



## Community Services and Public Safety Committee Beaufort County, SC

This meeting will be held in County Council Chambers, 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, and virtually through Zoom

**Monday, August 15, 2022  
2:00 PM**

### AGENDA

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

**LARRY MCELYNN, CHAIRMAN  
GERALD DAWSON  
ALICE HOWARD**

**LOGAN CUNNINGHAM, VICE CHAIRMAN  
YORK GLOVER**

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF THIS MEETING HAS BEEN PUBLISHED, POSTED, AND DISTRIBUTED IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE SOUTH CAROLINA FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT
4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - MAY 2, 2022
6. **CITIZEN COMMENTS - (ANYONE who wishes to speak during the Citizen Comment portion of the meeting will limit their comments to no longer than three (3) minutes ( a total of 15 minutes ) and will address Council in a respectful manner appropriate to the decorum of the meeting, refraining from the use of profane, abusive, or obscene language)**

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### AGENDA ITEMS

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7. PRESENTATION FROM THE LOWCOUNTRY GULLAH FOUNDATION
8. RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE REAPPOINTMENT OF WENDY BUKOWSKI TO THE BEAUFORT COUNTY DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS BOARD FOR A SECOND TERM WITH AN EXPIRATION DATE OF 2026
9. ADJOURNMENT

**TO WATCH COMMITTEE OR COUNTY COUNCIL MEETINGS OR FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF AGENDAS AND BACKUP PACKAGES, PLEASE VISIT:**

<https://beaufortcountysc.gov/council/council-committee-meetings/index.html>



## Community Services and Public Safety Committee Beaufort County, SC

This meeting was held at the County Council Chambers, 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, and virtually through Zoom.

Monday, May 02, 2022  
2:00 PM

### MINUTES

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chairman McElynn called the meeting to order at 2:01 PM.

#### PRESENT

Chairman Joseph F. Passiment  
Vice-Chairman D. Paul Sommerville  
Council Member Logan Cunningham  
Council Member Gerald Dawson  
Council Member York Glover  
Council Member Chris Hervochon  
Council Member Alice Howard  
Council Member Mark Lawson  
Council Member Lawrence McElynn  
Council Member Stu Rodman

#### ABSENT

Council Member Brian Flewelling

#### 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Committee Chairman McElynn led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### 3. FOIA

Committee Chairman McElynn stated that this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

#### 4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: It was moved by Council Member Howard, Seconded by Council Member Cunningham, to approve the agenda.

**The Vote** - The motion was approved without objection.

#### 5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion:** It was moved by Council Member Howard, seconded by Council Member Cunningham, to approve the minutes from April 4, 2022.

**The Vote** - The motion was approved without objection.

**6. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

No citizen comments.

**7. UPDATE ON HUNTING ISLAND STATE PARK, BRANDON GOFF, PARK MANAGER**

Brandon Goff, Hunting Island Park Manager, provided an update on the Hunting Island State Park.

Please watch the video stream available on the County's website to view the full presentation.

<https://beaufortcountysc.new.swagit.com/videos/170934>

**8. RECOMMEND APPROVAL TO APPLY FOR (MAT-PDOA) GRANT RFP 2022 MEDICATION-ASSISTED TREATMENT-PRESCRIPTION DRUG AND OPIOID ADDICTION: FISCAL IMPACT- GRANT IS UP TO \$750,000 PER YEAR FOR FIVE YEARS. NO MATCHING FUNDS**

Steve Donaldson, Director of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Department, presented Grant RFP 2022 Medication-Assisted Treatment-Prescription Drug and Opioid Addiction application for approval to apply.

**Motion:** It was moved by Council Member Cunningham, seconded by Council Member Glover, to recommend approval to apply for (MAT-PDOA) Grant RFP 2022 Medication-Assisted Treatment-Prescription Drug and Opioid Addiction.

**The Vote** - The motion was approved without objection.

**Status:** The item was forwarded to Council for approval.

Please watch the video stream available on the County's website to view the full presentation.

<https://beaufortcountysc.new.swagit.com/videos/170934>

**9. RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION TO NAME THE LIND BROWN RECREATION CENTER OUTDOOR POOL IN HONOR OF MR. ALVIN SETTLES**

Assistant County Administrator Chuck Atkinson presented a resolution to name the Lind Brown Recreations Center Outdoor Pool in honor of Mr. Alvin Settles.

**Motion:** It was moved by Council Member Glover, Seconded by Council Member Howard, to recommend approval of a resolution to name the Lind Brown Recreation Center Outdoor Pool in Honor of Mr. Alvin Settles.

**The Vote** - The motion was approved without objection.

**Status:** The item was forwarded to Council for approval.

Please watch the video stream available on the County's website to view the full presentation.

<https://beaufortcountysc.new.swagit.com/videos/170934>

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 2:48 PM

Ratified:



# BEAUFORT COUNTY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Item 7.

<b>ITEM TITLE:</b>
Lowcountry Gullah Foundation Presentation
<b>MEETING NAME AND DATE:</b>
Community Services Committee August 15, 2022
<b>PRESENTER INFORMATION:</b>
Luana M. Graves Sellars, Founder 20 minutes
<b>ITEM BACKGROUND:</b>
Lowcountry Gullah was developed to promote and more importantly document the richly significant Gullah culture and its contributions to the United States. As a historical resource and cultural tourism influencer, Lowcountry Gullah provides a necessary and central link to the cultural elements that have been woven into the fabric of our society. With a primary focus on the traditional cultural strengths on Hilton Head Island, Lowcountry Gullah is the bridge between all of the Gullah / Geechee communities throughout the designated Gullah / Geechee Corridor, which includes the Sea Islands that span from the eastern seaboard to 35 miles inland from Wilmington, North Carolina to St. Augustine, Florida.
N/A
<b>FISCAL IMPACT:</b>
N/A
<b>STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:</b>
N/A
<b>OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL MOTION:</b>
N/A



Lowcountry  
Gullah  
**FOUNDATION**



Protect and Provide  
Solutions for Gullah  
Land Issues



Beaufort  
County

## Our Mission

The Lowcountry Gullah Foundation protects the Gullah culture's greatest asset, historic generational land for Beaufort County Gullah landowners by providing financial support and literacy, economic development and heirs property solutions to families who are at risk of losing property by division or at the tax sale.

## Our Goal

Our ultimate goal is to remove all of the names from the Beaufort County Delinquent Tax List by establishing customized solutions that end the cycle of financial insecurity and create economic opportunities that would not only benefit the families, as well as all of Beaufort County.

# ***DELINQUENT TAXES***

## **The Problems**

Landowners struggle financially and with rising annual taxes because of:

- Higher Tax Rates
- Development
- Vacant Land
- Lack of Information

## **The Solutions**

Economic  
Development /  
Land Use Options

Establish Gullah  
Land & Tax  
Exceptions

Financial  
Literacy

Create  
Generational  
Wealth

# **RESOLVING HEIRS' PROPERTY**

## **The Problems**

- Many families are living on heirs' property and might not even know it until there's an issue or potential sale.
- Limited information or guidance available on how to figure out the process to a clear title.
- What land use options are available for undeveloped land?
- Annual Tax Sale regulars and how to break the cycle of financial insecurity

## **The Solutions**

Educational  
Programming

Guidance and  
Resources

Informational  
Materials

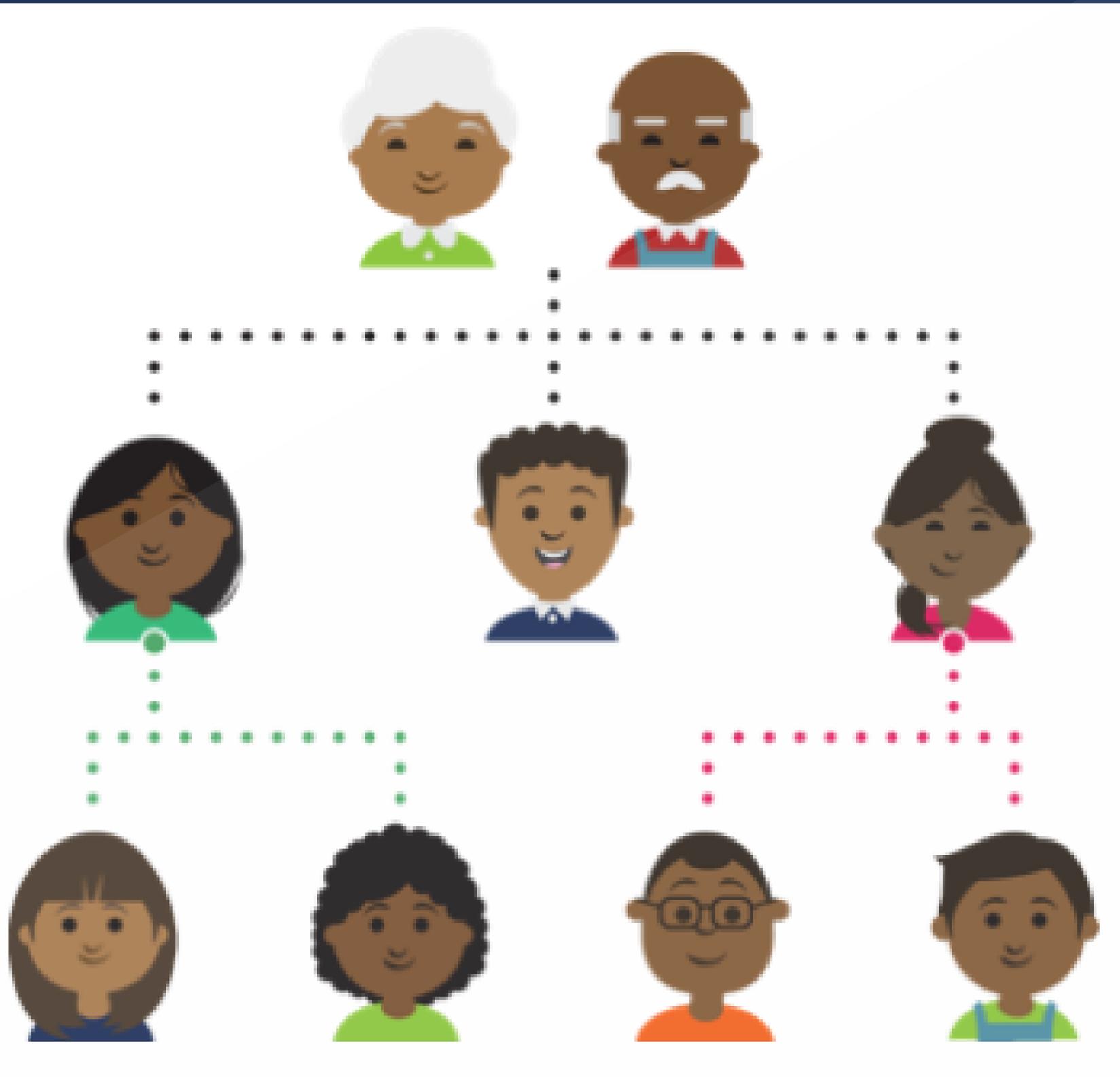


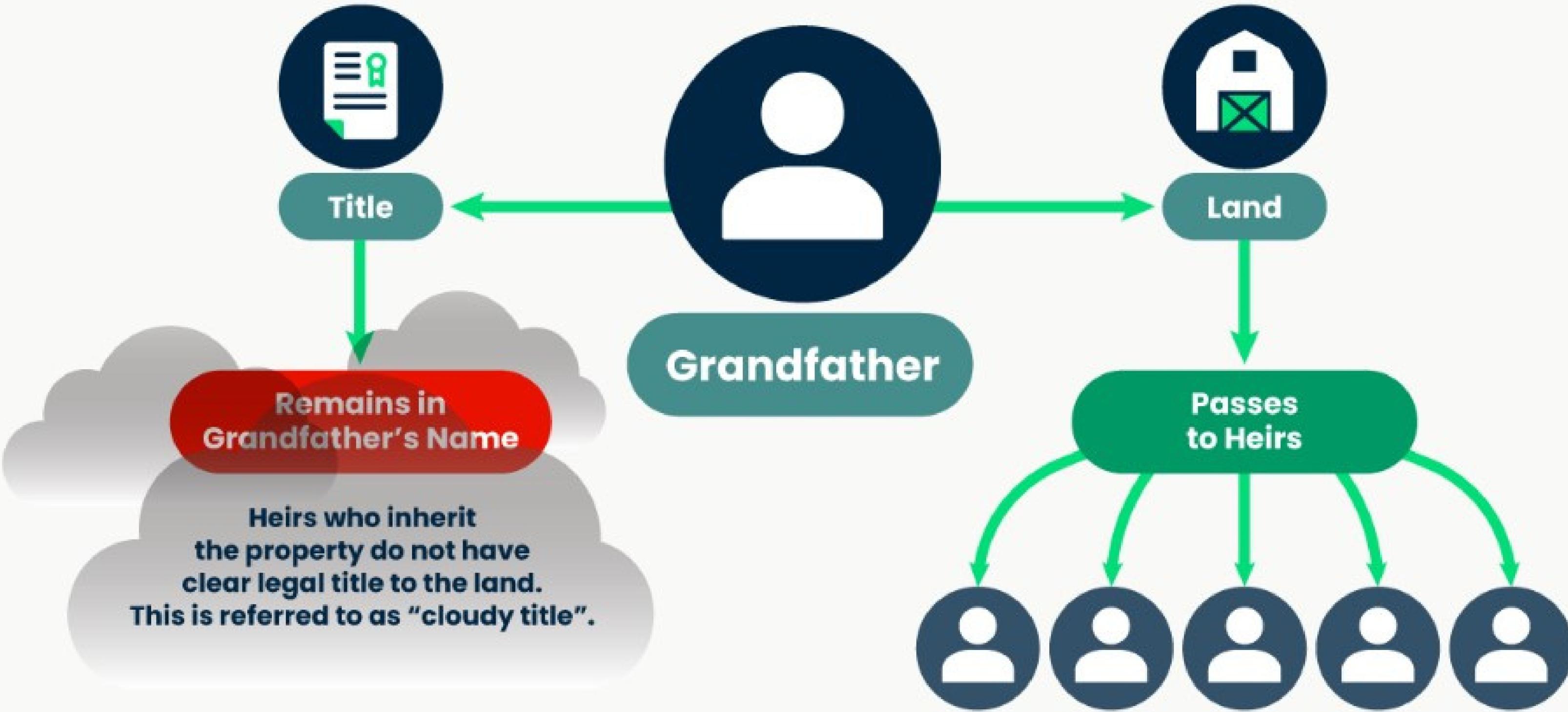
# ***WHAT IS HEIRS' PROPERTY?***



Heirs' property is land that has been passed down through generations from family member to family member, often without the property having a deed. The original purchaser, possibly an enslaved person did not have a will or was unable to transfer the deed to their descendants. The original purchaser might have hundreds of heirs' who have ownership rights to the property, but without a clear title even if they have lived on the property. If the land goes up for sale, the legality of ownership comes into play.

Over time,  
one  
property  
owner  
can have  
countless  
heirs'.





# Tenants in Common

100% agreement among the heirs is required for any activity on the land



agree



agree



agree



disagree



agree

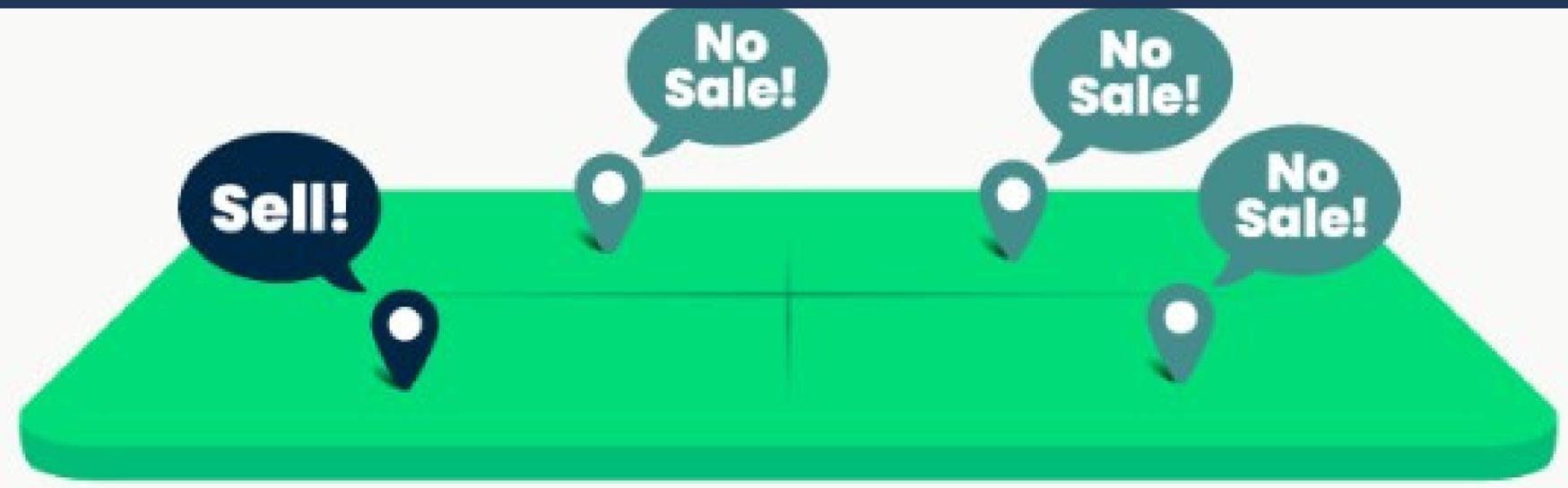


agree



agree

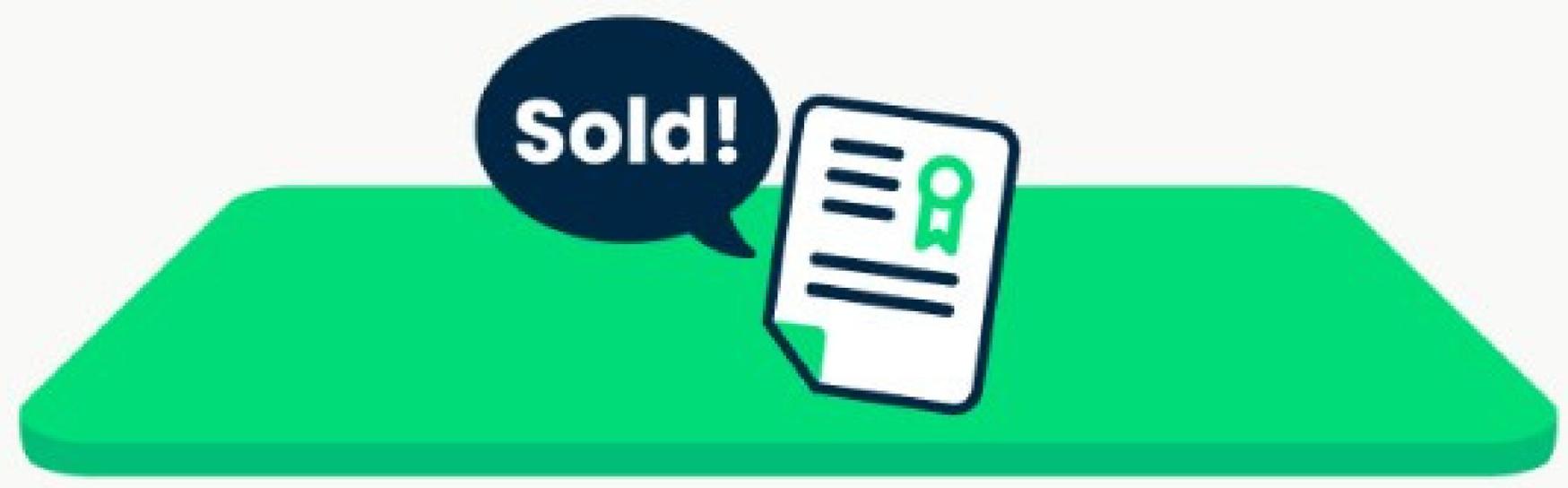
**If just a single Heir sells...**



**This can trigger a "Partition by Sale,"**



**and can result in the property being sold at auction.**



# THE CRITICAL PATH TO UNTANGLING HEIRS' PROPERTY & CLEARING TITLES

## Stringent Development Rules

Most Gullah don't have the financial resources to meet local ordinances

## Property Identification

Many Gullah landowners are not aware of their land's status

## Higher Tax Rates

Without clear title, Heirs' Property is taxed at the 6% rate vs. the 4% rate

## Who's Name is on the Title?

Is their a will?  
Is the title clear?

## Identifying Heirs

How many heirs' have a claim to the property?

## Contacting Heirs

In order to clear the title, every heir needs to be identified and contacted.

# WHY FUND HISTORIC GULLAH LAND?

- Generational landowners are often priced out of being able to pay their taxes when new development comes into the neighborhood.
- Culturally, Gullah land is generally considered heirs' property, which is land that might have been purchased by an enslaved person, is untitled and has been handed down undocumented to their descendants.
- Gullah land valuations might be high, but without any infrastructure or ability to economically develop the land, most homeowners struggle to hold on to the acreage.
- Traditional financial lending is not an option with heirs property and as a result, landowners tend to be land rich and cash poor.





# ***HISTORIC GULLAH LAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM***

- Resources and Information
- Tax Payment Assistance
- Targeted Programming





# ***KEY SERVICES***

- Preventing Historic Gullah Land Losses
- Tax Payment Assistance
- Heirs' Property Resolution Assistance
- Land Uses
- Resources and Information
- Financial Literacy
- Economic Development
- Succession Planning





# ***THE PATH TOWARDS RESOLUTION***

## **This Community Issue Needs a Community Wide Effort That Starts with Coordination, Trust, & Education**

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**Community Issue  
Needs a Community  
Wide Effort**

Collaboration between the municipalities (county and towns) and coordination between organizations (Lowcountry Gullah Foundation, Center for Heirs Property, Heritage Library, South State Bank, SCORE)

**Establishing  
Credibility & Trust**

Information needs to come from a trusted source. Materials distributed virtually, via mail and onsite at locations around the county.

**Favorable  
Ordinances**

County and local municipalities need to become user friendly and more understanding of the unique challenges that Gullah property owners face.

# ***THE PATH TOWARDS RESOLUTION***

## **Improved & Direct Access to Education & Information**



### **Organizational Coordination**

- Lowcountry Gullah
- County Tax Office
- Center for Heirs' Property
- Heritage Library

### **Grassroot Dissemination**

- Events
- Churches
- Local Charities
- Food Banks
- Community  
Organizations

### **Marketing Campaign**

Information needs to reach people where they are and through a variety of vehicles:

- Print
- Radio
- TV
- Social Media

Beaufort County  
Tax Office

Town  
of  
Hilton Head Island



Town  
of  
Bluffton

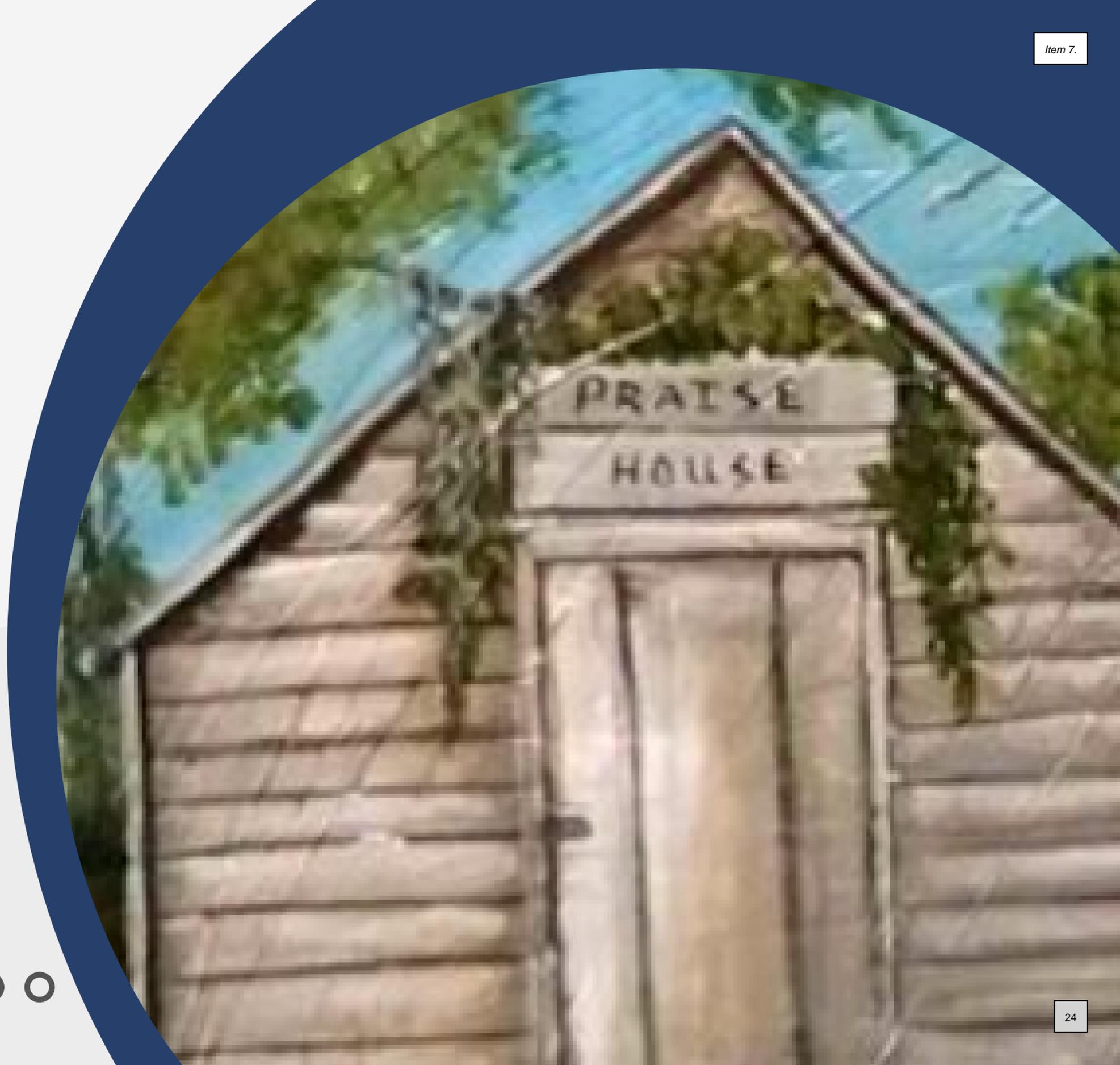
# DELINQUENT TAX LIST

Hilton Head	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Amount Due as of Sept 23th		\$22,632.06	\$21,336.86	\$69,198.88	\$79,574.60
Total Payments	YTD - \$3,680.80	\$22,632.06	\$21,336.86	\$22,558.86	
Number of Properties	YTD - 3	21	12	4	
Bluffton		\$1,637.61			
Amount Due as of Sept 28th		\$9,338.32			
Total Payments		\$1,637.61			
Number of Properties		2			



# ***PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT***

- Content Creation
  - Program Curriculum
  - Collateral Materials
- Program Operation / Implementation
- Marketing Campaign



# STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS



**Heritage Library**  
Genealogy research to identify heirs'



**Center for Heirs' Property**  
Legal services and guidance



**Financial Literacy**  
Financial education programs and budget workshops



**Attorney Referrals**  
When necessary, to local attorneys with heirs' property experience



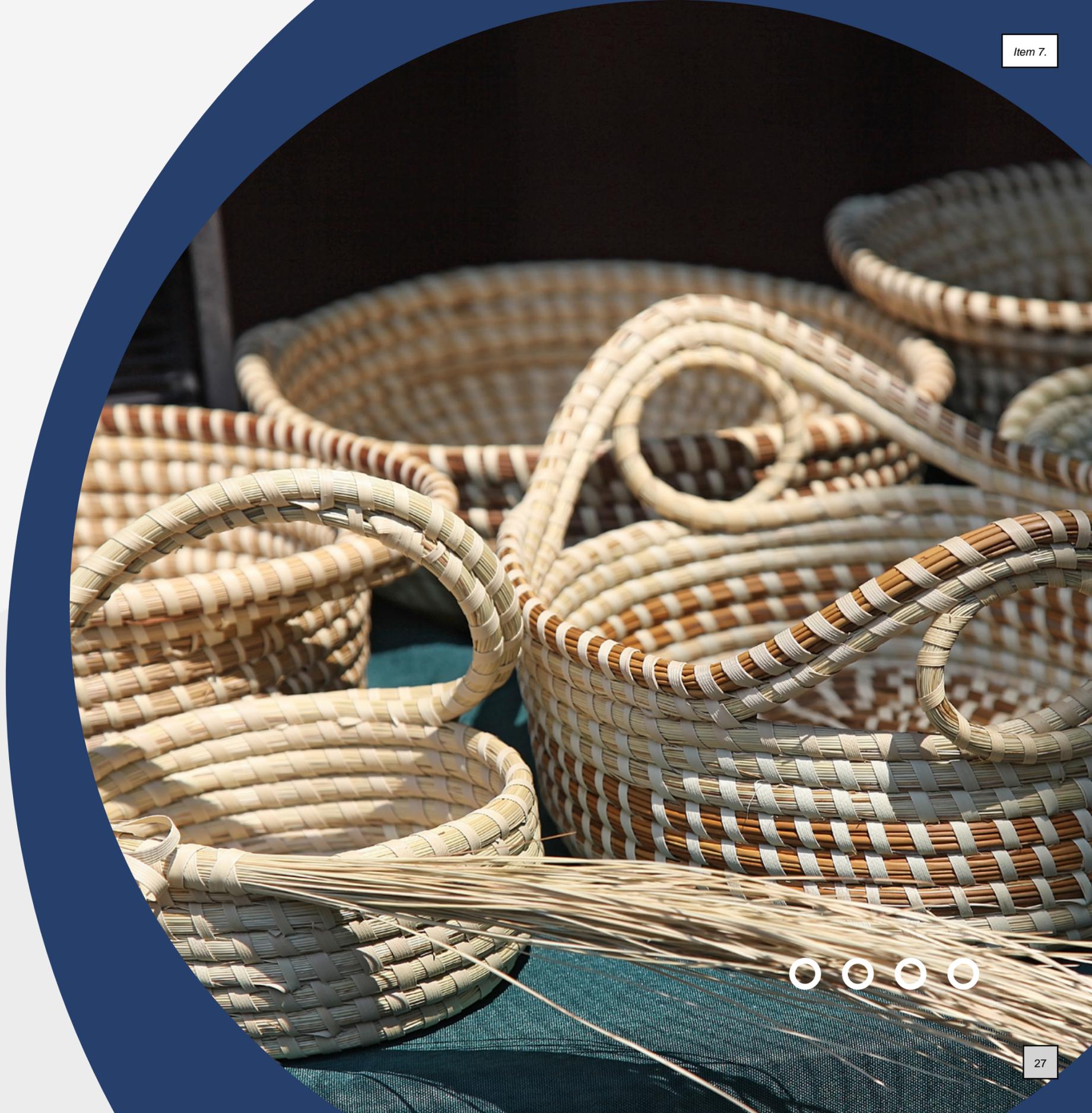
## Historic Gullah Land Preservation Program workshops include:

- What is Heirs' Property?
- Tracing Your Land's Ownership to the Beginning
- How to Get a Clear Title
- What Legal Complications Come with Heirs' Property?
- How to Stay off of the Annual Tax List
- Financial Literacy
- How to Make Your Land Pay for Itself
- Why Did My Property Taxes Suddenly Increase?
- What Can You Do with Heirs' Property?
- Economic Development and Land Use Options
- How to Subdivide Properties
- Property Funding Opportunities
- Adding Infrastructure to Your Property



# ***NEXT STEPS***

- Expand Current Operations
  - To The Entire County
  - Add a Physical Location
  - Hire Staff
- Develop Ongoing Program Schedule
- Produce Additional Collateral Materials
- Create a Marketing Plan



**Lowcountry Gullah Foundation**

**Budget 2022-2023**

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Operational</b>	<b>Programming</b>	<b>Tax Payments</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Educational Program Development</b>				\$140,000.00
1 Full-time Staff	\$100,000.00			
1 Part Time Staffer/Grant Writer/Presentations	\$40,000.00			
<b>Service Providers</b>				\$10,000.00
Graphic Designer	\$5,000.00			
Website Designer	\$5,000.00			
<b>Annual Beaufort County Tax Sale Payments</b>			\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00
<b>Programming</b>				\$30,500.00
Advertising - Mailchimp and Printing Materials		\$5,000.00		
Program Facilities Rental (including catering expenses)		\$3,000.00		
Program Collateral / Promotional Materials (Fliers/Brochures)		\$2,500.00		
Marketing - TV, Local Radio, Social Media	\$20,000.00			
<b>Program Operations</b>				\$59,550.00
Office Space	\$40,000.00			
Utilities (Electric / Phone / Internet)	\$7,500.00			
Office Supplies	\$1,300.00			
Phone	\$2,000.00			
Desktop Computer & Printer/Scanner	\$1,500.00			
Projector	\$500.00			
Postage	\$3,000.00			
Projector Screen	\$200.00			
Miscellaneous	\$1,000.00			
Desks/Chairs/Furniture	\$1,500.00			
County Travel Expenses - Churches/POA/Organization Meetings	\$3,000.00			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$231,500.00</b>	<b>\$10,500.00</b>	<b>\$100,000.00</b>	<b>\$342,000.00</b>



# THANK YOU

*I look forward to answering and questions that you might have*

## CONTACT



[gullahland@gmail.com](mailto:gullahland@gmail.com)



843.715.3506



[www.historicgullahlandpreservation.org](http://www.historicgullahlandpreservation.org)







**Beaufort County Disabilities and Special Needs Department**  
**100 Clear Water Way**  
**Beaufort, SC 29906**  
**Telephone: (843) 255-6300 Fax: (843) 255-9417**

October 20, 2021

Mr. Joe Passiment, Chairman  
Beaufort County Council  
P. O. Drawer 1228  
Beaufort, SC 29901-1228

Re: Reappointment to: Disabilities and Special Needs Advisory Board

Dear Mr. Passiment:

I hereby respectfully request that I be considered for reappointment to serve as a member of the Disabilities and Special Needs Advisory Board, effective February 2022.

Sincerely,

Wendy Bukowski