

Innocence Groups in North Carolina

The North Carolina Center on Actual Innocence

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Founded in 2000, the Center on Actual Innocence is a non-profit organization that works to identify, investigate, and advance credible claims of innocence made by inmates convicted of felonies in North Carolina. To qualify for review by the Center, an inmate must have been convicted of a felony that was committed in North Carolina.

The Center oversees Innocence Projects at Campbell, Duke, Elon, North Carolina Central, UNC-Chapel Hill, and UNC-Charlotte Law Schools, where law students perform initial investigative work. To request the assistance of the Center for Actual Innocence, inmates should answer the applicable Center questionnaires, which can be found on the Center's website.

The North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission

Kendra Montgomery-Blinn, Executive Director

North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission
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Established as an official state agency in 2006, the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission consists of eight voting members who review claims of factual innocence for merit. A claim must assert complete innocence of any criminal responsibility and present some evidence of innocence that was not presented at trial or considered in post-conviction proceedings. If the Commission finds sufficient evidence of factual innocence to warrant judicial review, it refers the case to a three-judge panel for an evidentiary hearing.

To submit a claim of factual innocence, the convicted person or a party on behalf of the convicted person should submit a letter to the Commission for initial screening. The convicted person will have to waive his or her procedural safeguards and privileges, agree to cooperate with the Commission, and agree to provide full disclosure before a formal inquiry can begin.