



# SC PRESERVATION

## TOOLKIT

Since March 2023, the WeGOJA Foundation has been spearheading a new project - the [South Carolina Preservation Toolkit](#), funded by a two-year grant from the Mellon Foundation. The toolkit will be a one stop shop of resources and tools to help African American communities preserve their historic spaces and places. Our goal is to bolster African American historic preservation in the state, equip and empower local communities, and increase accessibility and engagement with Black history.

The first phase of the Toolkit project has focused on discovering what challenges and barriers our local communities face in preserving our history. We've done this by establishing regional ambassadors and holding listening sessions throughout the state.

In the summer of 2023, WeGOJA brought on six Regional Ambassadors to the Toolkit Project. Each Ambassador was responsible for organizing Listening Sessions in their region(s) of the state and bringing community members to the table for discussion.

Throughout in-person and virtual listening sessions, we learned that our African American communities face significant barriers in historic preservation. One of the largest barriers is resistance to preserving Black history. Another was lack of support - both from outside influences and from within African American communities. Other barriers included securing funding, knowing how to begin a historic preservation project, knowing who to contact, and the lack of statewide community due to regional silos, among others.

The feedback from these listening sessions has been crucial as we begin to build the structure and content of the Toolkit in the next phase of the project. Some tools and resources we plan to include are a Professionals Database, Funding Opportunities, Standards for Rehabilitation and local ordinances/guidelines, How-To Guides (eg: historic markers, National Register applications, etc), Map of Current Projects, and a Community Forum.

Our next phase is working closely with the web design company Period Three, to take what we've learned and develop it into an online toolkit. We have already begun work with the tech team to start this phase, and are looking forward to a creative collaboration.

We expect the Toolkit to be available for initial testing in the fall of 2024, with a full reveal to the public during our Black History Month Gala in February 2025.

We are currently accepting names and contact information for professionals in the preservation community. If you are a grant writer, historian, architect or archivist, and would like to work with organizations on their preservation goals, please [add your name and expertise to the database](#).