

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.

### 80 PERCENT

*Of all the civil legal needs of the poor – legal representation in the areas of domestic violence, divorce, child custody, housing, consumer protection, employment, benefits, health – 80% go unmet each year.*

### 1 FOR 11,000

*There is only one legal aid attorney for every 11,000 North Carolinians eligible for legal services. In contrast, there is one private lawyer for every 362 NC residents.*

### 2.2 MILLION

*More than 2.2 million North Carolinians were eligible for the services of legal aid providers in 2016 – state residents living at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (\$30,375 for a family of four).*



### NORTH CAROLINA PRO BONO RESOURCE CENTER



The North Carolina Pro Bono Resource Center (PBRC) launched on April 4, 2016 with the hiring of its inaugural director, Sylvia Novinsky. This program of the NC Equal Access to Justice Commission grew out of the efforts of the Commission's Pro Bono Committee to incentivize pro bono legal service, as defined by NC Rule of Professional Conduct 6.1. In the months since its launch, the PBRC cultivated a statewide presence through a series of presentations on the value of pro bono legal service. Coupled with the launch of a website highlighting more than 30 available pro bono projects across the state, the PBRC has made it easy for attorneys to find volunteer opportunities and resources to get involved.



### NORTH CAROLINA LEGAL SERVICES CONFERENCE

In October 2016, nearly 250 legal aid lawyers, staff, and pro bono attorneys attended the 2016 North Carolina Legal Services Conference at the Greensboro Marriott. The conference featured ten hours of CLE programming, an inspiring keynote by Anita Earls, Executive Director of the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, an awards luncheon recognizing the contributions of lifelong legal aid advocates, and an evening reception at the International Civil Rights Center and Museum with remarks from Chief Justice Henry Frye. The conference was hosted by the Equal Justice Alliance and was organized by the staff of the NC Equal Access to Justice Commission.



# ABOUT THE COMMISSION

## 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:

### 2016 Support and Revenue

CLE Fee–NC State Bar	309,017
Veterans Website Grant (Womble Carlyle)	20,000
Donated Services (IOLTA)	5,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$334,017</b>

### 2016 Expenses

Administrative	237,526
Programming	48,527
Grants	9,600
Veterans Website	9,001
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$304,654</b>

## Our Staff:

Jennifer Lechner, *Executive Director*

Mary Irvine, *Director of External Affairs*

Sylvia Novinsky, *Director, NC Pro Bono Resource Center*

Jared Smith, *Communications Specialist*

Charlotte Stewart, *Veterans Project Coordinator*



## Our 2016 Members:

The Honorable Mark D. Martin, *Chair*  
 The Honorable Cheri Beasley, *Vice-Chair*  
 Jim Barrett  
 Representative Justin Burr  
 Marion A. Cowell, Jr.  
 Barbara Degen  
 Bill Farthing  
 Ronald L. Gibson  
 Rick Glazier  
 Joy Vermillion Heinsohn

Charles Holton  
 Afi Johnson-Parris  
 The Honorable Lisa Y. Johnson-Tonkins  
 Dean J. Rich Leonard  
 The Honorable Linda M. McGee  
 John B. McMillan  
 The Honorable Michael R. Morgan  
 Nancy Black Norelli  
 Alan Parry  
 The Honorable Jan H. Samet

Lindsey Wakely  
 Kirk G. Warner  
 Ann Warren  
 McKinley Wooten  
 Julian H. Wright, Jr.  
 Anita S. Earls, *Special Advisor*  
 George V. Hanna III, *Special Advisor*  
 George Hausen, *Special Advisor*  
 Kenneth Schorr, *Special Advisor*

## The Economic Benefits of Civil Legal Aid:

- In 2016, legal aid providers provided a direct economic benefit to the state of North Carolina of \$20,441,741. This benefit includes money secured for legal aid clients through through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), federal tax-related refunds, veterans benefits, child support awards, housing-related awards, and others. The indirect economic benefit of these services in 2016 was \$17,169,411.
- Similarly, legal aid providers provided cost savings to the state of North Carolina through services related to domestic violence, foreclosures, evictions, etc. This cost savings reached \$14,511,031 in 2016.
- Taken together, the total economic impact of civil legal aid on the state of North Carolina in 2016 was \$52,122,184. This amount shows that for every \$1 spent by North Carolina on civil legal aid, \$14.56 returns to the state's economy.



Chief Justice Martin thanks John B. McMillan, the Honorable Linda M. McGee, and Kirk G. Warner (*pictured left*) for their service on the Commission.

Access to Justice issues are discussed at the June 2016 Commission meeting in Charlotte, NC (*pictured right*).

