

Access to Justice Glossary

Find commonly used terms in access to justice community nationally and in North Carolina.

ABA	American Bar Association, a national voluntary organization for lawyers, paralegals, and law students.
Access to Civil Justice Act	North Carolina law that authorizes the Administrative Office of the Courts to send a portion of each court fee paid to legal services organizations.
Access to Justice Campaign	A statewide fundraising campaign conducted each year that solicits funds from North Carolina attorneys and law firms.
ADR	Alternative dispute resolution, an alternative for resolving legal disputes outside of court including mediation, collaborative law, and other methods.
AOC	Administrative Office of the Courts, the administrative agency of the North Carolina Judicial Branch that provides support services to the entire court system including court management and programming, financial, human resources, technology, research, and other resources.
ATJ	Access to justice, may also refer to state access to justice initiatives, like the NC Equal Access to Justice Commission.
CIU	Central Intake Unit, a unit of Legal Aid of North Carolina (LANC) that interviews persons calling LANC for assistance, provides advice and brief service, and refers to a local LANC office or pro bono attorney for further assistance.
Civil legal aid	Legal services provided to low-income individuals and families to solve non-criminal legal problems. Civil legal aid offers services to help low-income people defend and assert their legal rights in matters involving safety, economic security, shelter, health, and well-being.
Cy pres	A doctrine that allows the court to distribute unclaimed and residual funds in class action settlements to charitable organizations that have a connection to the case or the class. Other types of court awards may also be distributed to charitable organizations through mediation, arbitration and other negotiated settlement agreements.
DA	District Attorney (or ADA, Assistant District Attorney) is an attorney who represents the state and is responsible for prosecuting criminal cases.
Disability Rights North Carolina	A nonprofit law firm that works to protect the legal rights of people with disabilities through individual and systems advocacy.
DVPO	Domestic violence protective order, a civil order of the court that provides protection to an individual who is a victim of domestic violence from an abuser.
EATJC	Equal Access to Justice Commission, a North Carolina Supreme Court Commission created in 2005 to expand access to the civil justice system for people of low income and modest means across the state.
Equal Justice Alliance	Formerly the Legal Services Planning Council, a coalition made up of the executive directors of the primary legal services programs across North Carolina.
Indigent	An individual who is poor and cannot afford an attorney.
IDS	North Carolina Office of Indigent Defense Services, a program that manages the provision of legal services by public defenders to criminal defendants (and parties in some civil cases where there is a right to counsel) that cannot afford to hire an attorney. Sometimes called OIDS (Office of Indigent Defense Services).

IOLTA	Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts, a program in every state that receives interest on lawyers' general trust accounts to fund grants for civil legal aid for low-income individuals and other programs to improve the administration of justice. NC IOLTA formed in 1984 and has granted more than \$50 million to civil legal aid and other programs to improve the administration of justice.
LANC	Legal Aid of North Carolina, a nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services in civil matters to low-income people across the state that cannot afford an attorney.
LLPP	Land Loss Prevention Project, a nonprofit law firm that provides legal assistance to landowners, homeowners, farmers, and farm-related businesses in civil matters that affect the use and retention of land statewide.
LRAP	Loan repayment assistance program, a program that provides loan repayment, forgiveness, or lower loan payments to law graduates pursuing employment in the public sector. NC LEAF (the first statewide LRAP) formed in 1989 and has provided more than \$5.8 million in loan repayment assistance to over 500 public service attorneys.
LSC	Legal Services Corporation, a nonprofit corporation that is funded by the federal government and provides funding to organizations in each state to provide civil legal services to people that cannot afford to hire an attorney.
LSSP	Legal Services of Southern Piedmont, a nonprofit law firm that provides legal services in civil matters to low-income people in the Charlotte area and in west-central North Carolina that cannot afford an attorney.
MLP	Medical-legal partnership, a model that brings together medical and legal professionals to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals by addressing their legal needs including those that may be harming their health.
NCABL	North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers, a voluntary professional organization of black lawyers.
NCAJ	North Carolina Advocates for Justice, a voluntary professional organization for trial lawyers in North Carolina.
NCAWA	North Carolina Association of Women Attorneys, a voluntary professional organization of women lawyers dedicated to advancing women in the study and practice of law.
NCBA	North Carolina Bar Association, a voluntary professional organization of lawyers, paralegals, and law students.
NCBAF	North Carolina Bar Association Foundation, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit charitable organization affiliated with the 18,000 member North Carolina Bar Association.
NC GALA	North Carolina Gay and Lesbian Attorneys, a voluntary professional organization for North Carolina's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community.
NC Justice Center	A nonprofit law firm that provides advocacy and legal representation to eliminate poverty by ensuring that low-income, working, and minority individuals and communities have the resources and services they need to move from poverty to economic security, focusing on high-impact poverty law cases and representation of individuals who cannot receive services from Legal Aid of North Carolina due to LSC restrictions.

NC LEAF	North Carolina Legal Education Assistance Foundation, North Carolina's loan repayment assistance program (LRAP) providing loan repaying assistance to attorneys working in public service careers. NC LEAF, the first statewide LRAP, formed in 1989 and has provided more than \$5.8 million in loan repayment assistance to over 500 public service attorneys.
NC LEAP	North Carolina Lawyers for Entrepreneurs Assistance Program, a public service program of the North Carolina Bar Association, provides business-related legal services to low-wealth entrepreneurs and business owners in North Carolina.
NLADA	National Legal Aid & Defender Association, a national voluntary professional organization dedicated to the delivery of legal services to those who cannot afford counsel in civil and criminal matters.
NCSB	North Carolina State Bar, also called State Bar, a government agency responsible for regulation of the legal profession in North Carolina to protect the public and system of justice.
OAH	Office of Administrative Hearings, a state agency made up of administrative law judges that conduct administrative hearings involving citizens and state agencies.
PAI	Private attorney involvement, a requirement that programs funded by the Legal Services Corporation spend not less than 12.5% of federal grant funding on activities to involve the private bar in the delivery of civil legal aid services.
PD	Public Defender (or APD, Assistant Public Defender) is an attorney who represents criminal defendants (and parties in some civil cases where there is a right to counsel) that cannot afford to hire an attorney.
Pisgah Legal Services	A nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services in civil matters to low-income people in the western North Carolina counties of Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, Polk, Rutherford and Transylvania.
Prisoner Legal Services	Formally, NC Prisoner Legal Services; a nonprofit law firm that works to ensure humane conditions of confinement in prisons and jails and to challenge illegal convictions and sentences.
Pro bono	Volunteer legal services provided by legal professionals to individuals and organizations that need legal services but cannot afford to hire an attorney.
Pro se litigant	Refers to a person who is representing himself or herself in court without a lawyer. Also called SRL, self-represented litigant.
SRL	Self-represented litigant, refers to a person who is representing himself or herself in court without a lawyer. Also called pro se litigant.
VAWA	Violence Against Women Act, a source of federal funding for civil legal aid to victims of domestic violence.
VLP	Volunteer lawyer program, a program that refers cases to volunteer attorneys that represent individuals for free.
VOCA	Victims of Crime Act, a source of federal funding for legal assistance to victim of crime, including victims of domestic violence.