

Consumer, Housing & Energy

THE CONSUMER, HOUSING & ENERGY PROJECT is dedicated to improving housing conditions for people with low incomes and to protecting North Carolinians from harmful and abusive business practices.

OUR WORK, OUR IMPACT:

We strive to **1)** create affordable and sustainable access to energy, water, transportation, and other essential services; **2)** engage in litigation representing consumers, renters, and homeowners who are victims of abusive practices; and **3)** advocate for stronger consumer, housing, and energy policy solutions in state and federal forums.

Protecting people from utility disconnection and eviction during the pandemic

- Harmful pandemic impacts continue to increase risk of eviction and utility disconnection for people with low incomes in North Carolina. We have worked to **improve delivery of COVID relief funding for rent and utility payment support** and, where possible maintain protections against eviction and utility shutoffs and other policies to help protect people during the pandemic. For example, with our support and advocacy, Duke Energy agreed to extend modified shutoff protections until March of 2022 for certain vulnerable populations, benefitting an estimated 90,000 residential ratepayers.

Fighting predatory debt buyers

- Our attorneys and paralegals continue to **pursue a class action and two individual lawsuits to enforce North Carolina's debt buyer laws against a major debt-buyer company** and have secured significant victories from the North Carolina Court of Appeals in

At the core of the Consumer, Housing & Energy Project's work are some of the foundational issues of the NC Justice Center, dating back to the creation of the North Carolina Legal Resource Center in 1982. The team focuses on unfair and deceptive practices targeting North Carolina consumers, fair landlord/tenant laws, affordable housing, and lending abuses.

Our staff have successfully advocated for landmark laws protecting against predatory lending, mortgage servicing abuses, and debt buyer abuses. We have engaged in successful class action litigation against unscrupulous mortgage brokers and payday lenders, and have coordinated statewide foreclosure defense work. Some of these hard fought victories were accomplished through our effective relationships with policymakers, allied attorneys, and organizations from across the state working in coalition.





these cases. Together, these cases impact approximately 50,000 people with \$5.6 million in claims.

Working to keep utilities affordable and homes weatherized and energy efficient

- Our advocates work in the General Assembly, the Utility Commission, and other forums to **keep utility costs as low as possible** and to create better energy efficiency and weatherization programs for people with low-incomes. With energy costs expected to increase this winter, this work is more important than ever.



Working to protect tenants

- The North Carolina Justice Center and advocacy partners at the Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy and Robinson Bradshaw represented plaintiffs and **settled an important case related to alleged violations of North Carolina law** leading to a settlement of \$547,500 to settle the litigation brought on behalf of a class of former tenants.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER to end poverty, build power, and share prosperity across North Carolina!



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