

SPRING 2023



LEGAL AID  
OF NORTH CAROLINA

# JUSTICEGUIDE

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

## FREE, ONLINE RESOURCES FOR THE PUBLIC

24/7 access to info you need on a  
wide variety of legal topics PAGES 4 & 5

Help with Domestic Violence  
& Sexual Assault PAGES 8 & 9

Foreclosure Prevention PAGE 10

Important Updates on Public  
Benefits PAGES 12 & 13



## LEGAL AID NC

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

We can help you with civil legal issues related to

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

We do not handle criminal cases.

### GET LEGAL HELP



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



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

**Facebook Live Streams  
& Zoom Clinics**






See pages 4 & 5 for more information on our **FREE**, online legal clinics.

*Algunos videos, materiales y eventos en línea están disponibles en español.*

### CONTACT

PO BOX 28741  
RALEIGH, NC 27611  
DEVELOPMENT  
& DONATIONS  
(P) 919.856.2138  
(F) 919.856.2120  
[LEGALAIDNC.ORG](http://LEGALAIDNC.ORG)

### CONNECT

 [FACEBOOK.COM/LEGALAIDNC](https://FACEBOOK.COM/LEGALAIDNC)  
 [TWITTER.COM/LEGALAIDNC](https://TWITTER.COM/LEGALAIDNC)  
 [YOUTUBE.COM/LEGALAIDNC](https://YOUTUBE.COM/LEGALAIDNC)  
 [INSTAGRAM.COM/LEGALAIDNC](https://INSTAGRAM.COM/LEGALAIDNC)  
 [LINKEDIN.COM/COMPANY/  
LEGAL-AID-OF-NORTH-CAROLINA](https://LINKEDIN.COM/COMPANY/LEGAL-AID-OF-NORTH-CAROLINA)



### PRO BONO

[LEGALAIDNC.ORG/PRO-BONO](http://LEGALAIDNC.ORG/PRO-BONO)

### GIVE

[LEGALAIDNC.ORG/DONATE](http://LEGALAIDNC.ORG/DONATE)

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](http://lsc.gov).**

## Take Advantage of Free Legal Information

Knowing your rights is the first step in protecting yourself. In addition to providing direct legal representation in civil matters to low-income people, Legal Aid NC offers Listen & Learn sessions on many legal topics, such as simple divorce. You will receive all the guidance and paperwork necessary to walk out of the Listen & Learn and into the courthouse.

These webinars are hosted monthly or quarterly at Legal Aid offices, churches, community centers, and other locations throughout the state. All are FREE, but advance registration is required due to space limitations. The Listen & Learns provide general legal information and guidance only; they do not provide you with specific, individual legal advice. You can also view the Listen & Learns on Facebook.

We offer intermittent clinics on additional legal topics, as well as a wide variety of audio, video, and written materials you can access online 24/7. These resources can give individuals the information they need to handle a basic legal issue without hiring an attorney. Please see the following two pages for more detailed information.



### Self-Help Clinic Materials

Visit [legalaidnc.org/clinics](http://legalaidnc.org/clinics)

**Visit [legalaidnc.org/get-help](http://legalaidnc.org/get-help) or call 1.866.219.LANC (5262) to apply for brief service and advice on your individual case, as well as to apply for more extensive services.**

### Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) Project Expands

MLP brings together physicians, nurses, social workers, attorneys, and paralegals to address social and environmental determinants of poor health that may have a legal remedy. The project is expanding across the state.

If you or someone you love is experiencing one of the following, our MLP project may be able to help:

- Substandard Housing
- Domestic Violence
- Food, Income, & Housing Insecurity
- Improper Denials of Medicaid & Disability Benefits
- Failure to Provide Children with the Special Education Services to which They Are Entitled



**To apply for free help with civil (non-criminal) legal issues, call our helpline.**

**If you're 60 or older, please call the Senior Legal Helpline:**

**1.877. 579.7562**



**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.

**Tinyurl.com/LegalAidNCEvents**

Info on upcoming Facebook Live clinics.



**LISTEN & LEARN**  
LEGAL AID OF NORTH CAROLINA



To learn more and register for a webinar, visit: [legalaidnc.org/listen&learn](http://legalaidnc.org/listen&learn).

Or, scan the QR code above with your smart device to register.



**Regularly Scheduled Topics for Online Listen & Learn Sessions**

- Simple Divorce
- Child Custody
- Criminal Record Expunction
- Tenant Rights
- Health Care Power of Attorney & Living Wills
- Social Security Disability
- SNAP 101
- Medicaid Eligibility



**Intermittent Topics for Online Clinics (DAYS/TIMES VARY)**

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

You can learn how to handle certain basic legal issues without hiring an attorney. Our regularly scheduled Listen & Learn sessions and intermittent clinics provide guidance, support, and necessary paperwork. Webinars and 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.

Algunos recursos están disponibles en español.

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



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 Legal Aid NC services. You can access 20 videos on housing alone; other topics include the following:

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

*Algunos videos están disponibles en español.*

#### [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
- 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.





**LANC  
AT A  
GLANCE**

**LEGAL AID NC  
IS THE 3<sup>RD</sup> LARGEST LAW FIRM  
IN NORTH CAROLINA**



**Our health insurance navigators helped more than **40,000** people find affordable health insurance.**

**Legal Aid NC secured more than **\$1.9M** in food, disability and employment benefits & income maintenance.**



**Legal Aid NC prevented eviction, foreclosure or mobile home repossession in **2,055** cases.**

**In 2022, we handled **6,951 Domestic Abuse** cases**



**With your help, Legal Aid NC provided legal services to **22,609** people that benefited **53,265** total individuals.**

Statistics are for 2021 unless otherwise noted.

### Wilmington Second Chance Project Holds Open House

Ayana Robinson, Legal Aid NC's Second Chance Practice Group Manager, is spearheading our expanded outreach in New Hanover County to assist low-income clients with expunction and driver's license restoration. New Hanover County is funding this new effort, Wilmington Second Chance Project. An open house was held in February to celebrate.



Expunction is the destruction of a criminal record by court order. The expunction (also called an expungement) of a criminal record restores the individual, in the view of the law, to the status he or she occupied before the criminal record existed.

**Due to recent, significant changes in expunction law, people formerly unable to benefit from expunction may now qualify.**

**If you have a charge or conviction on your record, contact our helpline to find out if you're eligible for assistance: 1.866.219.LANC (5262).**



Ryan Francis and Helen English, paralegals in the Second Chance office, staffing an information table at the open house.

Scheree Gilchrist, Director of Client Engagement; Ashley Campbell, Executive Director; and Ayana Robinson, Second Chance Practice Group Manager (from left to right) at the open house.

Marc Robinson; Rob Zapple, New Hanover County Commissioner; Ayana Robinson; and Andre Brown, attorney in the Wilmington Second Chance office (lower right image).

**Thank you to  
New Hanover Co.  
and the DA's Office  
for their ongoing  
support of this  
life-changing  
project!**

## Know Your Rights: Domestic Violence

Legal Aid of NC secures Domestic Violence Protective Orders (DVPOs) for survivors and provides other services to help them and their children fully recover and lead safe, independent lives. Also called a "50B order," a DVPO is an order of the court that grants protection from their abuser to a survivor of domestic violence. Many people refer to a DVPO as a "restraining order."

**The order can direct the abuser to do, or refrain from doing, many things that include (but are not limited to) the following:**

- Staying away from the victim.
- Not contacting the victim by phone, mail, email, or other means.
- Leaving their shared home.
- Not abusing the victim.

In some cases, the court may order temporary custody of children and/or arrange for visitation.

**The basic process for getting a DVPO:**

- The victim must file a complaint. Usually the victim makes a request for an Emergency Ex Parte Order at the same time. The victim is given a date within 10 days to come to court.
- The defendant (abuser) has been served. The sheriff usually does this.
- The victim goes to a "return" or "10-day" hearing. The purpose is for the judge to decide whether the temporary Ex Parte Order will be extended for up to one year.



Services are FREE for survivors.  
All North Carolinians are eligible for our help.

**Visit [legalaidnc.org](https://www.legalaidnc.org), click "Get Help," and enter "Domestic Violence" in the search feature to access numerous resources like the following:**

- Detailed information about how to represent yourself at a domestic violence hearing.
- Videos on topics such as how to renew or modify a DVPO, domestic violence and the older adult, and how to file for divorce *pro se* (without the assistance of an attorney).
- A handbook for stalking victims that includes information on how to take legal action, make a safety plan, and maintain your quality of life.
- Detailed information on how to attend a free legal clinic on filing a child custody action and filing a simple divorce action in court without an attorney.



### April Is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

There are almost 100 rape crisis centers located throughout North Carolina. These private, nonprofit organizations are committed to helping all members of the public regardless of age, gender, sexual identity, etc. Centers provide services such as free, confidential referrals to support groups, counseling, legal advice, and medical care. Sexual assault victims and their close family and friends can also access 24-hour hotlines to discuss their feelings and concerns with trained personnel.



Some rape crisis centers have staff who can accompany sexual assault survivors to medical exams, legal consultations, court proceedings, and interactions with law enforcement such as police interviews. Centers may also provide community outreach in the form of prevention education, advocacy, and prevention training.

For contact info for the rape crisis centers organized by county, [visit \*\*nccasa.org/get-help\*\*](https://www.nccasa.org/get-help).

### Battered Immigrant Project Has New Name: Immigration Pathways for Victims (IMMPAV)

Our attorneys represent qualifying low-income immigrants who are survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking in immigration matters such as:

- Self-Petitions and Petitions to Remove Conditions for victims of domestic violence who are married to (or recently divorced from) U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents who abuse them.
- U Visas for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking.
- T Visas for victims of human trafficking.
- Applications to Adjust Status (to become a permanent resident) for self-petitioners, U visa holders, and T visa holders.
- Removal defense for qualifying victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking.

**DO YOU NEED HELP? We have no income restrictions for survivors; all North Carolinians are eligible. Some resources are available in Spanish.**

If you or someone you love is a survivor of domestic violence or sexual assault, call our toll-free helpline: **1.866.219.LANC (5262)**.

You can reach us from 8:30 AM–4:00 PM, Mon.–Fri. and 5:30 PM–8:30 PM on Mon. & Thurs.

## Know Your Rights: Foreclosure

Almost 40% of the cases Legal Aid NC handles involve housing. We help North Carolinians avoid foreclosure by negotiating a loan modification with their lender and/or assisting with Chapter 13 bankruptcy. This type of bankruptcy will halt a foreclosure and stop the forced sale of an individual's home. Our attorneys provide representation to defend against foreclosure proceedings. We may also be able to assist with preventing the repossession of a mobile home.



Foreclosure is a legal process where a lender seeks to take property when the owner/borrower is behind in payments. The lender may actually take ownership of the property, and they usually sell it to pay off the debt. In a foreclosure, the owner/borrower loses whatever rights they had in the property.

By providing high-quality legal representation in foreclosure actions, our attorneys help preserve equity and credit ratings. We strive to make it cost-prohibitive for unscrupulous brokers and lenders to conduct business. We also provide community education to increase awareness of home finance best practices and the dangers of predatory lending.

### Visit [LawHelpNC.org](https://www.lawhelpnc.org) today!

In addition to our primary website ([legalaidnc.org](https://www.legalaidnc.org)), we maintain an extensive website on a wide range of legal topics. You can visit [lawhelpnc.org/issues/housing/foreclosure](https://www.lawhelpnc.org/issues/housing/foreclosure) to access the following information and more:

- Answers to frequently asked questions on foreclosure.
- What to do if you're falling behind in your house payments.
- Avoiding scams promising foreclosure relief and loan modification.

**LawHelpNC.org** is a joint project of Legal Aid of North Carolina, the North Carolina Equal Justice Alliance, the North Carolina Bar Association Foundation, and Probono.net. The goal of the site is to provide users across our state with easy-to-understand legal resources and information.

## Thank you to our loyal supporters!

### **DEFENDERS—\$20,000+**

CHARLOTTE CENTER FOR LEGAL ADVOCACY  
DUKE CORPORATE ACCOUNTS PAYABLE  
RUST CONSULTING  
WAKE COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION  
WOMBLE BOND DICKINSON

### **YOU CAN ALSO BE A SUSTAINER OF JUSTICE!**

Your monthly or one-time contribution helps us reduce homelessness, protect families from violence, abate consumer scams, secure basic needs for North Carolina children, and much more. Please help us make access to justice a reality for all North Carolinians. Visit [legalaidnc.org/donate](https://legalaidnc.org/donate) today.

### **CHAMPIONS—\$10,000–\$19,999**

BAKER & MCKENZIE LLP  
BRIAN CONAGHAN  
KILPATRICK TOWNSEND & STOCKTON LLP  
LAWYERS MUTUAL

SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT BAR  
THE EIRENIKOS FOUNDATION  
TRUSTMARK FOUNDATION  
WATTS STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

## Using Technology to Benefit Our Clients

The Legal Aid NC Innovation Lab is coming soon! From personal computers to the internet, the “digital revolution” has profoundly changed the lives of most Americans. However, many groups such as rural and low-income people have had limited access to potentially life-changing technology.

We’re continually working to harness the power of tech to improve services to our clients. Our website offers numerous resources to the public on a wide range of legal topics. We’re also using Zoom and Facebook extensively to provide critical information to help North Carolinians protect their rights.

The mission of the Lab is to engage in purposeful innovation that expands access to justice and addresses inequities. Our vision is to create a dedicated hub for identifying and implementing new solutions for bridging the justice gap. The Lab will bring together community partners, staff, and justice tech experts to pursue projects that integrate technology and design best practices into legal service delivery that improves access to justice.

Executive Director Ashley Campbell and Scheree Gilchrist, Project Director/Managing Attorney for our Central Intake Unit/Helpline, are leading this effort. The Lab will create a space where other legal services organizations can learn from our work and adapt it to their own communities. Stay tuned for more information on this exciting project!

See **pages 4 & 5** for more information about our virtual resources.

## Extra Food Stamps Have Ended

The extra food stamp (FNS/SNAP) payment ended In February 2023. These payments, officially called “Emergency Allotments,” helped families during the pandemic. Beginning in March of this year, people who qualify for the food stamp program only received their regular food stamp payment loaded to their EBT card. There was no second payment later in the month.

### What you need to know:

You can keep food stamp benefits on your EBT card as long as you want. You just need to use the card once every 9 months to keep it active. Your regular food stamp benefit amount is based on your income and expenses. If you report any changes in how much you make and your expenses, this may help you get more food stamps.



### Your food stamp benefits could be increased if you had any of these changes:

- **Income:** Did you lose work hours or have your pay cut?
- **Shelter:** Did your rent, mortgage, homeowner’s insurance, or property taxes increase?
- **Dependent care:** Are you paying more for childcare or for the care of a disabled adult?
- **Medical expenses:** Does anyone in your household who is 60 or older or disabled have medical costs over \$35/ month that are new or have never been reported?
- **Your address:** This will not impact your benefit level, but you may miss important updates if your local DSS does not have your current address.

**If you’re already receiving the maximum amount of food stamps in your regular monthly payment, reporting higher expenses won’t increase your food stamp benefits. Please see the chart below.**

### Maximum amount of food stamp benefit per household size:

# of people in household	1	2	3	4
Maximum amount of food stamp benefit	\$281	\$516	\$740	\$939

### How to report a change in your income or expenses:

To report changes, visit or call your local Department of Social Services (DSS):  
[www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/local-dss-directory](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/local-dss-directory).

Although you do not have the right to request a fair hearing solely to dispute the end of emergency allotments, you can request a fair hearing if you believe your regular, monthly benefits were improperly calculated. Request a fair hearing by contacting your local county DSS. Hearings may be requested in person, by telephone, or in writing.

If you need legal assistance at a fair hearing, you can apply for help at **Legal Aid of North Carolina** by calling **1.866.219.LANC (5262)**.

### How to check your monthly food stamp benefits:

- Visit [www.ebtedge.com](http://www.ebtedge.com). Click on "More Information" under EBT Cardholder. You will be prompted to log in and/or register your account.
- Download and use the **EBT Edge mobile app**. You can download this app on Google Play or the App Store.
- **Contact the North Carolina EBT Call Center at 1.888.622.7328.**

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

To learn more about additional food and nutrition resources, visit [www.ncdhhs.gov/foodresources](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/foodresources).

If you have children under 5 or are pregnant/breastfeeding, you may be eligible for WIC. Learn more about WIC ([www.ncdhhs.gov/ncwic](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/ncwic)) and complete a WIC referral online ([www.ncdhhs.gov/ncwicreferral](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/ncwicreferral)).

Visit [www.nc211.org](http://www.nc211.org) or dial 211 to be connected to community resources.



Los cupones de alimentos adicionales han terminado. Para obtener información detallada en español, visite [legallaidnc.org/extra-food-stamps-are-ending](http://legallaidnc.org/extra-food-stamps-are-ending).

Attend Legal Aid North Carolina's FREE Emergency SNAP Clinic.  
To register, visit [tinyurl.com/LegalAidNCEvents](http://tinyurl.com/LegalAidNCEvents).



### Preventing Human Trafficking

The incidence of human trafficking is on the rise in our state. The goal of Legal Aid NC is to ensure that victims are reunited with their families, permanently protected from their traffickers, and freed from the burden of a criminal record related to their abuse.

With no income to speak of in Mexico, Ariana met people who promised to transport her to the United States where she could find work. Instead, they sold her to a brothel in a town on the U.S.-Mexican border.

After being sexually assaulted and beaten on multiple occasions over a period of several weeks, the brothel owners brought her to the United States, where she was forced to cook and clean for a woman involved in a trafficking ring. Other women in the house were forced to prostitute themselves.

The traffickers called Ariana's family members and threatened to harm her in an attempt to extort money. Ariana escaped, made contact with family members, and reported the traffickers to federal investigators.

Several months later, thanks to the investigation initiated after Ariana's testimony, the trafficking operation was raided. Authorities discovered a number of other undocumented people being held against their will.

Our client's continued cooperation in the prosecution of the traffickers led to several convictions. Ariana's complete cooperation in the investigation and prosecution, in spite of the danger to her personal safety and the extreme emotional trauma she experienced, entitled her to a T visa. These visas allow human trafficking victims to live and work in the United States and provide a path to permanent resident status.

Thanks to Legal Aid NC's continued advocacy on behalf of Ariana and her family, she was recently reunited with her young daughter, whom she had left in Mexico. The reunification was particularly poignant, because Ariana's original motivation for coming to the United States was being able to afford her daughter's schooling—an opportunity that Ariana herself had never had.

Please see page 9 for additional information on our Battered Immigrant Project, which has recently been renamed. The project is now called Immigration Pathways for Victims (IMMPAV). If you or someone you love needs assistance, call our toll-free Battered Immigrant Helpline: 1.866.204.7612. You can reach us from 3:30 pm–7:30 pm on Tuesdays and from 9:00 am–1:00 pm on Thursdays.





**WE NEED YOU!**  
**LEGALAIDNC.ORG/DONATE**

## **GIVE THE GIFT OF JUSTICE!**

**Make your tax-deductible year-end donation today.**

If you have the means to support our work, please visit

**LEGALAIDNC.ORG/DONATE** to make a one-time or monthly donation securely online.

Or, make your check out to  
Legal Aid NC  
and mail it to:

Development Officer  
Legal Aid NC  
PO Box 28741, Raleigh, NC 27611

## **DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT!**

Visit [doublethedonation.com/legalaidofnorthcarolina](http://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 *cypress* funds.

For more information, visit [LEGALAIDNC.ORG/DONATE](http://LEGALAIDNC.ORG/DONATE).

## **PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES**

[legalaidnc.org/pro-bono](http://legalaidnc.org/pro-bono)

**Harnessing the Private Bar's Spirit of Service for the Greater Good**



We have pro bono programs to fit all schedules, levels of experience, and interests in different areas of law.



Visit our website to learn more about our programs, meet our Pro Bono team, sign up for our email list, and fill out our Pro Bono Interest Form.



**IF YOU NEED LEGAL ASSISTANCE** with one of the following, Legal Aid NC 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](http://legalaidnc.org)

### SUPPORT OUR WORK

If you are in a position to support  
our work, please visit:  
[legalaidnc.org/donate](http://legalaidnc.org/donate)

Legal Aid NC  
PO Box 28741  
Raleigh, NC 27611