



step up  
savannah

TOGETHER  
we  
must **STEP UP** together

# WHO WE ARE...



Focused on economic inclusion, Step Up Savannah is a 501c(3) founded in 2005 by Chatham County, the City of Savannah, Savannah Chamber of Commerce, Savannah Economic Development Authority, Georgia Power, and the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System in response to the stagnantly high multi-generational poverty in the area. With a rich ecosystem of partnerships and collaborations, the organization acts as a convener to attract outside resources, adapt and create effective programs, train neighborhood and nonprofit leaders, and advocate for policies and programming that will improve the economic mobility of low-to-moderate income families.

As Savannah's poverty reduction initiative Step Up has established over 130 community and statewide partners representing all segments of the community—policymakers, business leaders, neighborhood leaders, and social service providers. Step Up's unique partnership with the City of Savannah over the last 15 years has yielded exponential economic impact to the citizens of Savannah.







## WHATweDO...

Step Up's priority focus areas are economic mobility, policy and advocacy, and community collaboration. Central to the agency's work and outreach to the low-wealth community is its workforce development, community service, and financial security, programming that has operated for over 15 years in the community.

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# WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO?

- **36%** of Savannahians are asset poor and around.
- **43.5%** of the households of color have a net worth of zero (Prosperity Now, 2021).
- **25.6%** of Savannah, Ga families of color live in income poverty. Income poverty is defined as income below the federal poverty threshold (Prosperity Now, 2020).
- **38.6%** of the people of color in Savannah are homeowners compared to their white counterpart's proportion of 50.8% (ACS, US Census).
- **60%** of renters are spending 30% or more of their income on housing costs (Prosperity Now, 2020).
- Children growing up in Opportunity Zones in the Savannah area are projected to make less than \$25,000 by the time they are age 35 (National Equity Atlas and Equality of Opportunity Project Economic Tracker).
- **31%** of Savannah's population is unbanked or underbanked.
- **55%** of those living at or below 199% of the federal poverty level are uninsured.

# WHAT PROGRAMS



## AMERICORPS VISTA

**AmeriCorps** Step Up acts as an intermediary for AmeriCorps VISTA, a federal program bringing volunteers to impoverished communities to serve as catalysts for change. Step Up brings in twelve new VISTA members each year to help build capacity across the safety net in our community. In 2018, Step Up was approved to expand the VISTA program to increase the host site slots, and to place a VISTA Leader slot at Step Up to assist the growing program.

# weOFFER...



## CHATHAM APPRENTICE PROGRAM

Step Up Savannah's Chatham Apprentice Program (CAP) is a cornerstone workforce development program set as being a direct intervention into the cycle of poverty by targeting those who are unemployed and underemployed with services and training aimed at helping them become stabilized in employment. Free to all participants, the program includes hard and soft skills training coupled with wrap-around services. These services include reentry counseling, record restriction, financial literacy, counseling, mediation servicing, nutrition education, clothing and toiletry items, transportation and childcare assistance, employment coaching



and placement, public benefits screening and enrollment, GED skills, assistance with secondary enrollment, Vital Document attainment, drug testing, basic computer skills, and work experience. Additionally, program participants are followed for up to 12 months to ensure stability is established and barriers to employment are overcome. CAP participants can receive a Forklift Operator Safety Training,

TWIC (Transportation Workers Identification Credential) card, OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health), Barista training, CDL, EMT-Basic, EMT-Advanced, Firefighter, Maritime Logistics, Chatham Emergency Dispatch Trainee, Registered Behavioral Technician, ServSafe Food Handler and ServSafe Manager certification.

## WHAT PROGRAMS **we** OFFER... *continued*



### LEVEL UP PROGRAM

Modeled after proven national best practices, Step Up Savannah launched the Level Up program in 2018. **LEVELUP is a financial security program focused on helping people take steps to interrupt the cycle of poverty and jumpstart their journey to economic mobility.**

Using an asset-based community development framework, the program provides training and resource planning that emphasizes learning, building social capital, and asset-building for low-wealth community members. The co-investigative process uses self-assessment and other tools to create financial, emotional, and social resources to explore the impact of poverty in participants' lives.

#### **PARTICIPANTS WILL:**

- Learn the root causes of poverty
- Uncover social capital
- Develop a personal resource plan to establish their own financial security
- Understand the basics of money and credit
- Build a relationship with a local bank

#### **WORK WITH STEP UP SAVANNAH AND OUR PARTNERS TO:**

- Attend employment training and get a job with livable wages
- Earn stackable credentials or a GED
- Pursue continuing education
- Become an entrepreneur and start a business
- Begin asset building with checking and savings account, purchase life insurance, start a contribution to 401K, and pursue homeownership







## **NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

The Neighborhood Leadership Academy has been a thriving part of Step Up Savannah's programming and outreach since 2012. The 12-week cohort brings Savannah's new, emerging, and seasoned community leaders to participate in an intensive community leadership development process. With the goals to acquire new and refresh advocacy and leadership skills, the group is guided by examining current "best" practices, sharing personal experiences, exploring diverse approaches, and a "hands-on" application of community organizing. NLA is open to 25 adults annually from diverse segments of the community who wish to enhance their leadership skills and broaden their understanding of issues impacting low-wealth communities. Upon graduation, each NLA Graduate is encouraged to become a building block for creating a community of shared economic prosperity.

## WHAT PROGRAMS **we** OFFER... *continued*



### **PUBLIC BENEFITS**

Step Up Savannah serves as an intermediary organization for the Department of Human Services overseeing eight agencies that provide public benefits enrollment across the county. Public benefits enrollment is available at the following locations:

#### **STEP UP SAVANNAH OFFICE**

428 Bull St, Suite 208  
Savannah, Ga 31401  
912-232-6747  
*(by appointment only)*

#### **FIRST HISPANIC BAPTIST CHURCH**

*(Bi lingual enrollment  
specialist available)*  
1 Gamble Rd,  
Savannah, Ga 31405  
912-349-1938

#### **FORSYTH FARMERS MARKET**

2603 Mechanics Avenue  
Thunderbolt, Ga 31404  
912-483-8737  
*SNAP screenings at the Saturday market  
on the second Saturday*

#### **KINGDOM LIFE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

425 W Montgomery Cross Rd  
Savannah, GA 31406  
912-921-5346  
*(by appointment only)*

#### **MOSES JACKSON ADVANCEMENT CENTER**

1410 B Richards St  
Savannah, Ga 31415  
912-525-2166  
*(by appointment only)*

#### **READY2CONNECT, INC.**

508 N Richland Ave  
Rincon, Ga 31326  
912-295-2361  
*(by appointment only)*

#### **PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE RESOURCE CENTER**

425 Pennsylvania Ave  
Savannah, Ga 31404  
912-651-4211  
*(by appointment only)*

#### **SAVANNAH TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

5717 White Bluff Rd  
Savannah, Ga 31401  
912-443-4151  
*(by appointment only)*

#### **ST. MARY'S COMMUNITY CENTER**

812 W 36th St  
Savannah, Ga 31415  
912-447-0578  
*(Walk ins welcome)*

#### **WESLEY COMMUNITY CENTERS OF SAVANNAH, INC.**

1601 Drayton St  
Savannah, Ga 31401  
912-447-5711  
Mondays, Tuesdays, & Thursdays  
9am-12pm  
*(by appointment only)*



## **WORKING FAMILIES NETWORK**

Step Up is the creator and establisher of the Working Families Network (WFN). The WFN is a collaborative that aims to build the capacity of community-based organizations, develop our skills collectively, and implement innovative community strategies that assist low-income individuals to achieve economic mobility.

WFN specifically helps non-profits and the faith-based community access social services, network and collaborate with local agencies. and better navigate bureaucratic systems and government resources. Currently, the network consists of more than 70 organizations serving low-income Savannah/Chatham County residents. This network also works together to identify gaps in the social safety net and to develop high-impact strategies.



## WHAT PROGRAMS **we** OFFER... *continued*

### **ADVOCACY AREAS**

**B3 NETWORK** Step Up Savannah started the Bridges Beyond Benefits (B3) Network in June 2022 to host an online community service board through a Facebook group to meet individuals experiencing the public benefits cliff where they are. The Public Benefits Cliff occurs when an individual is ineligible for Public Benefits but has insufficient income to cover their essential living expenses such as rent, healthcare, or groceries. Through surveys, listening sessions, and researching best practices around the country, Step Up Savannah has learned that if we can break silos and resource gaps, we can better assist people in our community. The B3 Network aims to bridge the public benefits' cliff by encouraging community and peer engagement through information and resource sharing.

**CALL TO ACTION** Step Up Savannah launched the Call to Action in April 2022 to provide an advocacy platform for service providers in our region. Early sessions worked to build up the knowledge and capacity of nonprofits and now works on directly advocating for policy change that impacts low-wealth communities of color. The group meets monthly to plan and coordinate activities and to learn what advocacy work other agencies and coalitions are doing. Through the Call to Action, service providers can put their experience and knowledge into the public sphere to shape positive outcomes for the broader low-wealth community.





**STEP UP AND VOTE** Step Up Launched a voter education and registration initiative in 2018 and partnered with ProGeorgia to facilitate voter registration and education in Savannah-Chatham County. The goals of the program are to increase voter education and community involvement among underrepresented communities, encourage new leadership from within the community and build a lasting culture of voter engagement within our region. Utilizing volunteers and canvassers, Savannah Votes operates through outreach, phone banking, text banking, and door-to-door canvassing.

## SPONSORS

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## ADVOCACY PARTNERS

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we live here together  
we work here together  
we play here together  
we love this place together

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[stepupsavannah.org](http://stepupsavannah.org)

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