
Position Announcement

We are excited to announce a job opportunity for the **Lawrence Nestler Native American Legal Fellowship** at Legal Aid of North Carolina.

Position Title: Lawrence Nestler Native American Legal Fellow

Reports to: Daniel Worrall, Managing Attorney, Smoky Mountains Office

Employment Type: Full-Time, Salaried Non-Exempt, Grant-funded

Location: Smoky Mountain Office (Sylva and Murphy), specifically serving Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) clients

Term: October 1, 2026 to September 30, 2027 with the possibility of one-year extension based on office and client needs

Application Deadline: Applications accepted on a rolling basis until position is filled. Deadline for priority consideration is COB March 6, 2026.

About us: Legal Aid of North Carolina is a statewide, nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services in civil matters to low-income people to ensure equal access to justice and to remove legal barriers to economic opportunity. Legal Aid is an innovative, creative, progressive, and efficient civil legal service provider to the poor, working towards an inclusive justice system of equal access. All voices are valued, heard, and respected.

Who we are looking for:

We are looking for candidates interested in:

- Direct impact for underserved Native American clients
- Unique experience in tribal court practice
- Intensive mentorship in rural legal advocacy
- Strong pathway into long-term public-interest careers

This position will involve hands-on litigation, community-based advocacy, and real client impact from day one. We are looking for a fellow who is willing to jump right in but who is also interested in mentorship: the fellow will receive strong training and supervision, and will work collaboratively with other attorneys in their office to develop their skills and holistically represent clients.

Applicants must have graduated law school before September 2026. You must not have previously held a full-time permanent, public interest lawyer position, though applicants coming from bridge/gap fellowships or clerkships are eligible. Contact jobs@legalaidnc.org if you want to confirm eligibility.

We are honored to dedicate this fellowship to Larry Nestler, whose foundational work supporting Cherokee legal services and the Cherokee Tribal Court laid the ground for ensuring access to justice in this community and reflects the values this fellowship is intended to carry forward. Larry founded what would go on to become the Smoky Mountains office of LANC and has also been a steady mentor and leader throughout his career. He has shaped generations of legal aid attorneys through his generosity, wisdom, and open-door approach. His contributions to the culture and capacity of Legal Aid have extended his impact far beyond the clients he directly serves. See [p. 28 of the Fall 2013 NC State Bar Journal](#) to learn more about Larry and the context for this fellowship.



Why this role matters: This fellowship offers new lawyers a rare opportunity to practice meaningful civil legal advocacy in partnership with a sovereign tribal community, while living and working in one of the most beautiful regions of the Southern Appalachians.

The Smoky Mountain Offices are located in Sylva and Murphy, North Carolina; small mountain towns neighboring the Qualla Boundary of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The region offers:

- Immediate access to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park
- Hiking, paddling, world-class kayaking, fly fishing, outdoor recreation minutes from home
- Affordable cost of living and available rental housing
- A welcoming small-town community with deep cultural roots

For candidates seeking meaningful work without sacrificing quality of life, this fellowship has both.

What you will do:

- Represent EBCI clients in LANC priority practice areas.
- Appear before the Cherokee Tribal Court (admission supported by LANC).
- Coordinate referrals with EBCI Legal Assistance Office and tribal partners.
- Provide community legal education.
- Assist with periodic Native American community needs assessments.

What you will bring to Legal Aid of North Carolina:

- Juris Doctor degree.
- A license to practice law in North Carolina or application to take July 2026 NC Bar exam.
- Eligibility and willingness to obtain admission to the Cherokee Tribal Court.
- Commitment to public-interest legal practice.
- Interest in rural and tribal community service.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Excellent organizational skills and attention to detail.
- Excellent judgement and discretion.
- Ability to prioritize tasks and to delegate them when appropriate.
- Ability to act with integrity, professionalism, and confidentiality.
- Proficient with Microsoft Office Suite or related software.
- Strong professional ethics.

What we offer:

- Starting salary of \$58,500 (*position contingent on admission to NC bar by start date*)
- Professional development opportunities
- Competitive benefits package including health, vision, and dental
- LRAP administered through NC LEAF (up to \$400 per month for eligible employees)
- Flexible work environment
- Paid time off (up to 21 days accrued first year and two flex days) and all federal holidays
- 401(k) retirement plan with a discretionary contribution
- Paid parental leave (up to 12 weeks)
- Disability insurance
- Paid employee life insurance
- Employee assistance program



How to apply:

Please provide a cover letter, resume, and contact information for three references as a single PDF titled "Nestler Fellowship – YOUR NAME".

Submit by email with the subject line "Nestler Fellowship Application – YOUR NAME" to jobs@legalaidnc.org. Applications accepted on a rolling basis until position is filled. Deadline for priority consideration is COB March 6, 2026.

Legal Aid of North Carolina is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All are welcome to apply. Selection will be based on relevant qualifications and work experience.