

Child and Family Protection and Self-Sufficiency Project

FY 2017 Buncombe County Community Funding

Pisgah Legal Services

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Application Form

Project Name*

Name of Project

Child and Family Protection and Self-Sufficiency Project

Amount Requested*

Amount Requested

\$300,000.00

Service Area***Which Commissioner Districts are served by this program?**Access a map of Buncombe County Commissioner districts [here](#).

District 1

District 2

District 3

Which county sustainability goal aligns best with the goals of this project?*

Based on the Buncombe County Sustainability Plan, select a Category, Goal & Objective that align with the focus of the project and the specific results that will be achieved.

Access the Buncombe County Sustainability Plan [here](#).

Economy > Workforce Development > Identify and reduce barriers to employment (e.g., childcare, transportation, housing, insurance)

If applicable, select a second sustainability goal that aligns with project goals.

Result 2 is optional - Select if project aligns with more than one Sustainability Category, Goal & Objective.

Community > Affordable, Green, and Liveable Housing > Work in partnership with other organizations to assist families in finding safe, affordable housing

If applicable, select a third sustainability goal that aligns with project goals.

Result 3 is optional - Select if project aligns with more than one Sustainability Category, Goal & Objective.

Community > Affordable, Green, and Liveable Housing > Promote home ownership while also supporting quality, affordable, safe rental developments

Project Description

Project Description*

Description of Project

The Child and Family Protection and Self-Sufficiency Project provides free civil legal aid to help low-income adults and children in Buncombe County. Through this project, Pisgah Legal Services (PLS) will:

- * Prevent illegal/unnecessary evictions and foreclosures to help families avoid homelessness;
- * Improve substandard housing conditions and maintain utility services so that families can remain in their homes;
- * Secure or preserve public/subsidized housing benefits to keep the poorest families housed;
- * Help victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse escape violence and rebuild their lives;
- * Secure public benefits and other resources to ensure that children and families have food, medical care, education and income.

When low-income people are able to address their basic needs, barriers to employment and high work performance are significantly reduced.

Pisgah Legal attorneys provide direct services to clients and also work to affect systemic change to improve the lives of entire groups or categories of people. For instance, we have advocated for changes to public housing policies to reduce the rent and prevent unnecessary evictions for very low-income residents.

Pisgah Legal's direct services and systemic change work plays an important role in addressing problems of poverty for thousands of Buncombe County residents and working towards poverty reduction in our community. Our efforts to help low-income families address housing problems are particularly urgent in Buncombe County right now, given our community's affordable housing crisis. Unfortunately, due to cuts in State, United Way and IOLTA funding, PLS has had to reduce the number of attorneys dedicated to housing cases, resulting in fewer families served when the need is higher than ever. PLS respectfully requests additional county funding for a homelessness prevention attorney. Additional funding would help PLS restore our capacity to provide these homelessness prevention services.

How many people will this project serve?*

State the number of individuals or households in Buncombe County that will be served by this project. Also state the number of people that will experience the desired result. For example, if dropout prevention services are being delivered to 100 students, how many will successfully graduate from high school?

The Child and Family Protection and Self Sufficiency Project will provide legal assistance to 3,000 unduplicated households in Buncombe County. Based on our past performance, we estimate that 90% of these households will achieve the desired result, such as secure a domestic violence protective order, prevention of eviction or foreclosure, or improvement of substandard housing conditions. PLS expects that this project will improve the lives of at least 6,000 adults and children in crisis in Buncombe County (counting all of the people in each household served).

PLS offers holistic legal services to our clients, addressing an average of 2 legal issues per client, often including a housing issue. In FY 2015, 27% of our case outcomes were housing related. For low-income

families, finding and keeping safe, decent and affordable housing is one of the greatest challenges of living in poverty. Their ability to afford health insurance and basic needs are affected by the high costs of housing.

Describe the people this project will serve.*

Characterize the demographics of the project's target population in terms such as age, gender, income, race, ethnicity, geographic area, etc. Include information about method of referral/recruitment of the target population.

This project will serve the most vulnerable, low-income residents of Buncombe County. Most of the people served by this project will be at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (\$25,112 for a family of three). This project will serve people of all ages, races, ethnicities and geographic areas in Buncombe County. We will serve: disadvantaged children, families facing homelessness, victims of domestic violence and child abuse, people with disabilities, and vulnerable seniors.

Clients are referred to PLS by: the 211 Helpline, Buncombe County HHS, Homeward Bound, Helpmate, Our Voice, local schools, OnTrack, Mission Health System, MAHEC, WNCCHS, and many other local organizations. PLS will also receive clients through the Buncombe County Family Justice Center, once opened in 2016.

In addition, PLS conducts education and training to raise community awareness of our services and to reach potential clients.

What key steps will you take to achieve the results of this project?*

Describe the core elements of your implementation plan, including milestones that will take place within the funding timeframe.

This project involves several strategies to improve the lives of low-income Buncombe County residents. These include:

- * Provision of legal advice and representation to low-income people;
- * Collaboration with local partners to work towards systemic solutions to problems of poverty; and,
- * Community education and training to help as many people as possible.

PLS provides holistic services to its clients and often addresses more than one issue for each client to create meaningful and lasting change in their lives. For example, we may help a domestic violence victim secure a protective order and child custody, as well as assist her with housing and debt issues, to make it possible for her to establish a life apart from her abuser.

This work will be ongoing throughout the funding period. Milestones will include analyzing case data quarterly to track our progress towards our goals.

Describe the evidence of success that backs this project's approach.*

What evidence of success (i.e. evidence-based research, practice model, accreditation, industry standards, and/or other framework) are you using as a basis for your project design?

Studies show that 80% of low-income people have civil legal problems and that "on average, lawyer-represented people are more likely to win than are unrepresented people." (www.nlada.org) For people in poverty, access to justice is directly related to their most basic needs, like housing and safety. PLS found that

in Buncombe County abuse victims with legal representation were 50% more likely to secure the protective orders they sought than those without legal help. An economic study showed that every dollar spent on getting a protective order for a domestic violence victim is estimated to prevent \$30.75 in societal costs.

PLS's work stabilizing housing and preventing homelessness creates tremendous savings for our community and tax payers. A 2014 independent analysis by Creative Housing Solutions showed that in Central Florida, the region spends \$31,000 a year per homeless person. In some cases, PLS prevents homelessness for a family with legal services costing \$500 to \$1,000.

Describe your data collection, tracking, and reporting procedures.*

Explain your methods for documenting project, service and client information. Include a description of any software or other tools utilized.

Pisgah Legal Services tracks and analyzes client data (including demographics, income, referral source, etc.) and case results using Kemps database software, a sophisticated database developed specifically for legal services agencies. This database allows us to check for conflicts of interest that would prevent us from accepting a case.

PLS measures its success through: court documents (e.g. protective orders, dismissal of evictions, child custody secured); award letters related to subsidized housing, unemployment benefits, health insurance coverage and other public benefits; and attorney notes about outcomes.

Explain your technological resources and capacity.*

Explain your current technological strengths and barriers and how this impacts your ability to track data and report outcomes. Who is responsible for adaptation and use of technology within your organization?

With Kemps we can track a wide range of client and case data. For example, in 2014 we documented that PLS helped 14,300+ people in WNC and secured more than \$19.1 million in quantifiable benefits for our clients. Through Kemps we can also track our success rate in achieving the desired outcome for clients.

PLS trains all staff involved in client services to use Kemps effectively and consistently. Still human error does occur when entering information in the database and sometimes causes discrepancies in data. PLS works to reduce errors by developing automatic "error reports" that identify and alert staff when a possible error has occurred. In addition, managing attorneys review cases bi-annually to catch additional errors missed by the automated reports.

Pablo Averza, our database administrator, is responsible for maintenance of our Kemps database and for creating queries to pull data. PLS Managing Attorney Robin Merrell supervises Pablo and oversees our data management and analysis.

Organizational Profile

How does the proposed project support your mission and strategic plan?*

State your mission and the date of your most recent strategic plan, and explain how the proposed project helps advance your organizational goals.

Pisgah Legal has a mission to pursue justice by providing legal assistance and advocacy to help low-income people in WNC meet their basic needs and improve their lives. In FY 2015 we helped 7,605 people in crisis in Buncombe County with issues including housing crises, domestic violence and child abuse, securing public benefits and managing limited financial resources, protecting their consumer rights, and accessing health care.

PLS' Board of Directors adopted a new strategic plan in Spring 2015. In this plan the Board established Homelessness Prevention, Domestic Violence Prevention, and Access to Health Care and Income Supports as the top three priorities for our programs. The proposed project addresses our goals in each of these areas.

With vital support and referrals from Buncombe County, PLS will help the most vulnerable children and families in the county. This is in line with our organizational goals.

What expertise/accomplishments do you have that are relevant to the proposed project?*

List your organization's strengths as well as accomplishments from the past 3 years that position the organization to be successful with the proposed project.

PLS has provided legal aid and advocated for systemic changes to address problems of poverty in Buncombe County for 37 years. PLS has 18 staff attorneys with expertise in an array of poverty law issues and 300+ private attorneys contribute pro bono services to our clients. Volunteers' expertise and leadership increase our capacity. PLS has a network of partners, with whom we work to: provide holistic services; improve the local safety net; and work on community development issues. PLS has helped lead local efforts to reduce homelessness, expand healthcare coverage and stop domestic violence.

In the past three years, PLS has:

- * Increased the number of people we serve annually despite severe state funding cuts.
- * Worked with partners to develop the Buncombe County Family Justice Center set to open in 2016.
- * Opened an office in the Buncombe County Courthouse to provide access to legal aid to most low-income residents facing evictions.no

Describe partners that are critical to the success of your organization.*

List any external partners, intermediaries or advisors important to your success, and describe their role and evidence of their commitment. Describe successful collaborations with these people or groups.

Our collaborative relationships with key partners are essential to this project's success. We have longstanding, effective partnerships with:

- * Helpmate and Our Voice - for client referrals and coordinated services to abuse victims
- * Law enforcement - for referrals and establishing evidence to protect victims through the court system
- * Buncombe Co. DSS - to address child abuse and provide income and other supports to low-income families
- * Homeward Bound - to refer for housing and SOAR cases and to collaborate on housing programming and obtaining resources
- * Housing Authority of the City of Asheville – to work collaboratively on housing policy that affects the lowest-income tenants
- * Mission Health System - to refer patients and collaborate to address homelessness, DV, child abuse and access to healthcare

Our ability to sustain our current level of services also depends, in part, on the contributions of our volunteer lawyers and collaboration with the 28th Judicial District Bar.

Financial Information

Nonprofit financial assurance requirements:

Financial statements, prepared using a recognizable basis of accounting (i.e., modified accrual) and IRS Form 990s must be submitted to Buncombe County annually.

- Organizations with annual revenues of \$300,000 or greater must submit financial statements audited in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.
- Those with revenues between \$100,000 and \$300,000 must submit financial statements reviewed in accordance with SSARS 19.
- Those with revenues of less than \$100,000 must submit non-disclosure financial statements compiled in accordance with SSARS 19.

All financial statements must be reported on by a certified public accountant and include a full balance sheet, income statement, and cash flow statement.

These requirements are considered minimum requirements. Organizations may submit a higher level of assurance than is required.

IRS Form 990 - Upload Here

Click Choose File to upload a copy of the 990 form you most recently completed.

2014 PLS Form 990 Public Insp.pdf

If your organization does not have a 990, briefly state the reason.

Include a statement of intent to comply with nonprofit financial assurance requirements as listed above.

N/A

Financial Statements - Upload here

Click Choose File to upload a copy of the most recently completed financial statements (audit, compilation or review).

Pisgah Legal Services 2014 Audit Report.pdf

If your organization does not have financial statements, briefly state the reason.

Include a statement of intent to comply with nonprofit financial assurance requirements as listed above.

N/A

Complete Budget Worksheet - Upload Here*

Download the budget form [Here](#).

Complete the budget form for this project/program and the overall agency. Save it to your computer, then upload it by clicking Choose File.

2016 17 Buncombe County community-funding-budget-form.xlsx

Budget Narrative*

Describe all differences between current year and proposed year. List all pending funding sources with expected date of notification. Please detail any other information that may help clarify the budget.

PLS operates on a calendar fiscal year, which is reflected in our attached budget.

Line 1 – We request an increase of \$30,000 for FY 2017 to help PLS restore our capacity to provide homelessness prevention services.

Line 2 – "Other Grants" includes grants that we will be re-applying for in 2015 and \$500,000+ of revenue that will come from sources that are not recurring. We continue to identify new foundation prospects that may help fill the funding gap.

Line 5 – Most of the Federal funding will run through 2016, including grants from the Department of Justice and the Governor's Crime Commission.

Line 6 – Half of the State funding has been approved and the other half will depend upon the 2016 State Budget decisions.

Line 12 – Salaries & Related Expenses – the increase in salaries is due largely to budgeting for a modest cost-of-living salary increase and increased cost of benefits.

What (if any) portion of requested funds will be used to support capital expenses?*

Capital projects are defined as those used to acquire or upgrade physical assets such as property, buildings, or equipment. Please detail.

None.

Employee Wages

Please provide information about the wage breakdowns of your employees. Living wage for Buncombe County has been identified as \$11.00 per hour for employees with employer-provided health insurance and \$12.50 per hour for employees without.

Employees with employer-provided health insurance*

List the number of employees in your organization with employer-provided health insurance in each wage category. For salaried employees, use hourly wage equivalents.

\$7.25 - \$10.99 per hour

\$11.00 - \$14.99 per hour

\$15.00 - \$19.99 per hour

\$20.00 - \$24.99 per hour

\$25.00 - \$29.99 per hour

\$30.00 - \$34.99 per hour

\$35.00 - \$39.99 per hour

\$40.00+ per hour

\$7.25 - \$10.99 per hour	- 0
\$11.00 - \$14.99 per hour	- 5
\$15.00 - \$19.99 per hour	- 9
\$20.00 - \$24.99 per hour	- 15
\$25.00 - \$29.99 per hour	- 7
\$30.00 - \$34.99 per hour	- 4
\$35.00 - \$39.99 per hour	- 2
\$40.00+ per hour	- 3

Employees without employer-provided health insurance*

List the number of employees in your organization without employer-provided health insurance in each wage category. For salaried employees, use hourly wage equivalents.

\$7.25 - \$12.49 per hour

\$12.50 - \$14.99 per hour

\$15.00 - \$19.99 per hour

\$20.00 - \$24.99 per hour

\$25.00 - \$29.99 per hour

\$30.00 - \$34.99 per hour

\$35.00 - \$39.99 per hour

\$40.00+ per hour

\$7.25 - \$12.49 per hour - 0
\$12.50 - \$14.99 per hour - 0
\$15.00 - \$19.99 per hour - 2
\$20.00 - \$24.99 per hour - 1
\$25.00 - \$29.99 per hour - 2
\$30.00 - \$34.99 per hour - 1
\$35.00 - \$39.99 per hour - 0
\$40.00+ per hour - 1