

# The Recent 25 Years: 1994-2018

**1994**

Federal funding for legal services was cut by 33%. North Central Legal Assistance Program (NCLAP) cut staff and closed its Henderson office. New federal restrictions limited the legal work that could be conducted and prohibited the representation of prisoners and non-citizens.

**1997**

NCLAP worked with a statewide Planning Council to develop a plan for merging the four independent legal aid programs in North Carolina. The merger into Legal Aid of North Carolina, Inc. took final form in 2002 when NCLAP becomes Legal Aid of North Carolina-Durham Office.

**2005**

Over 100 homebuyers were defrauded in a predatory lending scheme in Vance County and lost their homes. Legal Aid represented clients as representatives in criminal proceedings against the developer. This travesty was the initial entrée for Legal Aid-Durham into mortgage foreclosure prevention work. Legal Aid-Durham later represented hundreds of local residents to prevent loss of their homes during the mortgage lending crisis of the late 2000's.

**2007**

Medical professionals from Lincoln Community Health Center, Duke Children's Hospital and Duke Primary Care for Children and attorneys at the Duke Children's Law Clinic launched Legal Aid's Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) in Durham. This led to the creation of a statewide Medical Legal Partnership program.

**2010**

Legal Aid-Durham was able to hire additional staff to support domestic violence survivors. Legal Aid attorneys continue to lead local efforts to provide broader and more coordinated community responses to family violence as well as provide in-court legal representation to hundreds of victims every year.

**2014**

Legal Aid, in partnership with Duke, NCCU and UNC Law Schools, created the Veterans' Clinic to provide low-income veterans free legal assistance with expunction of criminal records and child support modifications. Legal Aid-Durham coordinated a team of Vets Corps advocates who offered legal education and empowerment to veterans across the state.

**2016**

As a product of partnering with local community leaders through the Mayor's Poverty Initiative, Legal Aid received funding from the City of Durham for its Roadmap to Work Project to handle drivers license restoration and certificates of relief for persons in Durham. This project underscored Legal Aid-Durham's long history of supporting community-based projects in Durham and the six surrounding counties.

Other community-based projects during this time included the Low Income Taxpayer Project, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, and the Rural Community Development Initiative. These projects were made possible through pro bono support and collaborations with local bars and law schools. Law school partners included North Carolina Central University School of Law, Duke University School of Law and the University of North Carolina School of Law.



*"When I think about all the people - clients, staff, volunteers - who have had a hand in Legal Aid over the years, I am filled with gratitude. To have made it 50 years through shifting political climates is truly amazing."*

*- Gina Reyman,  
Managing Attorney*



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of NORTH CAROLINA