

Success Through Engagement & Partnership



2019-2020
Annual Report

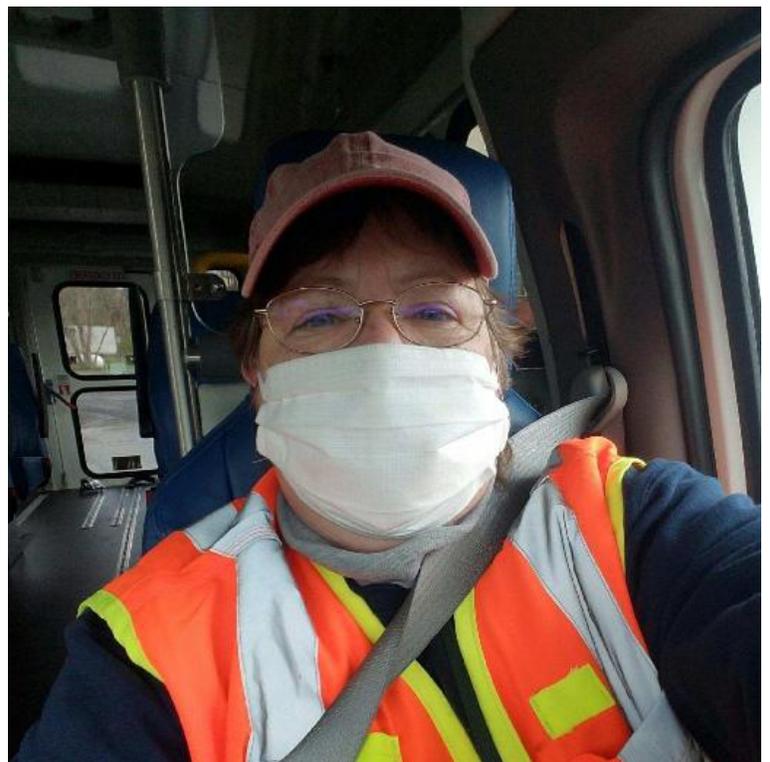
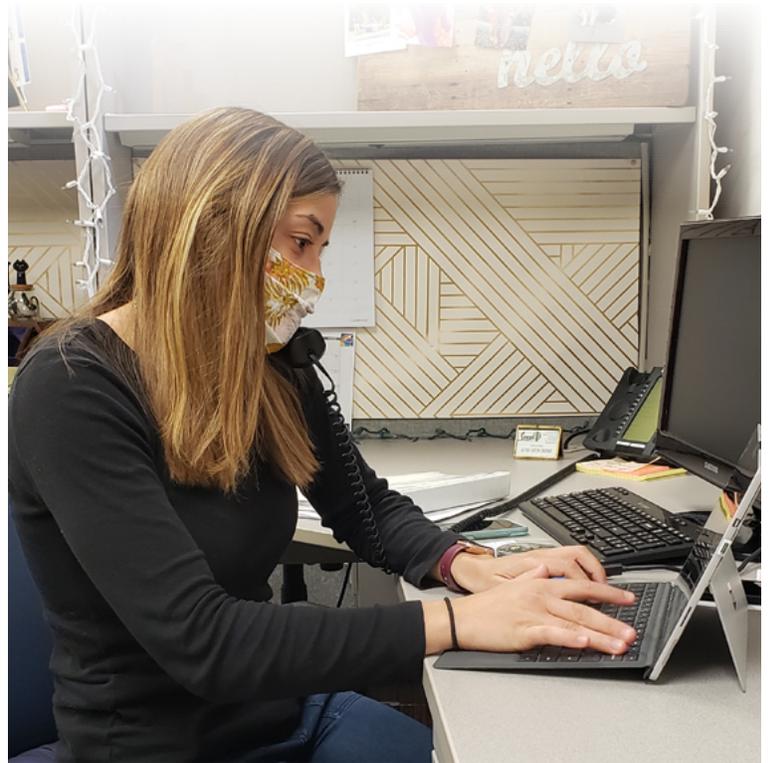


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The mission of STEP is to engage diverse individuals, families, and communities in the pursuit of social and economic success. STEP is one of approximately 1,000 Community Action Agencies nationwide (with 43 in Pennsylvania), and, based on the size of its annual budget, is the 3rd largest of the agencies serving solely in Pennsylvania. STEP is an active member of the national Community Action Partnership and the Community Action Association of Pennsylvania (CAAP). STEP fulfills its mission and achieves the three national community action goals through programs under its five Pathways to Success: Early Learning, Housing Options, Workforce Development, Community Collaboration, and Independent Living.

Three National Community Action Goals:

1. Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.
2. Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.
3. People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.

Services and strategies utilized by STEP to achieve the National Community Action Goals:



Education & Cognitive Development



Income, Infrastructure, & Asset Building



Housing



Employment



Health/Social Behavioral Development



Civic Engagement & Community Involvement

Community Action During A Pandemic

How does a community action agency function during a pandemic, when customer needs are greater than usual? While many businesses shut down, STEP found ways to continue providing much-needed services and help keep our staff, volunteers, and AmeriCorps members safe (and also acted to limit the spread of COVID-19). We made significant adaptations to our service delivery methods over the last three quarters of a year, while asking, “how are our customers and the community doing?”

In many ways, COVID-19 has been a chance for STEP to show what community action does best: seek information from our community, find what needs are evolving or intensifying, and design services to meet those needs. When service gaps are identified, we look at whether we are in a position to fill them, and if doing so will help us meet our agency mission and vision. For example, we determined that our holistic case management approach would complement pursuing housing assistance grants such as the PHFA CARES Rent Relief Program and homelessness prevention services.

I am tremendously proud of the resiliency and adaptiveness of our staff and our community. Working together, we will continue to put our resources where they are most needed, whatever the next year brings.

Jim Plankenhorn
President & CEO
STEP, Inc

Message from the Chairperson

This Annual Report spans two worlds – before and after COVID. Going from one to the other has been hard for everyone, but STEP has adapted and shown flexibility to meet community needs while keeping customers and staff safe. During any year, STEP has a whole slate of short, intermediate, and long term goals. These goals are an important part of an overall strategic plan that, along with the mission, guides decisions about programs and funding at STEP. This planning helps keep the agency focused through times of crisis.

The flexibility for customers and staff is only possible with a strong foundation. STEP's fiscal department is used to separating dozens of funding streams at all times, so accountability and reporting for COVID-related funding is at the same high standard. Human Resources and Information Technology have forged the way for an evolving workplace, while program managers and front line staff have kept customer needs at the forefront even as service delivery methods have changed.

This year has shown that, while no agency or board of directors can plan for every scenario, an adaptable organization can move forward effectively by using strategic planning and community needs as a guide.

Jeffrey Snyder
Chairperson
STEP Board of Directors

GOVERNANCE

Board of Directors

STEP's Board of Directors is tripartite in structure, with members representing the public, private, and low-income sectors/populations of Lycoming and Clinton counties.



Jeffrey Snyder
Chairperson
Clinton County
Commissioner



Aron Carter
Vice Chairperson
Jersey Shore State Bank



Brenda Nichols
Secretary
Lycoming County
Private Sector



Lindsay Stamm
Treasurer
Lycoming County
Housing Authority



Randall Allison
Williamsport
City Council



Susan Bigger
Williamsport Area
School District



Canda Boatman
Head Start
Policy Council
Representative



Maria Boileau
Clinton County
Voter Registration



Tia Hillyer
Clinton County
Housing Authority



Joanne Ludwikowski
McCormick
Law Firm



Scott Metzger
Lycoming County
Commissioner



Gail Nestlerode
Nestlerode
Contracting Co., Inc.



Jacqueline Oliva
River Valley
Health & Dental
Center



Abigail Roberts
City of
Lock Haven



Edward Weinhoffer
STEP Aging
Advisory Council
Representative

Also serving in 2019-2020: Linda Hess, Regan Garey, Jack McKernan, Amber Wilt

Aging Advisory Council

Officers

Raymond Humphrey
Chairperson
Linda Hess
Vice Chairperson
David Heiney
Secretary

Members

Sharon Cashwell
Lucille Evans
Leslie Houser
Rochelle Keefer
Jack McKernan
Jeffrey Snyder
Joseph Sohmer
Nancy Watson
Edward Weinhoffer

In memory of

Paulette Seitzer & Linda Yorks
also serving in 2019-2020

Head Start Policy Council

Officers

Heather Stroble
Chairperson
Malena Dunn
Vice Chairperson
Aron Carter
Treasurer

Members

Canda Boatman
Leigh McCarty
Kenneth Hoover
Paulette Clementoni
Ruth Love Schooley
Patricia Wylie
Debra Zinck

VOLUNTEERS

STEP appreciates all of its volunteers. As a Community Action Agency, STEP relies on volunteers to meet its goals. Many of STEP's volunteers are concentrated in its Office of Aging and Early Learning Programs, as well as STEP's governing bodies. All service provided by members of the STEP Board of Directors, Head Start Policy Council, and Aging Advisory Council is on a volunteer basis, complementing thousands of volunteers and AmeriCorps members who serve with the agency.

- **563** STEP Head Start, Early Head Start, and Pre-K Counts parent volunteers contributed **10,662** hours.
- **537** STEP Office of Aging volunteers provided **30,391** hours of service.
- STEP Board of Directors members gave **194** hours through meetings, training, events, and planning.



Volunteer Spotlight

STEP Office of Aging's Loyalsock Center for Healthy Aging became a reality thanks to the volunteer effort of center participants!

Pictured at left, senior volunteers broke ground on the Loyalsock Center for Healthy Aging in the summer of 2019. Participants who regularly volunteer at the center provided support and advocacy, in addition to fundraising to meet their goal of \$10,000 to contribute towards the expansion.

The Loyalsock Center for Healthy Aging opened its doors on March 2 with a Grand Opening Celebration planned for March 12 - which was quickly put on hold for everyone to "Stay Home, Stay Safe, and Stay Healthy." While STEP was unable to hold the event, the center has since re-opened with modifications for staff and customer safety.

EMPLOYEES

Employee of the Quarter Award Winners

Broc Haines

Accountant
STEP Fiscal Department

Nichole Miller

Clinton County Community Center Coordinator
STEP Administration

Jerry Walburn

Construction Supervisor
STEP Housing Options

Employee Milestones

Robert Clark

30 Years of Service
STEP Transportation

Anita Hill

25 Years of Service
STEP Head Start

Kelley Sees

30 Years of Service
STEP Head Start

Mary VanEmon

25 Years of Service
STEP Head Start

Brenda McDermit

30 Years of Service
STEP Office of Aging

Donna Rodriguez

20 Years of Service
STEP Head Start

Martin Hines

30 Years of Service
STEP Transportation

Maria Casale-Faubion

20 Years of Service
STEP Head Start

Teresa Moyer

25 Years of Service
STEP Head Start

2019-2020 Agency Highlights



2020 Community Needs Assessment

As a Community Action Agency, STEP depends on data-driven decision making. The Community Needs Assessment helps the agency identify service and resource gaps within the communities it serves and show where new or additional programming should be focused in order to recover from the COVID-19 crisis. Visit www.stepcorp.org/2020-community-needs-assessment.html to view the reports for both Lycoming and Clinton counties.



CARES Act Funding

In late April 2020, STEP received funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act totaling \$5,575,743. CARES funds secured included:

- ◆ **PA Department of Aging** - Food supports for seniors and enhancement of existing programs
- ◆ **Head Start - CARES Act** - Health, security, safety needs of staff and customers; technology and classroom needs
- ◆ **LIHEAP Crisis - CARES Act** - Additional LIHEAP Crisis work
- ◆ **PA Pre-K Counts/Head Start Supplemental** - Health, security, safety needs of staff and customers; technology and classroom needs
- ◆ **First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania** - Health & safety packs for childcare providers in Lycoming, Clinton, and Tioga counties
- ◆ **First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania** - Funding to support the housing program through the shut-down timeframe
- ◆ **Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) - Lycoming County CARES Act** - Specific for individuals who have lost 30% or more of their income
- ◆ **Pennsylvania United Way - PHARE and Home4Good Funds** - Supplement and support rental assistance programs
- ◆ **Lycoming County Commissioners - CDBG CV** - Supplement and support rental assistance programs
- ◆ **PA DCED - Emergency Solutions Grants - CARES Act** - Supplement and support rental assistance and homeless prevention programs



PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Carolyn Hawk
Director
STEP Head Start

Nate Snook
Director
STEP Housing Options

Jean Sullivan
Director
STEP Office of Aging

Melissa Kerschner
Director
Early Learning Resource Center
Region 7

Melissa Magargle
Program Manager
STEP Service Navigation

Dan Merk
Program Manager
STEP Transportation

Brittany Terre-Blanche
Program Manager
STEP AmeriCorps

EARLY Learning



STEP's Early Learning Pathway includes Head Start, Pre-K Counts, Early Head Start, Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC), and the Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV). These high-quality early learning experiences are provided by skilled professionals, in partnership with parents and communities. The Early Learning Pathway leads to success in school and life.

- **565** children demonstrated skills for school readiness.
- **579** children improved their attention skills.
- **574** individuals demonstrated improvements in cooking, shopping, or growing food.
- **57** caregivers demonstrated increased sensitivity and responsiveness toward their children.
- **712** children were up to date on immunizations.
- **38** children were referred for mental health services.
- **599** family partnerships were established, leading to **115** family goals being achieved.
- Total Early Head Start, Head Start, Pre-K Counts, and MIECHV enrollment: **575** children.
- **1,286** children were enrolled in a child care facility with a level three or four Keystone STARS rating.
- **90** child care providers obtained or kept a STAR designation; **6** providers moved up to a higher designation.
- **\$5,581,662** was issued in child care subsidy to local providers.



ELRC STEAM Machine

The Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) Region 7, in partnership with STEP, Inc. has made its concept of a shared-service mobile resource van a reality! The Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) Machine will contain curriculum kits for children age 0- through 13-years-old that will be available for lending to childcare providers. On loan will be STEAM learning kits, mobile MakerSpaces, lesson plans, books, light panels, tablets, microscopes, and much more to make learning fun and enjoyable for children of all ages.

ELRC Region 7 will provide technical assistance and coaching to ensure childcare providers know how to use materials with the intent of encouraging them to work on their continuous quality plans and move up in Pennsylvania's quality rating and improvement system, Keystone STARS. ELRC Region 7 will initially focus on Family Day Care Homes, particularly STAR One providers, bringing them materials and technical support. The possibilities of what the STEAM Machine can offer are endless, and ELRC Region 7 is looking forward to expanding this shared service through its partnerships.

With the realities of the pandemic, many of the STEAM Machine activities have been put on hold - however, ELRC staff has been busy putting together care packages, creating curriculum kits, and working on inventory and loaning software! The first road trip will be to deliver care packages to all of ELRC Region 7's childcare providers within the three-county region.

HOUSING *Options*



STEP's Housing Options Pathway includes Weatherization, Housing and Building Initiatives, and the Utilities Assistance Program. Individuals and families secure and maintain safe, affordable, and energy-efficient housing. The Housing Options Pathway leads to a safe and affordable home.

- **207** households experienced increased health and safety due to home improvements.
- **2,663** households improved energy efficiency and/or reduced their energy burden; **102** did so through weatherization.
- **23** households received code-compliance assistance through housing rehabilitation.
- **12** households enrolled in a STEP program obtained safe and affordable housing for 180 days; **55** maintained safe and affordable housing.
- **30** households avoided eviction or foreclosure.
- **2,563** customers enrolled in utility assistance programs to reduce their monthly costs and cure arrearages.

Safety & Efficiency Updates



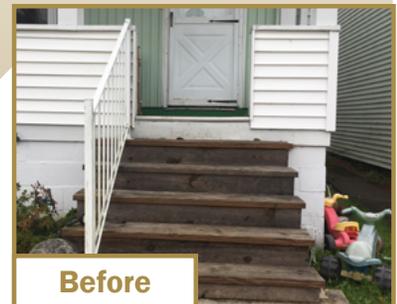
Before



In Progress



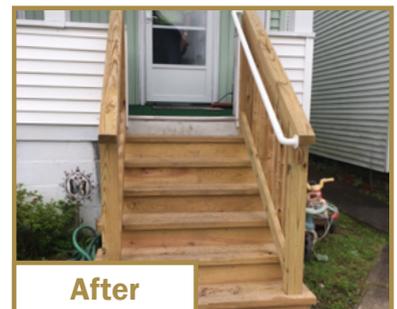
After



Before



In Progress



After

WORKFORCE *Development*



STEP's Workforce Development Pathway includes the Work Ready Program and the Employment Transportation Assistance Program. Through these programs, individuals overcome barriers to obtain or maintain employment and achieve self-sufficiency. The Workforce Development Pathway leads to employment and self-support for individuals, and economic success for the community.



Jasmine Hunt graduated from the Youth Enrichment for Success program.

- **20** unemployed youth obtained employment to gain skills or income.
- **15** adults obtained employment below a living wage; **3** at or above a living wage.
- **5** employed participants increased benefits.
- **24** employed participants in a career-advancement program increased income through wage or salary improvement.
- **52** individuals obtained or kept employment by accessing reliable transportation options.



Youth Enrichment for Success

Alexandria Milano was a participant in STEP's Youth Enrichment for Success (YES) Program. As a young mother, Alexandria was uncertain of her future education, employment goals, and personal skills. Family Navigator Stacy Bower assisted Alexandria with developing a goal plan that consisted of writing a resume, attending scheduled medical appointments, applying for childcare, obtaining a driver's permit, completing the GED examination, obtaining a photo ID, obtaining part-time employment, and finding a family medical provider.

Alexandria was referred to Penn State Career Pathways for high school equivalency classes and was placed into their Parenting Pathways course which also covered various parenting aspects for classroom participant. Alexandria worked diligently to maintain her attendance with high school equivalency classes and was able to complete and pass all sections of the GED examination. Additionally, Alexandria worked very closely with Stacy to address parenting skills and childcare needs. Alexandria is currently in the process of searching for employment.

COMMUNITY *Collaboration*



STEP's Community Collaboration Pathway consists of Service Navigation and STEP AmeriCorps. Through cooperation and partnerships, resources are maximized, and organizations and communities are enriched. The Community Collaboration Pathway leads to increased resources for individual and community success.

- **123** individuals achieved and maintained capacity to meet basic needs for 90 days.
- **117** individuals engaged with Community Action reported improved financial wellbeing.
- **147** participants increased skills, knowledge, and abilities allowing them to work with Community Action to improve conditions in their communities.
- STEP worked with **809** partners to eliminate service gaps and duplication.
- **23** AmeriCorps members completed their term of service and received an Education Award.
- **11,763** referrals were made to STEP programs and external partners to connect customers with the services they need.



STEP AmeriCorps: MLK Day of Service

Hundreds of Lycoming and Clinton county residents stepped up to serve on the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday. Volunteers packed nutritious meal kits, joining hundreds of thousands of Americans across the country in volunteer service.

STEP AmeriCorps planned the day of service in partnership with the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, Lycoming College, Pennsylvania College of Technology, and the Beloved Community Council. This partnership leveraged the strength of volunteers to help tackle local problems and advance Dr. King's dream of opportunity for all.

The "Pack and Share" service event, held on Monday, January 20, was STEP AmeriCorps' largest service project of the year. The service project leveraged more than 400 volunteers and saw more than 12,000 pounds of food packed into 2,250 meal kits and 1,000 backpacks, which will be given to area families who struggle with hunger. They will be distributed through the Food Bank's partner agencies and programs.

This event was part of Dream Week 2020 - a series of events centered around MLK Day. Additional activities included workshops, a showing of "Harriet" the movie, and guest speakers - all aimed to empower individuals to bring about change that moves us closer to Dr. King's vision of a beloved community.



INDEPENDENT *Living*



STEP's Independent Living Pathway consists of Office of Aging services and STEP Transportation. Through these programs, senior citizens and persons with disabilities maintain their independence with self-reliance, and continue to participate in community activities. The Independent Living Pathway leads to dignity and choices throughout life.

- **3,291** adults age 65+ and **1,111** individuals with disabilities maintained independent living situations.
- **14** seniors received home modifications and/or assistive devices to maintain independence.
- **1,263** adults obtained access to health screening services.
- **2,413** individuals registered for STEP Transportation maintained their independence by receiving rides to medical appointments, work, and other activities.
- **107** seniors stayed in their homes while receiving nursing facility level of care.
- **374** Adult Protective Services investigations from **638** reports of need ensured the health, safety, and financial security of older adults.



Providing Essential Services During Pandemic

Medical conditions requiring regular treatment do not take time off during pandemics; individuals with disabilities or circumstances that prevent them from driving still need to get to medical appointments, the pharmacy, and to the grocery store. STEP Transportation operates to serve their customers with trips necessary to maintain not just good health, but people's lives.

STEP Transportation has taken precautions during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as eliminating non-essential trips, to minimize exposure for both their drivers and the customers who need their services. Dan Merk, Program Manager for STEP Transportation, said, "We are considered a life-sustaining service. As such, our drivers and office staff have demonstrated their dedication to our customers by transporting them to much needed services and being there to answer questions they may have."

"While many of our programs and staff continue to serve our customers, our drivers remain a vital link in getting hundreds of individuals to and from life-sustaining medical appointments each day. Drivers provide safe travel and help passengers to and from their home and appointment facility. Transportation drivers are extremely dedicated and important to fulfilling our mission," said STEP's President & CEO, Jim Plankenhorn.



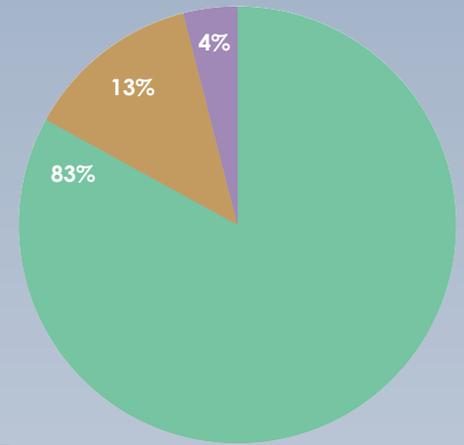
Financial Position

Statement of Financial Position

Total Assets.....	\$11,859,872
Total Liabilities.....	\$3,221,292
Net Assets.....	<u>\$8,638,580</u>

Statement of Activity

Total Grant Revenue & Other Support.....	\$27,955,638
Total Program Expenses.....	\$28,042,236
Excess (Deficit) Revenue Over Expenses.....	<u>(\$86,598)</u>



83%	Federal/State Grants & Contracts	\$23,251,409
13%	Local Grants & Contracts	\$3,595,234
4%	Service Fees & Miscellaneous	\$1,108,995

Program Expenditures

Early Learning 56%.....\$15,715,834 ■

- Head Start
- Head Start Supplemental Program
- Pre-K Counts
- Early Head Start
- Maternal, Infant, & Early Childhood Visitation
- Early Learning Resource Center

Housing Options 5%.....\$1,445,115 ■

- Weatherization & Housing Services
- Outreach Services

Workforce Development 1%.....\$258,861 ■

- Work Ready
- Employment Transportation Assistance Program

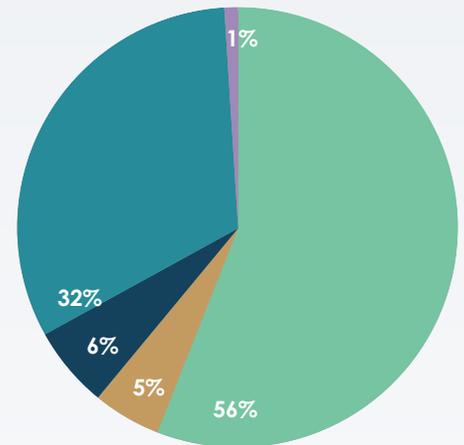
Community Collaboration 6%.....\$1,582,215 ■

- AmeriCorps
- Neighborhood Assistance
- Supportive Housing Program
- Service Navigation
- Administration & Planning

Independent Living 32%.....\$9,040,211 ■

- Office of Aging
- Shared-Ride Transportation Services
- Medical Assistance Transportation

Total Program Expenditures.....\$28,042,236



Message from the Chief Financial Officer

Fiscal year 2019-2020 started strong as we established the Early Learning Pathway endowment. Our next goal was establishing the fifth and final Pathway endowment, for Workforce Development. Before we kicked off our fundraising events, they were cancelled due to the pandemic. We quickly shifted to protecting our employees and serving the evolving needs of our community. Our agency stepped up to the challenge and is still moving at light speed to ensure that our mission is fulfilled – while making considerable progress toward the Workforce Development Endowment!

Patti Kiessling
Chief Financial Officer
STEP, Inc.



2138 Lincoln Street
Williamsport, PA 17701
570.326.0587



Give!



Donate
www.stepcorp.org/agency-info/community-support/donate.html



Raise The Region
www.raisetheregion.org



Endowment Funds:
STEP General Endowment
Early Learning
Housing Options
Workforce Development
Community Collaboration
Independent Living

Join!



Volunteer with us
www.stepcorp.org/Get_Involved



Join AmeriCorps
www.stepcorp.org/step-pathways/community-collaboration/step-ameriCorps.html



Employment Opportunities
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THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SUPPORTERS

July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

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