

# Community Foundation of the Lowcountry

*Project SAFE (Sewer Access for Everyone)*

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

## Challenge

Hilton Head Island is surrounded by several bodies of water. Compromised by the island's high water table and dense underground root systems, some low- to moderate-income homeowners are living with rain-flooded septic systems that are producing an overflow of sewage, causing sickness and threatening our environment and economy.

## Innovation

A collaborative partnership called Project SAFE (Sewer Access for Everyone) provides grants to low- to moderate-income property owners to connect to public sewers, enabling them to eliminate aging and failing septic systems.

## Overview

In the poverty-stricken areas of the Hilton Head Island, many of the residents live with septic systems that are in poor condition and disrepair. They cannot afford to repair them, nor can they afford to connect to town water and sewage systems. Each partner in this collaboration has clearly defined goals but together share a common mission: to provide connections from home to sewer for low- to moderate-income property owners. Community Foundation of the Lowcountry has infused \$500,000 into the \$3.0 million fundraising goal as well as committing to raising the remaining funds necessary to complete the project. The Town of Hilton Head Island has committed to funding sewer line installations, coordinating road and utility easement acquisition, and providing sewer pump stations on town-owned property at a cost to the town of nearly \$10 million. The Hilton Head Public Service District will finish building the remaining sewer pump stations at a cost of nearly \$3.6 million. To date, 209 connections have been completed. Connections to the remaining 350 qualified households are expected to be complete no later than June 2020.

## PUBLIC-SECTOR PARTNERS

Town of Hilton Head  
Island, Hilton Head  
Public Service District.

