



Louisiana Appleseed's Heir Property Initiatives

Advocacy

- In 2008, Louisiana Appleseed successfully advocated for the Louisiana Legislature to pass a study resolution, forming a legislative committee to study the effects of ownership of heir property and to issue recommendations. Louisiana Appleseed provided the committee with the background, research and recommendations necessary to develop and implement the legislation.
- In 2009, Louisiana Appleseed's volunteer, Malcolm A. Meyer of Adams and Reese LLP, worked with Senator Edwin R. Murray to pass Act 81, which provides thousands of Louisiana residents access to a legal procedure—the heirship affidavit— making it easier and less costly to clear title.
- In 2010, the legislature approved state Senator Murray's request, SCSR 5, to continue to study heir property. The joint study committee, along with stakeholders from around the state, analyzed the rights of a spouse to receive title to property upon death of the other spouse.
- In 2011, Act 323 was signed into law by Governor Bobby Jindal. Act 323 was introduced by Senator Murray and passed unanimously through the House and Senate. It further expands the use of the heirship affidavit, providing additional relief to the thousands of Louisiana residents living in homes without clear title.
- Louisiana Appleseed's most recent piece of legislation, Act 618, eliminates the need to open court succession proceedings for all estates where the decedent died over twenty five years ago, and will allow all such estates to be handled by affidavit.

Education and Outreach

- Volunteer Malcolm Meyer and Louisiana Appleseed Executive Director Christy Kane have provided numerous presentations on this topic around the country, including a seminar at the ABA Equal Justice Conference in Phoenix, AZ. They have also presented testimony before the Texas Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, at the committee's request, on heir property, lessons learned after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Louisiana's legislative reforms and community education.
- Louisiana Appleseed and its project partners have developed a community education booklet, *Protect Your Property*, to assist community members in identifying whether they

own heir property, why it benefits them to have clear title to their property, and how they can do so. Louisiana Appleseed has distributed over 13,000 copies of this booklet across the state.

- In 2011, Louisiana Appleseed and The Pro Bono Project, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services, and The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law were awarded a two-year grant from The Greater New Orleans Foundation. The "Title Clearing Collaborative" works together to educate community members about the importance of clearing title and provide them with the legal services they need to address their property issues. The collaborative, thus far, has assisted 200 homeowners in obtaining clear title to their properties and has educated over 1400 community members about the importance of protecting property through clear title.
- Louisiana Appleseed regularly hosts CLEs for attorneys to educate them on heir property issues and the use of the heirship affidavit to clear title for their clients.

For more information about Louisiana Appleseed and its heir property work, please contact Christy Kane, Executive Director, at ckane@appleseednetwork.org or 504-561-7312.