

Heirs' Property Overview



Helping Families Obtain Clear Titles to Their Homes

Our work at LISC Jacksonville revolves around uplifting our city's most vulnerable citizens and communities. A significant portion of this work focuses on helping families create wealth by addressing systemic and other barriers that deteriorate wealth, particularly among BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) families.

LISC Jacksonville has been at the forefront of addressing the issue of heirs' property in Duval County for the past two years. Our efforts to identify and fix this situation by engaging our partners and the community began in 2021, and since that time, we have been able to help nearly 200 local families retain ownership of the homes they have rightfully inherited – *before it was too late*.

What is Heirs' Property?

Heirs' property is property that is inherited without a will, estate plan, or court document from the owner who has passed away, causing unclear or disputed legal title ownership for the descendants. This wealth-deteriorating phenomenon, which is also sometimes referred to as "tangled titles" or "clouded titles," creates a very vulnerable housing and ownership situation that disproportionately impacts BIPOC and urban homes and communities.

Without a clear legal title, a property's condition and value are much harder to maintain. This prevents the heirs from obtaining home equity loans, tax rebates and homestead exemptions, and blocks access to disaster recovery assistance programs.

Heirs' property also prevents the accumulation of generational wealth through homeownership, which is historically done by passing property down from generation to generation. This then adds to the effects of other financial challenges already experienced by BIPOC individuals and communities.

Heirs' properties are highly vulnerable to real estate investors and corporations that purchase heirs' property homes that crowd residents out from the housing market.

Resolving the Issue of Heirs' Property

Resources and support are available to help families obtain a clear title to their inherited home and prevent future legal issues through proper estate planning.

LISC Jacksonville believes there is a direct connection between resolving and preventing heirs' property and increasing homeownership opportunities. This in turn brings more households into the housing market and creates generational wealth – all of which has positive and profound impacts for individuals, families, and neighborhoods. When ownership is preserved and homes are safe and resilient, families can leverage home market value and equity to pursue educational, entrepreneurial, or other opportunities that ultimately improve their lives and the lives of their loved ones.



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Our approach to resolving heirs' property with the support of our partners, legal aid organizations, and community development corporations includes:

| FIND | PRESERVE | SUPPORT |
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| We invest in data driven research processes to identify heirs' property homes. | We connect individuals with legal and property tax relief to help them keep their homes. | Once preserved, we help households access estate planning support and avert future home loss. |

Read more about our heirs' property and Family Wealth Creation work at lisc.org/jacksonville.

Quick Facts: Heirs' Property in Duval County

- Duval has the *densest concentration* of heirs' property parcels in the southeast
- 12,000 – 15,000 heirs' property households, representing \$2.5 billion in “dead capital” or housing market value
- Majority are BIPOC households



Need Support?

Contact Three Rivers Legal Services at (904) 394-7450 or www.trls.org.