



RISE. RECLAIM. REBUILD.

South Baltimore
Community Land Trust, Inc.

Progress Update
July 2024-December 2025

sbclt.org



Contents

This progress update contains highlights of SBCLT's work during the period between July 2024 and December 2025.

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Mission & Vision



Mission

The **South Baltimore Community Land Trust** is a community-led organization that creates **permanently affordable housing, development without displacement, and zero waste** in Baltimore.

Vision

We believe that people directly impacted by environmental, economic, and racial injustice must be in the lead to create development that **regenerates our communities and our planet**. Rooted in this vision, we take land out of the extractive speculative sector and **restore it to community ownership** in order to advance a proactive vision for development without displacement and zero waste.

About SBCLT

The South Baltimore Community Land Trust, Inc. (SBCLT) is a 501(c)(3) resident-governed non-profit organization advancing a vision and theory of change for Fair Development centered on identifying root structural causes and implementing community-driven solutions to address persistent environmental and community health disparities. We are working for a just transition away from an unhealthy community of toxic hazards, unsafe and unaffordable housing, and dead end low-wage jobs, to a community-led economic development model based on the core values and principles of universality, equity, participation, transparency, and accountability.

SBCLT grew out of grassroots, youth-led efforts to stop the construction of the nation's largest waste incinerator in South Baltimore more than 14 years ago. Through the process of identifying neighborhood health hazards and advocating for a just transition away from polluting industries, a group of residents in South Baltimore began imagining how different their neighborhoods would be if not dominated by industry.

After successfully stopping incinerator development, we realized what we lacked was community ownership of land and vacant spaces. We formed a land trust so that we could take land and homes out of the speculative market and create safe, healthy, and affordable places for residents.

We acquired our very first plot of land in Curtis Bay in 2019, and created a community park with a putt-putt course, a stage, and a compost and recycling drop-off for residents. From this humble DIY space, we've since expanded our reach and have over 15 permanently affordable housing units under development in South Baltimore, with more to come.



South Baltimore EJ Center

The South Baltimore Environmental Justice Center will serve as a community hub for housing and environmental justice education, research, and organizing in South Baltimore. We envision a space where citizen science takes place, where community organizations gather, and where residents turn for support and resources to challenge the environmental burdens we face.



During the 2025 calendar year, construction began on the **South Baltimore Environmental Justice Center** located in a long-vacant building at 1601 Locust Street. We selected this site for the EJ Center strategically: the building replaces an undesirable, problematic business in the neighborhood, and is adjacent to multiple units of SBCLT houses. By concentrating our development around a community hub, we create place-based identity, nurture collective pride, and organize with community power.

Design

Our collaborative design process focused on sustainable, innovative, low-tech, and affordable solutions. Our goal is to create building that is healthy for its occupants and for the community – and that can serve as an example of a new way to build in South Baltimore. We hired Carri Beer ([commONEcology](#)) and Michael Hindle ([Passive to Positive](#)) to guide us through this process. Additional design partners who supported our preliminary planning include the [Community of Curtis Bay Association](#) and the [Neighborhood Design Center](#).

Our priorities for the building design include:

- Using salvaged, locally-produced, and non-toxic materials
- High energy efficiency with net zero potential
- Utilizing natural light
- Incorporating color and texture to reflect the spirit of our South Baltimore community
- Generating and storing solar power

The interior designs include large open spaces for community events and co-working, private office spaces for SBCLT staff and budding local businesses, and a short-term housing rental unit for future SBCLT homeowners.



Progress

The building is made up of multiple structures that were previously combined, and it will require completely new framing to make sure it is stable and safe.

As of January 2026, we are in phase 2 of construction. This means that major exterior work has been completed, except for the installation of a new roof. Phase 2 includes a full interior demolition as well as the installation of new framing and joists. At the end of phase 2, we'll have a new roof and a new entryway enclosure.

Our phase 2 construction is made possible through a generous **Thriving Communities** grant from the [Green & Healthy Homes Initiative](#). For more information about upcoming project phases, visit sbclt.org/south-baltimore-environmental-justice-center.

Currently, our target completion date is the end of 2027. The timeliness of our completion depends on the status of pending funds.



Community mural project

We know that public art is central to place-making and cultivating a spirit of community stewardship. That's why we invested in a collaborative design process bringing together ideas from across South Baltimore and the expertise and creative vision of local artist [kolpeace](#).

With support from **Mural Arts**, we hosted a paid 10-week training program for local high school students in summer 2025 to learn about community engagement, collaborative design, and the technical preparation processes of mural creation.

At the end of the community process, our youth interns and kolpeace developed the initial mockups below. We can't wait to see and share the final product!

Environmental Justice

SBCLT has been leading the way in a **just transition to zero waste**, from our days as student activists and organizers in South Baltimore, long before the existence of the land trust. We envision a transition away from decades of burning, burying, and extraction to a future of healthy, clean, and stable communities with new infrastructure that regenerates our environment and local economies.



Trash incineration removed from the Renewable Energy Portfolio in Maryland

On the final day of Maryland's 2025 legislative session, lawmakers finally voted to eliminate trash incineration from the Renewable Energy Portfolio. With this vote, incinerators will no longer receive millions of dollars per year in clean energy subsidies from the state, as it has since 2011.

After over a decade of organizing around this issue, SBCLT celebrated with our allies. "We made our voices heard for over a decade explaining that burning limited natural resources is not clean energy," reflected Carlos Sanchez, SBCLT's Youth Outreach Specialist, "and we have been heard."

This bill is a critical step in the just transition to zero waste that we envision for our communities. Our communities have paid the price for incineration, not only with our pockets but with our health. It's time that the corporations pay a bit, too.

EPA announces investigation of SBCLT's civil rights complaint

In spring 2024, we filed a first-of-its kind civil rights complaint with the Environmental Protection Agency. In our complaint, we make the case that Baltimore City Department of Public Works has violated federal civil rights law by failing to move Baltimore away from its reliance on the incinerator, which harms and pollutes low-income Black and Hispanic neighborhoods in South Baltimore.

On July 12, 2024, the EPA notified Baltimore City that it accepted our complaint and will investigate our claims. With the unconstitutional gutting of the EPA under the current presidential administration, the status of this investigation remains murky. However, our initial complaint and the EPA's response set a precedent and bought legal confirmation to our belief that environmental rights are civil rights.

True costs of living in an overburdened community

In July 2025, we announced the findings of a new joint study by University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins University researchers. The study found that Baltimore City's two incinerators are responsible for \$97 Million in health damages across Maryland per year. Unsurprisingly, the study also found that these damages disproportionately impact residents of communities like ours like South Baltimore.

The study presents various models for curbing these impacts, including the need for "policy action to protect human health in the region." The study calls for continuous emissions monitoring of incineration facilities, disincentivizing incineration and promoting safer alternatives, and rigorous cumulative impact assessments, including of socioeconomic vulnerability and co-exposures, before permit renewals for high-emitting facilities.

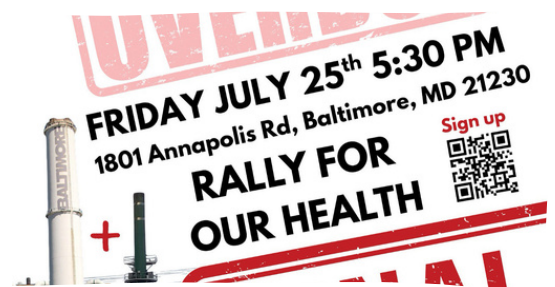
Find the article's preprint here:

medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2025.06.27.25330313v2

Baltimore City increases landfill tipping fees

In October 2025, the Baltimore City's Board of Estimates voted to increase the tipping fees at the city's Quarantine Road Landfill in South Baltimore. This was the first time these fees have increased since 1993, and the city made this change in response to SBCLT's landmark civil rights complaint filed with the EPA in 2024. The complaint specifically called for an increase in tipping fees at Quarantine Road.

As of early 2026, an investigation by the *Baltimore Banner* shows that the amount of garbage taken to the landfill in South Baltimore has decreased by HALF ever since the city increased their landfill fees, demonstrating that policy changes do lead to tangible effects.





The CHERISH Our Communities Act

For the past two years, SBCLT has been pushing the Maryland CHERISH Our Communities Act (CHERISH = from Cumulative Harms to Environmental Restoration for Improving our Shared Health). We've been organizing with and building the Mid-Atlantic Justice Coalition to pass this landmark legislation.

The bill follows examples set by other states to create new permitting requirements for facilities that have major environmental impact on their neighboring communities. It also gives Maryland Department of Environment a clear mandate—and the authority—to consider environmental justice when making permit decisions.

If the bill becomes law, residents in the most polluted neighborhoods across the state will be protected from new facilities that would exacerbate the pollution problem. Pollution from existing facilities will have to decrease. Meanwhile, positive development that doesn't harm people's health will be free to thrive.

The map to the right highlights how **cumulative harms** impact communities like those in South Baltimore. It's not just one brownfield that needs restoration; it's an entire landscape of environmental overburden that needs to be considered and addressed through forward-thinking, human-centered, policy and regulations.

WIN WASTE INCINERATOR

(BRESKO) is focus of SBCLT's Title V complaint

Citizen science investigation on **PM2.5 AIR POLLUTANTS** from uncovered coal trains

Congressional support for community call to **COVER COAL RAILCARS**

RECONSERVE, INC.

receives FDA warning letter about major environmental & health violations (2025)

Sites of SBCLT's **COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT**

Through youth-led campaign, community stops development of what would have become the nation's **LARGEST TRASH-BURNING INCINERATOR**

Citizen science investigation of **BLACK CARBON AIR EMISSIONS**

Youth-led citizen science research on high rates of **DIESEL TRUCK TRAFFIC**

Community analysis of 64-acre **BROWNFIELD** site

Emissions violation at **CSX COAL TERMINAL** (2024)

Citizen science research report on **COAL DUST** composition & levels (2023)

Citizen science research paper strengthens link between **COAL TERMINAL ACTIVITY** and pollution in the community (2025)

100+ year history of explosions, leaks and spills leading to **DISPLACEMENT** of 3 communities

Community response to renewed call to displace Curtis Bay rather than address cumulative impacts

Nation's largest **MEDICAL WASTE INCINERATOR** routinely violates emissions standards

Health impacts research shows **TRUE COSTS** of Baltimore's incinerators (2025)

Title V complaint breakthrough: **TIPPING FEE** increased at city landfill (2025)

Community-led campaign to keep **COMPOST** matter out of city landfill and incinerator

Community research and advocacy result in Johns Hopkins **ENDING CONTRACT** with medical waste incinerator

Cumulative Impacts Map of South Baltimore

a landscape of environmental overburden

Housing Justice

South Baltimore Community Land Trust creates **development without displacement** through renovations of vacant homes and construction of new homes on vacant land. All homes created and sold by SBCLT will remain **permanently affordable**, thereby creating opportunity for generations to come.



Our first homes arrive on the market!

In November 2024, we cut the ribbon on our first affordable housing unit to hit the market! We celebrated with a community dinner on November 8 and a special ceremony on November 9 featuring remarks from guests and keynote speakers including Dr. Lawrence Brown, Comptroller Brook Lierman, Councilwoman Philicia Porter, Senator Bill Ferguson, and more representatives from the city, state, and community.

Soon after the ribbon-cutting, we welcomed our first homeowner and her family. "From start to finish, your clear communication and attention to details ensured everything went smoothly and efficiently," she wrote to us afterward. "Thank you for helping us with our girl's school. This is indeed not just community, but family."

As of January 2026, we have another home on the market in the same block as the first unit. By the end of this year, five redeveloped homes on the 1600 block of Hazel Ave will be owner-occupied by first-time homeowners through SBCLT.

This is the block that started it all: In 2017, a three-alarm fire displaced two dozen residents from the 1600 block of Hazel Street. When the city put the damaged homes into receivership, our vision for community transformation started to take shape:

What if...

*... we bought homes on the block and put them into a **community land trust**?*

*... we **prevented** speculators and malicious landlords from capitalizing on this tragedy?*

*... we kept these homes **permanently affordable** so that opportunities are handed down from generation to generation?*

*... we stewarded this neighborhood in a way that returns **community power** to the people who live here?*

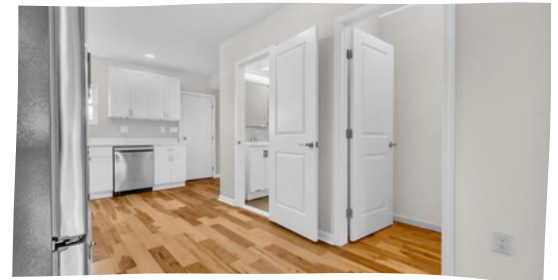
A newly-built duplex on Monroe Circle is coming soon, too, with additional homes in progress on Pennington Avenue and Locust Street.

Housing stewardship means we're with you every step of the way

We are committed to supporting first-time homeowners every step of the way along our homebuying process. Our homes are available to individuals and families at 50% average median income (AMI) and below.

SBCLT's Stewardship Coordinator, Quan Campbell, works with prospective homebuyers from their initial intake through the homeownership counseling process with our partners at Druid Heights Community Development Corporation and beyond. In addition to one-on-one support, Quan has been working with SBCLT's community partners in lending, real estate, and renters rights to develop free community workshops on homeownership preparedness.

Our goal is to cultivate a web of professional support for our first-time homebuyers, from matching interested homebuyers with a values-aligned partner realtors within SBCLT's network, to developing community leaders invested in neighborhood success, to referring homeowners to home repair vendors who share our vision for a zero waste future.



We Are ENOUGH

Brooklyn/Curtis Bay ENOUGH creates a brighter future for our children by ensuring they have access to safe housing, healthy environments, and essential resources necessary for their growth and development.



Issue-based community organizing in Brooklyn & Curtis Bay

In 2025, SBCLT was selected as one of 27 communities across Maryland to launch ENOUGH: Engaging Neighbors, Organizations, Unions, Government, and Households.

As the host organization of **Brooklyn/Curtis Bay ENOUGH**, we are part of a targeted initiative to end childhood poverty in Brooklyn and Curtis Bay. Kayla Smith, our BCB ENOUGH program manager, attended training at the William Julius Wilson Institute.

BCB ENOUGH's ever-expanding team of community leaders and youth leaders identifies issues faced by South Baltimore residents through community-based listening and outreach. We develop solutions and create strategies to improve our qualities of life. We concentrate on specific areas to identify and tackle the root causes of child poverty. We work with local schools, businesses, churches, unions, and dozens of other organizations (*see the community resources map on the next page*) to weave a holistic web of support for our children and their families.

In our first year, BCB ENOUGH co-hosted events with Curtis Bay Elementary, gave away 67 bicycles to kids in our community, convened a youth council of dedicated and passionate young people, and adopted a shared vision statement: ***We in Brooklyn and Curtis Bay are vibrant, safe communities where every child and family has access to opportunity, grows in power and possibility, and feels seen, supported, and connected. We belong here!***





Community Resources Map of Brooklyn/Curtis Bay

a landscape of grassroots investment & care

Community Members Take the Lead



Citizen science research leads to damning air quality conclusions

In July 2025, the academic journal *Air Quality, Atmosphere, and Health* published a new study conducted by researchers from Johns Hopkins University and community members in South Baltimore. Together, researchers and community members monitored air quality around Curtis Bay. By mapping pollutant levels across South Baltimore and documenting bulldozer activity at the CSX coal terminal using trail cameras and tracking wind directions, researchers and citizen scientists concluded that the CSX facility is a significant driver of air pollution burdens in South Baltimore.

Read the article here: link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11869-025-01773-w



This study is a result of SBCLT's dedication to **citizen science**, rooted in our belief that those directly impacted must be in the lead in researching issues, developing solutions, and driving transformation that affect their communities. As result, we invite residents to participate in building and assembling air monitoring kits, train to become drone pilots to better monitor industry activity across South Baltimore, and engage youth in data collection and participatory action research.



SBCLT youth leaders design professional museum exhibit

SBCLT youth from Benjamin Franklin High School created, designed, and launched ***Toxic Overburden: 100 Years of Environmental Injustice and Resistance***, a professional museum exhibit about the policies, practices, and budgets that have made our state and city officials complicit in ongoing environmental violence. The exhibit was the culmination of years of collaboration, research, and documentation with Dr. Nicole Fabricant of Towson University, and was on display at the Peale Museum (April 10, 2025-June 29, 2025) and Baltimore Unity Hall (July 1, 2025-July 25, 2025).

New Partnerships

Since our founding, we've been fortunate to be surrounded by a network of partner organizations who share our vision and mission for environmental, health, and housing justice and equity. We are grateful to welcome these new partners into our SBCLT family!

Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice, and Health

In September 2025, we co-hosted the **11th Annual Environmental Justice and Health Disparities Symposium** of the Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice, and Health (CEEJH), participating in multiple plenary sessions and hosting solidarity tours in South Baltimore for guests from around the world.

While we've been part of CEEJH since our inception and currently serve on its steering committee, this was our first time playing such a significant role in symposium. We are proud to be part of CEEJH and look forward to how this partnership continues to evolve!



Casa Pueblo — Adjuntas, Puerto Rico

In October 2025, SBCLT staff and board members were honored to travel to Puerto Rico to share stories of resilience and learn from the inspiring environmental justice leaders of **Casa Pueblo** in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico. This solidarity and learning partnership was made possible by SBCLT's former intern Annalisa Jenkins. Princeton University and the Goldman Environmental Prize made our trip possible.



Unitarian Universalist Association

SBCLT was selected by the **Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)** to be the local recipient organization of funds collected during the UUA's annual General Assembly conference that took place in Baltimore in June 2025. We had the privilege of sharing SBCLT's story with over 2,000 people gathered at the Baltimore Convention Center and thousands more who tuned in from around the world. In addition, we partnered with the UUA to plan a hands-on Day of Service in South Baltimore in which over 70 guests from around the country helped clean up a vacant lot and prepared SBCLT properties for development.

In the Media

Regional and national news media outlets continued to look to SBCLT as an expert voice on the cumulative health impacts of environmental injustice on local communities. Additional coverage highlighted SBCLT victories and our progress in building permanently affordable housing. Here's just a small sampling of media coverage we received during this period of July 2024-December 2025:

July 8, 2024 — *Yes! Magazine*: [A Cross-State Movement to Hold Railroads Accountable](#)

July 17, 2024 — *Waste Dive*: [EPA opens civil rights investigation into Baltimore waste plan](#)

July 18, 2024 — *Afro*: [Living on the fence line: how incinerators affect public health](#)

July 24, 2024 — *Baltimore Brew*: [EPA will review civil rights complaint against city over Baltimore trash incinerator](#)

July 25, 2024 — *Maryland Matters*: [EPA to probe civil-rights complaint over Baltimore's trash incineration](#)

August 14, 2024 — *In These Times*: [Scenes From a Sacrifice Zone: South Baltimore Residents Fight Back Against Industrial Pollution](#)

August 21, 2024 — *Baltimore Banner*: [What it's like to live in Curtis Bay, Baltimore's pollution epicenter](#)

August 29, 2024 — *Baltimore Banner*: [State permit for CSX in South Baltimore would have a catch — barriers to block coal dust](#)

September 26, 2024 — *Hopkins Bloomberg Public Health*: [Community vs. Coal: Reclaiming Health in Curtis Bay](#)

November 17, 2024 — *Baltimore Brew*: [Good News: South Baltimore Community Land Trust cuts the ribbon on its first affordable home](#)

November 25, 2024 — *Johns Hopkins Hub*: [Study confirms coal dust presence in Baltimore's Curtis Bay, raising health concerns](#)

December 4, 2024 — *Baltimore Magazine*: [Incineration, Coal, and Curtis Bay: Why the South Baltimore Community Suffers Like No Other](#)

March 12, 2025 — *Prism Reports*: [In the face of empty promises, Baltimore residents take on environmental injustice in their communities](#)

April 8, 2025 — *Baltimore Brew*: [A long-sought victory for community groups: Lawmakers end Maryland's subsidy for incinerators](#)

April 8, 2025 — *Clean Water Action*: [Maryland General Assembly Eliminates Trash Incineration from the State Renewable Portfolio Standard](#)

April 8, 2025 — *Baltimore Banner*: [Maryland lawmakers approve end of clean-energy subsidies for trash incinerators](#)

June 9, 2025 — *Baltimore Brew*: [South Baltimore activists call absence of zero waste funding in city's FY26 budget "a betrayal"](#)

July 22, 2025 — *Baltimore Brew*: [New study strengthens link between CSX coal terminal and air pollution in Baltimore's Curtis Bay](#)

July 28, 2025 — *WYPR*: [Baltimore incinerators cause about \\$100 million in health costs, study says](#)

August 19, 2025 — *Maryland DHCD*: [Reinvest Baltimore Brings Critical Financial Boost to South Baltimore Community Land Trust, Curtis Bay Neighborhood](#)

August 20, 2025 — *Sierra*: [From Burning Trash to Zero Waste: South Baltimore residents tackle polluting facilities and fight for a cleaner future](#)

September 8, 2025 — *Baltimore Banner*: [A 'windscreen' to shield South Baltimore from coal dust? Both CSX and the community say no](#)

September 29, 2025 — *Maryland Matters*: [Maryland redrew an environmental justice map; polluted communities feel left out](#)

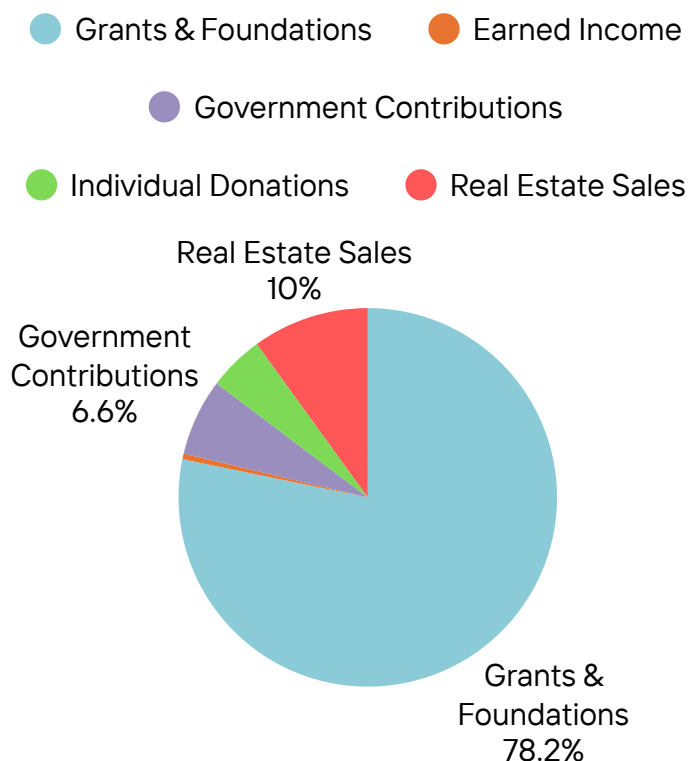
Financial Summary

SBCLT's fiscal year mirrors the calendar year. The financial summary on this page reflects income and expenses of the completed fiscal year from **January 1-December 31, 2025**. Full audited financials will become available upon request in mid-2026. You can review our latest filed 990s [here](#).

Operational

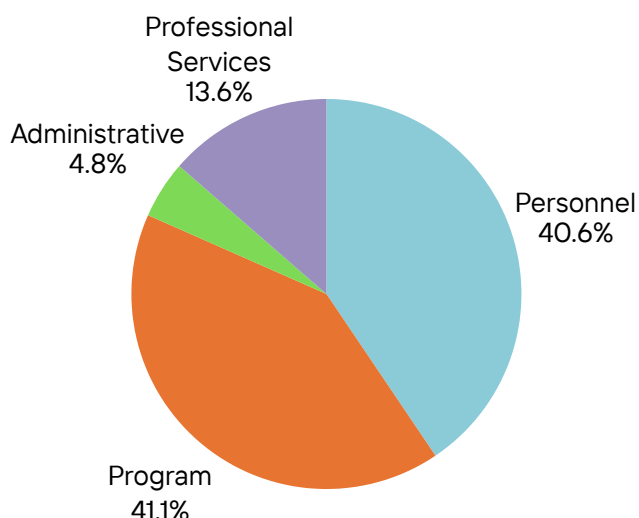
Income FY25

Total income:
\$1,606,191



Expenses FY25

Total expenses:
\$1,259,657



Capital

The average rehab costs \$220,000 to complete. In July 2025, we became one of 16 community organizations in Baltimore City to receive investment from the **Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Initiative (BVRI)**. This program unlocks access to redevelopment construction loan financing to address vacancies around our South Baltimore development clusters, and will help us move forward in our mission of creating permanently affordable housing and development without displacement!

Staff

- **Dr. Meleny Thomas**, *Executive Director*
- **Shaquandra "Quan" Campbell**, *Housing & Community Stewardship Coordinator*
- **Shashawnda Campbell**, *Environmental Justice Director*
- **Valerie Hsu**, *Communications & Donor Engagement Coordinator*
- **Carlos Sanchez**, *Youth Outreach Specialist*
- **Greg Sawtell**, *Zero Waste Just Transition Director*
- **Kayla Smith**, *BCB ENOUGH Program Manager*



Board of Directors

SBCLT is governed by a volunteer board of community members who bring their unique perspectives, expertise, and experiences to support SBCLT's mission. Per our organizational bylaws, over one-third of our board must be residents of South Baltimore. We are actively recruiting additional board members. Current board members are:

- Matthew A. Aubourg
- Christina Shoppert Devereaux
- Sharon Hunt
- Thaonne Malone
- Jay Monteverde



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