Building a path to prosperity for all

ANNUAL REPORT 2012
OUR MISSION:

To end poverty in North Carolina
by ensuring that every household has access
to the resources, services and fair treatment
it needs to achieve economic security.
**Table of Contents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter from the Board of Directors Co-Chairs</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter from the Executive Director and Deputy Director</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget and Tax Center</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Protections and Housing Project</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers’ Rights Project</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Law Project</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Access Coalition</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC Policy Watch</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice Center Communications</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Our Work</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 Defenders of Justice Awards</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the past, North Carolina has been viewed as a progressive leader in the South, but in 2012, nearly 1.7 million North Carolinians continue to live in poverty while struggling to reach a dwindling middle class.

There are serious attacks on the path to success – shifting scarce funding away from public schools, denying health care for low-income families, eroding the rights of consumers and workers, and shifting the burden of funding state services and programs from the wealthiest among us to low- and middle-income families struggling in this economy. Such attacks have always been around, and for nearly two decades the North Carolina Justice Center has stood in their way.

**The path to opportunity and prosperity** is fraught with pitfalls for many North Carolina families, although many have traveled successfully along this path with help from a state that valued a strong education system, health care coverage, consumer protections, rights in the workplace, and more progressive funding of these areas.
We are the protectors of the path to prosperity in North Carolina.

Our researchers use data and analysis to propose public policies that support widespread prosperity.

Our legislative advocates work with state leaders to make sure they build a path that stretches deep into the state’s most struggling communities and is accessible to all.

Our litigators are there to help individuals, families and communities navigate the path and to protect them from exploitation, discrimination and abuse.

Our community educators and communications professionals work to make sure everyone knows how the path works and where the pitfalls are, and they engage and mobilize the public when access to the path needs defending.

The North Carolina Justice Center plays a critical role in developing, supporting, and widening the path to prosperity in this state. Here is a brief look at our work in 2012 and the challenges we anticipate in the year ahead.
If there was ever a time for the progressive citizens of North Carolina to come together for the future of our state, that time is now.

The actions by our state’s leaders to cut important programs and services make economic recovery all the more difficult for struggling families. Reduced investments in our children’s education, fewer protections for consumers and workers, and expanding numbers of uninsured all create obstacles for hard-working North Carolinians trying to find their way to the middle class.

A single strategy for creating a strong and just North Carolina simply will not work – we must employ multiple approaches to achieve our goal of creating opportunity and prosperity for all North Carolinians. And the Justice Center is examining and re-aligning its efforts by working to build greater presence and involvement in local communities – often with our allies and their constituents. We have also stepped up our efforts to report on and analyze the impact of the actions taken by government leaders to ensure broad public awareness of the state’s policy decisions. Finally, we are assessing the increased role for litigation to achieve social and economic change.

As fellow citizens of North Carolina, we find ourselves asking: “What can one person do to combat the onslaught of attacks on our state’s most vulnerable citizens?” For us, the first answer to that question is to support the hard work of the staff at the Justice Center in their powerful advocacy, reliable research, and effective communication. The Justice Center is able to operate through the generous contributions of private foundations and individuals – we receive no public money. And now more than ever, we need your help. So let us come together for the future of North Carolina, to support sound public policy with our voices and with our money, to build a better future for all North Carolinians.

Sincerely,

DHAMIAN BLUE

CHRISTOPHER T. GRAEBE

Co-Chair, Board of Directors  Co-Chair, Board of Directors
Dear Friend of the Justice Center,

The Justice Center’s advocacy for low- and moderate-income North Carolinians was especially critical in 2012. All too often last year state leaders made policy choices that limited opportunity for the majority and promoted prosperity for the few. Even with these significant challenges, the Justice Center’s staff — working with our allies and supporters — achieved many noteworthy accomplishments in the past year. Here are just a few.

- We provided **county-level research on North Carolina’s poverty** — in both rural areas and urban centers — and we traveled on the Truth and Hope Poverty Tour across the state hearing first-hand from those struggling from economic hardship.
- We developed **critical analyses of tax reform proposals** and how they would impact government services and programs.
- Our staff **assisted over two thousand young adults with their applications to obtain legal status** under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.
- Our consumer advocates **successfully fought off attempts to allow excessive fees and interest rates for small loans, and maintained consumer protections for homeowners facing foreclosure.**
- The communications team provided **daily commentary on government and policy issues, and investigative reports on charter schools, government corruption, and the state and federal courts.**
- We brought **experts to speak** on issues ranging from gambling, to the gridlock in Washington, to campaign finance reform.
- Our attorneys **continued their fights** against payday lenders, wage theft, and virtual charter schools. They also litigated cases protecting access to educational services for at-risk children and expanded access to the state’s court system for those with limited English proficiency.
- Our **health care advocates have been the principal voice for consumers** in North Carolina’s implementation of health reform. They have recorded personal stories from North Carolinians who would be affected by provisions of the Affordable Care Act, and went on the road to train advocates in other states on how to use video in their work.

As we travel around the state and talk with North Carolinians about the issues impacting their lives, we hear about their struggles, their hopes and their dreams. We know difficulties and obstacles lie ahead and that 2013 will likely prove to be an even more difficult year for those of us working to build a more progressive state. We are in a battle for the future of North Carolina. The Justice Center is uniquely positioned, given its mission, its expertise, its experience and its capacity to play an essential role in that battle. This is no time for retrenchment. The staff of the Justice Center is committed to give their all to protect the interests of poor and middle-income North Carolinians and the critical policies and structures that have made North Carolina a leader in the region.

We thank you for your commitment, energy and support for our work. Together we will achieve the vision we all want for North Carolina.

With warm regards,

Melinda Lawrence  
Executive Director

Bill Wilson  
Deputy Director

JUSTICE CENTER LEADERSHIP
The maxim that how we spend our money illustrates our values applies not only to individuals but to states as well. The researchers of the Budget and Tax Center (BTC) provide critical information and analysis about how we as North Carolinians collectively spend our public resources – and about how the state chooses to raise those resources. The BTC’s analysis of state budget and revenue decisions is aimed at ensuring those decisions reflect the needs and interests of North Carolina’s low- and moderate-income families and that state fiscal policies build a solid, accessible path to prosperity for all North Carolinians.

Shining a Light on Poverty
In 2012, BTC deepened its analysis of poverty in North Carolina and fought to preserve effective anti-poverty policies.

- Exposed the prevalence and depth of poverty in North Carolina through briefs and reports providing detailed state and county level data
- Published a comprehensive look at the job market in North Carolina, along with recommendations as to how state leaders can strengthen and expand economic opportunity
- Protected the state’s Earned Income Tax Credit, which benefits more than 800,000 working families in North Carolina

Developing Policies that Promote Opportunity
The Justice Center worked proactively to create proposals for programs and services that would open the path to prosperity to more working families throughout North Carolina.

- Developed and promoted public transit plans that provide for affordable housing and job availability in order to create communities of opportunity
- Created proposals that would lay the foundation for employment for displaced workers through training at community colleges and well-targeted business incentives
- Explained how tax breaks enacted two decades ago created the current crisis in the state’s unemployment insurance system, and outlined a plan to address it that would preserve much-needed benefits for unemployed workers

North Carolina has traditionally been viewed as a leader among Southern states for its commitment to public investments that promote economic opportunity for all. North Carolina’s investments in early learning, its university and community college systems, workforce development and training, and its roads and infrastructure has been seen as a national model. These public investments are supported with the tax contributions of North Carolinians, helping create a desirable state to run a business and raise a family.

- The NC Budget & Tax Center’s statement on “Tax Freedom Day”

Exposing Efforts to Limit Opportunity
When state legislators tried to justify cuts to the programs that offer a path to prosperity, BTC’s team of analysts provided the research and data to explain how their proposals would hurt thousands of low-income and working families who were already struggling due to the weak economy.
• Informed the public through briefs and reports detailing state budget cuts to education, health services, work supports and other programs that help working families reach the middle class

• Supported other non-profits throughout North Carolina with data and news about important policy developments at the General Assembly

• Developed new ways to share data about the budget and policy decisions that will shape North Carolina for years to come (see adjacent page)

The Big Challenge of 2013 – Revenue Reform

In 2013, the leaders of the North Carolina General Assembly plan to dramatically change the way the state’s public structures and programs—that create the path to prosperity—are funded. The proposals now under consideration would unavoidably lead to higher taxes for low-income families and cuts to public education and programs that serve the most vulnerable people in North Carolina.

BTC staff has already written extensively on the state revenue system—about what works, what doesn’t, and how North Carolina can build a better system that supports shared prosperity. They have met with state leaders and elected officials, and educated hundreds of individuals and organizations throughout North Carolina about what it would mean to their communities if the legislature’s proposals for revenue “reform” were to become reality.

The Justice Center’s Budget and Tax Center is the only project in North Carolina focused on the well-being of low-income people that has the ability to analyze the true impacts of these “reform” proposals on individuals and the state’s economy.

INFOGRAPHICS

This year, BTC dramatically increased its production of infographics in order to inform the public about budget cuts and to get the facts out about an array of policy and spending proposals. These infographics provide important information in a way that’s easy to understand and easy to share. Thousands of people viewed, commented on and shared our infographics through social media in 2012.
The staff of the Justice Center’s Consumer Protections and Housing Project were active at the legislature and in the courts in 2012. Our team of lobbyists and attorneys fight to protect individuals and families from exploitation and profiteering, and to ensure they have a safe, sound, affordable home. The Consumer Protections and Housing Project is dedicated to stopping efforts to rob families of hard-earned assets and to creating protections that support families’ hard work to move into the middle class.

Defending North Carolina’s Consumer Protection Laws
For more than a decade, the Justice Center has successfully worked to secure strong consumer protections for the people of North Carolina. In 2012, the Justice Center worked to defend those protections against attacks by special interests.

- Organized North Carolina military leaders and consumer advocates in a successful effort to stop a bill that would increase rates and fees on loans from finance companies, which frequently target soldiers, low-income people and those with poor credit
- Worked with legislators and others to defeat a bill that would have allowed scammers to prey on homeowners struggling to avoid foreclosure
- Stopped several bills that would have weakened the rights of tenants

Helping Working Families Protect Assets
The attorneys of the Consumer Protections and Housing Project provide legal representation to victims of deceptive lending and housing practices.

- Successfully defended homeowners against foreclosure and recovered damages for homeowners and renters who suffered a range of illegal practices
- Filed a class-action lawsuit against one of the nation’s largest debt-buying companies, alleging unfair debt collection practices
- Continued to litigate cases against two payday lenders, having already received the largest settlement on record from three other lenders that violated North Carolina’s usury laws

Fighting for a More Accessible Path to Prosperity
The advocates of the Consumer Protections and Housing Project worked with legislators and administrative agencies to protect and strengthen consumer protections in North Carolina.
Al Ripley discusses the return of payday loans in NC

This entry was posted in Videos. Bookmark the permalink.
• Worked with agencies and other non-profits to fight for more affordable rates for low-income families during the Duke-Progress Energy merger

• Stopped passage of a bill that would have shifted the liability and responsibility of tenants for the eradication of bedbug infestation

• Organized protests that helped to stop efforts to bring payday lending back to North Carolina

The Big Challenge for 2013 – Affordable Utilities

Access to affordable energy is fundamental to the well-being of families and communities. Duke Energy (now called Duke Energy Progress) provides power to much of North Carolina and is seeking to substantially increase what working families pay for electricity. Poor and middle-class people in North Carolina simply cannot afford to pay more for electricity. Last year alone, more than 200,000 residences in North Carolina had power disconnected for non-payment of bills. At a time when so many families are struggling to get by and to avoid slipping into poverty, a rate increase is unconscionable.

The Justice Center’s Consumer Protections and Housing Project will work to educate regulators and lawmakers about the effect rate hikes would have on North Carolina families and to expose the truth about the power companies’ already bloated bottom line. Together with our partners, we will seek to ensure that electricity bills don’t push people off the path to prosperity.

The people of North Carolina recognize how harmful payday lending is, and it shows they don’t want payday lending in North Carolina.

— Al Ripley, Director of Consumer Protections and Housing Project, quoted in the News & Observer
The Justice Center’s Workers’ Rights Project is dedicated to making sure those who work hard for a living are fairly paid, are fairly treated, and have the opportunity to progress along the path to prosperity. That involves working for better state policies, educating workers about their rights and holding employers who violate those rights responsible.

Educating and Empowering Workers

Many workers in North Carolina endure wage theft, unsafe working conditions, and discriminatory policies on the job because they don’t know what their rights are or they believe they have no recourse. Providing that important information to workers is a core mission of the Workers’ Rights Project.

- Talked with workers around the state and produced an extensive qualitative research report on wage theft, then organized events and communications efforts around the report’s release
- Conducted 18 Know Your Rights workshops throughout the state where we explained to workers what their rights are on the job and how they can stand up for those rights, and created a series of factsheets in English, Spanish and Creole to educate workers and Department of Labor officials
- Led the NC Families Care Coalition, which works with partners in North Carolina and nationally to secure work-family policies that enable workers to care for their loved ones and themselves and still earn a living
- Conducted outreach to dozens of migrant-worker camps and educated hundreds of immigrant workers about their rights

Working for Opportunities for Ex-offenders

There are 1.6 million people in North Carolina with criminal records. For some, that record prevents them from getting a job, finding a place to live, and reintegrating into society. In 2011, we were successful in securing changes to state law that enabled some ex-offenders to remove those barriers by having their records expunged or by receiving certificates of relief. In 2012, we worked to make sure people benefited from these new laws and pushed for further improvements.

- Led the Second Chance Alliance, which grew from 200 members to 700 members in 2012, and engaged people around the state in our efforts
- Worked with the NC Department of Public Safety to establish local reentry councils, which are developing comprehensive plans to help people formerly incarcerated to reintegrate into their communities
- Trained approximately 200 lawyers, in

The extreme, unnecessary and hurtful “reform” proposal quietly sired by big business will slash important protections for people who are jobless through no fault of their own, working people who are victims of widespread layoffs.

- Harry Payne, Senior Counsel for Policy and Law, in a Wilmington Star-News op-ed
partnership with Legal Aid of North Carolina, to represent low-income individuals so they can benefit from the new expunction and certificate of relief laws

Fighting for Workers’ Rights in Court
The attorneys of the Workers’ Rights Project represent workers who have suffered from illegal employment practices. We make sure that workers are paid what they are owed and that employers end unsafe, discriminatory or unscrupulous practices.

- Successfully challenged wage and other violations in the restaurant industry
- Negotiated a substantial settlement for a class of over 800 poultry workers who were laid off following a plant closing without receiving all wages owed them
- Secured a major victory for crab workers recovering significant back pay for the class whose employer was violating minimum wage and other wage and hour laws

The Big Challenge for 2013 – Unemployment Insurance
North Carolina’s unemployment rate is higher than the national average, and there are three unemployed workers for every one job opening. Fortunately, thousands of families in North Carolina have avoided homelessness and hunger thanks to unemployment insurance benefits.

In 2012, the Workers’ Rights Project stopped efforts to cut unemployment benefits or make them harder to access. We launched the I Am a Tar Heel Worker campaign and website, engaging hundreds of people and organizations in the effort to protect unemployment benefits and make more opportunities available to jobless workers. We met with newspaper editorial boards, testified before legislative committees, and sent letters to North Carolina’s congressional delegation in order to protect and increase unemployment benefits. We’ve also exposed the hypocrisy of plans to make unemployed workers pay a debt that was created by past tax cuts for business owners.

This fight will kick into high gear in 2013. We will advocate against efforts to cut the amount or duration of benefits, and we will work with state officials as they seek to modify how the unemployment system is run.

Whatever changes are put forward, we will be there to stand up for the well-being of North Carolina’s working families.

ABOVE, LEFT: Project Director, Carol Brooke, at the 2.13 press conference.
Waiters and waitresses make up the largest group of tipped workers, who, in North Carolina, earn more than $5 less than non-tipped workers. 1 in 4 North Carolina tipped workers live below the poverty line.

ABOVE, TOP: Rows of shoes symbolize workers who lost their lives at a service to commemorate those who died on the job in 2011.

ABOVE: Paralegal Ron Garcia-Fogarty on the 2012 Poverty Tour.

OPPOSITE, TOP: Workers’ Rights Project staff, left to right: Sabine Schoenbach, Policy Analyst; Clermont Fraser, Staff Attorney; Daniel Bowes, Staff Attorney, Equal Justice Works Fellow; Bill Rowe, General Counsel and Director of Advocacy; Harry Payne, Senior Counsel for Policy and Law; Carol Brooke, Director; and Ron Garcia-Fogarty, Paralegal.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: The Workers’ Rights project created a series of comprehensive factsheets on basic legal rights of employees in North Carolina to provide accessible, reliable information for North Carolina’s low-income workers on issues ranging from wrongful termination, unemployment insurance and equal pay to family and medical leave, immigrant workers’ rights and wage theft.
YOUR RIGHT to take time to care for yourself and your family.

You may be entitled to time off from work when a child is born, when a family member is ill, or when you have a serious health condition.

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) guarantees eligible workers the right to unpaid time off. You are eligible if you have worked at least 1,250 hours in the last year or worked for the employer for at least 12 months.

Am I eligible under the FMLA? You are eligible if you have worked for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours in the last year at a business with 50 or more employees in a public agency, including schools.

What counts as a serious health condition? You may be eligible for leave time when you have a serious or medically defined illness. You must inform your employer of your need for leave and be able to produce medical evidence that supports your request.

Did you know? North Carolina employees have the right to request a leave of absence to care for a family member. Check out www.workercouncil.org to learn more.

Take Action! Many employers do not know they must provide FMLA leave. You can help spread the word by distributing this flyer to your colleagues and friends.

FOUND OUT TO WORK...

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is a federal agency that ensures workers have the right to organize and the right to engage in collective bargaining. The NLRB enforces the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), which protects the rights of workers to form labor unions and to bargain collectively.

Has your employer engaged in unfair labor practices? If you have been disturbed by your employer, contact the National Labor Relations Board at 1-800-367-6278 or www.nlrb.gov.

Workers' Rights

Do you know your rights? Did you know that you have the right to be paid for all the work you do? Did you know that you have the right to be treated with respect by your employer?

Did you know that you have the right to a safe working environment? Did you know that you have the right to be treated fairly and with respect?

Workers' Rights

Workers' Rights

Workers' Rights

Workers' Rights
The Education and Law Project works to protect and expand access to quality public education. Increasingly a solid education and top-notch skills are required to open the door to opportunity. We advocate at the General Assembly and with local school systems for education policies and funding that support those students most at risk for falling behind, dropping out, or being let down by the school system. We also work with families to make sure their students’ education rights are being respected and fulfilled.

Preserving Funding
North Carolina’s public school system must have adequate funding if it is to provide a quality education to every child, no matter his or her background or circumstances. In 2012, we worked to protect education funding, especially for the neediest students.

- Ensured that the legislature maintained special funding for the education of low-wealth and disadvantaged students
State Board of Ed Approves 25 Charter Schools

The State Board of Education approved 25 new charter schools on September 6. The approval process for charter schools changed in 2011, when a new state law created a Charter School Advisory Board to review applications and provide preliminary approval before the State Board of Education either approved or rejected the applications.

Eight new charter schools in the state opened this year after the State Board approved them in the “last-track” process. Nine charters were approved but one did not open because it lacked a facility. That charter, the Howard and Lillian Lee Scholars Charter School, applied and was approved in this round, but it still does not have a building in which to hold classes.

Matt Ellinwood, Policy Analyst for the Education and Law Project, wrote a letter to the State Board asking the members to be deliberate and cautious as they considered approving the 25 charter applications. The letter contained a chart with explanations of the strengths and weaknesses of each applicant.

We have several concerns about the 25 charter school applicants.

Transportation — Many of the applicants will not transport students to and from school. Some applicants actually claim carpooling is their transportation plan. This clearly prevents

The question is not whether we can afford to invest in every child, it is whether we can afford not to.

— Marian Wright Edelman

The North Carolina Justice Center’s Education and Law Project focuses on reforming the education and administrative advocacy, community outreach and litigation.

Education and Law Staff

Eric Goeckler
Director

Matt Ellinwood
Policy Analyst/Attorney

Christine Bischuh
Education Staff Attorney

Follow the Education and Law Project on Twitter

Black Education
Through legislative testimony and an aggressive communications strategy, stopped a bill that would have reduced funding for public schools by giving dollar-for-dollar tax credits to corporations that fund private-school scholarships.

Informed community groups, parents, and education advocates about problems with North Carolina’s system for school funding, which is unduly complex, opaque and inadequate.

**Protecting Access to Quality Education**

North Carolina’s Constitution requires that the state provide all children with a sound, basic education. For children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and are at risk of academic failure, such an education includes pre-kindergarten and personalized education interventions in K-12. It also means putting a stop to discipline policies that unfairly target minority students and rob them of their education. In 2012, we worked in the legislature, in the courts and in local communities to preserve these rights for North Carolina’s children.

- Participated as amicus in the case that secured the right of all eligible at-risk four-year-olds to enroll in North Carolina’s pre-kindergarten program.

- Worked with lawmakers and testified at the legislature to strengthen the state law on Personal Education Plans for students at risk of academic failure.

- Successfully challenged Gaston County Public Schools’ coercive and discriminatory “gang contract” policy, resulting in the clearing of records of all 185 students subjected to this unlawful policy.

**Ensuring the Quality of Publicly Funded Education Services**

Some state legislators are aggressively working to move as much taxpayer money into the hands of for-
profit companies as possible. This effort includes the explosion of charter schools—because charter schools have fewer regulations and are not run by local school boards, it’s easy for for-profit management organizations to pocket the taxpayer money that is supposed to go to educating North Carolina’s children. We worked to make sure charter schools are held accountable for providing North Carolina students with a quality education.

- Pointed out deficiencies in the approval process for charter schools, forcing the State Board of Education to revise its methods
- Participated in litigation to keep a corporation with questionable practices from opening a “virtual” (online) charter school in North Carolina, and prompted the adoption of rules for approval of such online education enterprises
- Presented before community groups to discuss the privatization of public education, how it could hurt students, and what they can do to stop it

The Big Challenge for 2013 – School Funding and Diversion of Public Funds to Private Providers
The state legislature’s repeated cuts to the education budget have forced superintendents and school administrators to scale back or eliminate some much-needed supports for students. We expect additional attacks on funding for traditional public schools in 2013, including efforts to expand the availability of vouchers for private-school education. Such vouchers never provide enough money for low-income families to send their students to private schools; rather, they subsidize private education for those who are already well-off. Moreover, these schools would have no accountability for their use of public funds.

The Education and Law Project will be at the legislature and in the courts, fighting budget cuts and protecting North Carolina’s valuable public education system from the for-profit corporate vultures that are circling to take whatever money they can.

“...the best course of action is not to privatize public schools but to actually advocate that public schools have the funding and resources necessary to create the college – and career-ready students that North Carolina needs.”

- Chris Hill, Director of the Education & Law Project, in a statement defending public schools
LEFT AND ABOVE: We Are NC, an alliance of organizations and individuals working to shift the debate on immigration in North Carolina, held a press conference on the Halifax Mall to emphasize the positive impacts of immigrants in our state.

RIGHT: Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project and other Justice Center staff held legal clinics for hundreds of young people eligible for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.
The Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project is dedicated to opening the path to prosperity for immigrants in North Carolina by protecting their rights, advocating for fairer policies, and helping them navigate the complex and confusing immigration system. Organizations and individuals throughout North Carolina rely on our attorneys, paralegals, and community educators for their legal and legislative expertise, their extensive connections, and their ability to bring people together.

**Fighting for Immigrants’ Legal Rights**

We provide free legal representation to hundreds of immigrants every year. We also helped thousands of young immigrants hoping to benefit from President Obama’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which allowed young people who were brought to the United States without documentation as children to apply for a work permit and be granted a two-year deferral of deportation. This was a ground-shifting event for the immigrant community, and the Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project was one of the few organizations with the legal capacity and know-how to help these young people.

- Worked with community partners to assist some 2,000 young immigrants in preparing their DACA applications
- Provided up-to-date information and legal advice about DACA to hundreds more at over 40 community events across North Carolina, and reached many more through our one-hour training videos in English and Spanish and our DACA factsheets in five languages
- Secured legal status or other immigration relief for 150 of our clients; included two asylum victories establishing valuable

“To truly fix the system, reform should both keep families together and create a functional path to citizenship.”

- Immigration project statement on comprehensive immigration reform
precedents for victims of domestic violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation

**Protecting Immigrants**

Members of North Carolina’s immigrant community are often targeted by unscrupulous employers, landlords and business people who seek to take advantage of them, and their needs are often ignored by government officials. Our attorneys stand up for the rights of immigrants in all areas of the law.

- Secured a finding from the US Department of Justice that the NC Administrative Office of the Courts had violated the law by not providing access to the court system for people who speak little or no English, and worked with federal and state officials to secure a settlement that will result in greatly increased language access in North Carolina courts
- Received more than $140,000 for victims of a “notario” who claimed to be an attorney and duped hundreds of immigrants with fraudulent immigration legal services
- Secured in-state tuition in the UNC system and NC community colleges for immigrant students who were granted Temporary Protected Status because of natural disasters in their countries of origin

**Strengthening North Carolina’s Immigrant Community**

We provide communications and legislative advocacy support, as well as education and information about legal issues to immigrant organizations and advocates throughout North Carolina.
As part of the We Are NC coalition, collaborated with immigrant community groups, educated lawmakers and the media, and provided legal guidance to successfully stop anti-immigrant proposals from becoming law.

Gave nine presentations to immigrant groups in six counties covering issues including landlord-tenant and housing rights, employment rights, public benefits for immigrants, and immigration law issues.

Participated in a nationally coordinated communications campaign to expose how American detention and deportation policies devastate families, and helped to secure more than 20,000 signatures calling on North Carolina to reunite a father deported to Mexico with his three American-citizen children, rather than terminate his parental rights and put the children in foster care.

The Big Challenge for 2013 – Discriminatory State Policies

During the 2012 legislative session, we successfully fought numerous policy proposals that would have devastated immigrant families in North Carolina. The North Carolina House of Representatives launched a committee that set out to look for ways the state could make immigrants' lives harder or more dangerous, such as shutting off heat and utilities for those who are undocumented. In response, we partnered with other immigrant advocacy organizations to create We Are NC, a coalition that exposed and ultimately stopped the committee's proposals using a comprehensive communications and engagement strategy.

But we believe these proposals will re-emerge in 2013. While on the national stage there is greater acknowledgement of the importance of immigrants in the political debate, many legislators in North Carolina prefer to stick with the discriminatory and hateful rhetoric of the past. We believe they will try to turn that rhetoric into legislation in 2013.

We will be at the legislature, in the courts, and in communities throughout North Carolina fighting to defend and expand the rights of immigrants, and your support is vital to those efforts.
Federal health reform provides North Carolina an opportunity to ensure quality health care for hundreds of thousands of people previously locked out of the health care system. Now it is up to the state, with the prodding of advocates at the Health Access Coalition, to move forward with making quality, affordable care available to all North Carolinians.

Building Understanding of New Health Benefits and Rights

- As a result of the federal Affordable Care Act, people have new rights, such as preventive care without cost sharing and extended family coverage for young adults. In 2012 the Health Access Coalition helped North Carolinians understand and access these new benefits.
- Organized meetings with more than 400 attendees in ten cities and towns, bringing doctors and local service providers together with the public to discuss available services and how health reform is building stronger communities.
- Wrote editorials and traveled to forums across the state to explain reform and counter false claims about the law.
- Provided commentary and organized press conferences, especially in the run up to the United State Supreme Court decision on health reform.

Laying the Foundations for a Better Health System

To make health reform work and to build a path that is open to everyone, the Health Access Coalition advocated for policies at the national and state levels that will make health reform work for all consumers, especially those with limited means and great health care needs.

- Worked at the legislature to block bills that would have hurt consumers and undermined the intent of health reform.
- Served on advisory councils through the NC Institute of Medicine and shaped recommendations on how the state should implement health reform.
- Commented on regulations and served as a designated consumer representative to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners to help craft national rules that best serve North Carolinians.

Informing the Debate by Telling North Carolinians’ Stories

Every path is ultimately about the people who walk it. To build support for health reform and continue highlighting problems in the health system, the Health Access Coalition is committed to giving people a voice. When we see the faces of people who are hurt and helped by state and national policies it reminds all of us that political decisions make a real difference.

- Recorded the stories of people benefiting from health reform or hurt by the complexities of the health care system and distributed them online and through our e-newsletters.
- Successfully pitched the stories we compiled to local and national media outlets to put a human face on the health reform debate.
- Traveled to California, New Mexico, Florida, Pennsylvania, Utah, New York, Wisconsin, DC and Texas to help other advocates learn to record and edit video stories of everyday people.

Above: Adam Linker speaks at a press conference after the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision on the Affordable Care Act.

Opposite, Top: HAC’s Nicole Dozier has organized and led dozens of events across the state as part of the Campaign for Better Care, bringing together disparate voices in health care to push for improvements in the coordination and quality of care, especially for older adults and people with disabilities.

Opposite, Bottom: Congressman David Price presents HAC Director Adam Searing – named a “Champion of Change” by the White House – with a U.S. flag that flew over the Capitol.
The Big Challenge for 2013 – Expanding Medicaid

The United States Supreme Court determined that each state can decide whether to expand Medicaid to all low-income individuals and families within its boundaries. In North Carolina expanding Medicaid would bring billions of dollars in federal money to the state and provide health insurance coverage to nearly 500,000 people. Medicaid makes up half of the coverage expansion promised by the Affordable Care Act.

Already some state leaders are proposing to walk away from over $15 billion in federal funding and deny desperately needed health care to needy North Carolinians. The Health Access Coalition will continue organizing partner groups, working with media outlets, holding public forums, and lobbying legislators to protect the state’s most vulnerable residents.

After all, one of the main reasons North Carolina’s Medicaid program has become a national model with the lowest cost growth of any program is the widespread commitment of primary health care providers, hospitals and other health institutions to the system. Indeed, these health organizations have undertaken herculean efforts over the past two decades to work together in an effort to improve care and to lower costs in our Medicaid program. These same providers understand that our safety-net system of health clinics alone simply can’t meet the huge health care needs in our state without a dramatic expansion of Medicaid.

- Adam Searing, Health Access Coalition Director, in an op-ed advocating Medicaid expansion
ABOVE: Participants at a Campaign for Better Care event in Greensboro.

LEFT: Health Access Coalition staff, left to right: Adam Linker, Policy Analyst; Adam Searing, Director; and Nicole Dozier, Assistant Project Director.

BELOW, LEFT: Adam Searing speaking at a Medicaid Expansion workshop in Raleigh.

BELOW, RIGHT: Justice Center staff celebrate Adam Searing’s White House Champion of Change award.

ABOVE: Nicole Dozier receives a Lifetime Achievement Award from the North Carolina Advocates for Justice.
2012 was a year of significant accomplishments for the Justice Center’s special media project, NC Policy Watch. Buoyed by the demand for accurate reporting and thoughtful, alternative voices at a time when legislative leaders were advancing an enormously regressive state policy agenda, the project produced more news, analysis and commentary for a larger statewide audience than ever before.

**Shaping the Policy Conversation in North Carolina**

Policy Watch’s mission is dedicated to changing the way elected officials debate important issues and, ultimately, to improving the quality of life for all North Carolinians. To that end, we produced an average of 10,000 words of commentary, reporting and analysis every week of the year, as well as scores of video and audio recordings, numerous photos and “infographics,” and 52 editorial cartoons. Our original content appeared on newspaper and website opinion pages throughout the state every week in 2012.

- Grew the number of unique visitors for the main Policy Watch website by 17 percent, and grew unique visitors for the Progressive Pulse blog by 34.5 percent
- Produced a weekly syndicated radio show and nightly one-minute radio commentaries and appeared regularly in newspapers and on television
- Increased the number of policy experts writing for our weekly Progressive Voices op-ed service and increased the audience for those op-eds

**Keeping State Policymakers Honest**

As traditional news outlets have cut back on state-level policy reporting, Policy Watch has stepped in to ensure that the public knows about questionable or unethical practices by state leaders.

- Produced several high-profile reports, including an investigation of a controversial trip for state legislators funded by a conservative education lobby group and a series of stories about a virtual charter school that was under investigation in other states
Produced follow-up reports to our 2011 series documenting the business practices of a then-powerful state lawmaker who was forced to resign and has been indicted by federal authorities on corruption charges arising out of conduct we uncovered

• Launched a reporting unit looking at North Carolina’s courts in order to raise the profile of issues in the state and federal courts

Providing Leadership to the Progressive Non-profit Movement
Because of its connections and statewide public profile, Policy Watch works with dozens of progressive non-profit organizations to coordinate and provide expertise on lobbying and communications efforts.

• Distributed “The Week Ahead,” a tip sheet including several ideas for news stories highlighting our partner organizations, to reporters throughout North Carolina

• As part of the Crucial Conversation luncheon series, hosted an array of compelling speakers on topics including wage theft, campaign finance reform, the dangers of state-sponsored gambling, and the erosion of the American Dream

• Hosted weekly conference calls during the legislative session with non-profit organizations in order to inform the state’s progressive advocacy community

The Big Challenge for 2013 — Building Public Understanding of State Policy Decisions
In 2013 state leaders are poised to make major policy decisions — in areas ranging from tax reform to education to consumer rights. These decisions will have significant and lasting impact on all North Carolina families and communities. A well informed public will be especially critical to wise policy choices. In the year ahead, Policy Watch, and the rest of the Justice Center must develop new strategies for monitoring policy debates, distilling key information and disseminating that information in ways that are accessible and that engage the public in the governmental decision making process.
Throughout 2012, the Justice Center Communications team worked hard to ensure that positive progressive messages reached important audiences in North Carolina, the region and the nation. More than 300 media outlets — including national and international publications — ran stories quoting Justice Center staff, citing our research, and relying on our expert analysis. Our staff made more than 1,700 appearances in North Carolina newspapers, on television stations and on radio stations in 2012, an average of about 4.5 times per day.

We took our online presence to new levels this year, launching a new Justice Center website, which effectively integrates our research with our advocacy and outreach efforts. Our social media efforts also expanded — we used multiple Twitter accounts and Facebook pages totaling more than 10,000 followers to spread the word about important issues. Using traditional and new media tools, we supported coalition work across all Justice Center project areas, working closely with more than two dozen allied organizations around the state.

The Justice Center News, a regular compilation of top stories, events and research related to our social and economic justice work, was provided electronically to nearly 5,000 supporters; and Policy and Progress, a quarterly news magazine, reached over 50,000 households.

The N.C. Justice Center is most likely the best known liberal-leaning organization in the state. Its experts were quoted dozens of times in February of 2013 as the legislature began work in earnest. Personalities from the N.C. Policy Watch arm are regular guests on public affairs shows ... columns and research by the Justice Center regularly find their way into newspapers across the state.

- Mark Binker, WRAL, March 8, 2012
The Communications team works hard to ensure that media are getting the Justice Center’s message in North Carolina and beyond. Maps show locations for media hits in 2012. Each week another issue of NC Justice News, the Justice Center’s newsletter, goes out via e-mail and the web. Issue Briefs and Action Alerts are released to address current policy issues.
The Justice Center wants to express its gratitude to those who have provided financial support for our work. We greatly appreciate the generous and diverse support we receive from state and national foundations and from individual donors. Many of the philanthropic organizations and individuals listed here have been supporting the Justice Center’s work for more than a decade. Without these strong partners none of the progress we have made would have been possible. This financial support has allowed us to increase our capacity, deepen our expertise, and extend our outreach throughout the state. Sustained funding has enabled us to strengthen and amplify our voice as advocates for poor and working families and individuals in North Carolina. If we are to continue this work, we must secure additional support in the year ahead. If you want to be a partner with us in the work that we do, please go to www.ncjustice.org and make a gift or become a sustaining supporter of our work.

The accomplishments of the Justice Center’s advocates and specialists would not be possible without the support and dedication of the Justice Center’s core staff. Their leadership and hard work ensure that the organization remains fiscally strong.

ABOVE: The Justice Center’s core staff, left to right: Jan Nichols, Chief Technology Officer; Elise Elliott, Assistant Finance Director; Suijin Li, Administrative Assistant; Bill Wilson, Deputy Director; Melinda Lawrence, Executive Director; Lucy Martinez, Director of Operations & Human Resources; Melissa Wiggins, Senior Administrative Assistant.

LEFT, ABOVE: Carlene McNulty, Director of Litigation.

LEFT: Bill Rowe, General Counsel & Director of Advocacy.
THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS IN 2012

John Aberman
Allen Adams
Jean Alexander
Patricia Amend
Shel Anderson
James Andrews
Marcos Ardon
William Austin
Parvin Aziz
Cleta Baker
Tom Balsley
Andrea Bazan
Rachel Bearman
Shana Becker
Laura Benedict
Charles Bentley
Ann Berry
Mary Bethel
Robert Bilbro
Annette Bingham
Reuben Blackwell
Dhanmian Blue
Lanier Blum
Bert Bowe
Fillmore Bowen
Doris Bowles
Diana Bowman
Joan Boyle
Scott Bradley
William Brandon
Martha Brock
Kenneth Broun
Beverly Brown
Charlie Bucket Fund
Sally Buckner
Jay Butler
Hilton Cancal
Paul Carrington
Jean Cary
Kyle Chenet
Lucinda Chew
John Clark
Louise Clifford
Andrew Cogdell
Howard Cohen
Gisele Crawford
Cynthia Crossen
W.R. Cuthbertson
Kenneth Dalheimer
Rhoda Davis
Jean De Majewski
Doug Dickerson
Stephen Dovenitz
Nicole Dozier
David Drooz
Michele Dubow
Donna Duke
Martin Dyckman
Jennie Ebien
Robert Elliott
Victor Farah
Joan Fenner
Theodore Fillette
Thomas Fiore
Lisa Forehand
Andrew Foster
Dolphin Foundation
Laurie Fox
John French
Taku Fund
Greg Garneau
Patricia Garrett
Hugh Giblin
Marina Gonzalez
Lucy Gorham
Roger Gorham
Karen Gottovi
Chris Graebe
Ileana Grams-Moog
R Gray
John Graybeal
United Way of Greater Triangle
Nancy Grebenkemper
Gary Greenberg
Justin Gross
Priscilla Guild
Betty Gunz
Patricia Gwyn
Joe Hackney
Jacqueline Hall
Darcene Hamm
Laura Hanson
Nahorni Harkavy
Lonnie Harkrader
Richard Harkrader
Thomas Harmon
Jerry Hartzell
Richard Hatch
Jerome Hay
Joy Heinoohn
Mark Hellman
Stanley Henshaw
Abel Hernandez
Andrew Holton
Jeanette Hyde
IBM
Rebecca Inglefield
Sandy Irving
Robert Jackson
Steve Jackson
Robin Johnson
David Jolly
Sarah Jones
Trevor Jones
David Jones
Annette Jurgelski
Freya Kamel
John Keller
Arion Kemple
David Kiel
MacKenzie King
A. Kirkman
Mary Kienz
Robert Korstad
Sue Krebs
Henry Landsberger
Robin Lane
Luke Largess
Jennifer Leeman
Margaret Leinbach
Evan Lewis
Georgia Lewis
Mark Lindblad
Kerry Little
Michael Lodico
Richard Logan
Albert Lyles
Nancy MacLean
Roberta Madden
Gregory Malhoit
Victor Marshall
Susan Mastro
Ricardo Matias
Mallam Maynard
Karen McCotter
Jennifer McGovern
Maria McIntyre
Troy Mclean
Charles Meeker
Lotte Meyerson
Sally Miggio
Gustavo Montana
Charles Montgomery
Richard Moore
Juan Moreno
Lawrence Morse
Constance Mullinix
NC Community Shares Donors
Jan Nichols
Virginia Noble
Ursula Nwapa
Ursula Nzimiro
Michael Okun
Jenni Owen
Katherine Parker
John Parker
Gino Pazzaglini
Andrew Perrin
Jeffrey Petrov
Francesca Poston
Mark Pozefsky
Lisa Price
Sarah Quandt
Alice Ratliff
George Reed
Jennie Renner-Yeomans
Tom Rhodes
Walter Richardson
Jill Rigsbee
Ann Rivers
Jessica Rocha
Maria Rodriguez
Bob Rodriguez
Hector Rojas Barrera
William Rowe
Ann Rowell
Michael Rulison
Susan Russell
Pedro Salmeron
John Sanders
Nathalie Sato
Bonnie Schell
Donald Searing
Octavia Seawell
Frances Seawell
John Shaw
Norma Shepard
Nancy Shoemaker
Alexandra Siroti
James Smith
Vicki Smith
Jane Smith
Evelyn Smith
Eric Solomon
Katherine Sparrow
Edwin Speas
Janice Stratton
Geraldine Sumter
Cathy Tamsberg
David Taylor
Barbara Terry
Elbert Townsend
Pamela Trent
Richard Trottier
Charles Van Der Horst
Terry Van Duyn
Tom Vitaglione
Timothy Vonderembse
Margaret Wainwright
Joan Walsh
Marvin Warner
Linda Weisel
Charles West
Judith West
Jane Wettach
Patricia Williams
Robert Willis
Ashley Wilson
Larry Yarger
Maria Alba Zamora
Carranza
The Defenders of Justice Awards honor those who have made significant contributions to North Carolina’s fight against poverty.

2012 Defenders of Justice Award Honorees

Mary Lee Hall of Legal Aid of North Carolina’s Farmworker Unit – for fighting to protect the rights and improve the well-being of the tens of thousands of migrant and seasonal farmworkers who work in North Carolina’s fields.

State Representative Deborah Ross of Wake County – for her dedication to increasing access to affordable housing and public transportation, protecting civil rights, and reforming North Carolina’s tax system to make it more fair and transparent.

State Representative Larry D. Hall of Durham County – for his commitment to protecting vulnerable families and members of the military from predatory lenders, safeguarding voting rights, and expanding opportunities for low-income individuals and communities throughout the state.

Reuben Blackwell of the Opportunities Industrialization Center in Rocky Mount – for his tenacity in opening doors to opportunity, breaking down barriers, and standing up for the rights and well-being of the people of Rocky Mount and the state.

2012 Event Sponsors

PLATINUM

CAPITOL BROADCASTING COMPANY
THE WARNER FOUNDATION
AMERICAN TOBACCO

GOLD

WOMBLE CARLYLE

SILVER

ANONYMOUS
JOHN I. WILSON
NORTH STATE BANK

SUZANNE BEGNOCHE, ATTORNEY AT LAW
HAW RIVER WINE MAN

BRONZE

Adam and Jane Stein
Barbara Wiedemann and Chris Fitzsimon
Bill Wilson and Carol Teal
Blue Stephens & Fellers LLP
Center for Responsible Lending
Cy and Carolyn King
Environmental Defense Fund
Gene Nichol
Graebe Hanna & Welborn, PLLC
Jay Butler
John Graybeal and Laurie Heise
Legal Aid NC
Mary Mountcastle and Jim Overton
McMillan & Smith
Melinda Lawrence and Gregory Malhoit
NCSBPProgress.org
North Carolina AFL-CIO
Planned Parenthood of Central NC
Richard and Linda Hooker
Robert M. (Hoppy) Elliot and Suzanne Reynolds
Romeo, Wiggins & Company, L.L.P.
Ruth Sheehan and Harry Payne
Self-Help
Stephon Bowens
Steve Schewel and Lao Rubert
Theodore Fillette
William and Mary Coleman
Wood Jackson, PLLC