

Guidelines for Local Advisory Councils

Local Advisory Councils(LACs) serve an important role within Legal Aid of North Carolina (LANC) by assisting local offices with their efforts to respond to specific client needs within their service areas. LACs meet to discuss the current needs of the low income communities and available resources to serve those needs. These local groups are integral to help local staff identify legal issues/problems which require resolution, to recruit private attorneys who will provide pro bono legal representation, to secure community support for our work and to assist with fundraising.

The Local Advisory Councils will advise the LANC Board of Directors about matters pertaining to the local office in order to enable the LANC Board to make informed decisions related to the organization's operation. The LANC Board of Directors acknowledges that the LACs play an important role at both local and statewide levels and will actively recruit LAC members to serve as a director on the statewide board. The Board will assist Managers in each local office to initiate the formation of a LAC by seeking interested attorneys, low-income community residents, business members, clergy, nonprofit agencies and other community groups. Once the LAC is formed, these guidelines will provide a structure within which it can operate.

A. Membership

1. The Local Advisory Councils shall have at least five (5) members, and an effort shall be made to balance the numbers of attorneys, clients and community group representatives.
2. The terms shall be for three (3) years and members may serve additional terms, but no more than three (3) consecutive terms unless waived by the Chair.
3. Membership should reflect diversity within the local office service area related to geography (urban and rural) culture, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation and age.
4. Client members shall be recommended by LANC client board members, the Client Council, other local community groups, and local office staff.
5. Attorney members shall be recommended by LANC attorney board members, local bar groups, other attorney groups and local office staff.
6. Community groups shall be recommended from nonprofit agencies or organizations involved with the low income population in the service area, from local businesses with a history of, or interest in, serving the needs of the low-income population, or from faith based organizations involved with the low-income population.

B. Role and Responsibilities

1. Assist local office management about needs and issues affecting client community within the local office's service area.
2. Discuss case acceptance criteria to ensure that resources are effectively maximized to address legal needs of clients in the service area.
3. Assist with local fund raising activities as needed and advise how such funds should be used for the benefit of the local office and its service area.

4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the local office in meeting the legal needs of financially eligible clients in the local office's service area.
5. Participate in evaluating the senior managing attorney in the local office.
6. Advise the LANC Board of Directors on matters pertaining to the local office and its service area.
7. Perform other responsibilities as delegated by the LANC Board of Directors.

C. Organization

1. The Senior Managing Attorney will be an *ex-officio* member of the LAC.
2. The LAC will select the following officers: Chair to lead and run the meetings; Vice Chair to assist Chair and direct local fund-raising and Secretary (who may be the managing attorney) to record the meetings.
3. The LAC will meet at least four times annually. The meetings will include a quarterly report from the local staff about its case work and other activities affecting clients and communities within its service area.
4. The LAC Chair will submit an annual report about LAC activities annually to the Chair of the LANC Operations Committee, using the attached format. These reports will be due at least two weeks prior to the date of the LANC Board meeting listed below:
 - a. **February** Board Meeting (or **First LANC Board Meeting of the year**)
- LACs from **Sylva, Greensboro, Pembroke** and **Ahoskie**;
 - b. **June** Board Meeting (or **Second LANC Board Meeting of the year**)
- LACs from **Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Wilmington** and **Wilson**;
 - c. **September** Board Meeting (or **Third Board Meeting of the year**)
- LACs from **Morganton, Raleigh, Durham** and **Greenville/New Bern**; and
 - d. **December** Board Meeting (or **Fourth Board Meeting of the year**)
- LACs from **Boone, Pittsboro** and **Asheville**.