



Annual
Impact Report
2022-23

Protecting *People*
Defending *Justice*
Connecting *Communities*

Dear *Friends,*

As 2023 comes to a close, we offer our sincere thanks for your support of the North Carolina Justice Center's mission to eliminate poverty.

The NC Justice Center has spent nearly three decades working toward an ambitious, but we believe achievable, policy goal: ending poverty in North Carolina. Your encouragement and generosity make this work possible, and your continued partnership makes it sustainable.

Despite our state's difficult and increasingly divided climate, people are growing ever more determined to stand up for their rights. Women are leading organizing efforts in North Carolina workplaces, immigrants are standing up against abusive employers and creating better workplaces, consumers and tenants are fighting back against abusive business practices, those unjustly denied healthcare are holding their lawmakers accountable, and people from all racial and economic backgrounds are using their personal stories to build power and create change.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to ensuring everyone in our state has the resources and opportunities needed to thrive.

With gratitude,



REGINALD T. SHUFORD
Executive Director



DEAN PATRICIA
TIMMONS-GOODSON
Co-Chair,
Board of Directors



DEAN MELISSA
ESSARY
Junior Co-Chair,
Board of Directors



Our mission

...is to eliminate poverty in North Carolina by ensuring that every household in the state has access to the resources, services, and fair treatment needed to achieve economic security. To make opportunity and prosperity for all a reality, we work toward:

- Safe jobs that pay a living wage and provide benefits
- Access to quality and affordable health care
- Quality public education for every child
- Consumer protections from abusive practices
- Safe and affordable housing
- Public investments that expand opportunities for economic security
- A more fair criminal justice system, from arrest to reentry
- Fair treatment for everyone in North Carolina—regardless of race, ethnicity, country of origin, religion, disability, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation

Our Work



CONSUMER, HOUSING & ENERGY:

Improve housing conditions for people with low incomes, protect consumers from harmful business practices, and create affordable access to utilities, transportation, and other services.

EDUCATION & LAW:

Improve public education by ensuring public schools have the resources they need to provide every child—particularly children of color and those with low incomes—with a high-quality education through access to excellent schools from pre-kindergarten through high school.



FAIR CHANCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE:

Make the criminal justice system more fair from arrest to reentry by changing local and state policies that exclude people with criminal records from essential opportunities and resources.

HEALTH ADVOCACY:

Ensure all North Carolinians, especially underserved populations, have meaningful access to high-quality, affordable, equitable health care so that children, adults, and families have better health outcomes and productive lives.



IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE RIGHTS:

Protect and defend the rights of immigrants and refugees statewide through legal representation to navigate the complex immigration system and to protect immigrants and refugees from abuses in the public and private sectors.

WORKERS' RIGHTS:

Ensure everyone in North Carolina has a quality job or dignity when lacking a job by advocating for safe workplaces, by advocating for safe workplaces, higher wages, and better benefits, and by protecting the rights of low-wage workers.



2022-23 *by the Numbers*

- + Produced **45** publications
- + Received nearly **800** mentions in the press
- + Connected our **50,000** email subscribers to resources and advocacy opportunities
- + Led or was co-counsel in **7** class actions
- + Handled more than **35** impact cases
- + Provided legal advice to over **100** immigrant clients
- + Served more than **900** clients overall

Our staff has improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in North Carolina.

The NC Justice Center's effectiveness in advocating for policies that improve the lives of people in communities throughout North Carolina stems from **our five-strategy approach:**

LITIGATION:

Our experienced attorneys take on high-impact cases that protect and expand the rights of workers, consumers, immigrants, and families with low incomes.

RESEARCH:

Our expert analysts assess the social and economic challenges confronting families and communities with low incomes and develop policy recommendations that promote shared prosperity.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Our writers and media specialists generate a wealth of content for new and traditional media in order to inform the public dialogue and influence state policy.

PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY:

Our skilled advocates work with government officials and allies to secure laws and policies that protect and expand economic security.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

Our educators and facilitators partner with community groups and leaders to create movements for change.



EXPANDING MEDICAL CARE *in* NORTH CAROLINA

BY ORDER OF GOVERNOR ROY COOPER



United in the Fight for Healthcare

ICAID
LINA



The NC Justice Center's health advocacy staff works to ensure all North Carolinians, including individuals and families with low incomes, racial and ethnic minorities, and rural communities, have meaningful access to high-quality, affordable, equitable, and comprehensive health care. Equitable access to health care improves health outcomes in our state, making it a better place to live for children, adults, and families.

A Win for North Carolinians: Medicaid Expansion

The steadfast commitment of advocates, community organizers, coalition partners, and everyday North Carolinians led our state to expand Medicaid after 13 years of advocacy efforts. The NC Justice Center was a leader in the Medicaid fight, organizing community events, meeting with numerous providers and patients, anchoring coalitions, and lobbying legislators on the importance of expanding Medicaid.



LEFT: Members of the NC Justice Center's Health Advocacy Project and their coalition partners were present when Medicaid expansion was signed into law.

United in the Fight for Healthcare (cont.)



'Love Thy Neighbor' Campaign

In February 2023, the NC Justice Center organized a Love Thy Neighbor Advocacy Day and postcard campaign. North Carolinians sent over 2,000 postcards to all members of the North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) for Valentine's Day, urging them to finally expand Medicaid. The postcards were so impactful that, during the February 14 Advocacy Day, Representative Donny Lambeth read one written by an NC Justice Center health advocate in front of the House Health Committee before the House passed Bill 76 to expand Medicaid.

In addition to the mailed postcards, hundreds of volunteers delivered hand-drawn Valentine's Day cards to every lawmaker on February 14, and many met personally with their legislators to urge them to show their love for North Carolina by expanding Medicaid.

Continuing to Educate and Empower Communities with Information

While North Carolinians wait for the implementation of Medicaid expansion to begin, NC Justice Center staff has continued to provide educational resources to those facing the loss of Medicaid because of a process called Medicaid redetermination, where the rules for Medicaid have changed since the end of the public health emergency.

As 9,000 North Carolinians on Medicaid lost coverage for procedural issues due to the unnecessary budget delay, our staff worked tirelessly with people directly impacted. We raised awareness of the backroom budget negotiations tying Medicaid expansion to a casino proposal. Ultimately, the casino proposal did not garner enough support from the NCGA members or the community.

In the end, the NCGA's conference budget was months late, delaying the Medicaid expansion launch, and we mourn the loss of thousands of North Carolinians who did not live to see this moment. Our work will continue in honor of them, and to ensure not

one person eligible for Medicaid is left out. We also celebrate this moment with those who joined us over the many years, including those in the coverage gap, their families, and their providers who helped make this life-saving policy a reality.





“Power to do big things”

José Rolando traveled to North Carolina from his village in Mexico hoping to earn money to support his growing family back home.

With dozens of others, he boarded a bus in Monterrey, Mexico, with his H-2A visa in hand, looking forward to a season of hard work in the fields.

When the group arrived, they found a very different reality than what was promised to them, and quickly found their way to the NC Justice Center’s Workers’ Rights Project and Legal Aid of North Carolina’s Farmworker Unit. The two organizations filed a federal human trafficking and wage theft lawsuit against the crew leader, Francisco Valadez, and the growers who employed them.

In the lawsuit, they alleged that they arrived in debt because of the visa costs, travel costs, and illegally charged recruitment fees they had incurred in Mexico. They further alleged that they were not reimbursed for those costs, violating federal and state law.

In court filings, the workers described various uninhabitable and dangerous housing conditions: for several days, some workers were housed in a parked bus and then outdoors, and others were housed in decrepit labor camps with soiled mattresses, snakes in the barracks, and no hot water. The workers alleged that one labor camp was padlocked shut, preventing workers’ easy entry and exit. They also described confiscation of their passports and other documents, threats of serious harm to compel their work in the blueberry fields, and further threats from Valadez’s agents in North Carolina and Mexico after their escape.

The court granted the petition of José and nine of his co-workers to bring their claims as a collective action, which allowed

those representatives to reach a settlement benefiting 40 other co-workers. Ultimately, Valadez, his company, Francisco Valadez, Jr. LLC, and the remaining grower defendants (Goldsboro Milling Co., Inc., and GMC Legacy, LLC) agreed to pay a total of \$120,000 to the workers (a separate settlement was reached with Winzeler Farms, LLC, and a judgment was entered against Cottle Farms, Inc).

It was important to José Rolando and the nine other collective action representatives that their settlement would lead to improvements benefiting future H-2A visa recipients. These improvements were part of a consent decree entered by the court. They prohibit Valadez from employing H-2A workers for three years, from possessing or controlling workers’ passports, and require compliance with federal payroll recordkeeping requirements. Goldsboro Milling and GMC Legacy are required to pre-pay costs associated with bringing H-2A workers to the state.

In 2023, because of the settlement, for the first time, H-2A workers living in labor camps owned by Goldsboro Milling Co. (formerly Sleepy Creek Farms) have had wi-fi access, allowing them to maintain contact with family and to reach out to service providers. The labor camp gate may no longer be locked when occupants are inside, and the defendants must post signs reinforcing the housing occupants’ right to have visitors, as well as signs advising workers of emergency resources for human trafficking victims.

José Rolando (shown in the photo at right, finally reunited with his family in August 2023 after Legal Aid helped them to obtain visas for victims of human trafficking) said of the settlement, “It is a signal to all of the H-2A workers who come to North Carolina to work and who may be scared, a signal that they do have rights and power to do big things when companies are violating their rights.”





Empowering Working People

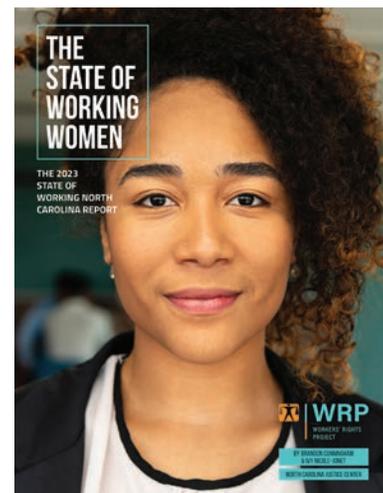
The NC Justice Center’s workers’ rights team works to ensure all jobs in North Carolina are good jobs that pay a living wage and have adequate benefits, that everyone can take time off work when needed, and that they have dignity when out of work. Working people have power: to enforce their rights, improve their workplaces, and influence policymakers.

State of Working North Carolina

The NC Justice Center’s 2023 State of Working North Carolina report focused on what it means to be a working woman in North Carolina—a uniquely challenging environment for women in the workforce, especially women of color. Barriers like occupational segregation, discrimination, and sexual harassment mean women still face a hostile work environment.

The good news is that women are organizing in greater numbers, and, as women flex their collective power, there is the potential for change from the halls of Congress to the smallest of workplaces.

Visit www.stateofworkingnc.org to read the full report.



We Work We Vote

Working people have collective power at the polls, and last year’s We Work We Vote campaign equipped voters with the tools they need as they advocate for worker-friendly policies. The campaign included educational materials on issues like paid family and medical leave, workplace safety, and unemployment, a guide to writing letters to the editor, and a list of questions to ask candidates.

It's just 1, 2, 3:

- 1 WEAR the enclosed sticker to the polls:**
Share the extras with your friends and family!
- 2 TAKE A SELFIE with your We Work, We Vote sticker!**
- 3 SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA!**
Tag us on Twitter and Instagram with your reasons for why you support working people’s issues!
Twitter: @ncworkers
IG: @buildingworkerpower

WeWorkWeVoteNC.org



Worker’s Lobby Day

RIGHT: The April 2023 Workers’ Rights lobby day featured a legislative press conference which garnered coverage from several media outlets.

On April 26, the NC Justice Center-led Raising Wages NC and NC Families Care Coalitions joined forces at the NCGA in Raleigh to advocate for bills on paid sick days, paid family and medical leave, and raising the minimum wage. The lobby day included more than 60 worker activists and was preceded by a legislative press conference that garnered coverage from multiple media outlets.

FMLA 30



The NC Justice Center-led NC Families Care Coalition, in partnership with the national Paid Leave for All campaign, hosted a month-long exhibit at Artspace in downtown Raleigh in March. #FMLA30 commemorated 30 years of the Family Medical Leave Act and featured six large format works by Raleigh artist Tim Lytvinenko centering North Carolinians who have needed time away from work to care for an aging or sick parent, welcome a newborn baby, or recover from their own serious illness. Visit the link below to view and listen to the virtual exhibit.

www.ncfamiliescare.com/fmla30-exhibition/





LEFT AND ABOVE: Scenes from the “30 years of the Family Medical Leave Act” Exhibit reception, June 2023. The exhibit featured six large format works by Raleigh artist Tim Lytvinenko

All People Deserve a Fair Chance



North Carolina’s current system of incarceration and re-incarceration is eroding the safety of our communities, draining our state’s resources, and failing those with criminal records, especially people of color.

The NC Justice Center’s fair chance team works to improve procedures, practices, and policies throughout the criminal justice system so people are treated fairly and can reintegrate with their families and communities when exiting this system.

The North Carolina Drug Tax

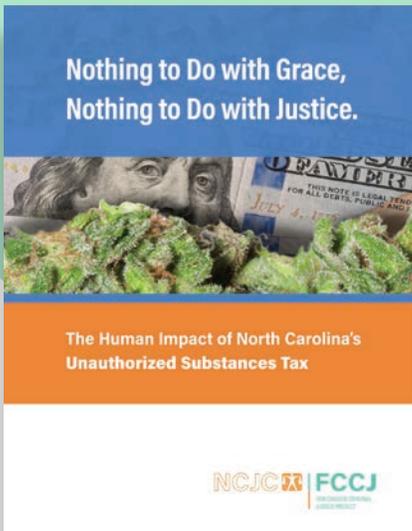
The NC Justice Center’s fair chance team compiled a report that includes interviews with North Carolinians whose lives have been upended by the Unauthorized Substance Tax, better known as the North Carolina Drug Tax, and seeks to educate the public about

this unjust law and advocate for its abolishment.

The North Carolina Drug Tax, a war-on-drugs-era law, requires people possessing certain amounts of a drug to purchase tax stamps from the North Carolina Department of Revenue (NCDOR) and place them permanently on the substance—with harsh financial consequences for those who don’t



comply. Almost no one, besides stamp collectors, purchases these stamps; most people don’t know they exist. The NCDOR later assesses back taxes, penalties, and interest against people found to be out of compliance. Over four thousand people annually, on average, are exposed to thousands in back taxes, interest, and penalties. The average assessed drug tax is \$8,872, but some owe millions.



Debt-based driver's license suspension?

LEARN ABOUT YOUR OPTIONS

www.ResolveTrafficDebtNC.org

The drug tax extracts millions from low-income communities and communities of color annually. It incentivizes over-policing vulnerable communities because 75% of the money collected is given to the law enforcement agency that initiated the investigation that led to the tax assessment.



THIS PHOTO: At the 2022 Vigil for Freedom and Racial Justice, left to right: Jamie Lau (of Duke University School of Law) and his family, Daniel Bowes (in Santa suit), Douglas Webb, Laura Holland.

LEFT: Advocates for fair chance policies gather at the NC General Assembly.



Thirty-three states and the federal government have deemed drug taxes unnecessary, unjust, or unconstitutional.

Resolve Traffic Debt

More than 1.2 million drivers in North Carolina have suspended driver's licenses for unpaid traffic fines and fees or missing a court date. Approximately 95 percent of North Carolinians drive to work. Therefore, not having a driver's license can create barriers to obtaining and maintaining meaningful employment. It can also make it hard to obtain affordable housing,

attend doctor's appointments, or care for family members. Low-income families and families of color are disproportionately affected by driver's license suspensions based on traffic debt.



The NC Justice Center launched www.resolvetrafficdebtnc.org to help North Carolinians overcome driver's license suspension. Driving records can be difficult to understand, and the site guides those who already have or will have a suspended license through the process of reinstatement.

Partnership with The Athlete's Foot

In April, the NC Justice Center partnered with The Athlete's Foot to present a symposium called **Unlocking Opportunities: The Business Case for Fair Chance Hiring and Second Chance Reforms in North Carolina.**

North Carolina is facing a workforce shortage in almost every industry. At the same time, nearly 1.6 million North Carolinians with criminal records have difficulty getting and keeping meaningful employment. Attendees

heard from business leaders, advocates, decision-makers, and directly impacted people about the importance of intentional, evidence-based interventions, such as fair chance hiring practices and statewide second-chance reform policies, to address criminal record-related barriers to employment.

Thanks to The Athlete's Foot for their support of our work!





"Whatever you want to do,
if you want to be great at it,
you have to love it
and be able to make sacrifices for it."
—Mays Angelou

ABOVE: Darryl Atkinson, renowned criminal justice reform advocate in NC and nationally, is the co-founder of Forward Justice and is a founding member of the NC Second Chance Alliance. He is a leader in the fair chance hiring conversation and has produced several publications and reports about it.

LEFT: Ali Edwards and Jana McNeil, owners of AJ's Cheesecakes, a family-owned, black women-owned small business and a fair chance employer.

FAR LEFT: Sangria Noble is a directly-impacted person who lives in Mecklenburg County. She is an advocate for criminal justice reform, including fair chance hiring, and a member of the Second Chance Alliance. Patrick Rorie is the HR director and leader with GenPak, a fair chance employer located in Charlotte, NC.

Funding *Schools,* Funding *Futures*



All students in North Carolina deserve the chance to attend schools that provide meaningful opportunity and, this year, the NC Justice Center’s education team continued the push for equitable, inclusive, and fully funded public schools.

As a founding member, co-chair, and anchor organization of the Every Child NC coalition, the NC Justice Center partnered with organizations and advocates from historically marginalized communities throughout the state to stand up for a state budget that will provide the resources schools, teachers, and support staff needed.



Expert Policy Analysis

Our policy experts analyzed data on growing teacher vacancies and the funding of an unproven and unregulated voucher system, painting a clear picture of a public school system in dire need of the funding it is owed under the state constitution.

We published research reports, blogs, and policy briefs outlining the critical need to fund public schools so that all students—regardless of family income, race, or geographic location—can thrive.

Advocacy Day for Public Education

On June 21, 2023, the NC Justice Center-supported coalition Every Child NC hosted a rally at the Edenton Street Methodist Church to support our children’s right to a quality public education. In the wake of efforts within state government to defund public education and redirect funds to private schools, it was more important than ever to stand in solidarity with our state’s educators and students to reject privatization.

The event was attended by over 200 educators, students, families, and activists, all demanding the equitable distribution of taxpayer funds to all North Carolina public schools—especially our rural schools, which often lack the resources necessary to provide students the same opportunities as schools in urban and suburban districts. North Carolina has the resources to fully fund the Leandro Plan, a legislative roadmap for fully resourcing North Carolina’s public schools.



The newest North Carolinians—immigrants and refugees who call North Carolina home—are supported by the NC Justice Center’s immigrant and refugee rights experts.

Our work in this area includes legal representation, support in navigating the complex immigration system, and advocacy in the public and private sectors. We work closely with community partners and other social justice nonprofits to address the most pressing issues immigrants and refugees face, from education and health care to public safety and fighting discrimination.

A Win for Access to Full-Term Driver’s Licenses

In December 2022, the NC Justice Center and ACLU of North Carolina filed a petition regarding the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles’ (NCDMV) inconsistent, unfair, and discriminatory practices with regard to immigrants who have permanent or indefinite lawful status in the United States. The petition declared that the NCDMV had been wrongfully providing this group of immigrants with limited-term driver’s licenses, shorter than the full-term license they should have received. In other instances, these immigrants were being denied licenses entirely due to NCDMV’s mistaken and unlawful practices.

In March, NCDMV issued a declaratory ruling establishing that immigrants of permanent and indefinite status are entitled to full-term driver’s licenses under North Carolina law, a significant victory that will help immigrants get to and from work, school, and medical appointments, among countless other daily tasks.

One of the petitioners in the case, Mayra, said, “Knowing that I will get a license issued for the appropriate period of time is great because, under the previous policy, I was denied and did not have a license for four months and had to quit my job because I couldn’t drive to get there. I’m happy that this ruling benefits so many more people than I thought and that they won’t have to go through the same experiences that I did.”

Language Access in Court

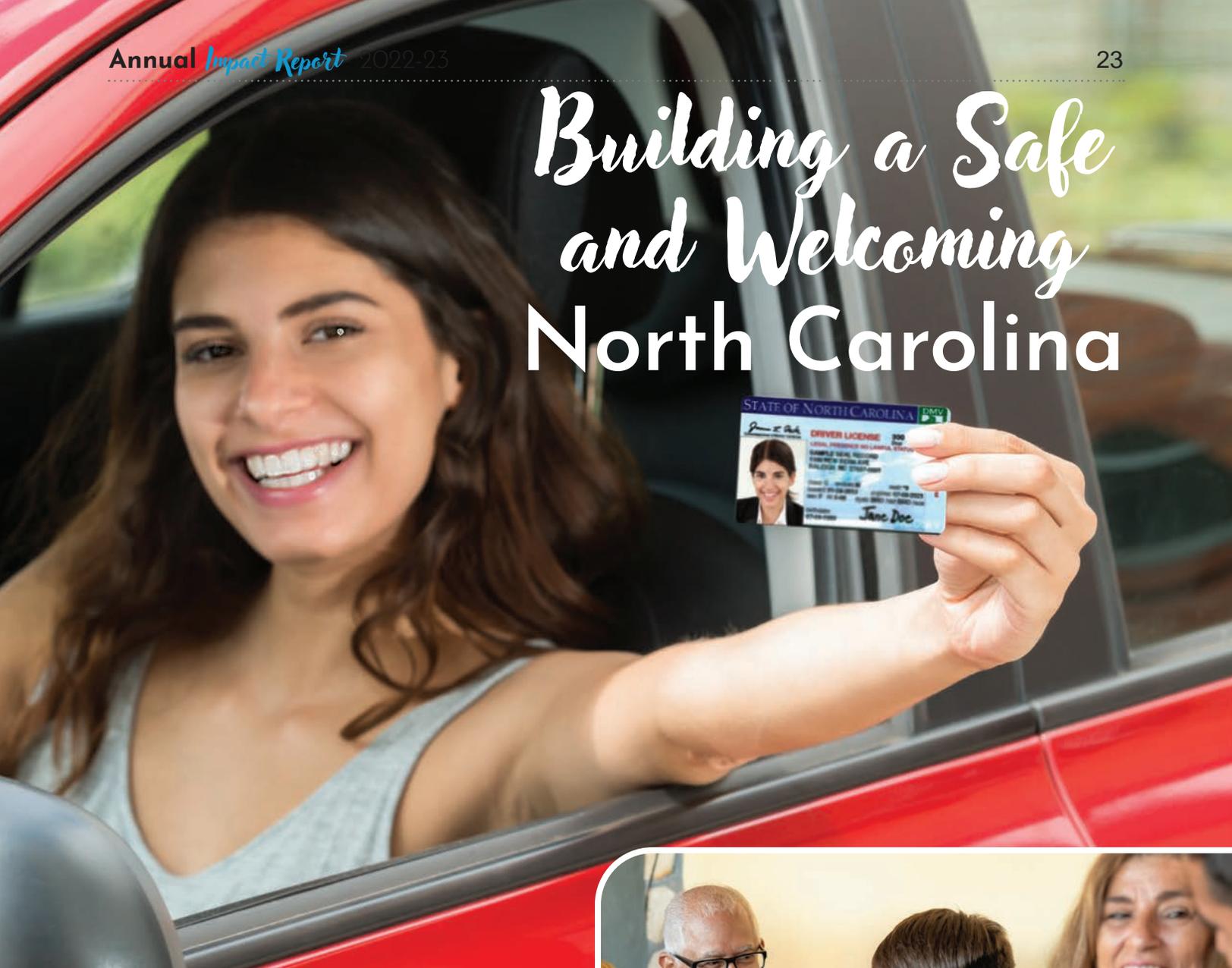
After more than a decade of work, the NC Justice Center—along with Legal Aid of North Carolina, the private bar, North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC), and others—resolved a language access complaint with NCAOC and the U.S. Department of Justice.

The original federal Title VI civil rights complaint, filed in 2011 by the NC Justice Center and co-counsel Tin Nguyen, alleged that NC AOC was not meeting its legal duties to provide language access to all who need to use the court system.

Among the many new requirements for NCAOC as a result of the resolution are: making the interpreter request form available in multiple languages; posting signs in courthouses informing people of their language access rights; and including information on court filing forms asking whether any parties or witnesses to the litigation will need interpreter services.

The resolution is a milestone for language access in North Carolina’s courts, ensuring all who participate in the court process have the necessary tools to understand the proceedings. All people should be able to navigate the court system, no matter what languages they speak.

Building a Safe and Welcoming North Carolina



Keeping families together, protecting people from violence, and standing up to injustice

The NC Justice Center's attorneys recently filed a lawsuit on behalf of hundreds of victims of crimes who had been waiting endlessly for their U-visa immigration paperwork to be processed. As a result of our lawsuit, our clients began receiving determinations on their applications, including the issuance of much-needed work permits and social security cards.



We also settled a federal court case filed on behalf of three clients who have been waiting for more than five years to have their asylum applications processed. Some of our clients have not been able to see their families during that entire time period. Thanks to the settlement, the government has agreed to schedule asylum interviews for all three of these clients promptly.

Gia's Story



When Gia and her family were presented with a rent-to-own opportunity, they were excited about the prospect of a place to build memories and make their own—something they didn't think was within reach in the current housing market.

of the house, and the agreement she'd signed was a rental agreement.

"And the next thing I know I'm being served with eviction notices," said Gia. "And...I was very scared. I didn't know my rights. I didn't know if this was legit."

The first time she went to court, Gia had been unable to find representation and went without an attorney. Fortunately, shortly after this, she was referred to the NC Justice Center, and her

case was taken on by Senior Attorney Kate Woomer-Deters.

"[We] hadn't even met in person yet," Gia explained. "We met at court on the day of court, and Kate, wow—Kate blew me away. She came with all these documents. She got information that I didn't have. Thank God for Kate."

Thanks to Kate's efforts, Gia learned another shocking piece of information: her landlord had not even owned the home at the time he initially agreed to sell it to Gia and her family.

With Kate and the NC Justice Center helping Gia navigate the proceedings, Gia and her family reached a resolution that allowed them to stay in the house and become the actual owners.

"Seven of us...would have lost our home that we have invested so much love and so many memories and so much money [into] already," said Gia. "You guys literally save lives because you saved my whole family's life."

After paying rent, living in the house for a year and a half, and spending countless hours and thousands of dollars remodeling the property, Gia's landlord told her that he was in financial trouble and would need her and her family to leave so he could sell the house. He tried to get the family to move into another property he owned, which was uninhabitable.

Gia told the landlord, "Wait a minute, what do you mean you're gonna need me to move out? I bought the home."

That's when he told Gia that she was not the owner



2023 *Legislative Session*

Lawmakers at the NCGA began a long session of the legislature in January.

Equipped with valuable lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, the NC Justice Center brought forth an ambitious legislative agenda to strengthen critical policies, practices, and systems.

Throughout the session, the NC Justice Center participated in lobbying efforts, created educational materials, organized advocacy days and other direct actions to bring together North Carolinians from across the state, helped connect constituents to their lawmakers to weigh in on key legislation, and held lawmakers accountable for delays in the state budget.

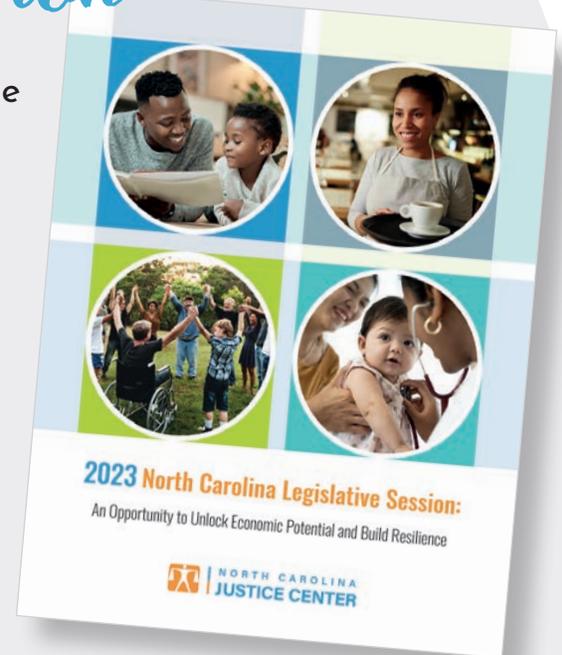
There were over 1,600 bills filed during the session. The NC Justice Center's lobbyists and advocates showed up on the grounds of the NCGA to help file or otherwise advance several measures to provide relief for families with low incomes, including:

- **Medicaid expansion**
- **Raising the minimum wage and mandating paid sick days**
- **Improving our state's unemployment insurance program**
- **Increasing access to criminal record expunction**
- **Reducing debt-based driver's license suspensions**
- **De-weaponizing medical debt**
- **Tuition equity for students without citizenship status**
- **Measures to promote a healthy and inclusive public school environment**

Importantly, our lobbyists and advocates opposed several harmful bills, in many cases stopping, stalling, or mitigating them through amendments:

- **Worker classification measure making it easier to exploit workers**
- **Attempts to weaken consumer protections, increase rates and fees on consumer loans**
- **Building code changes favorable for industry but harmful to consumers or the environment**
- **Discrimination against LGBTQ+ youth**
- **Draconian restrictions on access to abortion care and reproductive health**
- **Requiring sheriffs to cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement**
- **Expansion of charter schools and private school vouchers at the expense of public schools**
- **Blue Cross NC restructuring**

Though we did not prevail in every legislative fight, our advocacy kept progressive ideas in the discourse, strengthened relationships with partners and directly impacted communities, and pushed lawmakers to center their decisions on their constituents' needs above moneyed interests.





Protecting Consumers

North Carolinians with low incomes need safe and affordable housing, utilities, and transportation. The NC Justice Center's consumer advocates engage in litigation representing consumers, renters, and homeowners who are victims of abusive practices. They also advocate for stronger consumer, housing, and energy policy solutions in state and federal forums.

Reducing Loss of Homes Through Foreclosure and Unfair Practices

Our advocacy before the NC Housing Finance Agency has led to significant improvements in the operation of the Homeowner's Assistance Fund Program, North Carolina's COVID-relief program.

In addition, NC Justice Center attorneys defended numerous clients at foreclosure hearings, focusing

on cases that address predatory lending and servicing practices targeted against people of color. In these cases, we challenge unfair and abusive practices of mortgage servicers and lenders, HOAs, manufactured home parks, and land-installment lenders.



To help homeowners guard against foreclosure rescue and other scams targeting vulnerable homeowners, we created educational materials about “surplus funds” scams. As home values increase, this scam is becoming more prevalent. Often, homeowners facing foreclosure do not realize they have significant home equity, even after the home has been through foreclosure.

Scammers take

advantage of this lack of sophistication and convince homeowners to sign away that extra equity—surplus funds—to the scammers after the sale.

Protecting Consumers from Rising Energy Costs

The N.C. Utilities Commission approved a partial settlement in a ruling recently issued on Duke Energy’s rate increase filings. The NC Justice Center had intervened in these proceedings. The settlement provides for a new customer assistance program to be created by Duke Energy, and a \$16 million shareholder contribution to low-income households over the next three years: \$10 million for critical health and safety repairs that would allow for energy efficiency and weatherization upgrades to homes and \$6 million for Duke Energy’s Share the Light fund, which helps low-income customers who are behind on their bills.

The settlement is an important first step to making clean and affordable energy accessible to all North Carolinians.

Increasing Transportation Options

The NC Justice Center’s transportation work focuses on increasing transportation options for low-income communities, marginalized people, and communities of color. We need statewide solutions that address climate change and offer equitable solutions for our neighbors. The NC Justice Center hosted a statewide summit in Raleigh in September, which brought together advocates working on transportation issues.



Thank You to Our Generous Donors!

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