

80% OF THE CIVIL LEGAL NEEDS OF POOR PEOPLE IN NORTH CAROLINA ARE UNMET

2.2 MILLION NORTH CAROLINIANS, OVER 23% OF THE POPULATION, QUALIFY FOR LEGAL AID

THERE IS ONLY 1 LEGAL AID ATTORNEY FOR EVERY 13,170 ELIGIBLE NORTH CAROLINIANS

THE AVERAGE ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR LEGAL AID CLIENTS IS \$15,000

EQUAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE

The Equal Justice Alliance is the collaborative planning and coordination council of providers of civil legal assistance in North Carolina. The Equal Justice Alliance was initially funded by an IOLTA grant and by contributions from the member organizations. The mission of the Equal Justice Alliance is to provide central coordination of a sustained, comprehensive, integrated, statewide system to provide the most effective legal services to people in poverty in North Carolina.

On November 6, 2015, the Equal Justice Alliance presented an overview of civil legal aid in North Carolina to the NC Commission on the Administration of Law and Justice's Civil Justice Subcommittee. The PowerPoint and materials can be viewed on the NCCALJ's website at www.nccalj.org.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Commission increased its communications activities to educate the bar and the general public about unmet civil legal needs and how the Commission is addressing the justice gap. The NC State Bar dedicated an entire Bar Journal edition to access to justice issues. This inaugural edition included an introduction by Chief Justice Mark Martin and articles on Rule 6.1, the Safe Child Immigrant Project, North Carolina veterans legal services, NCAOC's Language Access Services System, consumer protection success stories, and pro bono services in rural areas.

Additionally, commission member Kirk Warner submitted an opinion editorial about the importance of state funding for civil legal aid in the News and Observer. Justice Cheri Beasley, Vice Chair of the Commission authored an article that appeared in Lawyers Weekly on the importance of pro bono.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE FUNDING

On November 5, 2015 the North Carolina Supreme Court approved an amendment to the Rules of the North Carolina State Bar increasing the CLE credit hour fee from \$3.00 to \$3.50 per hour of approved credit. The amendment increases the amount of funding per credit hour, from .50 to \$1.00 which is allocated to support activities of the NC Equal Access to Justice Commission.

Further, Chief Justice Mark Martin created a new committee at the urging of NC IOLTA to review all available funding sources for civil legal aid, how used they are used and/or implemented in other states, and opportunities for doing so in NC. The Ad-Hoc Funding Committee, chaired by IOLTA Director Evelyn Pursley, identified potential areas for enhanced development.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

Our Mission:

The NC Equal Access to Justice Commission (NCEATJC) was established in November 2005 by order of the North Carolina Supreme Court. The mission of the Commission is to expand access to civil legal representation for people of low income and modest means across North Carolina.

Our Priorities:

- Establish the right to counsel in civil matters affecting basic human needs
- Increase legislative funding of civil legal services at the state and federal levels
- Encourage/support pro bono attorney participation
- Help pro se litigants navigate the court system successfully
- Educate the public
- Increase the role of the business community
- Include people with limited English proficiency in the justice system
- Increase loan repayment assistance

Our Financial Information:

2015 Support and Revenue

CLE Fee-NC State Bar	175,074
Veteran's Website Grant (Womble Carlyle)	20,000
Total Revenue	\$195,074

2015 Expenses

Administrative	150,802
Programming	29,852
Grants	9,600
Veterans Website	14,547
Total Expenses	\$204,801



Members of the Commission Education Committee

2015 COMMISSION MEMBERS

The Honorable Mark Martin, *Chair*

Jim Barrett

The Honorable Cheri L. Beasley

Representative Justin Burr

Marion A. Cowell, Jr.

Joseph D. Crocker

Kearns Davis

Bill Farthing

George Hausen

Afi Johnson-Parris

Dean J. Rich Leonard

The Honorable Linda M. McGee

John B. McMillan

The Honorable Michael R. Morgan

Nancy Black Norelli

Sylvia K. Novinsky

E. Fitzgerald Parnell

Bill Rowe

The Honorable Jan H. Samet

Richard M. Taylor, Jr.

Kirk G. Warner

Ann Warren

Carol Allen White

Anita Earls, *Special Advisor*

George V. Hanna III, *Special Advisor*

Kenneth Schorr, *Special Advisor*

Jennifer M. Lechner,
Executive Director

Mary L. Irvine,
Access to Justice Coordinator

Charlotte R. Stewart,
Veterans Project Coordinator



Additional 2015 Highlights

- **NCProBono.org:** The Commission has completed a redesign of NCProBono.org. The site was given a fresh look and new content. This site will serve as the statewide portal for pro bono recruitment, training and opportunities.
- **Celebrate Pro Bono Week:** The Commission helps to coordinate activities for Celebrate Pro Bono Week, an annual national spotlight on pro bono. There were over 30 pro bono events during this week. For more information about pro bono activities and opportunities, visit www.ncprobono.org.



Chief Justice Martin thanks Anita Earls, George V. Hanna III, Kenneth Schorr, George Hausen, E. Fitzgerald Parnell, and Carol Allen White for their service on the Commission. Photos/Justin Furr