

New Program Created to Preserve and Maintain Historic Cemeteries

[House Bill 49](#) creates section 267.21, Florida Statutes, to establish a Historic Cemeteries Program which provides for the identification and maintenance of abandoned and historic cemeteries. The bill details how the program's administrators will be selected and the functions they possess.

Among other groups, the Historic Cemeteries Program will provide grants to local governments and qualified nonprofit organizations for the purposes of restoring abandoned African American cemeteries. The Historic Cemeteries Program will be headed by the State Historic Preservation Officer and will be tasked with preserving old or abandoned cemeteries. The program will also aid in the education of historic cemeteries by developing a curriculum with the Department of Education.

The bill also creates an accompanying Program Advisory Council to provide guidance for the program's administrators.

Finally, the bill amends the definition of conservation easement under section 704.06, Florida Statutes, to include abandoned and neglected cemeteries that are older than 50 years.

HB 49 was signed into law and became effective on July 1, 2023.