



JUSTICEGUIDE

How to obtain **FREE** civil legal services & information



HEALTH IS THE GREATEST GIFT

Need affordable health insurance?
We can help. PAGE 14

Free Online Legal Clinics PAGES 4-5

LawHelpNC.org PAGE 8

SNAP Benefits Increase PAGE 12



LEGAL AID NC (LANC)

Our services are **FREE** to low-income people. To find out if you qualify, call our helpline or apply on the web.

LANC can help you with civil legal issues related to

GET LEGAL HELP



Toll-Free HELPLINE
1.866.219.LANC (5262)



APPLY ONLINE
legalaidnc.org/apply

Housing | Consumer | Employment | Public Benefits
Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault

We do not handle criminal cases.

Facebook Live Streams
& Zoom Clinics

See pages 4 & 5 for more information
on our **FREE**, online legal clinics.
Some videos, materials, and online events are available in Spanish.

CONTACT

PO BOX 28741, RALEIGH, NC 27611
(P) 919.856.2138
(F) 919.856.2120
LEGALAIDNC.ORG

CONNECT

- FACEBOOK.COM/LEGALAIDNC
- TWITTER.COM/LEGALAIDNC
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Your gift allows us to provide essential legal services to our clients throughout the state. As an LSC-funded organization, all grants and contributions made to us are subject to the Legal Services Corporation Act, 42 U.S.C. 2996 et seq. and LSC's appropriations. These regulations have been followed by our program since 1976 and ensure that all our funding will be used to meet the most critical legal needs of the most vulnerable North Carolinians.

Please contact us for more information. See lsc.gov.

Overview of LANC Services

LANC is a statewide, nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services in civil matters to low-income people. Our organization has remained fully operational throughout COVID-19. LANC attorneys go to court and meet with clients in person as needed. We also provide self-help materials in the form of videos, written materials, and online clinics. These materials can provide you with the detailed information you need to handle some basic legal issues without hiring an attorney.



Self-Help Clinic Materials

Visit legalaidnc.org/clinics

Due to the Coronavirus crisis, we now hold all of our clinics electronically using Facebook Live and Zoom. See pages 4 and 5 for detailed info regarding these online presentations. All clinics remain free and open to the public.

You can visit legalaidnc.org/get-help or call 1.866.219.LANC (5262) to find out if you're eligible for brief service and advice on individual cases and extended services such as representation in court.

Do you need help as a result of a natural disaster?

After a hurricane makes landfall, storm clouds quickly dissipate, but the recovery process for homeowners can take years. In the midst of what is predicted to be an above-average Atlantic hurricane season, our Disaster Relief Project is helping remove legal barriers that disaster survivors may experience during the recovery process. We also provide estate planning services and other info to help folks prepare for the future.



One client's story: In 2018, Hurricane Florence damaged our client's home beyond repair. When he tried to get assistance to rebuild, he couldn't prove ownership of the land he had long lived on because he inherited it from family who passed away without a will. This method of inheritance, although legally just as valid, often does not provide the documentation that many

organizations, like FEMA, require. Families who have lived on the same land for generations may be unable to prove ownership to the satisfaction of authorities in charge of distributing aid. An attorney from our Disaster Relief Project helped this client formally document ownership, and he recently received the funding needed to build a new house.

This project also helps survivors of natural disasters by advocating for clients in benefits application and appeals processes, standing up for survivors who were victimized by fraudulent contractors or bad-actor landlords, assisting community groups that provide long-term recovery, and more. **To learn more and access resources, visit legalaidnc.org/disaster.**

Legal Aid Live! Free Legal Clinics for the Public

FACEBOOK LIVE STREAMS & ZOOM CLINICS

Facebook.com/LegalAidNC

Detailed information on Facebook Live streams and Zoom clinics on the topics of interest to you.

Facebook.com/LegalAidNC/live

Recordings of past Facebook Live clinics.

Facebook.com/LegalAidNC/events

Info on upcoming Facebook Live clinics.

For the safety of all, LANC and pro bono attorneys are currently covering the topics listed below using Facebook and Zoom.

Pandemic-specific legal info may be provided.

Regularly Scheduled Topics for Online Legal Clinics Held on Specific TUES/THURS, 2:30–4:00 PM



- Child Custody & Visitation
- Criminal Record Expunction
- Employee Rights
- Medicaid Transformation
- Simple Divorce
- Social Security Disability
- Tenant Rights
- Health Care Powers of Attorney & Living Wills

Intermittent Topics for Online Clinics DAYS/TIMES VARY



- Domestic Violence
- Housing
- Disaster Relief
- Unemployment Benefits
- Remote Notarization
- Education Rights
- And More!

Clinics provide you with the guidance and paperwork necessary to handle certain basic legal issues without hiring an attorney. Clinics provide general information only.

If you need help specific to your case, call us toll-free at 1.866.219.LANC (5262) to apply for services.

100+ VIDEOS ON LEGAL TOPICS AVAILABLE

Our videos are maintained in two archives:

[YouTube.com/LegalAidNC](https://www.youtube.com/LegalAidNC)

Find playlists of videos on certain topics.

[LegalAidNC.org/Self-Help-Library](https://www.LegalAidNC.org/Self-Help-Library)

Access an alphabetical list of the legal topics on which detailed information is available.

In addition to our online clinics, we offer more than 100 videos on a wide variety of legal topics, such as foreclosure and consumer rights.

Some information is available in Spanish.

[YouTube.com/LegalAidNC](https://www.youtube.com/LegalAidNC)



Some videos are available in Spanish

Videos of online presentations are posted to our YouTube Channel, so you can view them 24/7. Videos provide information on both your legal rights and LANC services. You can access 20 videos on housing topics alone; other topics include the following:

- Senior Law
- Tribal Law
- Motor Vehicle Law
- CDC Eviction Moratorium
- COVID-19
- Racial Inequality

[LegalAidNC.org/Self-Help-Library](https://www.LegalAidNC.org/Self-Help-Library)



The library provides access to self-help videos with extensive information on the following topics:

- Advance Child Tax Credit Payments in 2021
- Consumer Rights
- Criminal Record Expunction
- Disaster Relief
- Domestic Violence
- Sexual Assault
- Education
- Employment
- Health Insurance
- Housing

Also available in the library is **"A Guide to Small Claims Court,"** a 57-page downloadable booklet that explains how to fill out the right forms, prepare for trial, handle the trial, and follow through on the judge's decision.

LEGAL AID NC



**LANC
AT A
GLANCE**


**LEGAL AID NC
IS ONE OF THE LARGEST LAW
FIRMS IN NORTH CAROLINA**



Our Disaster Relief Project helped **625 PEOPLE** overcome legal barriers to a full and just recovery in 2019

**>2 MILLION
NORTH CAROLINIANS
WERE ELIGIBLE FOR
THE SERVICES OF
LEGAL AID
PROVIDERS
IN 2018**

LANC attorneys helped
>2,000 clients
with criminal record
expunction in 2016



The coronavirus pandemic has significantly **INCREASED THE NEED** for legal aid



The eviction rate per renter households in North Carolina was 4.61% in 2016, meaning there were **171 evictions daily**.

Eviction Lab, Princeton University

Paul Newby Elected 30th Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina

First joining the Supreme Court of North Carolina in 2004, Paul Newby was elevated to the highest judicial office in our state in the 2020 election. In his capacity as Chief Justice, Newby is head of the North Carolina Judicial Branch and is entrusted with leading its more than 6,000 elected officials and employees. The mission of the Judicial Branch is to provide open courts for the administration of justice without favor, denial, or delay.



Paul Newby has written more than 300 opinions as a Justice of North Carolina's highest court.

Newby has written more than 300 opinions as a Justice of North Carolina's highest court. Among his many related areas of service, he chairs the North Carolina Equal Access to Justice Commission. The purpose of the Commission is to overcome barriers to justice and meet legal needs through collaboration and problem solving. Newby is also an adjunct professor at Campbell University School of Law, where he teaches courses on appellate practice and state constitutional law. He travels across the state educating citizens about North Carolina history and the role of government in our lives.



**THANK YOU,
Lincoln Financial Foundation!**

Legal Aid of North Carolina would like to express our sincere appreciation to Lincoln Financial Foundation, the philanthropic arm of LINCOLN FINANCIAL GROUP. The Foundation has provided funding for a staff attorney operating on the front lines of COVID-related eviction prevention efforts for our Greensboro office. The Foundation's approach to local philanthropic giving in human services, education, and financial wellness reflects the strong connection Lincoln Financial has to its communities.

Need Help Understanding Your Legal Issue? Visit LawHelpNC.org

LawHelpNC.org provides you with easy-to-understand legal facts and resources. The site offers detailed information on 16 areas of North Carolina law, from family and juvenile to wills and life planning. By learning about the legal issues affecting you and your family, you become better prepared to represent yourself in court (*pro se* representation) or work with an attorney to resolve your problem.

You can type your issue (for example, “appeal an eviction”) into the search feature of the site or use the pull-down menu under the tab “Understand Your Legal Issue” to be taken to a page of helpful links on that topic. These links lead you to various types of information: free clinics LANC offers on the topic, a brief overview of the issue, and self-help “interviews” that explain the law and help you prepare court forms.

Click on “Online Legal Forms” for quick access to forms of the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC). Before you fill out any of the forms, learn all you can about your legal issue to help ensure you use the forms correctly. Examples of forms you can fill out online include: cover sheet for child support cases, order on child custody mediation, complaint and motion for domestic violence protective order, civil summons, and notice of appeal to district court. Many forms are available in Spanish.



Visit LawHelpNC.org for straightforward information on the following legal topics:

Family and Juvenile	Disaster Assistance
Housing	Economic Development
Money and Taxes	Education and Schools
Government Benefits	Farmworkers
Veterans and Military	Immigration
Work and Jobs	Individual Rights
Criminal Law	Wills and Life Planning
Health and Disability	The Legal System

LawHelpNC.org allows you to:

- Access online forms and produce *pro se* documents.
- Take advantage of self-help resources like free clinics, educational videos, and guided tours called “interviews” that help you fill out court forms.
- Search for a lawyer who can help with your needs.

LawHelpNC.org is a collaborative effort by LANC, the North Carolina Equal Justice Alliance, the North Carolina Bar Association Foundation, and Probono.net.

In 2017, 71% of low-income Americans experienced a civil legal problem.

Only 14% of these legal needs were met.

Source: Legal Services Corporation

**WE NEED YOU!
PRO BONO SERVICE**

NC has **ONE legal aid attorney for every 8,000 people eligible for legal services compared to **ONE** private lawyer for every 367 NC residents.**

Source: NC Equal Access to Justice Commission



LANC offers volunteer opportunities for lawyers, law students, paralegals, and others to donate their time and talents to serve North Carolinians in need. Our volunteer programs include:

Eviction Negotiation Program: In anticipation of a spike in eviction filings due to the economic impact of COVID-19, LANC is partnering with private attorney volunteers to negotiate with landlords to prevent evictions for non-payment of rent. Volunteer attorneys may conduct all their services remotely.

Lawyer on the Line (LOTL): A partnership with NC Bar Foundation, LOTL gives private attorneys an easy and rewarding way to provide basic legal advice and service to Legal Aid clients through one-hour phone interviews. You choose the number of referrals you receive (up to four per month) and the types of cases.

Volunteer Lawyer Program: You choose how often to take Legal Aid clients cases involving extended representation and litigation services. We need your help in these areas of law and others: domestic violence, expunctions, immigration, and veterans benefits. Necesitamos abogados que hablen español.

Self-Help Clinic Volunteer Program: LANC coordinates legal clinics on a variety of topics during which volunteer attorneys answer general legal questions from participants. See p. 4 for more information regarding our clinics, which are free and open to the public.

WE CAN HELP YOU fulfill your professional responsibility of providing 50 hours of legal services annually for those unable to pay, as laid out in Rule 6.1 of the NC State Bar's Rules of Professional Conduct. LANC provides you with training (for CLE credit in some cases), mentor support, and malpractice insurance, as appropriate.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED in joining our pro bono team or supporting our work, please visit legalaidnc.org/give-help today. Your expertise can make a significant difference in someone's life!

LANC Partners with the NC HOPE Program to Prevent Evictions

LANC collaborates with numerous other community organizations to increase our capacity to help low-income North Carolinians. One such partner is the NC Housing Opportunities and Prevention of Evictions (HOPE) Program, which provides rent and utility assistance. The state initially launched the HOPE Program last fall, using flexible funds from the federal CARES Act to help ensure that low-income families struggling during the pandemic could stay in their homes.



Are you struggling to pay rent or utilities?

The HOPE Program may be able to help.

In June 2021, the HOPE Program announced that increased assistance would become available to families who continue to need help due to the pandemic. Starting August 1, the monthly rent award limit increased by 30%. This should allow the program to cover approximately 95% of all rent assistance that very low-income tenants request. The utility award limit increased by 100%, meaning it should cover nearly 90% of all past-due amounts that program applicants request.

What you need to know:

- Even if you applied for assistance during the first phase of the HOPE Program, you are eligible to reapply for more assistance.
- As of the beginning of August, the program is also accepting tenant referrals from landlords regarding their tenants who are struggling.
- Applications for help with utilities only are *not* being accepted during this phase of the program.
- The monthly rent award limit has increased by 30%; the utility award limit has doubled. These new limits apply to all new applications received, including those reapplying for assistance.
- The HOPE Program serves 88 North Carolina counties. The remaining 12 counties and five Native American tribes are served by local emergency rent/utility programs that receive funds directly from the federal government.

TENANTS AND LANDLORDS
can call the HOPE Call Center at
888.ASK.HOPE (888.927.5467)

**You can also visit hope.nc.gov
to request assistance.**

The call center is open Monday through Friday from 8AM to 5PM.
English-and Spanish-speaking specialists are available to assist callers.

Starting Over After a Storm

With the help of Don Pocock and Chelsea Barnes, volunteer lawyers from Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP in Winston-Salem, Amy from Kernersville rebuilt her life after a storm destroyed her mobile home. Amy knew dead trees on the mobile home lot could cause trouble. She contacted the landlord, who acknowledged the trees were a problem but refused to cut them down. When Tropical Storm Michael came through in October of 2018, a tree fell on her home, making it unlivable. Amy contacted LANC, and the Disaster Relief Project volunteers took the case and demanded \$12,000 for her loss. After some back-and-forth between the landlord and his insurance company, Amy received a check for the full amount. Our Disaster Relief Project helps disaster survivors overcome the legal barriers standing in the way of a full and just recovery. See p. 3 for more information.



Hope for Families Facing Eviction

When Briana's rent went up this past February, she couldn't keep up with the cost. She moved into a hotel with her niece until she could find a more affordable place. Little did she know the pandemic would wreak havoc on local housing and result in her losing shifts at work. Though Briana worked as many hours as possible, she fell behind on her payments at the hotel. Her room key was deactivated.



Her niece had to stay in the room alone while Briana worked since she didn't have a key. Despite the protections in place from the CARES Act, each day the hotel staff demanded she pay or leave immediately.

Briana called our Durham Eviction Diversion Program for help. With Legal Aid's intervention, her key was reactivated, and she avoided an eviction filing. We prevented the hotel from engaging in any debt collection, which could hurt her finances in the long term. With a renewed sense of security, Briana found an apartment. In July, she moved into a place where she and her family can weather the pandemic safely.

The Durham Eviction Diversion Program provides help for families on the brink of homelessness. Now more than ever, it's important to keep families safely housed in our community.

Know Your Rights: Food Stamp (SNAP) Benefits Are Increasing

In an effort to keep pace with actual current food prices, food stamp benefits are increasing for all recipients. These changes to the food stamp program, also known as SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), are the first of their kind in more than 45 years. Many families across the state who are struggling to keep food on the table during the pandemic will benefit.

According to the USDA (the federal agency that oversees the food stamp program), the average benefit will increase by \$36 per person, per month—or about \$1.20 per day—for Fiscal Year 2022. This increase begins on October 1, 2021 and does *not* include any additional funds provided as part of pandemic relief.

SNAP helps feed 1 of every 8 Americans each month. The program increases food security, including supporting families with children who have been disproportionately impacted by hunger during COVID.

The average SNAP benefit is increasing by \$36 per person, per month, beginning on October 1, 2021.

To apply for food stamps

(also called FNS or Food and Nutrition Services), visit this web page of the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS):
www.bit.ly/2N4FLmZ

If you need help applying for benefits, call LANC's toll-free helpline: 1.866.219.LANC

October Is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM)

Each October since 1987, organizations across the country raise awareness about the prevalence of domestic violence and its impact on families and communities. Community events are organized to educate and connect those concerned about this issues. Over the past several decades, advocates have made tremendous progress supporting survivors, holding abusers accountable, and creating and updating legislation that protects the rights of those

suffering from abuse. Domestic violence agencies located across the state now provide assistance to survivors in all 100 North Carolina counties. Services include 24-hour confidential crisis hotlines, emergency shelter, and support groups and counseling. The North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCCADV) maintains a list of many of these services. To get involved or learn more about available services, visit nccadv.org.

To access help for yourself or a loved one, visit nccadv.org on a computer that isn't being monitored or contact LANC at 1.866.219.5262.

LANC Creates New Position: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer



LANC is pleased to announce that Tonia D. Trammell, MEd, JD has become our first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Officer. Before taking on this new role, she was on our staff for three years and active in our diversity working group.

Trammell brings more than a decade of DEI experience to the position. She spent most of her career prior to her tenure with LANC working on race equity, as well LGBTQ+ equality, religion equity, and disability rights. As an adjunct professor, she taught a cultural competency course for social workers and human service providers, helping them develop their skills serving diverse populations.

A large percentage of LANC clients come from marginalized backgrounds, including chronic poverty. "I've always been drawn to LANC's work helping diverse groups achieve equity," says Trammell. "While I was in law school, I worked as a volunteer for a homelessness prevention project. I provided information on basic North Carolina landlord-tenant law to people who were facing eviction and couldn't afford an attorney."

Trammell recently completed a DEI assessment with LANC staff. The results indicate they generally find their work environment to be inclusive and supportive. They are eager to move forward with further applying an equity lens to their work, and Trammell plans to develop a cultural competency curriculum to provide practical tools to facilitate creating safe spaces for both staff and clients.

Staff suggestions for improvements from the assessment have been compiled in a DEI Action Plan, which is being woven into LANC's current strategic plan. Some objectives are being met immediately, with others being on-going and long-term.

Trammell's personal mission as DEI Officer is to be a catalyst for significant, lasting improvements in work policy and procedures that further equity and reflect the organization's core beliefs. "DEI has to be threaded throughout all that we do at LANC," she says. "In order for LANC to be most impactful in the services we provide, our staff and policies need to be reflective of the world as it's changing around us."



New DEI Officer Tonia Trammell is developing a cultural competency curriculum to provide practical tools to facilitate creating safe spaces for LANC staff and clients.

Do You Need Affordable Health Insurance?



The COVID-19 crisis has caused many people in North Carolina to lose their health insurance. Legal Aid NC Navigators have been working tirelessly to connect them to quality, affordable health coverage through a special enrollment period. The majority pay less than \$80 a month for quality health insurance. Many new plans and prices are available this year due to several new health coverage providers entering the Marketplace in North Carolina.



The American Rescue Plan has significantly brought down the cost of premiums for many folks across the state. Following the enactment of this plan, 4 out of 5 consumers assisted by Legal Aid have obtained coverage for \$10 a month, or less. Nine out of 10 North Carolinians who chose a plan during the last Open Enrollment received financial assistance in paying for their plan.



Open Enrollment Begins November 1st, 2021

Legal Aid Navigators stand ready to assist as many North Carolinians as possible through safe, remote appointments.

Financial assistance is available to assist in paying for coverage, with 9 out of 10 North Carolina residents who enrolled in 2019 receiving help to pay their premiums.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

STARTS NOV. 1

855.733.3711

NCNavigator.net

Twitter: @navigatorNC

Facebook:

facebook.com/
NCNavigatorConsortium

Instagram: @NCNavigator

To book an appointment with a navigator, please call 855.733.3711 or visit [NCNavigator.net](https://www.ncnavigator.net).

If you have missed the open enrollment window, we may still be able to help you enroll via a Special Enrollment Period (SEP). Visit our website or call 855.733.3711 to find out more.

Free virtual or in-person assistance is available.

WE NEED YOU!

LEGALAIDNC.ORG/DONATE

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

If you have the means to support our work during this time of crisis, please visit **LEGALAIDNC.ORG/DONATE** today to make a one-time or monthly donation securely online.

Or, make your check out to Legal Aid of North Carolina and mail it to:

Development Officer
Legal Aid of North Carolina
PO Box 28741
Raleigh, NC 27611

DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT!

Visit **doublethedonation.com/legalaidofnorthcarolina** to find out if your employer matches volunteer time or donations.

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS

Additional options for giving include donor-advised funds, matching gifts, endowment gifts, Amazon Smile, and *cy pres* funds. For more information, visit **LEGALAIDNC.ORG/DONATE** or email our Director of Development, Megan Milner, at MeganW@legalaidnc.org.

Calls to our helpline are up > 300%

YOUR SUPPORT IS MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAN EVER!



MEDICAID PATIENTS QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS?



**NC MEDICAID
OMBUDSMAN**

877-201-3750 • ncmedicaidombudsman.org

VOLUNTEERING



Our volunteers are critical to helping us expand access to justice in our state.

See p. 9 and visit **Legalaidnc.org/volunteer** for more info.



IF YOU NEED LEGAL ASSISTANCE with one of the following, LANC may be able to help:

Eviction | Utilities | Food Stamps
Unemployment Benefits | Domestic Violence |
Mortgages and Foreclosure |
Health Insurance Enrollment |

NEED LEGAL HELP?

If you need help, call us toll-free
1.866.219.LANC (5262)
legalaidnc.org

SUPPORT OUR WORK

If you are in a position to support
our work, please visit:
legalaidnc.org/donate

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