**Three Programs to Financially Empower South Carolinians**

As a taxpayer, your government is meant to serve you in many ways and at many levels. Being your County \_\_\_\_\_, I know that having access to the right financial resources and information at the right time can make a significant difference in our day-to-day lives, business dealings and personal fiscal health. That’s why I want to share information about three important programs administered by the [**State Treasurer’s Office**](https://treasurer.sc.gov/) that can provide value to you and your loved ones by offering opportunities to save, invest and plan sound financial futures.

**Unclaimed Property Program**

Millions of dollars are transferred to the [**state’s Unclaimed Property Program**](https://treasurer.sc.gov/what-we-do/for-citizens/unclaimed-property-program/) each year by companies that cannot locate the owners. From old utility deposits to uncashed payroll checks, life insurance proceeds and unredeemed shares of stock, this is the first place you should look for your missing money.

Currently, the State Treasurer’s Office holds more than $850 million in unclaimed funds, and these funds can belong to individuals, estates, businesses and even churches and charities. You’re encouraged to search your name at least twice a year to see if there are funds that rightfully belong to you. If you find unclaimed property, it’s easy to claim it online and receive a check within a matter of weeks after you have provided the required documentation.

**Future Scholar 529 College Savings Plan**

The award-winning [**Future Scholar 529 College Savings Plan**](https://futurescholar.com/) offers a flexible, low-cost investment program that helps families save for their children’s future education. Future Scholar offers South Carolina residents the ability to deduct their contributions from their state income tax returns. The money in a Future Scholar account isn’t taxed as it grows and can be withdrawn tax-free when used to pay for qualified education expenses, such as tuition, room and board, books, supplies and equipment.

Funds can be used at any eligible two- or four-year college, university or technical school throughout the U.S. and at more than 600 international institutions. The plan offers a great amount of flexibility, and account holders can even invite their friends and family to make contributions, via online or direct mail so that even the most distant of loved ones can participate in a child’s dream of a higher education.

**Palmetto ABLE Savings Program**

The State Treasurer’s Office administers the [**Palmetto ABLE Savings Program**](https://palmettoable.com/), which provides individuals with disabilities and their loved ones the opportunity to save and invest for the future.

Like its college savings counterpart, contributions to a Palmetto ABLE® account are deductible on South Carolina tax returns and earnings grow tax-free. Account owners can use the funds for a number of qualified expenses that improve their quality of life, such as basic living expenses, healthcare, job training and education, transportation and assistive technology, to name a few.

Most importantly, Palmetto ABLE accounts provide account owners and their families with peace of mind that they won’t lose their existing needs-based benefits, like SSI and Medicaid, creating a pathway to financial stability that hasn’t existed before.

To learn more about the consumer-facing programs administered by the State Treasurer’s Office, visit [**treasurer.sc.gov**](https://treasurer.sc.gov/).