



end **poverty**



build **power**



share **prosperity**

2017
in review

A renewed

commitment

to economic
& social

JUSTICE



The true measure of our commitment to justice, the character of our society, our commitment to the rule of law, fairness, and equality cannot be measured by how we treat the rich, the powerful, the privileged, and the respected among us. The true measure of our character is how we treat the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned.

- Bryan Stevenson



“Who is the Justice Center?”

“What exactly is it that you all do?”



A message from...

Rick Glazier, Executive Director

The NC Justice Center has existed in its current form—after growing out of Legal Services in the 1980s—for over 20 years. We have worked alongside and for countless individuals during this time. Our partners know what work we do, as do our donors, clients, and individuals who receive our emails and read stories on NC Policy Watch. But it can be confusing for someone who’s just getting to know what we’re about.

The NC Justice Center would not be what it is today without the work of partner organizations and individuals that have worked alongside us. Each of those relationships is specific and personal to what we are as an organization because the work of the NC Justice Center is so specific and personal.

In the past year alone we organized clinics for immigrants across the state and hosted rallies in support of the Affordable Care Act. We reported on gerrymandering, environmental abuses, and unrelenting attacks on public education, while documenting the devastating impact of tax cuts on families with low incomes. We represented individuals who lost their homes to foreclosure or abusive consumer practices and workers seeking to be paid a fair wage for their work. We lobbied for and celebrated legislation that will aid thousands of formerly incarcerated North Carolinians and reaffirmed our commitment to speak out against racial injustice.

This may seem like many different kinds of work but it’s all interconnected. Each of our projects work in tandem in service of a common goal—to bring economic and social justice to the communities with low incomes across our state. This report aims to break down the different pieces of our work—how each of our projects makes a difference across our five-strategy system and how

they come together to create a unique nonprofit that is still evolving in these changing times.

I believe we are in a time when many organizations like ours—although few are exactly like the NC Justice Center in terms of scope of work, history, and size—are reexamining where they belong in an ever-changing world. Right now we have a better sense of the fight that lies ahead, having worked tirelessly through a difficult and unprecedented past few years. The issues that lie at the heart of our work and lives—and the communities and ideals we have sworn to protect—have seemingly been under constant attack, demanding our action and compassion. We had to make a recommitment to that work and take time to examine and redefine where we belong in the broader social justice movement across North Carolina.

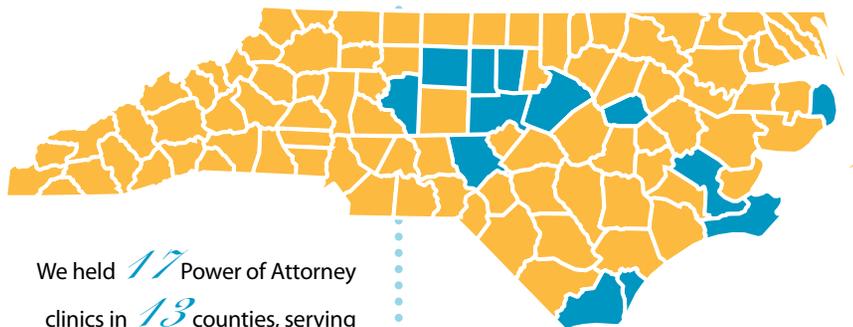
We have a better sense of our capability and strength. We know—more than ever—what a significant role each of us can play in building a more progressive state. One that stands by individuals from all walks of life, regardless of race, gender identity, income, sexual orientation, country of origin, immigration status, religion, disability, or history of incarceration.

We hope you’ll join us on this journey to a kinder, better, and wiser North Carolina.



2017 BY THE NUMBERS

We worked on *423 cases* through our litigation efforts in 2017, serving tens of thousands of North Carolinians.



We held *17* Power of Attorney clinics in *13* counties, serving *703* immigrants.



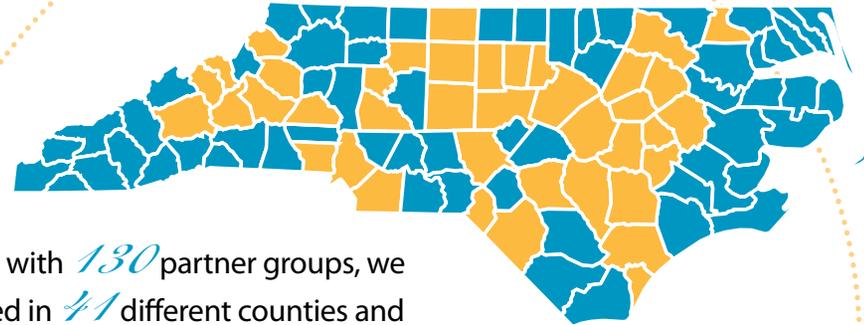
We engaged the services of *168* pro bono attorneys in our clinic efforts.



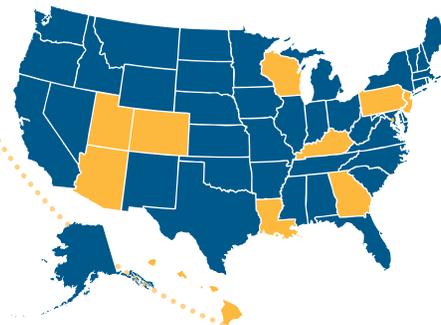
Health Advocacy Project was the main or only speaker at over *50* community events, engaging over *2,425* people.

We reached communities across the state through more than

270 presentations and outreach events.



Working with *130* partner groups, we presented in *41* different counties and across *11* states outside of North Carolina.



Other states: DC, New Jersey, Kentucky, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Utah, Hawaii, Arizona, Georgia, Wisconsin, Louisiana

NC Policy Watch produced more content for a growing audience:

Nearly *2,500* news stories, commentaries, infographics, and blog posts



Content appeared in *35* other news outlets around the state



The NCPW website had more than *900,000* unique website visitors in 2017

47,000 Twitter followers and nearly *22,000* Facebook followers

We released *96* reports, factsheets, briefs, and publications, and *102* media releases and reporter memos in 2017.



Our readers and followers wrote letters to lawmakers and signed petitions upwards of

12,000 times throughout the year.



LITIGATION

Every year our litigation staff

—made up of individuals with decades of experience litigating issues affecting North Carolinians—takes on high impact cases that protect and expand the rights of workers, consumers, immigrants, and families with low incomes. Last year alone, the NC Justice Center served as lead counsel or co-counsel in multiple class action cases and handled more than 70 additional impact cases, affecting hundreds of thousands of clients and indirectly impacting every resident of our state.

Our **Workers' Rights Project** successfully defended a group of housekeepers forced by their employers to sign non-compete agreements, prohibiting them from working for other housekeeping businesses. After winning a court decision in their favor, the company agreed to remove the non-compete clause and pay back wages owed to our clients.

The **Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project** represented immigrant families living in terrible

housing conditions, defended against foreclosures on behalf of victims of fraudulent home sales, and assisted legally-present immigrants in obtaining health care. Following the announcement that the popular DACA program would be terminated for DREAMers—and amidst a culture of anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric—we held legal clinics to ensure immigrants could apply for renewals they were entitled to receive under the push-back litigation, keeping the program open for now. To assuage fears of deportation spreading throughout the community, we organized Power of Attorney clinics across the state, helping hundreds of families create emergency plans.

Attorneys from our **Consumer & Housing Project** represented North Carolinians in a range of critical

areas, including successfully challenging an eviction of an interracial couple from a mobile home park and Homeowner Association's discriminatory accommodation policies for HOA members with



disabilities. We also continued and settled class action efforts challenging illegal practices of debt buyers and represented victims of for-profit school fraud.

Here to Stay NC
SAVE DACA.
SAVE TPS.

Stay NC
SAVE DACA.
SAVE TPS.



State Spending Below the 45-Year Average

General Fund appropriations as a share of state personal income

Final Budget Approval



Our analysts, journalists, and advocates offer the policy expertise that residents of our state need and publications that keep our community informed. Providing timely analysis and making sure progressive policy arguments are well-reasoned and supported are key steps to ensure our lawmakers are held accountable. **More than ever it is crucial to document the harms of policy choices as well as the needs of our communities.**

It's difficult to pore over complicated

proposals coming out of the General Assembly but, as always, the **Budget & Tax Center** provides critical tools on the state budget for the public and partners – factsheets, budget primers, reports, petitions – always asking the crucial questions of what's missing in the budget and how it will impact communities. Perhaps most importantly, they offer solutions and alternatives for what will provide a better path forward for our state and create an economy that works for all.

“Class-size chaos” remained a hot-button issue at the legislature throughout 2017, as schools were ordered to reduce class sizes in grades K-3 – without any of the funding necessary for districts to meet those goals. The **Education & Law Project’s** research and advocacy highlighted how this unfunded mandate will impact

RESEARCH

teachers and schools. They provided critical analysis and data, worked with parents and partners to organize events, and spoke to the media about how districts will be affected.

NC Policy Watch, the NC Justice Center’s award-winning news and commentary project, continues to break important stories and deliver hard-hitting daily reporting

and research on an array of vitally important subjects that often can’t be found anywhere else. When, for instance, lawmakers attempted to gerrymander state judicial maps last fall, Policy Watch deciphered the proposed legislation and reported exactly which sitting judges and district attorneys would be affected and how.



LOBBYING



Every year lawmakers debate countless bills at the General Assembly. Some benefit North Carolinians, others cause harm—and all may seem like distant policies controlled by people that most residents will never meet. But these policy proposals impact the livelihood and very lives of each and every North Carolinian. **This past year our lobbyists successfully advocated for bills that positively affect communities across the state, while also keeping dangerous laws from ever reaching the Governor’s desk.**

Our staff worked with the statewide **Second Chance Alliance**, a collaboration addressing the reintegration of adults and juveniles with criminal records, and served as integral players in one of this year’s most significant legislative victories. Senate Bill 445, a bipartisan bill, expanded

access to criminal record expungement for North Carolinians with charges not resulting in convictions and first-time nonviolent convictions.

Advocates on our **Consumer & Housing** team successfully blocked a harmful bill that would have made it easier to cheat homebuyers in the sale of manufactured homes – such as mobile units – by weakening protections for families with low incomes. Thanks to our team’s lobbying, the bill did not become law.

The **Workers’ Rights Project** fought long and hard to raise wages for our state’s home healthcare workers, who often earn far less than what it takes to make ends meet. Thanks to their efforts, legislators agreed to raise the Medicaid reimbursement rate for long-term care—the most important factor in setting caregiver wages—from \$13.88 an hour



to \$15.60 an hour. This will benefit both workers, who will see bigger paychecks, and seniors, who will get better care.

The **Education & Law Project** successfully opposed legislation that would have diverted funding from public schools and allowed low-performing charter schools to rapidly expand. They also successfully advocated for additional funding, phase-in requirements, and other improvements to the initially unfunded K-3 class size mandate as well as increased funding for early childhood educational programs.







COMMUNICATIONS



Serving as a trusted source of information in a world addled by claims of “fake news,” the NC Justice Center transforms public debate by focusing on the facts and the real stories of individuals across the state. Through reporting on NC Policy Watch, action alerts and petitions, social media, and our publications, we make clear to North Carolina what is at stake when policy changes are in play.

No other news organization in North Carolina covers environmental issues like **NC Policy Watch**. Our team has uncovered information on the GenX drinking water contamination crisis, coal ash and hog farm pollution, and numerous other threats to public health and well-being—particularly in communities of color and with low incomes. Uncovering and making these stories come to life is an integral part of our commitment to fighting poverty and social injustice.

The **Health Advocacy Project’s Medicaid Matters** series highlighted the success of Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in enhancing the health and well-being of children, older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers, as well as the state budget. Our communication efforts helped support the community as members stepped up in opposition to proposals debated in Congress that would threaten the very existence of these programs.



Since Hurricane Matthew devastated Eastern North Carolina, the **Budget & Tax Center** has called on lawmakers to increase investment in rural Eastern North Carolina communities, documented the ongoing impact of the storm, and collected stories from Robeson County residents hit hardest by the hurricane’s devastation. These individuals used their stories to pressure local leaders to accelerate investments in their communities. At a time when the federal government wouldn’t fully contribute to the recovery, state policymakers worked to make investments and identify other resources to help some of the state’s most vulnerable residents.

ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is one of the key building blocks of our work at the NC Justice Center. We work with community members across



North Carolina – teachers, parents, workers, students, advocates – in order to build connections and support local leaders in a broad range of economic justice efforts, from advocating for a living wage to helping communities access inexpensive, healthy food.

As part of the **Energy Efficiency for All** campaign, we have been working to improve energy efficiency programs



that reduce costs for communities with low incomes and better protect our environment. We've worked with allies to stop Duke Energy Progress from implementing astronomical increases in their mandatory monthly fees, an outcome which directly affects struggling North Carolinians who cannot afford to pay more for electricity.

Future leaders were the heart of our inaugural **Summer Policy Institute** in 2017. Two dozen aspiring advocates joined NC Justice Center staff for a three-day program aimed at fostering the state's next generation of analysts and leaders. We will host a second year of SPI this year and expand our successful Community Leader Policy Academy to grow a network of individuals working to advance change across the state.

The **Health Advocacy Project** traveled the state organizing educational forums, press events, rallies, and protests to protect access to healthcare and stop attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act. We worked with partners to organize call-in days, town halls, and phone banks so that North



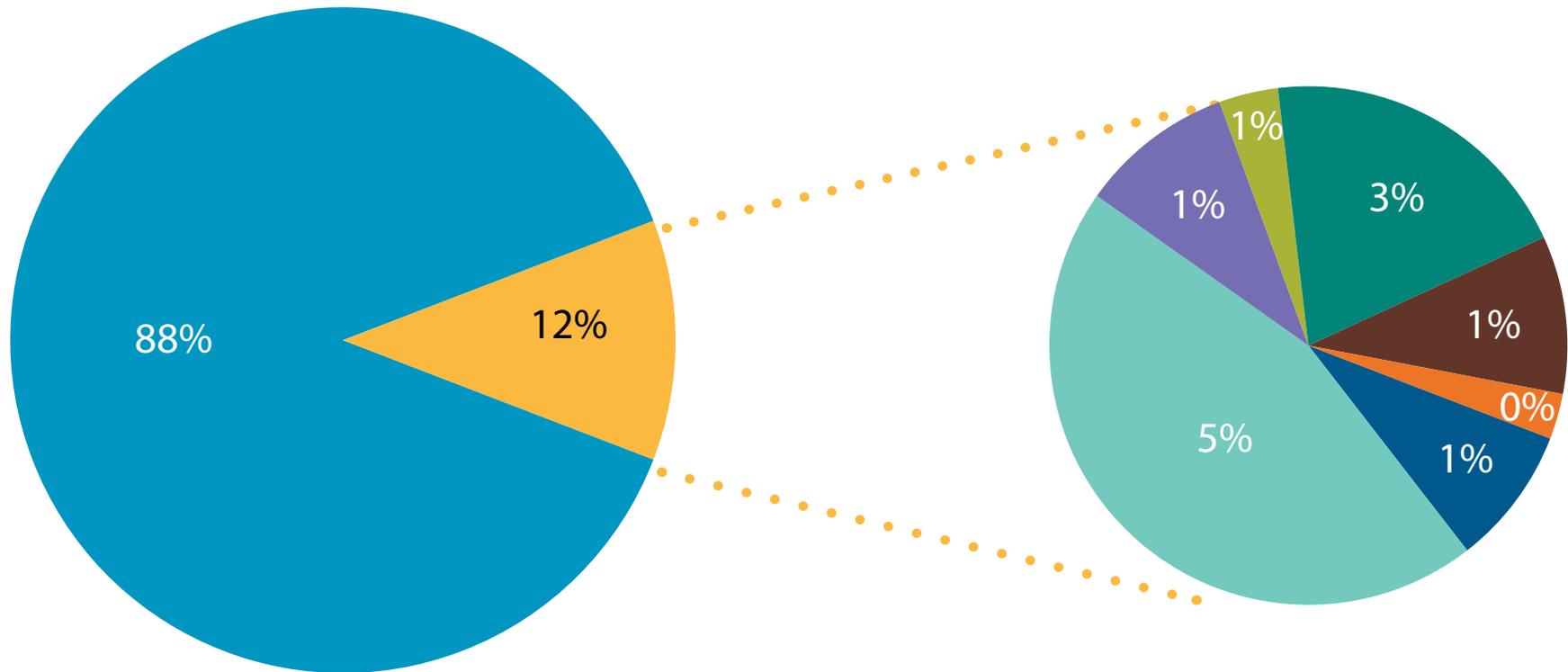
Carolinians could contact their elected officials to stop efforts to weaken the ACA and Medicaid.

Our **Education & Law Project** advocated for universal, high-quality, and affordable early childhood opportunities for every child in Forsyth County—aiming to close the achievement gap by supporting policy changes and engaging parents and community members in the process. Our advocacy last year—as well our leadership as a steering committee member of the Forsyth Universal Pre-K Initiative—resulted in expanding early childhood education opportunities to more than 600 additional children.



FUNDING

North Carolina Justice Center
2017 Operating Revenue Sources



- Grants and restricted contributions \$4,725,855
- Contracts \$54,105
- Unrestricted contributions \$282,919
- Attorney fees \$60,114

- Investment income \$23,078
- Special events \$125,100
- Donated services \$61,529
- Other income \$17,723

TOTAL \$5,350,423

Foundations

AJ Fletcher Foundation

Annie E. Casey Foundation

Blueprint

Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation

Caring Across Generations (Bend the Arc)

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Center for American Progress

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Community Catalyst, Inc.

- *Community Catalyst Health Justice Fund*
- *Community Catalyst Action Fund*

Cone Health Foundation

Democracy Fund

Educational Foundation of America

Energy Foundation

Family Values @ Work

Food Research & Action Center

Ford Foundation

Fund for Democratic Communities

IOLTA

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Kate B. Reynolds Foundation

Kenan Charitable Trust

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

NHeLP

Park Foundation

Southeast Immigrant Rights Network

The Shriver Center

Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance

Triangle Community Foundation

D. Michael Warner – Elizabeth B. Craven Foundation

Winston Salem Women's Fund

Working Poor Families

Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

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Every social justice movement that I know of has come out of people sitting in small groups, telling their life stories, and discovering that other people have shared similar experiences.

- Gloria Steinem



Phone: (919) 856-2570 Fax: (919) 856-2175

contact@ncjustice.org

www.ncjustice.org www.ncpolicywatch.com

Physical Address: 224 S. Dawson Street • Raleigh, NC 27601

Mailing Address: PO Box 28068 • Raleigh, NC 27611

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