



INVESTING IN JUSTICE FOR
ALL NORTH CAROLINIANS

2023 Annual Report

Presented to the North Carolina State Bar Council, October 2024



North Carolina Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (NC IOLTA) provides access to justice by funding high-quality legal assistance.

Due to limited resources and insufficient funding, only a fraction of North Carolinians have access to the critical legal services they need to thrive. As the philanthropic focus of the North Carolina State Bar, we work directly with lawyers and financial institutions to set up interest-bearing trust accounts. We use the funds generated to award grants to organizations that provide legal aid to individuals, families and children, working toward a North Carolina where all can fairly navigate the justice system to have their basic needs met and rights protected.

North Carolina Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts
A philanthropic program of the North Carolina State Bar
P.O. Box 25996 | Raleigh, NC 27611 | 919-828-0477



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In 2023, NC IOLTA continued to partner with banks, lawyers and nonprofit organizations across North Carolina to invest in high-quality legal assistance. These accomplishments include:

✓ **Administering \$6,101,864 in regular grants in calendar year 2023.**

This includes \$4,957,500 to fund civil legal aid for low-income individuals, families, and children, \$629,564 to programs that engage private attorneys to provide pro bono legal services to individuals in need, and \$514,800 to advance administration of justice efforts in North Carolina.

✓ **Administering \$841,926 in state funding.**

This includes state funds directed to Legal Aid of North Carolina and Pisgah Legal Services to provide legal services to victims of domestic violence and to veterans.

✓ **Reestablishing the NC IOLTA Public Interest Internship Program.**

The program provides funding for stipends to support students at North Carolina's six accredited law schools who are interning with a public interest organization in a county designated as a legal desert.

✓ **Celebrating NC IOLTA's 40th Anniversary.**

In celebration of NC IOLTA's 40th Anniversary in 2023, NC IOLTA connected with stakeholders to share more about the work of the program since our inception in 1983. NC IOLTA connected with grantees, former members of the Board of Trustees, bar organizations, judges, and others. NC IOLTA also released a video to explain how we work to improve access to justice by providing high-quality legal assistance to those in need. The video can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J91GqNmKLQs>

✓ **Surpassing prior peak in IOLTA income.**

Income from interest earned on trust accounts continued to increase throughout 2023, totaling more than \$15.9 million by year end, making 2023 interest income the highest it has been in the program's history. Increases in income in recent years are attributable to significant interest rate increases and continued strong economic conditions, in addition to improved compliance efforts with financial institution partners. The Board continued to balance opportunities to invest in IOLTA's mission at the present while also setting aside funds for future years, acknowledging revenue will likely decrease as factors driving increased revenue stabilize.

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✓ **Providing out-of-cycle funding to support gaps identified in the Legal Needs Assessment and subsequent recommendations.**

NC IOLTA opened an out of cycle grant opportunity targeted to pursuing a set of recommendations developed last year for how civil legal aid could be improved in North Carolina in the areas of: (1) family law, (2) legal services for immigrants, (3) communications and outreach, and (4) coordinated intake. In total, eight applications were submitted requesting more than \$2 million in funding. Five applications were approved to receive funding of \$1.5 million over a two-year period.

✓ **Supporting grantees who continued their service to those most in need.**

NC IOLTA grantees remain steadfast in serving those most in need, responding to current and emerging legal issues facing North Carolinians.

- Grantees served **44,967 North Carolinians** in 2023.
- Legal aid helped more than **9,294 families** achieve stability when dealing with domestic violence and other family law matters.
- Legal aid ensured **9,994 families** had the support they needed to stay in their homes when faced with the threat of foreclosure and other housing issues.
- Legal aid advocated for **308 students** so they can continue to participate in the classroom and receive services that meet their educational needs.
- Legal aid supported **1,137 individuals** to ensure access to adequate health care.



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