

AUGUST 2020

LEGAL AID NC



# JUSTICEGUIDE

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

## AND STILL WE RISE

Cheri Beasley,  
Chief Justice of  
the North Carolina  
Supreme Court,  
Launches Faith  
& Justice Alliance

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RACIAL EQUITY

JUSTICE DURING  
COVID-19

FREE ONLINE CLINICS  
ON LEGAL TOPICS





## LEGAL AID OF 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](https://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 6 & 7 for more information  
on our **FREE**, online legal clinics.  
*Some videos, materials, and online events are available in Spanish.*

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**LawHelpNC.org:** Easy-to-understand information on a wide range of legal issues, including family law; referrals to private attorneys near you.

**NCCourts.gov:** Free access to many kinds of legal documents. You can search by document name or file number.

**North Carolina Bar Association's Lawyer Referral Service:** You can call 800.662.7660 (or 919.677.8574 for out-of-state callers). Find an attorney in your area and receive a 30-minute consultation for \$50.

#### CONTACT

PO BOX 28741, RALEIGH, NC 27611  
(P) 919.856.2138  
(F) 919.856.2120  
[LEGALAIDNC.ORG](https://legalaidnc.org)

#### VOLUNTEER

[LEGALAIDNC.ORG/VOLUNTEER](https://legalaidnc.org/volunteer)

#### GIVE

[LEGALAIDNC.ORG/DONATE](https://legalaidnc.org/donate)

#### CONNECT



[FACEBOOK.COM/LEGALAIDNC](https://facebook.com/legalaidnc)



[TWITTER.COM/LEGALAIDNC](https://twitter.com/legalaidnc)



[YOUTUBE.COM/LEGALAIDNC](https://youtube.com/legalaidnc)

### Justice During COVID-19

The pandemic continues to disrupt life in North Carolina—and the world—in ways we can't predict. Legal Aid of NC (LANC) has provided services throughout this crisis. We remain committed to ensuring that the virus interferes as little as possible with our ability to help low-income people with their civil legal needs.

For safety reasons, we have suspended the in-person self-help clinics we usually offer across the state, but you can still access many of the clinic resources online. These include videos and instructional packets. Visit [legalaidnc.org](https://legalaidnc.org), click "Get Help," and choose "Self-Help Clinics" for the info you need about handling certain basic legal issues without hiring an attorney. Clinic topics are: Child Custody and Visitation, Criminal Record Expunction, Employee Rights, Health Care Powers of Attorney & Living Wills, Simple Divorce, Social Security Disability, and Tenant Rights.



#### Self-Help Clinic Materials

Visit [legalaidnc.org](https://legalaidnc.org), click "Get Help," and choose "Self-Help Clinics."

**COVID-19 is**  
affecting how  
courts operate

Visit [NCCourts.gov](https://nccourts.gov) for updates on the Judicial Branch's COVID-19 response: courts being reopened, sanitation practices, mask wearing, social distancing in the courthouse, and grace periods for filings.

### The pandemic affects many aspects of your rights under the law.

**Information, coupled with power, is the most ferocious ally justice can have.**



**VIDEO RESOURCES**

To access our video library about COVID-19 and changes in the law, visit [legalaidnc.org](https://legalaidnc.org), click the "About Us" tab, and choose "News." Then click the news release dated 6/9/2020. This web page has links to all LANC videos related to Coronavirus on YouTube and Facebook.

#### TOPICS INCLUDE:

Tenants' Rights During COVID-19  
Domestic Violence and Healthcare During the Pandemic  
Finding and Applying for Affordable Housing  
Foreclosures and Foreclosure Evictions  
Public Benefits During Coronavirus  
How to Apply for Federal Unemployment

## Faith & Justice

### NC Faith and Justice Alliance Unites Faith Leaders with Legal Professionals to Serve People in Need

In January of 2020, Chief Justice Cheri Beasley announced the creation of the Faith and Justice Alliance (FJA). This coalition of faith-based groups and legal professionals is working to meet the growing need for legal assistance for North Carolinians who lack the resources needed to protect their legal rights. Faith leaders are often the first to know of legal issues within their membership and in the communities they serve. The Alliance plans to train clergy to identify issues, host legal clinics, and refer people for free legal assistance. Volunteer attorneys will provide legal services to those in need.

"Solving the access to justice gap is our moral obligation and an obligation of the faith community," says Chief Justice Beasley. "Faith and justice must walk hand in hand to serve our communities. Working together we can ensure that all people have access to justice."



*Cheri Beasley, Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court and Chair of the North Carolina Equal Access to Justice Commission.*

*Governor Roy Cooper appointed Beasley to be Chief Justice in February 2019. She is the first African-American woman to serve as the leader of the state's highest court.*



LIVE  
STREAM

The inaugural meeting of the Faith and Justice Alliance Steering Committee was held on 6/5/2020 via Zoom and livestreamed to the public.

Visit [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and enter "North Carolina Faith and Justice Alliance Steering Committee Meeting" into the search feature to view.



### VOLUNTEER

Visit [NCCOURTS.GOV](https://www.nccourts.gov) today and enter "FAITH AND JUSTICE ALLIANCE" in the search

Are you an attorney or a member of the faith community interested in the Alliance? Visit [NCCourts.gov](https://www.nccourts.gov) and enter "Faith and Justice Alliance" in the search feature at the top left for more information about how to get involved.

## Racial Equity

### Justice Is a Constant Fight

*La Justicia es una lucha constante*

The scales of racial, social, and economic justice are woefully tilted against our clients. Every day we at Legal Aid fight for them. On their behalf we confront the evils of racism in many forms: predatory and abusive lending, unlawful evictions, unhealthy and dangerous housing conditions, unfeeling bureaucracy, sexual harassment, unfair employment practices, and the school-to-prison pipeline.

These kinds of injustices, among many others, are frequently race-motivated. They deny our minority clients equal opportunities to work and live with dignity. They interfere with their ability to raise their children in safe and healthy environments. They shorten lives.

George Floyd was killed on 5/25/2020, and global grief and outrage have followed at another unjust, unnecessary, and completely incomprehensible killing of a black person through excessive and brutal force. He joins Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin, Philando Castile, and so many others on a list of the tragic victims of racism.

Despite the shock, the fury, and the heartbreak, we at Legal Aid remain committed to protecting the rights of individual citizens in our communities while working for systemic change. Our duty continues to be increasing access to justice, housing, healthcare, education, and economic stability for North Carolinians struggling to make ends meet.



### GET LEGAL HELP



Toll-Free HELPLINE  
**1.866.219.LANC (5262)**



APPLY ONLINE  
**[legalaidnc.org/apply](https://legalaidnc.org/apply)**

You may notice that some of our offices have boarded-up windows or changed entrances—but, make no mistake, across the state our offices remain open. Please know that we are with you in the ongoing struggle for justice and equality.

Can you help  
someone in  
need?

### VOLUNTEER

[LEGALAIDNC.ORG/VOLUNTEER](https://legalaidnc.org/volunteer)

### GIVE

[LEGALAIDNC.ORG/DONATE](https://legalaidnc.org/donate)



## Protecting Your Rights under the Law

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Facebook Live  
Streams & Zoom  
Clinics

Get the legal help you  
need on your computer  
or mobile device.

Visit [Facebook.com/LegalAidNC](https://www.facebook.com/LegalAidNC)  
to take advantage of these events;  
video of the live event is then  
archived in our Facebook feed.



### Online Legal Clinics

Tuesdays/Thursdays from 2:30–4:00 PM

These free webinars are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm. Topics covered by Legal Aid and pro bono attorneys are: Child Custody and Visitation, Criminal Record Expunction, Employee Rights, Health Care Powers of Attorney and Living Wills, Simple Divorce, Social Security Disability, and Tenant Rights.



### Free Forum Fridays

Fridays from 11:00 to noon

Forums occur every Friday from 11:00 to noon. A legal expert presents on the hot legal issues of the week. Examples of topics addressed are: updates on unemployment benefits, domestic violence assistance, housing and tenant rights, remote notarization, and the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on minorities.



### Housing on Monday Evenings (HOME)

Mondays at 4:00 PM

Offered each Monday at 4:00 pm, Legal Aid's free HOME events provide up-to-date information on topics such as evictions, applying for affordable housing, and the key implications of the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) on owners and renters.

## General Info about LANC's Online Services

### Online events provide general information

We are unable to offer individualized legal assistance during these events. Attorneys answer general questions at the end of each presentation. If you need additional help, call us toll free at 1.866.219.LANC (5262) or apply online: [legalaiddnc.org/apply](https://legalaiddnc.org/apply).



- All events are free and open to the public; you can sign up and attend online.
- Events are provided through Zoom and simultaneously streamed to Facebook.
- You do *not* need to create a Zoom or Facebook account to take advantage of these events.
- You can submit general questions during the live event via Zoom chat or a Facebook comment.
- COVID-19 updates like the effects of the virus on laws/court procedures are covered.
- You can receive written materials related to an online event via email.
- Some online legal clinics and follow-up materials are available in Spanish.



Videos of online presentations are also posted to our YouTube Channel, so you can view them whenever convenient. We offer almost 20 videos on housing topics alone that answer specific questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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



In addition, you can access our video library about COVID-19 and changes in the law from our website. Visit [legalaiddnc.org](https://legalaiddnc.org), click the "About Us" tab, and choose "News."

Then click the news release dated 6/9/2020 with the title "VIDEO LIBRARY – COVID-19 and the Law."

LEGAL AID NC


**LANC  
AT A  
GLANCE**
**LEGAL AID OF NC  
IS ONE OF THE LARGEST LAW  
FIRMS IN NORTH CAROLINA**

**TWENTY  
OFFICES  
SERVE ALL  
100  
NC  
COUNTIES**
**> 192 K**
**Central Intake Unit (CIU)  
fielded 192K calls in 2018**
**CIU assesses client eligibility  
& assigns cases to staff &  
volunteers throughout NC**

### LANC clients receive three types of services

**Information:** Facebook live streams, Zoom clinics, and online self-help resources that include videos, information packets, & more

**Brief service and advice:** A conversation with an attorney about your issue

**Extended service:** Representation in court, for example

**\$14,472 median income  
OF LANC CLIENTS**
**76%** of our clients  
are women

**IMPACT OF LANC  
2002–2018**
**872,814 LIVES TOUCHED**

## Client Stories

### Helping The Newly Unemployed Get Benefits

Laura lost her job due to the coronavirus—and her health insurance with it. Her old plan had a high deductible, and she had to pay all her medical costs until she met it. Still, it was better than nothing. Confused about how to get healthcare during the pandemic, Laura met with one of Legal Aid's Navigators.

We helped her enroll in a plan on the HealthCare.gov marketplace. Laura's new coverage has no monthly premium and low out-of-pocket costs. It went into effect within days. She is happy with her new coverage and grateful to get help.

The NC Navigator Consortium is a group of nonprofits that helps North Carolinians enroll in affordable coverage on HealthCare.gov. As a leader of the consortium, LANC helps people like Laura get access to life-changing benefits.



### Fair Housing Project Protects Victims of Domestic Violence

Victims of domestic violence often face evictions, poor credit, and criminal charges as the result of their abuse. The federal Violence Against Women Act and Fair Housing Act therefore include protections for them as they seek a safe, affordable home. These laws can't protect victims unless there are attorneys like those at LANC to advocate for them when needed.

In a recent successful settlement, LANC attorneys at our Fair Housing Project joined our friends at the Duke Civil Justice Clinic to represent a victim of domestic violence. This woman alleged that the Raleigh Housing Authority (RHA) ignored her repeated requests for emergency transfer to a safe location.

LANC's settlement with RHA led to two important victories:

- Our client can rebuild her life free from danger in a safe, affordable home.
- RHA must make changes to help prevent future discrimination.

The settlement is believed to be the first in the US to address a landlord's obligations under the Violence Against Women Act. It gives victims and advocates across the nation hope—and a legal precedent for fighting discrimination.



## Know Your Rights: A Brief Overview of Fair Housing Law

### The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing based on a person's:

- Race (*any race*)
- Color (*any color*)
- Religion (*any religion or no religion*)
- National origin (*any nationality*)
- Sex (including gender identity)
- Familial status (presence of children under 18 in family, pregnancy, or adults attempting to secure custody of children)
- Disability (handicap)



### Prohibited conduct

Discrimination includes refusing to rent or sell to someone—or charging more or offering different terms to someone—due to any of factors in the list above. Housing providers are prohibited from making discriminatory statements or publishing discriminatory advertising, as well as from making false statements about availability.

People with disabilities are also allowed to obtain reasonable accommodations to rules or policies to allow them to reside in housing. They can also make reasonable modifications to the property, such as installing a ramp or grab bars, if needed because of their disability.

### Harassment and retaliation

Harassing someone, or retaliating against or interfering with someone who is attempting to exercise their fair housing rights, is also prohibited.

## NEED ASSISTANCE?

Contact LANC's Fair Housing Project. Our attorneys at the Fair Housing Project are available to provide information concerning a person's rights under the federal Fair Housing Act. If you believe you are a victim of housing discrimination, call us.



**FAIR HOUSING  
PROJECT**  
1-855-797-3247

**LEARN MORE ONLINE**  
[fairhousingnc.org](http://fairhousingnc.org)

## WE NEED YOU!

LANC offers volunteer opportunities for lawyers, law students, paralegals, and others who want to donate their time and talents to serve North Carolinians in need.

Volunteers operating remotely can make a huge difference in the lives of our clients. We offer additional volunteer opportunities in addition to those outlined below.

For detailed information, visit [LEGALAIDNC.ORG/VOLUNTEER](http://LEGALAIDNC.ORG/VOLUNTEER).



### Lawyer on the Line (LOTL)

A partnership of LANC and the North Carolina Bar Foundation, Lawyer on the Line gives private attorneys a rewarding way to provide basic legal advice and service to Legal Aid clients. LOTL volunteers serve thousands of clients every year who have nowhere else to turn. Attorneys provide one-hour telephone interviews with Legal Aid clients, can choose to receive up to four referrals per month, and specify the types of cases they want to handle. Legal Aid prescreens eligible clients for assistance in one of these areas: bankruptcy, consumer, child custody, employment, criminal record expunction, foreclosure, government benefits, government housing, landlord/tenant, and unemployment. We also provide training opportunities, malpractice insurance, and mentoring support services.

### Volunteer Lawyers Program

Our Volunteer Lawyers Program is a statewide pro bono program for those who can provide extended representation and litigation services to Legal Aid clients. Volunteers receive training for CLE credit, mentoring support throughout the duration of a case, and malpractice insurance. Lawyers choose how often to take cases. We need volunteer help in these areas of law: consumer, domestic violence, education, expunctions, guardianship terminations and removals, immigration, private landlord-tenant, and veterans benefits. Necesitamos abogados que hablen español.

## GIVE

[LEGALAIDNC.ORG/DONATE](http://LEGALAIDNC.ORG/DONATE)  
CY PRES FUNDS  
AMAZON SMILE  
DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS  
MATCHED, PLANNED,  
OR MONTHLY GIFTS

You can help ensure equal access to justice by becoming an annual donor to Legal Aid of North Carolina. Visit our website to learn more about how to make matched, planned, or monthly gifts. You can also donate directly from a donor-advised fund and contribute to Legal Aid through Amazon Smile. Judges and lawyers can direct cy pres funds and other court awards to support LANC; see our cy pres manual on the "donate" page.



**LEGAL AID**  
of NORTH CAROLINA



## JUSTICE IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

Legal Aid of North Carolina (LANC) is fully operational and assisting clients with legal problems resulting from COVID-19 as well as our general practice areas. The widespread disruptions caused by this pandemic are creating severe hardships for our clients and other low-income people throughout the state. We anticipate continued mass unemployment, waves of evictions and foreclosures, rampant domestic violence, large numbers of consumer scams, and other problems due to this crisis. We need the support of donors and pro bono volunteers to meet the increased need for our services that will result. Please see the inside of the back cover for details.

## NEED LEGAL HELP?



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