

FY2024 Buncombe County Strategic Partnership Grant Report

Organization Name:	Pisgah Legal Services		
Project Name:	Homelessness Prevention Program		
Reporting Quarter: (Check one)		Quarter 1 (July 1, 2023 - September 30, 2023)	
		Quarter 2 (October 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023)	
	X	Quarter 3 (January 1, 2024 - March 31, 2024)	
		Quarter 4 (April 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024)	

Narrative summary of grant related activities

Please provide a brief summary (no more than 1500 characters). You may attach supplemental documents if needed.

Quarter 1	<p>Pisgah Legal Services has provided legal services in the area of housing to 549 households with the total number of people helped equaling 1,199 in the first quarter of the grant. More than half the cases we closed this quarter related to preventing or delaying eviction for our clients and is indicative of the trends we continue to see. Though Buncombe County HHS has reopened applications for rental assistance, most other pandemic-related financial assistance has ended. This means there are fewer resources to direct our clients to when facing eviction due to an inability to pay rents that are rising faster than inflation. We continue to provide legal services at the Buncombe County Courthouse, providing on-the-spot legal services on dates with high rates of eviction hearings being heard. The courthouse work allows us to proactively reach out to clients who are typically underserved populations. In total 36% of the people we served through our Homelessness Prevention Program in Buncombe County this quarter identified as Black.</p>
Quarter 2	<p>Pisgah Legal Services has provided legal services in the area of housing to 774 households with the total number of people helped equaling 1,680 during the two quarters of the grant. In Buncombe County, an average of over 210 evictions were filed per month during October and November (December data is not yet available). This problem is not unique to our county as state and national data suggest that evictions are rising, especially in urban areas where housing prices are high. During the second quarter we closed 210 cases of which 51% of the outcomes achieved were related to preventing or delaying eviction for our clients. For the other cases, 27% of our clients were helped to obtain or preserve eligibility for housing assistance; we improved housing conditions for 16%; 4% of our clients avoided foreclosure; and we delayed foreclosure for 3%. Approximately 10 of our clients had their power and/or water cut off by their landlord during this quarter. Luckily, we were able to resolve these issues without court filings in most cases. During the last three months of this grant, 70% of our clients were women, 38% have children in the home; and 38.5% identified as BIPOC.</p>

Quarter 3	<p>Pisgah Legal Services has provided legal services in the area of housing to 975 households with the total number of people helped equaling 2,093 during the three quarters of the grant. According to the NC Housing Coalition, 2,262 Buncombe County families faced an eviction filing in 2023 and this trend is not dissipating in 2024. Of the 181 cases closed during the third quarter of this grant, 157 were eviction cases. The NC Housing Coalition also states that local families need to earn an income of \$67,200 per year to afford Fair Market Rent in the county, yet the average annual income of our Buncombe County housing clients since July 1, 2023 is only \$15,947. Fair Market Rents have increased 15% in the last year and 69% in the last five years as published by HUD. Many studies on the value of legal advice or representation for tenants facing eviction find that individuals receiving legal assistance are much more likely to achieve the desired legal outcome than those without legal help. In one example, a 2018 study "Legal Representation in Evictions - Comparative Studies", found that tenants who were fully represented won or settled their cases 96% of the time, compared with just 62% of unrepresented clients. For the cases we closed during the last quarter, we had a 99% success rate obtaining a positive outcome for the clients that we fully represented.</p> <p>During the third quarter, 71% of our clients were women, 46% have children in the home; and 37% identified as BIPOC.</p>
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Progress toward annual goals

Measure	Annual Goal	Actual Results (Enter Data) Please only include new data for the specific quarter				Progress toward Annual Goal
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
# of Buncombe County residents helped by the Homeless Prevention Program	1640	1199	481	413		2093
# of Buncombe County closed and pending cases	750	549	225	201		975
# of Buncombe County closed and pending cases served by this grant	131	65	27	24		116
Success rate obtaining a positive outcome	90%	100%	100%	99%		100%

Comments:

(The first two metrics include duplicates from the prior quarter given a case opened in one quarter may continue to be worked in the following quarter. In new quarters, we are only including new case numbers.) Many of Pisgah Legal Services' clients fall into the estimated 53% of renters and 19% of homeowners in Buncombe County who are cost-burdened by their housing (paying more than 30% of their incomes). With continually rising housing costs as well as inflation, more and more families are vulnerable to housing insecurities due to unforeseen expenses and lost income. This was the case for Steven (name changed) who reached out to Pisgah Legal for help after receiving an eviction notice. Steven, his sister, and 17-year-old brother were scared and had nowhere to go if they lost their apartment. Steven shared the responsibility of paying rent with his sister who had unexpectedly lost her job and was out of work for two months. They fell behind on the rent but were doing everything they could to find the funds to pay, including applying for rental financial assistance from several organizations in Asheville. They were added to the waiting list for each place they contacted but were unsure if assistance would come through. While Steven's sister found another job, they received the eviction notice before she was paid, which would allow them to catch up on their rent. Steven had filed for an extension at the courthouse himself though had not heard anything when he contacted Pisgah Legal. Attorney Frank Fischer quickly contacted the opposing council and was able to negotiate more time for Steven and his family to get caught up. One week later they were able to tender the balance in full before the next court date and the opposing council dismissed the case. Steven and his siblings were thrilled to be able to stay in their home. Something as simple as giving people a little more time to find the money to keep a roof over their heads makes a huge difference and prevents them from becoming homeless.

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Use of funds to date and any budget considerations

Spending Category	Starting Budget	Total Spending (Enter Data)				Amount Remaining
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Personnel	\$ 64,000	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,000		\$ 16,000
Training						\$ -
Supplies/Materials						\$ -
Meetings						\$ -
Equipment/Furniture						\$ -
Printing/Marketing						\$ -
Licensing/Memberships/Dues/Subscriptions						\$ -
Client Support						\$ -
Contracts						\$ -
Professional Services						\$ -
Insurance and Bonds						\$ -
Building Maintenance						\$ -
Total	\$ 64,000	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,000	\$ -	\$ 16,000

Comments: