
Oregon	\$732,000	\$250
Utah	\$444,000	2 Bill Hrs.
Washington	\$390,000	\$200
West Virginia****	\$300,000	\$250

- Last year contributions to LANC from the legal community amounted to only \$140, 000, an amount far below smaller states like Oklahoma or West Virginia.
- The goal of the new **Access to Justice Campaign** is to raise a total of \$1.5 M over the next three years. It will do this by securing contributions from law firms, individual attorneys, bar associations and related organizations, corporations, foundations, court awards and other sources.

## THE ACCESS TO JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

1. **The Access to Justice Campaign** is a new annual fund drive being created by leading members of the North Carolina bar. The campaign to raise dollars for the Campaign is a major community effort on behalf of the Legal Aid of North Carolina (LANC), the principal provider of free legal services to the poor in North Carolina.
2. The types of cases handled by Legal Aid are basic "safety net" issues facing victims of domestic violence, abused and neglected children, the working poor the disabled and elderly. The LANC board of directors has determined that the organization will emphasize protection from violence and abuse as a top priority. Other priority areas include securing access to health care, maintaining freedom from hunger, the preservation of safe and decent housing, helping individuals to successfully make the transition from welfare to work, insuring adequate income for subsistence living, securing a decent education for poor children, and insuring that access to justice is provided to low -income families. The work of Legal Aid is described in greater detail elsewhere in this guide.
3. **The Access to Justice Campaign** is being created because of the great need for legal assistance for the poor of North Carolina. In the past few years, Legal Aid has faced stagnant federal LSC funding and drops in interest rates have decimated IOLTA funding. While other federal and local government contracts, local foundation grants and contributions from community supporters, have made up for some of this shortfall, most of these funds are directed to specific, time -limited projects. And there is no guarantee that they will be renewed from year to year. The Campaign can provide a base of discretionary funds that can help weather the loss of funds from one or more other sources in any given year. More importantly, as it grows, it will become a major source of dependable, continuing support. In short, the **Access to Justice Campaign** will allow Legal Aid to maintain and increase its capacity to serve more of our community's low-income families and individuals.
4. The **Access to Justice Campaign** will seek and accept several kinds of gifts, among them: cash pledges and donations, *cy pres* and other court awards, securities, bequests, annuities and trusts. A planned giving program will be organized as an integral part of the Campaign in coming years. Thus, the **Access to Justice Campaign** will offer several kinds of opportunities for individuals or groups to help make justice accessible for all residents of North Carolina.
5. While the goal of the **Access to Justice Campaign** is to become the primary focus for charitable giving within our legal community, the campaign will also be directed to people outside the legal community. The Campaign will do this recognizing that the entire community has a stake in guaranteeing access to the justice system. However, the initial focus of the **Fund** is on lawyers and judges. Because of their knowledge of the need to guarantee access to justice and their understanding of the ethical obligation to ensure access to the courts it is anticipated that many of them will identify the **Access to Justice Campaign** as the primary recipient of their charitable giving. Their strong participation will dramatically

demonstrate the viability and credibility of the Campaign to the broader community.

## **WHY LAWYERS SHOULD GENEROUSLY SUPPORT THE ACCESS TO JUSTICE CAMPAIGN**

1. Poor people continue to need civil legal aid for equal access to justice, but there are far too few lawyers to meet this need. Every day, people call Legal Aid looking for help; because of limited resources, LANC can help only about 20% of poor persons eligible for services. Legal Aid simply lacks the resources to meet the great demand for legal help. This is not going to change in the near future, making it essential that the **Access to Justice Campaign** be established to guarantee that resources will be available in the future.
2. Attorneys and judges are particularly aware of the importance of Legal Aid to all members of our community, rich and poor. Without legal help the poor find themselves unarmed in judicial and administrative systems where they face the loss of income benefits, foreclosure on their homes, or where they are unable to seek relief that only the courts can give, such as a protective order or child support. Through the Campaign the legal community will ensure that Legal Aid will always be there to provide effective access to the justice system.
3. Legal aid is an extremely important and cost-effective service. For example, securing a protective order can save women and children from severe physical and emotional harm, gaining access to needed health care at a critical time often prevents more serious, and expensive, problems later, helping an individual make the welfare to work transition helps guarantee a sound economic future and preventing an eviction or foreclosure through early legal intervention can avoid the much more expensive societal costs of homelessness later. At a cost of less than \$25 per hour, Legal Aid is also an extremely cost-efficient program.
4. Legal Aid helps the courts and the bar to function more efficiently by providing expert legal advice and representation to families and individuals who might otherwise attempt to resolve their legal problems without the benefit of counsel.
5. Supporting the **Access to Justice Campaign** is not a way to "buy-out" of pro bono services. The pattern in other communities is that those who perform significant pro bono work also support their local legal aid fundraising programs. Proceeds from the **Access to Justice Campaign** will supplement and enhance the already impressive level of pro bono work done by North Carolina attorneys.

## **WHY NORTH CAROLINA CORPORATIONS SHOULD GENEROUSLY SUPPORT THE FUND FOR JUSTICE**

1. Legal Aid North Carolina provides desperately needed help to the poorest members of our society. Its clients are victims of domestic abuse, persons with disabilities, the elderly and the working poor. Over 70% of its clients are women, most of them with children.
2. Legal Aid provides critical services to the whole range of persons living below the poverty line: children, the elderly, persons with physical or mental disabilities, the unemployed, the working poor, individuals and families.
3. Legal Aid is important to all members of our community, rich and poor. It provides powerful solutions to such critical societal problems as domestic violence, loss of income, foreclosure on homes, and for other kinds of issues that only the courts can resolve, such as child custody or support.
4. Because Legal Aid does not have the resources needed to serve everyone needing help it has instituted a case acceptance system that sets a priority on the most desperate and threatening situations faced by poor persons. Thus, cases it accepts have to do with immediate survival needs such as safety, food, health care, shelter and income.
5. While one of the of the important goals of the **Access to Justice Campaign** is to make it the primary focus for charitable giving within the legal community, justice is an issue that should be supported by the whole community, not just lawyers and judges alone.
6. Legal Aid provides services that prevent problems in the future. For example, helping a family that is moving from welfare to work helps insure that it will not again become poor, preventing an eviction through early legal intervention can avoid the much more expensive costs of homelessness. Securing a Protective Order can save women and children from severe physical and emotional harm, and gaining access to needed health care at a critical time often prevents more serious, and expensive, problems later. Thus, a donation to the **Access to Justice Campaign** is a cost effective charitable investment in the future of North Carolina.
7. Legal Aid provides the stitching that holds the safety net together: While protective orders are available to victims of domestic violence, without an attorney they are often beyond the reach of many poor women and children; in order to secure child support and custody, an attorney is essential. While public and private insurance programs may cover the costs of children's health care, these benefits are often denied and families need an attorney to secure needed medical help. And, when individuals are making the transition from welfare to work they often need an attorney to help with legal problems such as eligibility for childcare or health insurance to assure that they are successful.