

Pisgah Legal Services

Pursuing Justice, Improving Lives

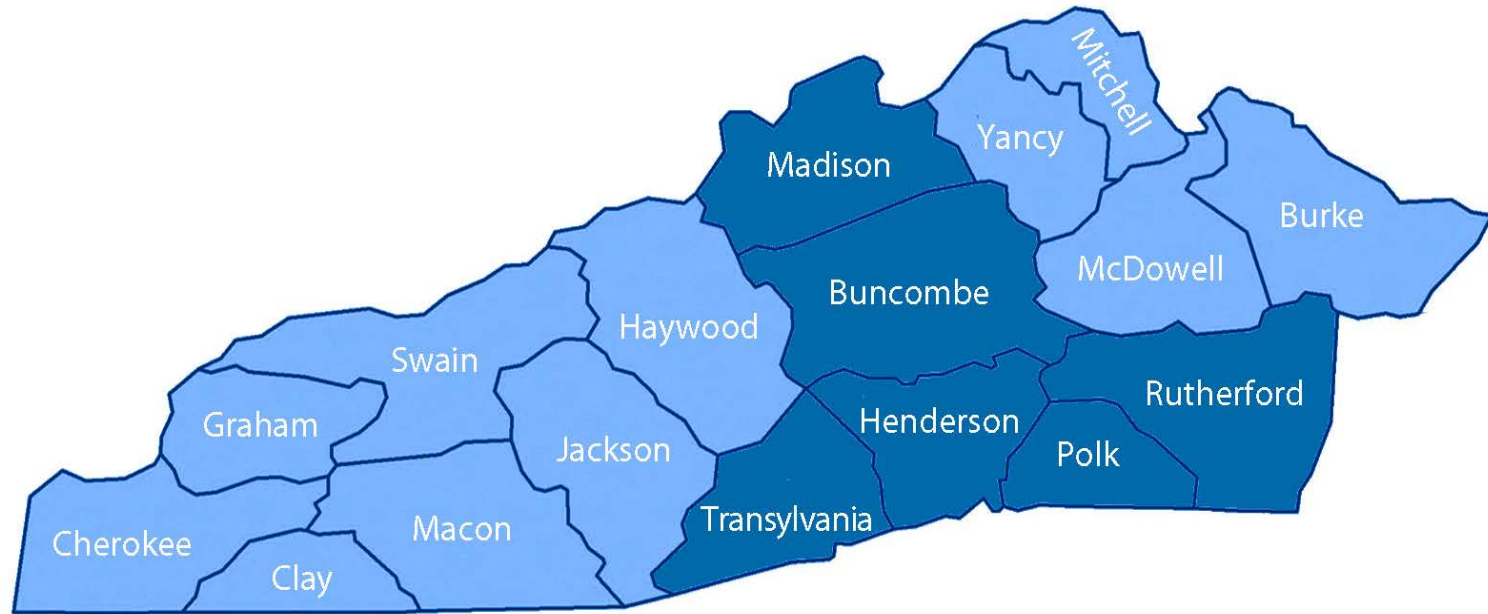




**Pisgah Legal Services
is a leading, regional organization
addressing poverty issues in WNC.**

For 35 years, we've tackled problems of poverty through direct services, collaboration and policy advocacy.

Our Service Area



Primary Service Area = 6 dark blue counties

Limited services in 17 WNC counties

Offices in Asheville, Hendersonville, Spindale

Who We Help



- The most vulnerable people in WNC: children, single moms, elderly, people with disabilities, the working poor
- Very low-income: **at or below 125% of the poverty level** (\$29,438 for a family of four)
- Average income of PLS clients = **\$10,600/year**

In 2013 PLS helped **14,000+**
low-income people to meet basic needs:
food, shelter and protection



- Helped more than **4,000 people** (mostly women and children) escape domestic violence
- Prevented homelessness for over **4,600 people**



PLS' Domestic Violence Prevention Project includes:

- 5 Attorneys**
- 2 Bilingual Court Advocates**
- Screener/Social Worker**
- Follow Up Case Manager**



What do Legal Services look like?

- **Domestic Violence Protective Orders**
 - Including temporary custody, possession of the home and car, safe visitation exchanges, denying abusers access to firearms.
- **Child Custody**
- **Divorce**
- **Property Distribution**
- **Child Support and Spousal Support**
- **Housing Protections**

Attorney Representation Makes a Difference in Victim's Safety



Representation by an attorney makes it
**more likely that a victim will obtain a
Domestic Violence Protective Order.**

DV Victims with Attorneys are More Likely to Win Their Cases



- According to an analysis of 12 studies, “lawyer-represented people do better — on average, lawyer-represented people are more likely to win than are unrepresented people in every study.”

- Rebecca L. Sandefur, [The Impact of Counsel: An Analysis of Empirical Evidence](http://www.nlada.org/DMS/Documents/1328197560.02/Sandefur%20Seattle%202-10.pdf), 9 Seattle U. L. Rev. 51 (2010) <http://www.nlada.org/DMS/Documents/1328197560.02/Sandefur%20Seattle%202-10.pdf>

Legal Services Save Lives

Access to legal services has been **proven to reduce incidents of domestic violence.**

- “While most services provided to help battered women do not impact the likelihood of abuse, the **provision of legal services significantly lowers the incidents of abuse.**”
- “**Women who live in counties with legal assistance programs** to help battered women are **significantly less likely to report abuse.** Because legal services help women with practical matters such as protective orders, custody and child support they appear to actually present women with real, long-term alternatives to their relationship.”
 - Explaining the Recent Decline in Domestic Violence. Amy Farmer and Jill Tiefenthaler - 21 Contemp. Econ. Pol'y. 158 (April 2003) <http://legalaidresearch.org/2012/12/19/explaining-the-recent-decline-in-domestic-violence>

Legal Services reduce the community wide cost of domestic violence.

Legal services for victims of domestic violence **reduce domestic violence rates and associated costs.**

- “When civil legal aid programs prevent domestic violence, they avoid the need for society to spend money ‘on medical care for injured victims, special education and counseling for affected children, and police resources and prison for perpetrators.’ They also prevent property loss and reductions in productivity by victims that domestic violence would cause.”
 - Laura K. Abel, et. al., [Economic and Other Benefits Associated with the Provision of Civil Legal Aid](http://legalaidresearch.org/2013/04/05/economic-and-other-benefits-associated-with-the-provision-of-civil-legal-aid-2010), 9 Seattle U.L. 139 (2010) <http://legalaidresearch.org/2013/04/05/economic-and-other-benefits-associated-with-the-provision-of-civil-legal-aid-2010>

Bilingual Court Advocates



- Ensure access to justice for non-English speakers
- Support clients through criminal and civil court processes
- Assist in seeking immigration remedies for DV victims where appropriate
- Advocate for victims with law enforcement and prosecutors

Follow Up Case Manager

- Connects victims to long-term counseling
- Empowers victims to access services to help stabilize their finances
- Educates victims about community resources: support during and after transition
- Creates goals and plans with victims to help them remain separated from abusers.





Volunteers

11,867+ hours donated by volunteers
in 2013 = 6 full-time staff positions

300+ volunteer attorneys!

Volunteers help with: client intake,
administrative tasks, fundraising

PLS Funding Sources for DV

- Madison, Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania counties
- Governor's Crime Commission (VAWA)
- U.S. Department of Justice (VAWA)
- PLS Annual Campaign ("No Excuses")
- State of N.C.
- N.C. Dept. of Administration (federal pass-through)

Annual PLS Funding Cuts (DV)

- U.S. DOJ (federal \$) \$107,000
- GCC (federal \$) \$106,000
- State of N.C. \$29,000
- HUD (federal) \$12,000

**Total: \$254,000 per year cut
from a \$681,000 program budget**



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