



OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

HIGHLIGHTS

FISCAL YEAR 2017–18

Advice and Inquiries

Our primary business areas include providing advice and counsel to judicial officials and staff, and to NCAOC staff; working with other Judicial Branch personnel to provide court official education; serving as subject matter experts and advising in the implementation of computer applications, court procedures, and court programs; and serving as legal staff to various Judicial Branch committees.

Legislative Tracking

During the 2017 – 18 legislative session, legal staff reviewed 1,922 bills for applicability and actively monitored, summarized the effect of, drafted forms and procedures for, or sought amendments for 494 bills.

WHO WE ASSIST

We assist judicial officials and personnel employed in the Judicial Branch. We collaborate with other state and private agencies and commissions on matters related to proposed legislation, criminal justice, and child abuse.



The Office of General Counsel of the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) works individually and as part of a team to help ensure effective, efficient, equitable, and legally compliant delivery of judicial services and operations throughout the state, by providing thorough, timely legal advice to court officials and staff.

The Office of General Counsel also provides support, oversight, and legal advice to Judicial Branch committees, task forces, and work groups. General Counsel staff assists these groups with the development and management of policies and procedures, programs, and strategies that support the entire judicial community.

The Office of General Counsel staff is limited to giving legal advice to court officials and staff. The office is prohibited from providing legal advice to the public or to litigants on either side of a court case.



ABOUT THE OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

Services	Brief Description
Advice and Counsel	Researches, formulates legal opinions, gives advice, and makes recommendations on the wide variety of civil, criminal, and constitutional legal concerns faced by and impacting the Judicial Branch and its officials and employees; advises Judicial Branch committees.
Training and Education	Creates and delivers educational classes and materials regarding substantive legal issues to Judicial Branch officials through education conferences, programs, video presentations, web-based seminars and legal memoranda; serves as subject matter experts in conjunction with other NCAOC staff to develop curricula for conferences and continuing education efforts; upon request, presents at continuing education seminars for members of affiliated criminal and civil justice agencies and associations.
Legislation	Tracks, analyzes, and reports on all bills with potential impact on the Judicial Branch; responds to information requests from legislators, legislative staff, and others; reviews, revises, and drafts legislation and amendments; assists the director and the NCAOC legislative liaisons with representing the Judicial Branch before North Carolina General Assembly committees and study commissions.
Litigation and Settlements	Appears at mediations to determine risk; reviews and assesses all lawsuits filed in federal or state court and agencies against Judicial Branch officials and employees, and works closely with the Attorney General's office to provide representation in court; assesses potential claims against Judicial Branch officials and employees and where appropriate negotiates settlement terms, monitors litigation, and develops strategies to address potential litigation.
Process and Procedure Creation and Improvement	Serves as counsel to Judicial Branch committees to create or improve processes, policies, and procedures for matters including the Rules of Recordkeeping, Human Resources, Financial Policies, and Forms Committees; serves as liaison to or member of task forces with other state agencies that are an integral part of the judicial process, such as criminal justice agencies and DHHS.