

ABOUT THE JUSTICE CENTER

The North Carolina Justice and Community Development Center (Justice Center) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization founded and governed by low-income people, non-profit groups and legal and community leaders. The Justice Center is dedicated to helping low income and working poor North Carolinians escape poverty and achieve economic security. It includes several well-known projects within its umbrella and is professionally staffed by a team of lawyers, community educators and policy analysts who:



Advocate on important public policy issues before state and local governments;



Conduct research and publish analyses on important public policy issues;



Provide direct education and training in order to empower non-profits and community groups;



Represent individual low-income clients and groups of clients in important litigation with statewide impact.

The Justice Center is the only non-profit in North Carolina that seeks to bring such a comprehensive approach to helping low income people achieve economic security.

Justice Center Projects:

- North Carolina Education and Law Project
- North Carolina Health Access Coalition
- North Carolina Living Income Project
- Grassroots and Community Empowerment Project
- North Carolina Poverty Law Litigation Project
- North Carolina Immigrants Legal Assistance Project
- North Carolina Budget & Tax Center

The following persons represent the Justice Center at the North Carolina General Assembly:

Sorien Schmidt	856-2151
Bill Rowe	856-2177
Adam Searing	856-2568
Greg Malhoit	856-2150
Angella Dunston	856-2567
Yvonne Perry	856-2176
Rob Schofield	856-2153
Dan Gerlach	856-2158

North Carolina Justice & Community Development Center

919/856-2570 *voice*
919/856-2175 *fax*

224 S. Dawson Street
P.O. Box 28068
Raleigh, North Carolina 27611

www.ncjustice.org
info@ncjustice.org



N.C. JUSTICE and
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
CENTER

**A Living
Income
Agenda**

2001

LOW-INCOME FAMILIES NEED PROTECTION AND SUPPORT TO ACHIEVE A LIVING INCOME

Across North Carolina, 1.1 million taxpayers and their families are working hard and playing by the rules; yet they have a hard time making it. For them, a living income is an unrealized dream. The Justice Center believes that state policymakers can take action that breaks down the barriers these families face. To support these families, the Justice Center has established a Living Income Agenda that policymakers can follow to help working families make ends meet. This agenda was based on our January 2001 report *Working Hard is Not Enough*. The demand for this report has been unprecedented in our organization's history. We believe it indicates broad awareness of underlying economic troubles and a readiness and hunger for action.

A Living Income Agenda

Improve Educational Opportunities

- Increase funding for limited English proficient children and children in special education
- Support programs that will narrow the achievement gap and lead to academic success for at-risk students
- Promote fair testing of students

Protect Consumers

- Protect the state's anti-predatory lending law
- Reform payday lending practices
- Assure that all North Carolinians can obtain affordable basic utility service

Create Access to Affordable Housing

- Allocate \$50 million annually to the Housing Trust Fund
- Expand North Carolina's state housing tax credit to 75 percent of the federal credit.
- Maximize flood-related funds for very low income families.
- Use TANF funds for affordable housing.
- Authorize local governments to adopt inclusionary zoning programs.

Support Low Wage Workers

- Increase the minimum wage
- Ensure that state and local governments pay their employees a living wage and require their contractors to do so as well
- Provide flat dollar amount increases for state employees
- Extend federal worker rights (such as Family & Medical Leave Act to state employees)

Improve Tax Policy

- Enact a state Earned Income Tax Credit
- Require that businesses receiving tax credits from the state pay living wages.

Expand Health Care Access

- Ensure that all children eligible for Health Choice and Medicaid are served
- Expand Medicaid to uninsured working parents
- Enhance access to affordable dental care and prescription drugs

Strengthen the Safety Net

- Base Work First benefits on the amount it takes to live
- Improve food stamp outreach and simplify eligibility requirements
- Protect current unemployment insurance benefits and standards

Legal Services

- Support additional funding for civil legal services to low income people