



STEPS Ministries

Summary of Operations & Strategy Overview

(December 2025)

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Mission and Approach

STEPS Ministries is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit improving behavioral health outcomes through early awareness, prevention, and education. We reach tens of thousands of people annually through seminars, online resources, digital outreach, and collaboration with partner organizations in the community. We will deliver scalable, evidence-based prevention and wellness education in Alabama and beyond in order to reduce behavioral health crises, equip parents and youth with practical life skills, save lives, protect families, improve communities, and reduce strain on the healthcare system.

The STEPS mission is to provide practical resources for hurting people to find help, healing, and hope. We are focused on improving health and wellness through early awareness, education, and prevention by addressing the root causes of behavioral health issues that impact so many lives. Over one half of families struggle with substance abuse or mental health problems. Those issues are often preventable, but the majority of those struggling never get the help they need.

STEPS Ministries delivers prevention and wellness resources and education that equip individuals, parents, and organizations with practical, research-backed skills to make healthy lifestyle choices, build resilience, and prevent behavioral health problems before they become life-altering crises. We reach tens of thousands of people through seminars, digital outreach, online resources, blogs, podcasts, and organizational partnerships. We can serve all Alabama counties including rural and underserved populations with early awareness, health-based life skills, and education to prevent addiction and mental health issues. Our content is proven and timeless so it can help people for years to come. This will improve the health of the tens of thousands of people we reach and ease future strains on healthcare systems.

Addressing the Healthcare Crisis in Alabama

STEPS addresses some of the most urgent—and preventable—healthcare challenges in Alabama which are behavioral health problems, substance abuse and addiction, and co-occurring conditions that often go untreated until they become crises. Nearly half of families will face one or both of these challenges. Alarming, 90% of those struggling do not receive the help they need. This gap in care has devastating consequences for individuals, families, and communities. At STEPS, we address behavioral root causes and empower individuals to make positive changes in their lives.

The problems we address are both personal and systemic: without proactive, accessible education and prevention, behavioral health and substance use issues will continue to deepen which will diminish quality of life and overburden the healthcare systems in our communities. STEPS helps people in Alabama acquire the knowledge, skills, and support to make healthy choices today that will protect their future. This provides a scalable, prevention-first approach that combines education, digital outreach, and partnerships to reduce risk behaviors before they become crises.

Delivering Awareness, Education, and Prevention

STEPS is uniquely focused on preventing substance abuse and mental health disorders as well as broader wellness issues through a combination of awareness and education with a proactive approach to prevention. We believe that by reaching people early and equipping them with practical tools and actionable life skills, we can help prevent serious issues from becoming life-altering problems. We reach people who are often overlooked or underserved, including those held back from getting help by unawareness, stigma, or lack of access to resources. We provide them with simple, effective steps they can take to improve their well-being.

Our focus is on education that promotes awareness and prevention. We teach individuals, families, and organizations how to recognize the early signs of substance abuse, mental health struggles, and other wellness issues. We provide practical life skills that help them take control of their well-being before problems escalate. Our resources include:

- In-person seminars: Covering topics such as addiction prevention, mental health and emotional well-being, parenting skills, spiritual growth, youth development, and wellness-based life improvement.
- Digital resources: Outbound content and products we deliver to people plus additional resources they can utilize to go deeper. This ranges from millions of social media views of posts and videos to how-to tools, products, and workbooks.
- Online education: Accessible content portals, online toolkits, articles, and videos designed to help people find the information they need when they need it without getting lost in the clutter and confusion of the internet.

Evidence-Based Approach to Root Cause Issues

Our work goes beyond surface-level solutions. We believe many wellness issues, including substance use and mental health disorders, stem from behavioral root causes. By addressing these core issues, we help individuals prevent problems before they spiral out of control. Our resources are designed for lasting impact by equipping people with the

knowledge and tools they need to improve their lives. We have integrated many of the leading evidence-based methods and principles into the methodologies we utilize in our resources and education including:

- Early awareness and education: Enhancing risk awareness, providing proactive training, and promoting early intervention and treatment.
- Holistic wellness-based training: Integrating principles of emotional health, mental well-being, social and emotional learning, prevention strategies, and 12 Steps-informed guidance.
- Parent and family-based education: Strengthening families with education that supports parents, caregivers, adolescents, and underserved youth.
- Community-impact programs: Delivering education through organizational partnerships, digital outreach, social media, and traditional media to reach more people where they are.

Accessible, Scalable Resources for Long Term Impact

Our content is designed to be accessible, scalable, and easy to use. STEPS provides:

- Universal content: Our resources are relevant to individuals in all demographics and communities, ensuring that everyone can benefit from our approach, and they take a grace-driven approach to meet people where they are.
- Timeless solutions: Our material is based on well-proven principles that will remain applicable and effective for years to come. They include evidence-based prevention strategies integrated with scientific and spiritual principles.
- Convenient access: With easy access to online toolkits and portals, people can find what they need without sifting through misinformation or clutter. Our simple, practical steps help people make progress quickly and effectively.

Digital Outreach and Collaboration Reach More People

We maximize our reach by using digital platforms to connect with individuals and families across Alabama and beyond. Through social media, digital marketing, video content, and online courses we extend our resources to those who may not have access to in-person support. We collaborate with other organizations to multiply our impact by using our content to serve their audiences efficiently and effectively.

Our long-term strategy is to reach and serve the most people possible. We extend our reach through wide use of social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, TikTok, and LinkedIn. We share content through digital influencers, traditional media, podcasters, and others. We implement targeted digital marketing campaigns to reach selected segments of the population and provide them with resources tailored to meet their specific needs.

A Mission to Serve and Positively Impact People's Lives

Our mission is to help people live better, healthier lives by offering practical, easy-to-implement solutions that address their specific needs. We understand that people are hurting and many battle addiction, depression, anxiety, or other challenges. We help them utilize the power of small, consistent steps toward wellness. We offer healing so people understand that it's okay not to be okay, but they don't have to stay that way. We bring them hope with life-changing education, encouragement, and support.

STEPS Ministries serves a broad range of individuals and families with a particular focus on underserved and at-risk populations. We are committed to making our resources available to as many people as possible through digital and in-person channels and by collaborating with other groups. As we continue to grow, our vision is to expand our reach even further, offering support to those who need it most and creating healthier, more resilient communities in the process.

History, Accomplishments, and Programs

History – A Message from Our Executive Director

Years ago, my family faced dark times as three of the four of us struggled with substance abuse or mental health issues. Yet out of those troubles came exciting growth that changed the course of our lives. A turning point came during 2009 while I was dealing with recovery as I experienced three epiphanies:

- Many of life's most harmful issues, including behavioral health problems such as substance abuse and mental health disorders, are treatable. Tens of millions of people have successfully recovered from them and gone on to happier lives.
- Many of those problems are also preventable! Behavioral health problems can often be dealt with before lives are dangerously impacted by addressing root causes and working on the underlying behaviors associated with the issue.
- We can prevent behavioral health problems by building spiritually-based personal skills for how we deal with day-to-day life. Many issues can be positively impacted by taking informed, intentional, and healthy steps toward wellness.

These epiphanies led me to several years of research and eventually to writing my first book in 2014. I continued learning and writing and in 2018, after a 38-year career with IBM, I left the business world to found STEPS Ministries.

Statistics related to the problems STEPS addresses are mind-numbing. More people deal with these afflictions than heart disease, diabetes, or cancer, and more people die from substance abuse than from vehicle accidents, murder, or suicide. Those statistics fuel our passion at STEPS to champion the cause of prevention to help turn lives around!

Accomplishments – Education That Reaches Thousands

Some of our accomplishments over the last 3 years include:

Deliver Easy-to-Access and Life-Changing Education:

- Equipped thousands through seminars, parenting programs, and resources.
- Created over 300 videos and 30 products and presentations we can reuse.
- Over 25 in-person seminars receiving high ratings and excellent feedback.
- Built 15 Online Toolkits (courses) and workbooks for individuals or small groups.
- Other education includes integrated online training center, about 150 podcasts, and 2 books.
- Received hundreds of positive testimonials about the value of our education. Seminars were rated 9.7 out of 10 by attendees and education for at-risk youth was evaluated at 9.6 out of 10 by students at an underserved high school.

Multiply Ministry Impact Through Collaboration:

- STEPS is strategically focused on collaboration to partner with organizations and serve people through them which led to our strategy to use Content Portals as an easy-to-implement way to share content through partners.
- Examples of collaboration include partnerships with nonprofits (e.g. Raleigh's Place, Grace Klein Community), churches (e.g. Liberty, Oak Mountain Presbyterian), business organizations (e.g. Cornerstone Coaching, Principio Coaching, the Onin Group), and youth-serving organizations (e.g. Renew Birmingham, Liberty).
- Developed "The Prevention Movement" with collaboration in mind and collected contact information for over 5000 organizations with the goal to conduct outreach to 8000+ organizations in Alabama to pursue partnerships.
- Reached tens of thousands of people by collaborating with traditional media such as radio stations and magazines.
- Launching church outreach program to thousands of churches and creating segmented programs for organizations.
- Participated in over 30 seminars, speaking engagements, and events in partnership with other organizations.

Scale Ministry Impact Through Digital Outreach:

- Delivered over 3 million content views via social media, digital ads, and videos.

- Guested on over 40 podcasts that have reached well over 100,000 people.
- A total of over 20,000 regular followers on social media by year-end 2025.
- Website page visitors are expected to be over 50,000 page views for 2025.
- An additional 50,000 page views to our online learning center content pages.
- Published over 1300 social media posts and over 300 high-value blog articles.
- Hired digital marketing agency as a long-term partner to maximize digital outreach.

Optimize Operations and Generate Funds to Fuel Growth:

- Implemented process for operational metrics and continuous improvement.
- Acquired ChatGPT and several AI tools to increase our efficiency and effectiveness.
- Launching a new Sponsorship Campaign that will remain part of our development efforts.
- We are now finding, researching, and developing relationships with Private Family Foundations.
- Developed revenue-generating programs and business-to-business campaigns to expand revenue sources.
- STEPS has been supported by organizations including The Caring Foundation, Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, Daniel Foundation, Walker Area Community Foundation, Anonymous Foundation, Sanders Family Foundation, Hill Crest Foundation, John Thomas Foundation, The Center, Worthington Family Foundation, Susan Mott Webb Charitable Trust, several churches, and a number of other organizations.

Current Programs – Strategic Initiatives for Serving

STEPS has a number of programs underway, and these are 5 key initiatives we are focusing on:

1. The Prevention Movement – Expand prevention education for substance abuse and mental health issues through every county in Alabama and inspire a collective movement to help others who are hurting.
2. Proactive and Biblical Parenting – Equip parents with evidence-based skills and spiritually-grounded strategies to raise healthy, happy kids and prevent substance and mental health issues during the teenage years.
3. Real Life Skills for Teenagers – Empower teens with practical life skills for spiritual, emotional, mental, social, and personal well-being and train underserved youth to make wise choices and live more effectively.
4. Life Improvement Skills for Adults – Enhance the well-being and quality of life for individuals and families and prevent life-altering problems through evidence-based life skills training and practical daily steps.
5. Steps to Spiritual Growth – Launch a new program to help people take grace-filled steps to find faith, peace, and hope—strengthening emotional and spiritual wellness that contributes to overall mental health and life stability.

By equipping people with practical steps they can take, we reduce the likelihood of preventable crises, improve quality of life and wellness, and preserve healthcare capacity. Outcomes of our programs are to create awareness, promote connection to useful resources, encourage life-changing education, and foster collaboration through partnerships. Longer-term outcomes will focus on transformed lives: parents gaining confidence to guide their children, individuals overcoming destructive habits, and organizations fostering healthier communities. With appropriate financial support, STEPS will reach and serve more hurting people than ever before with help, healing, and hope.

Focus on At-Risk Populations

STEPS serves individuals, parents, and youth in Birmingham, across Alabama, and beyond with a focus on prevention and wellness for at-risk individuals and organizations that serve, employ, or reach them. Populations we serve include:

- **Those with behavioral health problems:** In the United States, 1 in 7 people face a substance addiction. The number of Americans who meet the clinical criteria for addiction is more than those with heart disease, diabetes, or cancer, and an additional 80 million people are risky substance users. Mental illness affects conservatively 23% of adults and 36% of young adults and more than 60% do not receive care.
- **Parents and families:** Parents play a crucial role in influencing their children's behavior. Our parenting seminars, which have received exceptional feedback (9.7 out of 10 in attendee ratings), equip parents with useful tools to address substance use and mental health issues in their children. We work with families at all socioeconomic levels, and those groups face overlapping but different challenges in their families.
- **Teenagers and young adults:** 90% of substance use disorders begin before the age of 18, 75% of high schoolers have used addictive substances, and 40% abuse them. Mental health issues like depression and suicide are rising, with 22% of teens considering suicide and 1 in 11 attempting it. Two-thirds of college students experience overwhelming anxiety, and fentanyl is now the leading cause of death among young adults aged 18-to-44.
- **Underserved youth and families:** STEPS researched, developed, and piloted education for underserved youth in lower-income, diverse communities. We have methods to serve rural areas we developed through experience and will expand into rural counties in 2026. We have strong experience reaching those who are disenfranchised and marginalized due to the shame and stigma of behavioral health issues who often do not have access to help.

Building on the 2025 Results

STEPS tracks measurable results through digital analytics, seminar ratings, use of resources, and feedback. Our metrics guide continuous improvement and help us refine our programs. Below are some of the highlights from 2025 alone:

For 2025, we had over 1,700,000 views on social media with 20,000+ followers and 40,000+ clicks to view deeper content. This performance was a year-to-year increase of two-and-a-half times for views and over 1000% for followers.

Social media reach is a leading-edge indicator of results. Each view is a "touch" that can bring help, healing, and hope to hurting people. For the year of 2025, we published about 400 social media posts and 100 articles on two blogs.

Our social media growth numbers are accelerating, and they will get a boost in the fourth quarter of 2025 as we launch TikTok and LinkedIn channels, so 2026 will be exciting in terms of social media growth.

Web visitors had strong growth with 50,000+ website visits for 2025. Monthly views accelerated throughout the year growing from 2000/month in the first quarter to 6000/month in the fourth quarter of 2025. In addition to these numbers, there were also more than 50,000 page views for our online learning center.

Our guesting on podcasts has grown rapidly with appearances on over 40 podcasts. We reached an estimated hundreds of thousands of people on those interviews which include deeper content that is often 35-to-50 minutes long.

STEPS has 15 online toolkits (2 more in process) and an online training center. We have 2 books, over 300 articles, almost 500 videos, and about 150 podcasts. Our seminars were consistently rated 9.7 out of 10 or better by attendees.

These results demonstrate STEPS' measurable ability to engage people at scale and convert awareness and education into sustained improvements in health and wellness.

Key Plans for 2026

During the next year, STEPS Ministries will build and deliver scalable, evidence-based prevention education across Alabama and beyond, reduce behavioral health crises, equip parents and youth with wellness-based life skills, protect families, improve communities, and reduce strain on the healthcare system. Here is a summary of our approach:

WHY – Why STEPS is pursuing these life-changing ministry programs and projects

The breadth of the needs we address are staggering, but our proven methodologies, well-tested education, and operational capabilities can make a difference. The statistics below are just a sample of the needs we address:

- Half of families have someone struggling with substance abuse or mental health.
- 90% of those hurting people are not getting the help they need to improve.
- About 1 in 7 Americans will face substance abuse addictions.
- The #1 cause of death in the US from age 18-to-44 is fentanyl.
- 19% of high school students seriously consider suicide (22% in 2025).
- Mental health affects adults (23%), young adults (36%), and youth (46%).

By reducing preventable behavioral health crises, this grant will improve wellness and lower uncompensated care costs.

WHAT – What the impact on communities will be as we focus on our 5 key programs

1. THE PREVENTION MOVEMENT

- Impact – Expand prevention education to every county in Alabama for both substance use and mental health.
- Plans – Execute integrated county-wide campaigns delivering prevention education to all 67 Alabama counties. (More information on The Prevention Movement is covered in the pilot project described below.)
- Testimonial – “STEPS Ministries is leading the way on prevention. They help families identify healthy behaviors before trouble arises.” (Don Menendez, CEO, White Plume Technologies)

2. PROACTIVE AND BIBLICAL PARENTING

- Impact – Empower parents with evidence-based skills and strategies to prevent teenage issues before they escalate.
- Plans – Provide PACES workshops, an online training center, and organization-based resources and small groups.
- Testimonial – “We greatly appreciate the content portal, resources and biblical guidance STEPS Ministries provides for parents and families that are struggling.” (Bruce Terry, senior pastor at Liberty Church)

3. REAL LIFE SKILLS FOR TEENAGERS

- Impact – Equip teens with life skills for spiritual, emotional, mental, social, and personal wellness and resilience.
- Plans – Build practical life skills curriculums and deliver by partnering with churches, schools, and nonprofits.
- Testimonial – “I am happy people actually care about our future and want to put their time into us. I really think this is a great program and I truly am blessed to get this opportunity.” (Darnell, an at-risk teenager)

4. LIFE IMPROVEMENT SKILLS FOR ADULTS

- Impact – Enhance wellness and quality of life and prevent life-altering problems through life skills training.
- Plans – Provide a holistic suite of online toolkits and workbooks individuals can use to live more effectively.
- Testimonial – “The STEPS content portal has quickly become one of our most impactful resources. It’s practical, relevant, and deeply appreciated.” (James Justice, CEO and Founder, Cornerstone Coaching)

5. STEPS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH (new)

- Impact – Meet people where they are and help them take grace-filled steps to find faith, peace, and hope.
- Plans – Deliver an interactive program with workbook and large-scale outreach via social media and churches.
- Testimonial – “Very encouraging to hear practical tips to move myself and my kids toward the Gospel from someone who has experienced struggles himself. Well worth the time.” (James, a father and seminar attendee)

Pilot Program – Conduct a pilot for “The Prevention Movement” in several Alabama counties

STEPS Ministries will pilot an integrated county program to deliver education to prevent substance abuse and mental health issues. For this pilot, STEPS will implement “The Prevention Movement” in 3-5 Alabama counties:

- Provide a content portal to each county – Include topics such as mental health, handling anxiety, substance abuse prevention, promoting recovery, and high-functioning addiction.
- Deliver over 1 million views of content – Create awareness and direct people to resources with useful posts and videos delivered across several social media channels.
- Reach 200 organizations for awareness – Identify nonprofits, churches, companies, and healthcare providers and build a relationship through email to partner with them.
- Provide content portals to partners – Organizations will be offered prevention resources and a content portal to share with their people and benefit the community.
- Reach tens of thousands through the media – Execute proactive outreach to media who can reach people in the counties with Public Service Announcements and articles.

HOW – How STEPS will serve people efficiently and effectively through 5 operational projects

1. EASY-TO-ACCESS, LIFE-CHANGING EDUCATION

- Impact – Offer easy-to-use forms of training to engage people more deeply in life-changing education.
- Plans – Online Toolkits and Content Portals; needs-specific offerings and campaigns; easy-to-use products.

2. MULTIPLY IMPACT THROUGH COLLABORATION

- Impact – Increase the number of people we can serve through collaboration and partnerships with organizations.
- Plans – Content Portals for partners; “The Prevention Movement;” segmented strategies for types of organizations.

3. SCALE IMPACT THROUGH DIGITAL OUTREACH

- Impact – Continue expanding digital engagement at an increasing rate to reach and serve the most people possible.
- Plans – Escalate growth on digital channels; web navigation; LinkedIn and TikTok; social sharing strategies.

4. OPTIMIZE OUR OPERATIONS FOR EFFICIENCY

- Impact – Maximize growth, effectiveness, and efficiency through metrics-based continuous improvement.
- Plans – Metrics, analysis, and optimization across all content; use of AI tools for creating content and videos.

5. EXPAND RESOURCES AND MINISTRY SERVICES

- Impact – Invest in resources and skills to expand the number of people we can serve moving forward.
- Plans – Launch Sponsorship Campaign; apply to Private Family Foundations; revenue-generating for-fee models.

By focusing on our 5 key programs and 5 operational projects, STEPS Ministries will continue to serve more and more hurting people by providing help, healing, and hope to individuals, parents, youth, and organizations.