

Jerry Blassingame

Executive Director of Soteria Community Development Corporation

Jerry Blassingame is the Founder and CEO of Soteria Community Development Corporation. He endeavors to empower individuals and the community through education, affordable housing, financial literacy, community and economic development, and entrepreneurship. His passion is assisting individuals who have been incarcerated through reentry and helping them to become productive citizens.

Blassingame attended Columbia International University and studied architectural engineering at Greenville Technical College. Blassingame received a 20-year prison sentence in 1995 and only served 3 and a half years after being paroled in 1999. He is also a Social Entrepreneur who believes in social enterprise for the non-profit sector. Blassingame has continued to fight for change in legislation since he was granted a pardon in 2004. After 14 years of advocacy, South Carolina passed its first legislation to expunge felony drug charges in December of 2018.

In 2018, Blassingame published his first book, *Reclaimed*, a memoir that details his story from tragedy to triumph.

Blassingame lives in Greenville, South Carolina and is an active part of the community and an advocate for economic and social justice.