

3/22/2023

Vice Mayor Dan Wu
200 E Main Street
Lexington, KY 40507

Re: Funding Request:

Step By Step, Inc has faithfully served Fayette County and surrounding counties for 28 years. Our mission is to empower young single mothers ages 12 to 24 and their children. To this end, we provide weekly in-person programming aimed at providing life skills, support, and connection with one another and caring and supportive people from our community.

In order to remove barriers to participation, we provide a hot meal, children's programming, infant care, and transportation at every single event we host. Lextran does not have transportation available when our evening programming ends for many of the neighborhoods we serve. Therefore, we are providing a service our city cannot.

According to the Center for Disease Control:

"While there has been great progress in reducing unintended teen pregnancy, the U.S. teen birth rate of 15.4 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19 years in 2020 remains higher than that in many other developed countries, including Canada and the United Kingdom. Young people ages 15 to 24 account for nearly half of all new cases of sexually transmitted infections (STI). Additionally, there continues to be significant disparities in adolescent sexual health outcomes by race, ethnicity, geography, and among those that have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality."¹

According to Kentucky Youth Advocates 2021 County Data Book, teen mothers account for 16.7 percent of 1000 births in Fayette County (higher than the national average). Additionally, 18.5% of young mothers in Fayette County have repeat births.

Step By Step aims to break cycles by providing health education, goal-setting initiatives, weekly case management, wrap-around services such as our Refine Mentor Program, weekly basic needs items giveaways, and emergency service referrals to our partner agencies.

Of the young single mothers we encounter, 98% of them live at or below the poverty line, 25% of them have open cases with the Department of Community Based Services, Foster Care Division, and 60% are without transportation. The majority are housing insecure and food insecure. Incidentally, their children are as well.

Kentucky Youth Advocates maintains that social determinants of health contribute greatly to preventing child abuse and increasing the avenues of success for these young families. "Communities can support teens in waiting to become parents, which is better for babies and their parents, by encouraging teens to set and pursue goals for their future."²

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/std/life-stages-populations/adolescents-youngadults.htm>

² <https://kyyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/2021-County-Data-Book.pdf>

One of the solutions offered by researchers is to “offer easy-to-access primary prevention programs in the community to address basic needs, like housing and food, as well as common risk factors for abuse and neglect, such as substance use disorders, mental health problems, and family violence.”

This is precisely what Step By Step provides.

Step By Step is requesting funds in the amount of **\$28,000** to match funds provided by anonymous donors through Blue Grass Community Foundation in the amount of \$28,000 to purchase a 15-passenger van to replace a van that is no longer operational. Transportation is integral to the success of our program and to the participation of our clients.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Tanya Torp
Executive Director
EIN 61-1313872

Documents Attached: 2022 Annual Report
Estimates for the van
501c3 documentation