

## PRESS RELEASE

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### WeGOJA Foundation Receives Grants for “Portraits of a Pandemic” Initiative

**Hartsville** -- The [WeGOJA Foundation](http://www.WeGOJA.org) (formerly the South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation) has received funding from the 1772 Foundation and the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelly Foundation to support its Black Carolinians Speak project, an oral history effort to capture African American voices in South Carolina during key moments.

The current Black Carolinians Speak initiative is called “Portraits of a Pandemic,” and its goal is to document the African American experience of the Coronavirus outbreak. The funding will allow the Foundation to expand its outreach to capture a broader range of African American perspectives, across all socioeconomic levels and geographical areas. Currently, there are 97 entries to the project at [www.GreenBookofSC.com/speak](http://www.GreenBookofSC.com/speak). The WeGOJA Foundation hopes to capture more voices from the Lowcountry and Upstate South Carolina regions, as well as teachers, students, funeral home directors and law enforcement officers.

“We already have a significant number of entrants, but we recognize some key demographics missing in the record,” said Jannie Harriot, Executive Director of the WeGOJA Foundation. “It’s important that we document as many diverse voices as possible.”

Launched in May, “Portraits of a Pandemic” has been inviting African Americans who live in South Carolina to document how the pandemic has affected their lives. The project accepts a variety of formats -- from music, paintings and photography to interviews, narratives, poetry and other forms of expression.

The effort will create a repository of African American voices for the state’s permanent historical record at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History for public use and research. A long-term goal is to digitize much of the material submitted for the project.

For more information, visit [WeGOJA.org](http://www.WeGOJA.org) or contact Jannie Harriot at [wegoaexecdir@gmail.com](mailto:wegoaexecdir@gmail.com) or 843-332-3589.

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#### **About the WeGOJA Foundation**

The mission of the WeGOJA Foundation is to find resources to support the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission in its efforts to identify, document, help preserve and promote sites, structures, buildings and stories associated with African Americans in South Carolina.