



FOLLOW *My* STEPS  
FOUNDATION

# IMPACT REPORT FY 2024

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# WHO IS



FOLLOW *My* STEPS  
FOUNDATION

# ?

## OUR MISSION:

Opposing social-economic conditions faced by youth, in under resourced communities, by providing **Mentorship, Career Skills, and Financial Resources.**

## HOW WE DO IT:

### **Our Mentorship Platform:**

Empowering youth with personalized, one-on-one guidance to build confidence, resilience, and hope for a brighter future

### **Our Youth Development Programs:**

Equipping young people with essential education, life skills, and career tools to succeed in school, work, and life.

### **Our Community Events:**

Creating safe, inclusive spaces for youth to engage with their community through meaningful experiences

# BE THE MENTOR YOU NEEDED.

# INTRODUCTION



**Dear Follow My Steps Friends,**  
2024 has been a transformative year for Follow My Steps Foundation. Together, we've achieved remarkable milestones, reaffirming our commitment to empowering under-resourced youth, fostering resilience, and building stronger communities.

*This year, we proudly:*

- Empowered over **2,000 youth** through mentorship, workshops, and community events.
- Raised over **\$328,000** through grants, fundraising events, and partnerships to drive sustainable growth.
- Launched our **Entrepreneurship Program**, inspiring youth to plan for their futures and explore business opportunities.
- Expanded **Step Up Fitness** with a summer program featuring 5K training and guided group sessions.
- Strengthened **Thrive Over Survive** and **Steps to Success**, equipping Explorers with essential academic, personal, and professional skills.
- Hosted impactful events like the **Mentoring Matters 5K**, **Cultural Steps**, and **Shooting for Success**, delivering scholarships and vital resources while fostering community engagement.
- Secured our 1st van providing free transportation to all youth in our programs

## A Message from Our CEO:

"At Follow My Steps, we are proud of the impact we've achieved together. From empowering our community's youth, to fostering stronger communities, our progress reflects the collective effort of our partners, donors, and supporters. As we continue to grow rapidly, our vision is bold: **establishing a Follow My Steps Community Center**—a hub for year-round mentorship, skills training, and resources for under-resourced youth. To make this a reality, we need your partnership. Let's take the next step forward—together."

*Kashawn Sanders*

President & CEO  
Follow My Steps Foundation



# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW



	Key Events	BIG Accomplishments
Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Boston Celtics Field Trip</li><li>• Ice Cube Award Ceremony</li><li>• Fams Taal Global Foundation</li><li>• Suited For Growth: Young Men</li><li>• Mission Springfield 5K</li><li>• Visionaries in the Act: Art Showcase</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Awarded the Difference Maker Award (New England Patriots) and Brianna Fund Award</li><li>• <b>Launched our first entrepreneurship program</b> to equip youth with business skills.</li></ul>
Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shooting for Success</li><li>• Step Up: Cooking with Chef Drew</li><li>• Six Flags Field Trip</li><li>• Radiance on the Runway Gala</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Awarded \$7,000 in scholarships</b> to support youth pursuing educational goals</li><li>• Introduced wellness education through interactive cooking and fitness programs.</li></ul>
Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mentoring Matters 5K</li><li>• E.B.Henderson Book Signing at the Hall of Fame Field Trip</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Distributed 200+ backpacks</b> with school supplies to underserved youth</li><li>• Connected underserved youth with professional mentors to foster long-term success</li></ul>
Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Basketball Hall of Fame Enshrinement Ceremony</li><li>• Cultural Steps</li><li>• Stepping into 2025 Banquet</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acquired our 1st <b>Follow My Steps Van</b></li><li>• Connected youth with professional role models to encourage personal and career growth</li></ul>

# OUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS



In 2024, we impacted over **300 youth**.  
Mentored youth are 55% more likely to enroll in college and 78% more likely to volunteer in their communities

Our mentors provided over **700 hours** of one-on-one guidance. Mentored youth are 46% less likely to use illegal drugs and 27% less likely to begin drinking.

We raised **\$328,022** in 2024 through grants, events, and donations. Every \$1 invested in mentorship generates up to \$3 in social and economic benefits

Our **50 partnerships** expanded access to education, wellness, and career resources, which are vital for improving outcomes for underserved youth

Volunteers dedicated over **1,400 hours** to supporting our programs and events. Community engagement fosters a stronger sense of safety and well-being for our youth.

In 2024, we awarded over **\$15,000** in scholarships, helping youth overcome financial barriers to higher education. Data shows that scholarships increase college enrollment by up to 30%, ensuring long-term success

300+

Youth Impacted

700+

Mentor Hours

328K

Funds Raised

50+

Community  
Partners

1,400+

Volunteer Hours

15K

Awarded in  
Scholarships



# MEET OUR TEAM

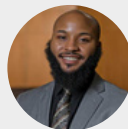


## Co-Founders

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**Kashawn Sanders**  
President & CEO



**Tyrone Williams**  
Vice President

## Executive Team

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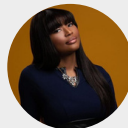
**Hubert  
Thevenin Jr.**  
Chief Finance  
Officer



**Anthony Payne**  
Chief Strategy  
&  
Development  
Officer



**Silavong  
Phimmasone**  
Chief  
Operating  
Officer



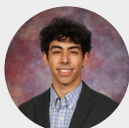
**Kay'la  
Sanders**  
Chief  
Planning  
Officer



**Jeff Byrnes**  
Creative  
Director

## Full Time Staff

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**Sami Elias**  
Director of Outreach

### Meet Sami!

We're thrilled to welcome Sami Elias as our first **full-time** staff member at Follow My Steps!

Sami is your go-to for all things FMS—partnerships, programs, events, and more.

**Connect:** [samielias@followmysteps.org](mailto:samielias@followmysteps.org)

## Board Members

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**Zhane Stone**



**Shawn Lockett**



**Michael Stanley**



**Matt Peters**

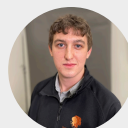


**Frank Bruton**



**Brendan Tassy**

## Program Managers



**Zane Foster**  
Program Mgr.

**Sherika  
Anderson**

Program Mgr.

# OUR TOP COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Max Cares  
Foundation   
a recipe for successful giving



M&T Bank

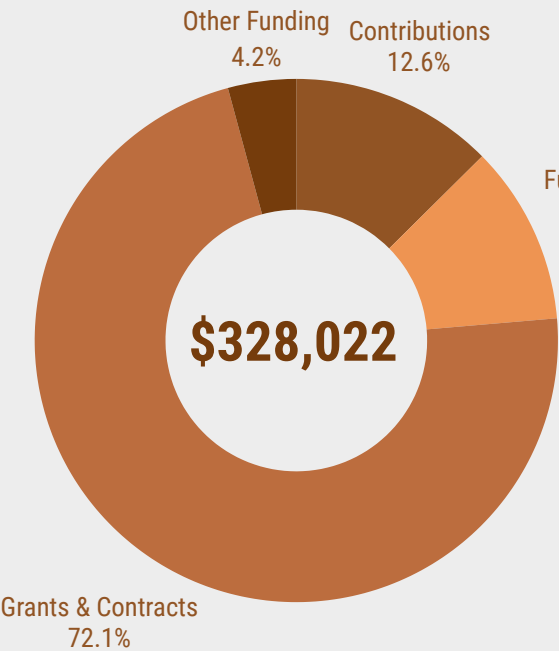
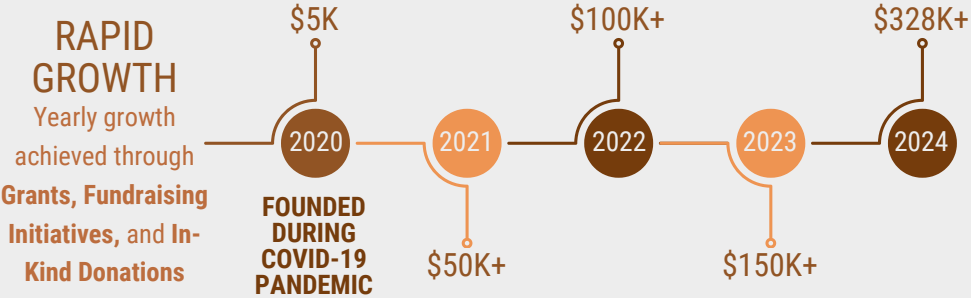


United Way  
Pioneer Valley

# WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN OUR PROGRAMS

# 2024 BUDGET

## FOLLOW MY STEPS FOUNDATION

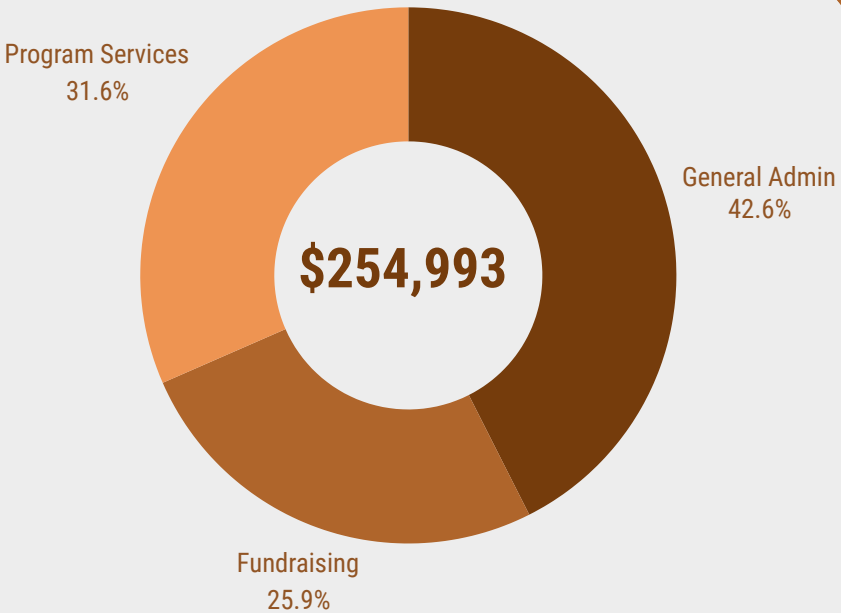


**FINANCIAL GROWTH & SUSTAINABILITY**

In 2024, Follow My Steps Foundation generated over \$328K, with 72.1% from grants and contracts, 12.6% from contributions, and 11.1% from fundraising initiatives. This strong financial foundation allows us to expand mentorship, wellness, and financial literacy programs, ensuring lasting impact for the youth we serve.

# 2024 EXPENSES

## FOLLOW MY STEPS FOUNDATION



### EXPENSE ALLOCATION & IMPACT

In 2024, Follow My Steps Foundation strategically allocated its resources to maximize impact. **42.6% of expenses were dedicated to general administration**, ensuring operational efficiency and organizational growth. **31.6% was invested in program services**, directly supporting mentorship, wellness, and financial literacy initiatives. **25.9% went toward fundraising efforts**, helping to secure the resources needed for future expansion. This balanced approach ensures sustainability while prioritizing programs that empower youth and strengthen communities.

# OUR 2025 GOALS

## PACK OUT OUR EVENTS!

### **Bringing Communities Together for a Greater Cause**

In 2025, we aim to boost attendance at signature events like the Mentoring Matters 5K, Shooting for Success, Cultural Steps, and Stepping Into 2026. By expanding outreach and enhancing the event experience, we will attract larger, more diverse audiences, strengthen community connections, and drive fundraising to sustain and grow our programs. Each event will inspire action and celebrate our collective progress.

## EXPAND OUR PROGRAMS

### **Thrive Over Survive, Step Up Fitness Summer Program, and Choose Your Steps**

In 2025, Follow My Steps will expand Thrive Over Survive, Step Up Fitness Summer Program, and Choose Your Steps to reach more youth. We will grow mentorship opportunities, launch new wellness initiatives like nutrition workshops and 5K training, and provide tools to address mental health and violence prevention. Together, we are building stronger, more resilient communities.

## RAISE \$500,000

### **Raise \$500,000 Toward Our Community Center**

Our boldest goal for 2025 is to raise \$500,000 to build the Follow My Steps Community Center — a year-round hub for mentorship, career readiness, wellness, and community programs. The center will triple our capacity to serve youth. Every contribution brings us closer to making this vision a reality.



# OUR NEXT STEPS



1

## By Youth, For Youth Entrepreneurship

We're partnering with UMass Amherst to launch a 20-week entrepreneurship program, empowering youth with leadership, business skills, and real-world confidence.

2

## Step Up Fitness Summer Program

This summer, our 6-week Step Up Fitness program will promote health, wellness, and community, giving Explorers the tools to build strong bodies, strong minds, and lifelong habits.

3

## Bringing Our Community Together

We're strengthening community partnerships to grow event turnout and expand opportunities for youth at the Mentoring Matters 5K, Shooting for Success, Cultural Steps, and Stepping Into 2026.

4

## Expand Thrive Over Survive Program

We're growing Thrive Over Survive across schools in Western Massachusetts, helping youth build resilience, break barriers, and reach their full potential.



FOLLOW MY STEPS  
FOUNDATION

**Take the Next Step With Us!**

**Empower youth. Build community. Create lasting change.**  
Donate, volunteer, or partner today at [followmysteps.org](https://followmysteps.org)