

The NC Equal Access to Justice Commission (NCEATJC) was established in November 2005 by order of the Supreme Court of North Carolina. 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:

2017 Support and Revenue

CLE Fee–NC State Bar	375,904
Pro Bono Support	50,849
Chief Justice’s Commission on Professionalism Grant	5,000
Total Revenue	\$431,753

2017 Expenses

Administrative	321,651
Programming	54,451
Pro Bono Resource Center	15,625
Total Expenses	\$391,727



Our Staff:

Jennifer Lechner, *Executive Director*
 Mary Irvine, *Director of External Affairs*
 Sylvia Novinsky, *Director, NC Pro Bono Resource Center*
 Jared Smith, *Programming and Engagement Associate*
 Nihad Mansour, *Access to Justice Fellow*



Pictured from Top: (1) Chief Justice Martin leads the June 2017 Commission Meeting in Asheville (from left: Jennifer Lechner, Chief Justice Mark Martin, Justice Cheri Beasley, and Justice Barbara Jackson); (2) Students from Elon Law School present research on pro bono involvement in NC (from left: Afi Johnson-Parris, Bill Farthing, Jason Pruett, and Ragan Riddle; photo credit: Eric Townsend); (3) Sylvia Novinsky presents about pro bono opportunities to Alston and Bird LLP (photo credit: Nihad Mansour); (4) Chief Justice Martin thanks Nancy Norelli (pictured) and Ann Warren for their service on the Commission.

Current Unmet Legal Needs:

For 27 years, the North Carolina Access to Civil Justice Act helped provide access to justice for North Carolina's most vulnerable citizens. This act provided the funding mechanism to support the three primary civil legal aid providers in North Carolina: Legal Aid of North Carolina, Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy (formerly Legal Services of Southern Piedmont), and Pisgah Legal Services.

At the height of state support, North Carolina directly appropriated or dedicated fees and fines totaling over \$6.1 million to support access to justice. In this past legislative session, the North Carolina General Assembly repealed the Access to Civil Justice Act and removed the allocation of \$1.50 from civil and criminal fees that funded the Act, withdrawing approximately \$1.7 million in funding.

The Act's repeal halved available state funding for this work and will result in a significant reduction of service capacity and legal representation for thousands of North Carolinians. This cut not only impacts our citizens but also impairs judicial system accessibility, effectiveness, and efficiency.

In response to the threatened elimination of the Access to Civil Justice Act in June 2017, the Commission issued a unanimous resolution opposing the cuts to state funding. Post-elimination, the Commission continues to coordinate state funding legislative advocacy.

PRO BONO RESOURCE CENTER

The NC Pro Bono Resource Center (PBRC) launched in April 2016 with the goal of increasing pro bono legal services provided by North Carolina Attorneys. In 2017, the Resource Center worked toward this goal in three major ways:

- **Connecting Attorneys to Pro Bono Opportunities** – The PBRC maintains a searchable and sortable list of available pro bono opportunities for attorneys at ncprobono.org. In partnership with other stakeholders, the PBRC also facilitated more than 20 pro bono clinic opportunities for more than 200 attorneys in 2017.
- **Convening Pro Bono Regional Councils** – The PBRC invited groups of private firm leaders in the Triad, Triangle, and the Coast to come together for regional conversations about pro bono challenges, opportunities, and incentives.
- **Managing Statewide Reporting and Recognition** – The PBRC implemented the inaugural voluntary pro bono reporting process for North Carolina in 2017, and worked with the Supreme Court of North Carolina to create the NC Pro Bono Honor Society, recognizing 170 attorneys for providing at least 50 hours of pro bono legal services in 2016.

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

86% OF CIVIL LEGAL NEEDS
REPORTED BY LOW INCOME
AMERICANS GO UNMET

OUR 2017 MEMBERS

The Honorable Mark D. Martin, *Chair*
The Honorable Cheri L. Beasley, *Vice-Chair*
James A. Barrett
Christin Coan
J. Samuel Cone
The Honorable J. Carlton "J.C." Cole
Barbara Degen
The Honorable Richard Dietz
William P. Farthing, Jr.
Ronald L. Gibson
Rick Glazier
Joy Vermillion Heinsohn
Charles Holton
David W. Hood
Gabriel Jiménez
Afi Johnson-Parris
The Honorable Lisa Y. Johnson-Tonkins
Robert C. Kemp, III
Dean J. Rich Leonard
The Honorable Michael R. Morgan
Nancy Black Norelli
Alan Parry
Representative David Rogers
The Honorable Jan H. Samet
Elizabeth D. Scott
The Honorable Linda Stephens
Ann Warren
McKinley Wooten
Julian H. Wright, Jr.
Marion Cowell, *Special Advisor*
Anita S. Earls, *Special Advisor*
George V. Hanna III, *Special Advisor*
George Hausen, *Special Advisor*
John B. McMillan, *Special Advisor*
Kenneth Schorr, *Special Advisor*