

Legal Aid to Close Boone Office

Written by Steve Frank
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Legal Aid of North Carolina, the largest provider of legal services to poor and working families in the State, announced Friday that it would close three of its branch offices—including Boone—and significantly reduce staff and services around the State due to severe funding cuts.

The press release said that cuts made this year to state and federal legislative appropriations amounted to annual reductions of more than \$2M. With such substantial cuts to its core funding, Legal Aid of NC could not avoid the closings and the elimination of about thirty staff positions. The LANC offices located in Smithfield, Boone and Henderson immediately will stop taking new cases and will close entirely by the end of September. The closings will affect households in Johnston, Harnett, Sampson, Allegheny, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, Vance and Yancey Counties. More than 100,000 households—including than 30,000 children—are eligible for the services of Legal Aid of NC in these counties, according to the Friday release. The offices in Smithfield, Boone and Henderson annually have served about 2,000 households in these counties. Clients in the affected areas will have to travel to other offices, find and pay a local attorney, or rely on getting help through Legal Aid's toll-free helpline.