



1701 Main Street
PO Box 192
Columbia, SC 29201

PHONE 803.576.1800
FAX 803.576.1718
www.scsolicitor5.org

EMBARGOED UNTIL Feb. 3, 2025, 12:00 p.m. EST

Free Richland County legal clinic helps residents remove barriers to employment and housing

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Feb. 3, 2025 – Richland County residents are invited to attend a pro bono legal clinic on Feb. 7 and 8. Hosted by the Fifth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office, Richland County Public Defender's Office, and [Rainy Day Fund](#), attorneys and service providers will offer legal assistance to individuals seeking to clear their driving or criminal records. The event will be held at the Benedict College Business Development Center, located at 2601 Read St., Columbia, SC 29204.

Available services include:

- **Driver's License Reinstatement Clinic:** Get help lifting driver's license suspensions due to unpaid traffic tickets two years or older (note: DUI and DUAC tickets do not qualify). Attendance is not required to receive this benefit, but individuals with specific questions can [schedule an appointment](#) to speak with a lawyer.
- **Bench Warrant Resolution Clinic:** Resolve non-violent general sessions bench warrants without the risk of arrest. Participants can schedule a new court date and connect with a public defender. Magistrate court and Summary BWFTA cases are excluded.
- **Child Support & Family Court Q&A Session:** On Feb. 7 from 1 to 4 p.m., individuals can get answers about child support compliance and learn how to lift family court bench warrants for child support issues.
- **Expungement Information Table:** Learn how to clear criminal records and explore expungement options.
- **Nelson Mullins Lawyers 4 Vets:** Veterans can receive specialized assistance on Feb. 7.

Participating courts include the Richland County magistrate courts and Columbia and Forest Acres municipal courts.

Hans Pauling, director of diversion programs and affiliate services at the Fifth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office, shared, "Working with the Public Defender's Office, Rainy Day Fund, and courts in our county has helped us to achieve some remarkable things at the previous two clinics. This event is an opportunity to support the community and help people get back on track. Pro bono legal work is one of the most valuable services local attorneys can offer someone needing guidance. Collaborating with other agencies and combining resources goes a long way to help solve problems."

Kieley Sutton, executive director and co-founder of Rainy Day Fund, expressed, “Being able to drive without the fear of accumulating another suspension ticket can be life-changing. Driver’s licenses are tied to better job opportunities, more housing options, and staying connected with loved ones. We’re grateful for the many partnerships making this happen and are excited to participate.”

For more information, [schedule an appointment](#) or contact the Rainy Day Fund at (803) 250-1772 or clinics@rainydayfund.us.

About the Fifth Judicial Circuit Solicitor’s Office

The Fifth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office, one of South Carolina's 16 judicial circuits, serves Richland and Kershaw Counties. Our mission is to act as ministers of justice by ensuring the fair and diligent prosecution of criminal offenses.

In addition to our prosecutorial responsibilities, the Fifth Judicial Circuit provides diversion programs and community services for rehabilitation and support for Richland and Kershaw County residents. Our nine diversionary programs include the Alcohol Education Program (AEP), Adult Drug Treatment Court, Columbia Homeless Court, DUI Treatment Court, Juvenile Drug Treatment Court, Mental Health Treatment Court, Pre-Trial Intervention (PTI), Traffic Education Program (TEP), and Veterans Treatment Court.

We also offer various community services, such as the Victim and Witness Assistance Program, Worthless Check Program, and expungement services, to support and assist our community members.

For more information, please visit our [website](#) or contact us directly.

About Rainy Day Fund

Rainy Day Fund (RDF) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating the financial obstacles that hinder individuals from exiting or avoiding the legal system. It assists with costs related to housing, employment, obtaining identification, restoring rights, court fees, and other urgent needs. In 2024, RDF helped coordinate five pro bono clinics serving over 450 individuals. In addition to their clinic efforts, RDF directly supported 175 individuals in 2024 alone. Founded in Columbia and with a branch in Virginia, RDF continues to expand its impact by finding ways to address the access to justice gaps across the country.

Press Contact

Aliyah Scott, Public Information Officer
P: 803.576.1839
E: scott.aliyah@richlandcountysc.gov

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