

# STEP AFRiKA!

## FY2023 ANNUAL REPORT

August 1, 2022–July 31, 2023



[WWW.STEPAFRIKA.COM](http://WWW.STEPAFRIKA.COM)



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# Message from the Founder



Photo Credit: Keith Major

Greetings Step Afrika! Family!

Planning for higher heights and profound impact, Step Afrika! is prioritizing sustainability and scalability. We are set to increase our engagement and youth involvement by expanding our full-time Company to grow our global reach and become more rooted in our local community. Step Afrika! is forging paths toward greater opportunity with a strong presence in schools, fostering life skills that will improve students' performance in the classroom and beyond. We are working to expand programmatic efforts and partnership, totaling outreach to 35,000 students. Step Afrika! is committed to encouraging young people to move towards higher educational goals through establishing connections between stepping, college/universities, and the diverse career opportunities available in the arts – a transformative life trajectory.

From our captivating performance at the White House's Juneteenth celebration to Step Afrika!'s induction into the National Association for Campus Activities Hall of Fame, this year has been a true standout. Step Afrika! continues to provide industry leadership and community impact in new and innovative ways that are being recognized. The work that we have done to pioneer cultural understanding by fostering an appreciation of stepping across national and global communities is redefining standards and leaving a enduring mark that will inspire future generations.

Thank you for celebrating Step Afrika!'s achievements with us. Across nearly three decades, Step Afrika! has connected generations through the tradition of stepping, and you have been with us every step of the way. As we embark on our next chapter, I look forward to working with you to make a lasting impact.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'CB' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line.

C. Brian Williams, Founder and Executive Producer



# Message from the Executive Director

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Photo Credit: Keith Major

Dear Friends,

This past year, Step Afrika! navigated a stable financial landscape that enabled us to expand our programming efforts with significant increases in both virtual and in-person engagements. Throughout the 2022-2023 season, our Company traveled domestically and internationally, performing in 62 cities, with multiple week-long performance runs. With steadfast support from our exceptional partners and donors, Step Afrika! reached more than 5,000 students in the Washington, D.C. metro area through in-school performances, summer camps, residency programs, and virtual initiatives—all made possible by your generosity.

With nearly 50,000 tickets sold domestically, Step Afrika! has successfully cultivated a dynamic atmosphere to educate audiences about the untold stories of the African American experience. Our arts education programs and community engagement activities outlined in this annual report drive our mission to inspire youth. As Washington, D.C.'s largest African American arts organization, we are pushing the boundaries of stepping and its core values of teamwork, discipline, and commitment to exciting new heights.

Thank you for your dedication to Step Afrika!'s mission and vision. Our efforts to empower audiences through our work aim to build a more inclusive future that honors the cultural significance of stepping. I encourage you to review a snapshot of our growth and hope it inspires you to renew your commitment to Step Afrika!, joining us in our ongoing journey to make a meaningful impact.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Lamar Lovelace". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops.

Lamar Lovelace, Executive Director



## Mission

For nearly 30 years, Step Afrika!'s mission has been and continues to be to preserve, expand, and promote an appreciation for stepping through professional performances, while educating, motivating, and inspiring young people in and out of school through arts education programs that emphasize teamwork, commitment, and discipline.

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## Vision

As one of the most celebrated African American dance companies in the world, Step Afrika! fortifies our relationships in the communities we serve and highlights our mission to preserve and promote the tradition of stepping. It is our vision to expand programmatic efforts to reach larger audiences.





# Staff

Since its founding in 1994, Step Afrika! continues to be led and operated by highly skilled and qualified professionals who strengthen performance, produce memorable event experiences, further strategies, and create dynamic results. Committed to excellence and industry leadership, the Step Afrika! team has contributed to evolving stepping into one of America's cultural exports. Step Afrika!'s fiscal year 2023 staff is presented below.

**C. Brian Williams**, Founder & Executive Producer

**Lamar Lovelace**, Executive Director

**Mfoniso Akpan**, Artistic Director

**Conrad R. Kelly II**, Assistant Artistic Director

**Artis Olds**, Director, Arts Education & Community Programs

**Margo Cunningham**, Marketing Manager



# Board of Directors

Step Afrika!'s Board plays an integral part in sustaining our organization. We express our deepest gratitude for all of their efforts. Their dedication, guidance, leadership, and unwavering commitment to advancing the organization's mission and vision is unmatched.

## Executive Committee

### **C. Brian Williams, Founder**

Founder and Executive Producer, Step Afrika!

### **Conrad Woody, Board Chair**

Managing Partner and Head of Odgers Berndtson's  
U.S. Corporate and Government Affairs Practice

### **Kym Taylor, Vice Chair**

Vice President – Marketing and Strategic Solutions,  
Family Choice Healthcare

### **Jeffery D. Kennerly, Treasurer**

Financial Advisor, Morgan Stanley Wealth Management

### **Natasha Watkins, Secretary**

Management Consultant

### **Dyonicia “Dy” Brown**

Senior Director, Regional Strategy, Young Invincibles

### **Beverly Burke**

Former Vice President and General Counsel,  
Washington Gas

### **David Canada**

Senior Manager, The Boeing Company

### **John W. Hill**

Founder and Chief Executive Officer, J Hill Group

### **Kymber Lovett-Menkiti**

Director, Sales, The Menkiti Group

### **Janel Merritt**

Chief Operating Officer, Public Sector Solutions  
Group (PS2G)

### **Christopher Montgomery**

Director, Transformation Delivery, KPMG

### **Latrena Owens**

Executive Director, District of Columbia's St. Elizabeths  
East Campus Redevelopment

### **Troy Patterson**

Principal/Founder, The Spera Group, TTR Sotheby's  
International Realty

### **Kebharu Smith**

Director, Amazon Counterfeit Crimes Unit, Amazon

### **Glenn Singleton**

CEO and Founder, Pacific Educational Group

### **Brandon Todd**

Director, Corporate Public Policy, Washington Gas

### **Melanie Trottman**

Senior Vice President/Chief Editorial  
Consultant, Edelman

## Directors

### **Lamont Akins**

Senior Manager, Strategic Initiatives and External  
Engagement, Pepco

### **Marc Battle**

Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Legal  
Affairs, DC Water and Sewer Authority

### **Ann Belkov**

Retired Superintendent, Statue of Liberty National  
Monument and Ellis Island Museum

### **Brady Birdsong**

Project Director, Child Welfare Technical Assistance,  
and Information Systems, ICF

### **Ran Borgersen**

Senior Director, Head of Multifamily Marketing,  
Freddie Mac





“The steppers moved in perfect unison, their feet pounding the stage in a mesmerizing display of precision and skill. Each step was carefully choreographed and executed brilliantly, showcasing the incredible athleticism of the performers.”

Eddy “Precise” Lamarre, *Rolling Out*



# Step Afrika!'s 2022-2023 Company

Step Afrika!'s Company is comprised of artists from all over the country. They bring alive the blended percussive dance styles practiced by historically African American fraternities and sororities, traditional African dances, and an array of contemporary dance and art forms into a compelling artistic experience.

Our Company reaches tens of thousands of people each year through performances, school and community educational demonstrations, signature shows, and tours. In fiscal year 2023, Step Afrika! employed 13 full-time dancers—all college graduates—many of whom attended Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and are members of Historically Black Greek Fraternities and Sororities. Step Afrika!'s dancers continue to uphold our rich legacy and maintain our status as Washington, D.C.'s Cultural Ambassador. We recognize the 2022-2023 Company and applaud their hard work.

## **Ariel Dykes**

- Hometown: Gainesville, FL
- Education: Santa Fe College, University of Florida
- Affiliation: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

## **Kamala Hargrove**

- Hometown: Bronx, NY
- Education: Trinity College

## **Akievia Hickman**

- Hometown: Tallahassee, FL
- Education: Florida A&M University
- Affiliation: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

## **Jabari Jones**

- Hometown: Detroit, MI
- Education: Morehouse College
- Affiliation: Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

## **Conrad Kelly II**

- Hometown: Fort Lauderdale, FL
- Education: Florida A&M University

## **Isaiah O'Connor**

- Hometown: Miami, FL
- Education: Florida A&M University

## **Na'imah Ray**

- Hometown: Brooklyn, NY
- Education: Montclair State University
- Affiliation: Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

## **Valencia Odeyka Emonni Springer**

- Hometown: Brooklyn, NY
- Education: Virginia Union University
- Affiliation: Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

**Ericka Still**

- Hometown: St. Petersburg, FL
- Education: Florida A&M University

**Brie Turner**

- Hometown: Lithonia, GA
- Education: Howard University
- Affiliation: Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

**Joseph Vasquez**

- Hometown: Guttenberg, NJ
- Education: Rutgers University
- Affiliation: Lambda Sigma Upsilon Latino Fraternity

**Pelham Warner Jr.**

- Hometown: The Bronx, NY
- Education: Dutchess Community College
- Affiliation: Order of the Feather Fraternity Inc.

**Robert Warnsley**

- Hometown: Chicago, IL
- Education: Illinois State University
- Affiliation: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.



# Accomplishments & Impact

Step Afrika! boldly reimagines possibility, a major part of that reimagination is marked by strategically assessing our accomplishments and quantifying impact. Our key performance indicators are rooted in our mission and vision—the preservation of stepping and the prioritization of education to create substantive outcomes. As an industry leader, Step Afrika!’s exceptional programs celebrate Black culture. Throughout the 2022-2023 season, Step Afrika! captivated audiences worldwide with its distinctive voice and innovative portrayal of African American history and performance. As the Company continues to succeed, Step Afrika! continues to experience increased social media followers, viewership, and newsletter sign-ups. Our social media following grew 17.25% across Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn, from the previous year, allowing us to virtually connect with larger audiences. The following programmatic snapshot provides highlights from fiscal year 2023.

## Steps Forward

Step Afrika!’s leadership strategically plans for greater influence through projected growth in our arts education programs, while doubling down on existing partnerships and forging new ones with D.C. Public Schools, Howard University, New York Edge, Teach For America, Girl Scouts of America, and the Music Center at Strathmore.

## Focus Areas

### Arts Education

I In FY23, Step Afrika! reached 5,663 students in the Washington, D.C., metro area through in-school performances, residency programs, and virtual programming, and engaged with 1,000 more in other states with arts education experiences.

Program Student Breakdown:

- ◆ **Step by Step: 4,129 Students**  
Step by Step is 45 minutes of highly energetic, percussive unity in motion. In this assembly-sized workshop-based program for grades Pre-K -12, students enjoy learning step choreography and discovering how dance brings people together. The program introduces the ties between stepping, college life, and academic achievement while discovering the rhythm, physicality, and history of







stepping. Step Afrika!’s core pillars of teamwork, commitment, and discipline shine through as spectators join the Company and individual students become a team.

◆ **Stepping with Step Afrika!: 640 students**

Stepping with Step Afrika! is an especially interactive 45-minute performance for K-12 students that highlights the rhythm, physicality, and history of stepping, and culminates in a group activity to get students on their feet. The program introduces the ties between stepping, college life, and academic achievement while incorporating the concepts of teamwork, discipline, and commitment. Performers incorporate world traditions, demonstrated through the lively South African gumboot dance. Students enjoy learning basic step choreography and discover how dance brings people and cultures together.

◆ **Five Days with Step Afrika!: 449 students**

Five Days With Step Afrika! is a notably engaging virtual arts education program, based on our award-winning arts education programs and more than twenty-five years of performing and teaching students across the world. Five Days with Step Afrika! was created to support the academic environment as well as the challenges of virtual learning. Since the 2020 launch of this unique program, Five Days With Step Afrika! has connected with over a dozen presenters, hundreds of educators and parents, and over 50,000 students (and counting!).

◆ **Step Afrika! Reads: 380 students**

Step Afrika! Reads is a performance designed to encourage young children of all cultural and economic backgrounds to be active, emphasizing the importance of parents reading to their children daily. The 35-minute program is structured for PreK-2nd grade students and combines reading, exercise, and creative movement.

◆ **Step Up to College: 65 students**

Step Up to College is a weekly residency program in school or after school for 4th -12th grade students. The curriculum covers stepping, its history, tradition, preparation for college life, and wellness. Step Afrika! successfully conducted four Step Up to College residency programs, offering both virtual and in-person options. One of our primary focuses for the future will be on maintaining a consistent and impactful arts education presence, with a goal of offering 15 residences. We expect our in-school performance total to rise from 42 to 70 programs.

## Accomplishments & Impact

Led by the multi-talented artists of Step Afrika!, Summer Steps with Step Afrika! emphasizes the values of teamwork, commitment, discipline, and academic achievement with performance training. This week-long summer camp for students in grades 4-12 immerses students in stepping through the creation of their own Step Show performance. Summer Steps with Step Afrika! made its in-person return to Washington, D.C. at Arena Stage July 31 – August 5, 2023. With its revival came recognition as a 2023 “Best Summer Camp” Finalist by Washington City Paper. Of the 70 camp participants, 43 were first time registrants.

### Black History Month Tour

Step Afrika! presence on college campuses remains a hallmark of our programmatic efforts. Our connection to higher education aids in the way we actively shape our future leaders by both sharing our core values and inspiring students and faculty alike through our performances. After being inducted into the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) Hall of Fame the 2022-2023 tour included campus performances and education programs in the:

- ◆ Midwest (Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, Indiana, Pennsylvania, West Virginia),
- ◆ South (Georgia and Florida),
- ◆ Northeast (New Jersey and Maryland), and
- ◆ West (Arizona, California, New Mexico).

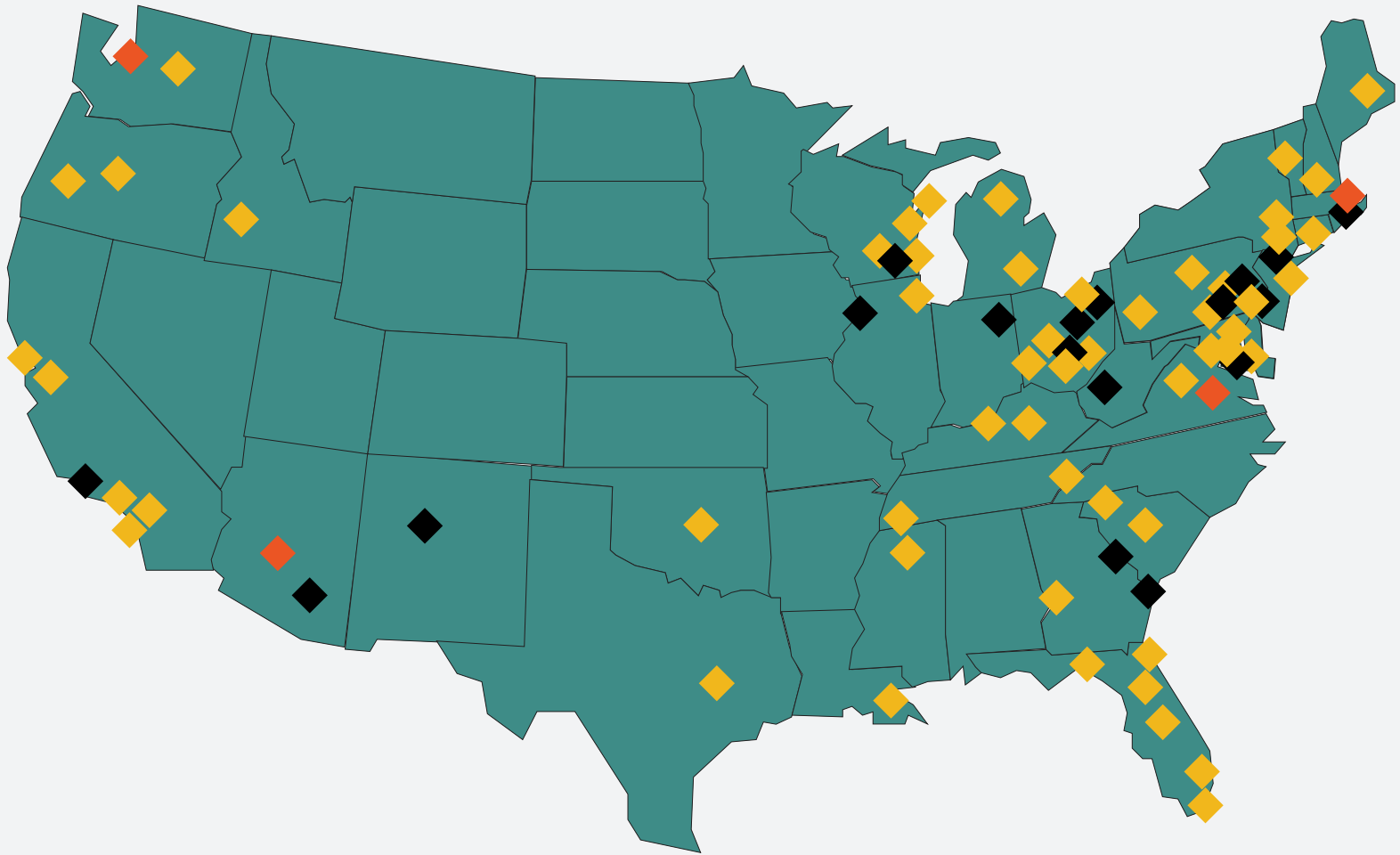
During the 2022-2023 season, 9,830 individuals attended performances at 20 colleges, universities, and a high school during Step Afrika!’s 2023 Black History Month Tour. We project a future expansion of our market reach from serving 23 colleges and universities to 30 markets in the next fiscal year.

### VIP Gala

June 5, 2023 marked our VIP Gala with nearly 400 sponsors and guests gathered to support Step Afrika!’s award-winning arts education programming at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. This evening of celebration showcased our talented Company and highlighted various efforts that harness the tradition of stepping as a tool for cultural awareness, youth engagement, and audience-centric entertainment. With the generous support of our 2023 VIP Gala sponsors, Step Afrika! raised nearly \$350,000 to ensure that we maintain our presence in local schools with the greatest need.

### 2022-2023 National Tour

The 2022-2023 season featured over 80 engagements that reached both domestic and international audiences alike. Selling nearly 50,000 tickets in 2022 alone, Step Afrika!’s performances draw diverse audiences. From college campuses to historic theaters and performance centers, each Step Afrika! performance promotes stepping, the arts, and a commitment to higher education.



-  National Tour
-  The *Drumfolk* Tour
-  Black History Month  
College Tour



## 2022

**August 20:** Elizabethtown College  
(Elizabethtown, PA)

**August 26:** University of Florida  
(Gainesville, FL)

**September 17:** Harbison Theatre  
at Midlands Technical College  
(Irmo, SC)

**September 19-23:** Brooks Center for  
the Performing Arts (Clemson, SC)

**September 24:** Dr. Phillips Center for  
the Performing Arts (Orlando, FL)

**September 28:** Flynn  
(Burlington, VT)

**September 29:** Collins Center for  
the Arts (Orono, ME)

**October 5-16:** Arts Emerson  
(Boston, MA) *\*Drumfolk*

**October 19-21:** Modlin Center for  
the Arts (Richmond, VA) *\*Drumfolk*

**October 24-29:** Arizona State  
University Gammage (Tempe, AZ)  
*\*Drumfolk*

**November 2-3:** Capitol Theater at  
Overture Center for the Arts  
(Madison, WI)

**November 4:** Weidner Center for the  
Performing Arts (Green Bay, WI)

**November 6-7:** Paramount Theatre  
for the Performing Arts (Austin, TX)

**November 9-10:** Victoria Theatre  
(Dayton, OH)

**November 11:** Hall Auditorium/Miami  
University (Oxford, OH)

**November 13-14:** Norton Center for  
the Performing Arts (Danville, KY)

**November 15-16:** The Paramount  
(Charlottesville, VA)

**November 17:** Templeton-Blackburn  
Alumni Memorial Auditorium  
(Athens, OH)

**November 19:** River Center for the  
Performing Arts (Columbus, GA)

**November 28-December 23:**  
Step Afrika!’s Magical Musical  
Holiday Step Show at Arena Stage  
(Washington, D.C.)

## 2023

**January 14:** Auditorium Theatre  
of Roosevelt University (Chicago, IL)

**January 18:** Door Community  
Auditorium (Fish Creek, WI)

**January 19:** Marcus Center for the  
Performing Arts (Milwaukee, WI)

**January 22:** Kean Stage, Wilkins  
Theatre (Union, NJ)

**January 25:** Shubert Theater  
(New Haven, CT)

**January 28:** Maryland Hall  
(Annapolis, MD)

**January 30:** California Polytechnic  
State University (San Luis  
Obispo, CA) *\*Black History Month  
College Tour*

**January 31:** Winter Visual and  
Performing Arts Center  
(Millersville, PA)

**February 1-2:** Byham Theater  
(Pittsburgh, PA)

**February 2:** West Virginia State  
University (Institute, WV) *\*Black  
History Month College Tour*

**February 3:** Kenyon College  
(Gambier, OH) *\*Black History Month  
College Tour*

**February 3:** Weis Center for the  
Performing Arts (Lewisburg, PA)

**February 4:** College of Wooster  
(Wooster, OH) *\*Black History Month  
College Tour*

**February 5:** Denison University  
(Granville, OH) *\*Black History Month  
College Tour*

**February 5:** Au Rene Theater  
(Fort Lauderdale, FL)

**February 7:** Ruby Diamond Concert  
Hall at Florida State University  
(Tallahassee, FL)

**February 7:** St. Mary’s College of  
Maryland (St. Mary’s City, MD)  
*\*Black History Month College Tour*

**February 9:** Florida Theatre  
(Jacksonville, FL)

**February 9:** University of Maryland  
Eastern Shore (Princess Anne, MD)

## 2023 cont.

**February 11:** Augustana College  
(Rock Island, IL) *\*Black History Month  
College Tour*

**February 12:** University of  
Wisconsin-Whitewater  
(Whitewater, WI) *\*Black History  
Month College Tour*

**February 13:** Gertrude C. Ford  
Center for the Performing Arts at  
University of Mississippi  
(University, MS)

**February 13:** University of  
Wisconsin-Whitewater  
(Whitewater, WI) *\*Black History  
Month College Tour*

**February 15:** Indiana Institute of  
Technology (Fort Wayne, IN)  
*\*Black History Month College Tour*

**February 15:** UCSB Arts & Lectures,  
Campbell Hall (Santa Barbara, CA)

**February 16:** UCSB Arts & Lectures,  
Campbell Hall (Santa Barbara, CA)

**February 17:** Lancaster Performing  
Arts Center (Lancaster, CA)

**February 18:** Luckman Fine Arts,  
California State University  
(Los Angeles, CA)

**February 20:** University of  
Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, PA)  
*\*Black History Month College Tour*

**February 21:** Ursinus College  
(Collegeville, PA) *\*Black History Month  
College Tour*

**February 21:** Morrison Center for  
the Performing Arts at Boise State  
University (Boise, ID)

**February 22:** Wheaton College  
(Norton, MA) *\*Black History Month  
College Tour*

**February 23:** William Paterson  
University of New Jersey (Wayne, NJ)  
*\*Black History Month College Tour*

**February 23:** Bankhead Theater,  
Livermore (Livermore, CA)

**February 24:** Alvernia University  
(Reading, PA) *\*Black History Month  
College Tour*

**February 25:** Zellerbach Hall at  
University of California, Berkeley  
(Berkeley, CA)

**February 26:** Augusta University  
(Augusta, GA) *\*Black History Month  
College Tour*

**February 27:** Savannah Heritage  
Festival (Savannah, GA) *\*Black History  
Month College Tour*

**February 28:** Oklahoma City  
Community College, Visual and  
Performing Arts Center Theater  
(Oklahoma City, OK)

**March 2:** University of Mexico  
(Albuquerque, NM) *\*Black History  
Month College Tour*

**March 3:** Clayton Center for the Arts  
(Maryville, TN)

**March 4:** Barbea Williams Presents  
(Tucson, AZ) *\*Black History Month  
College Tour*

**March 5:** Duncan-Williams  
Performance Hall at Germantown  
Performing Arts Center  
(Germantown, TN)

**March 10:** South Miami-Dade  
Cultural Arts Center (Cutler Bay, FL)

**March 12:** Hill Auditorium at the  
University of Michigan  
(Ann Arbor, MI)

**March 22:** W. L. Lyons Brown Theatre  
(Louisville, KY)

**March 25:** Macomb Center for the  
Performing Arts  
(Clinton Township, MI)

**March 27:** Columbus Association  
for the Performing Arts - Davidson  
Theatre (Columbus, OH)

**April 1:** Dr. Rodney R. Lafon  
Performing Arts Center (Luling, LA)

**April 11:** Numerica Performing Arts  
Center (Wenatchee, WA)

**April 14:** Tower Theatre (Bend, OR)

**April 15:** Hult Center for the  
Performing Arts (Eugene, OR)

**April 18-22:** Meany Hall at University  
of Washington (Seattle, WA)  
*\*Drumfolk*

**April 28:** Merriam Theater  
(Philadelphia, PA)

**May 2-6:** KeyBank State Theatre at  
Playhouse Square (Cleveland, OH)

**May 9:** Ulster Performing Arts Center  
(Kingston, NY)

**May 10:** Bardavon 1869 Opera House  
(Poughkeepsie, NY)

**May 12:** The Colonial (Keene, NH)

**June 17-19:** Juneteenth at  
Strathmore/Step Xplosion  
(Bethesda, MD)

## Accomplishments & Impact

### International Tour

Step Afrika! educates and introduces the tradition of stepping to international audiences via performances, workshops, and master classes at festivals, various venues, and cultural exchange programs around the world. Step Afrika! has toured in more than 60 countries globally, being ranked as one of the top 10 African American dance companies in the United States. Last season, serving as the District's official cultural ambassador, Step Afrika! had the following international engagements:

#### August 31 - September 11: Bolivia Tour

Sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Bolivia and in honor of Afro-Bolivian History Month, Step Afrika! toured Bolivia hosting workshops, lecture/demonstrations, and performances in Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, and La Paz. This inaugural visit allowed Step Afrika! to further connect with audiences in Latin America and reach thousands of Bolivianos. The Company shared the stage with several Afro-Bolivian groups that work to preserve African culture and traditions in the country.

2022





### March 14 – 20: Kuwait Tour

Step Afrika! visited Kuwait for a week-long partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait. Serving as an American cultural ambassador, Step Afrika! had several public performances at the LOYAC Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA), Avenues Mall, Dasman Bilingual School, and Yarmouk Cultural Center.

### April 26: Jack Singer Concert Hall at Arts Commons (Calgary, AB) \*Drumfolk

Step Afrika!'s *Drumfolk* brought its unstoppable rhythm to Canada, headlining the Arts Commons' BD&P World Stage Series. The engagement featured a full-length performance, a student matinee, and a workshop..





# Key Performances

## Step Afrika!'s Magical Musical Holiday Step Show

Celebrating its 11th year run, Step Afrika!'s Magical Musical Holiday Step Show is the first critically acclaimed holiday show highlighting the African American tradition of stepping. This festive, family-friendly production debuted at Arena Stage. Over 9,000 people attended the performances in December 2022. The program included crowd favorites like *Home for the Holidays*, as well as Step Afrika!'s own *The Arctic Step Challenge*.

## Drumfolk

Step Afrika! performed *Drumfolk* in Arizona, Massachusetts, Virginia, Washington, and Alberta, Canada. *Drumfolk* is inspired by the Stono Rebellion of 1739. Step Afrika! blended songs, storytelling, and dance to explore an event in history that transformed African American life and culture. When Africans lost the right to use their drums, the beats found their way into the body of the people, the *Drumfolk*. New percussive forms took root leading to the development of some of our country's most distinct performance traditions like ring shout, tap, and stepping.

*Drumfolk* concluded its national tour with stops at the University of Minnesota Northrop (Minneapolis, MN) and The Cullen Theater at the Wortham Center (Houston, TX). Its final showing was at the Charleston Gaillard Center (Charleston, SC) in November 2023.

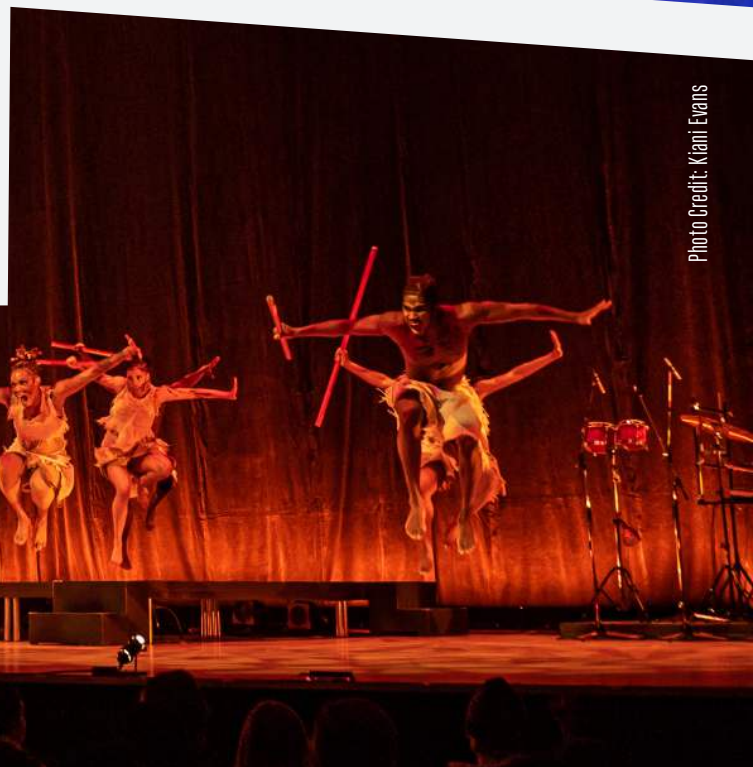


Photo Credit: Kiani Evans





## 2023 White House's Juneteenth Concert

In June, Step Afrika! received a presidential invitation to participate in the White House's Juneteenth Concert. In 2021, President Biden signed legislation establishing Juneteenth as a national federal holiday. This esteemed celebration took place on the South Lawn and featured a salute to Black culture, a nod to the historical significance of Juneteenth, and called out the unbreakable bond from a community driven to continue to advance racial equity for Black Americans. Step Afrika! performed in a star-studded line-up, among the likes of Jennifer Hudson, Ledisi, the Broadway Inspirational Voices, Cliff "Method Man" Smith, Colman Domingo, the Fisk Jubilee Singers, the Hampton University Concert Choir, Maverick City Music, the Morgan State University Marching Band, and many others.

A month earlier in May, Step Afrika! also had the honor of performing at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) for Vice President Kamala Harris. This photo distinction at NMAAHC amplifies Step Afrika!'s current contribution to the museum. Step Afrika! is featured in the NMAAHC's Explore More! exhibit, an interactive, multifaceted educational space dedicated to helping visitors connect and engage with African American history and culture. The museum feature, entitled "Join the Step Show" invites visitors to learn about the cultural dance form of stepping and practice their moves with members of Step Afrika!'s Company.

## Step Xplosion

Step Afrika! partnered with Strathmore to present Step Xplosion to an audience of 1,100 people in Bethesda, MD during the Juneteenth holiday. Step Xplosion honors the rich roots of stepping in the African American fraternity and sorority experience and its presence in the lives of students. This Juneteenth Celebration featured dynamic performances from some of the most innovative step teams from Maryland, New York, and Virginia coupled with the Washington, D.C. premiere of the Black Lives Matter-inspired work, *The Movement*.

### Awards

#### National Association for Campus Activities

Among the notable accolades and honors of Fiscal Year 2023 was Step Afrika!'s induction into the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) Hall of Fame. This distinction recognizes performers who have appeared at national or regional showcases and have distinguished themselves in the arts. Step Afrika! is the first-ever dance Company to join an esteemed list that includes Margaret Cho, B.B. King, Simon and Garfunkel, Jay Leno, Jon Stewart, and Roy Wood Jr. NACA empowers its members to amplify the campus experience through inclusive learning, meaningful connections, and engaging entertainment that transforms college communities.

#### National Endowment of the Arts

Step Afrika!'s Founder and Executive Producer C. Brian Williams received the prestigious 2022 National Heritage Fellowship. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in partnership with the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA) presented the film *Roots of American Culture: A Cross-Country Visit with Living Treasures of the Folk and Traditional Arts*, where Brian was spotlighted as one of ten exceptional artists. The film highlights the artistry and diversity of cultural traditions in America. Brian was recognized for his work in preserving and teaching the tradition and culture of stepping. Brian has taken stepping, this celebratory, percussive art form, to stages across the country and throughout the world to educate young people on the value of teamwork and community through this distinctive art.

Fellowship recipients are nominated by the public, often by members of their own communities, and then judged by a panel of experts in the folk and traditional arts. The panel's recommendations are reviewed by the National Council on the Arts, which sends its recommendations to the Arts Endowment chair, who makes the final decision. Established by Congress in 1965, NEA is the independent



#### Roots of American Culture

A Cross-Country Visit with Living Treasures of the Folk and Traditional Arts



Featuring C. Brian Williams, Step Artist and Producer

Watch the film premiere  
November 17, 2022 | 8pm ET | [arts.gov/heritage](https://arts.gov/heritage)

NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
for the ARTS  
© arts.gov



federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts. The National Heritage Fellowships, managed by the NEA, are the nation's highest honor in the folk and traditional arts. Including the 2022 class, the Arts Endowment has awarded 467 National Heritage Fellowships since 1982, recognizing artists working in more than 200 distinct art forms.

## Heinz College Award

Step Afrika!'s Executive Director Lamar Lovelace was presented with the Heinz College of Information Systems and Public Policy's 2022 Meritorious Service Award from Carnegie Mellon University. This award is given annually to an alumni who has contributed their time and talents in meaningful ways. Lamar was recognized for his leadership at Step Afrika!, and the transformational work he is doing to continue Step Afrika!'s rich legacy.

As Executive Director, Lamar is responsible for the organization's strategy and operations, leading its staff, programs, and the execution of its mission. Working closely with Step Afrika!'s board of directors, he spearheads fundraising, marketing, operations, and long-range planning for the organization. Lamar brings deep expertise from academia and has managed the organization's humanities-based partnerships.



## Accomplishments & Impact

### Press

Step Afrika! continues to leverage our relationships with the media to increase awareness and preserve the cultural richness of stepping. Notable television appearances include:



#### **Fox 10 AZAM**

Step Afrika!'s Drumfolk on  
Fox 10 AZAM



#### **WUSA9**

Step Afrika!'s Magical Musical  
Holiday Step Show



#### **Fox 32 Chicago**

Step Afrika! on  
FOX 32 Chicago



#### **CBS 2 News Chicago**

Step Afrika! brings Impressive Dance  
Performance to Auditorium Theatre



Photo Credit: The White House

## WUSA9

Step Afrika! Celebrates Juneteenth at the White House



Photo Credit: Jati Lindsay

## Fox 5 Good Day DC

Step Afrika! on FOX5's Good Day DC



Photo Credit: Jati Lindsay

## NBC4

Step Afrika! and Strathmore's Step Xplosion on NBC4




## WUSA9

The Movement, Step Xplosion







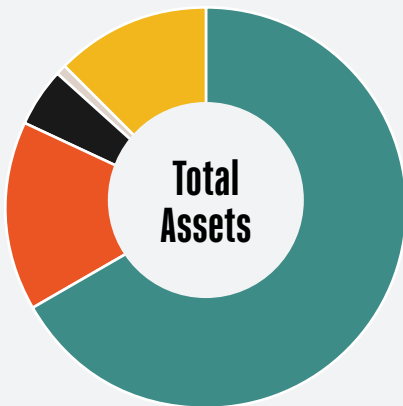


When those stage lights come up, Step Afrika! not only performs, the multifaceted artists bring the audience into the action, sharing the magic, cheer, and soulfulness of the season.

Micha Green, *The Washington Informer*

# FY2023 Financials

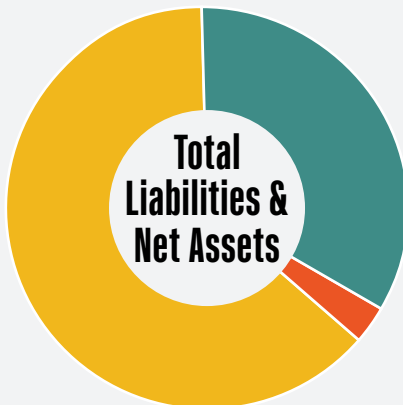
## Assets & Liabilities



- **Cash and cash equivalents:** \$3,472,516 – 66.9%
- **Investments:** \$788,301 – 15.2%
- **Property and equipment:** \$642,736 – 12.4%
- **Accounts receivable:** \$252,619 – 4.9%
- **Prepaid expenses:** \$35,349 – 0.6%

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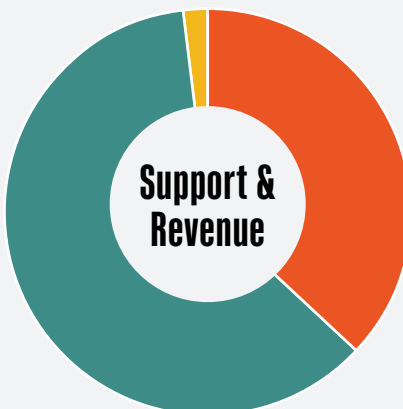
**TOTAL ASSETS: \$5,191,521**



- **Current Liabilities:** \$1,741,081 – 33.5%
- **Long-Term Liabilities:** \$155,834 – 3.0%
- **Net Assets:** \$3,294,606 – 63.5%

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**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS: \$5,191,52**

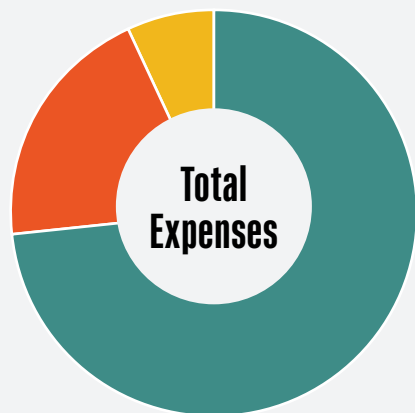


- **Contributions, Gifts and Grant Income:** \$1,135,542 – 37.0%
- **Performance Income:** \$1,884,891 – 61.3%
- **Other Income:** \$52,514 – 1.7%

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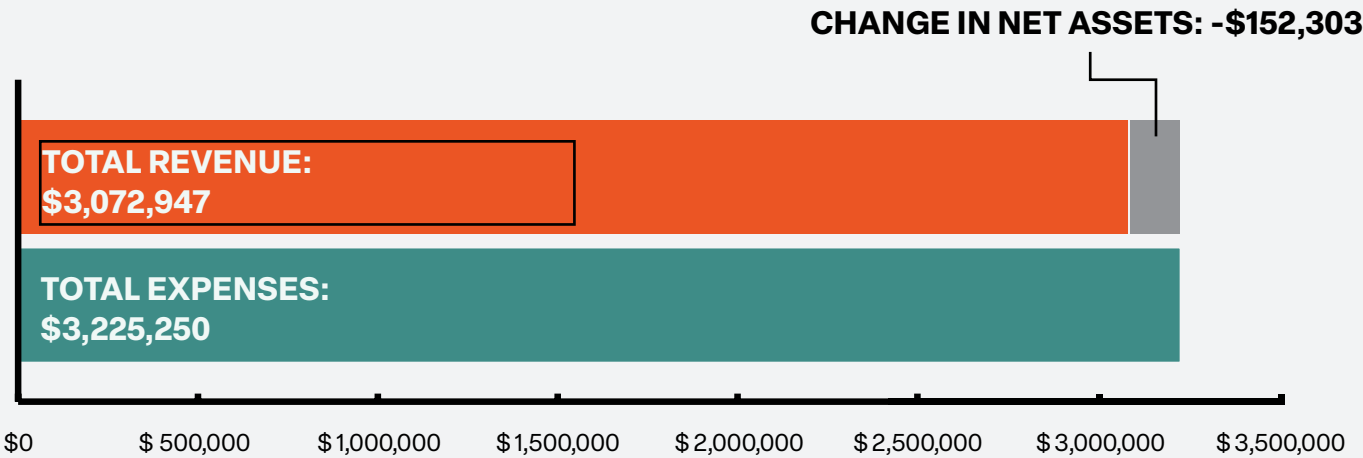
**TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE: \$3,072,947**

# Revenue & Expenses



- **Program Services:** \$2,366,000 – 73.3%
- **Management and General:** \$640,678 – 19.9%
- **Fundraising:** \$218,572 – 6.8%

**TOTAL EXPENSES: \$3,225,250**



In Fiscal Year 2023, individual income was lower, likely due to market fluctuations. During this time, we expanded both the administrative and artistic teams with new hires and implemented salary adjustments as part of right-sizing the organization. Despite these changes, Step Afrika! expects to achieve a surplus in Fiscal Year 2024.







“My daughter performed alongside Step Afrika! and it was so powerful! You guys have inspired her to use dance on so many levels and I just want to say thank you for the opportunity to raise another up-and-coming dancer and performer!”

Francisca, Audience Member of *The Movement*, Step Xplosion



Photo Credit: Kiani Evans

# Donor Acknowledgements

Step Afrika! recognizes the generous contributions from our sponsors and donor community. Your gifts create a lasting impact and empower us to inspire and educate domestic and international audiences. Your investment yields dividends. Our Board of Directors are designated with an asterisk. Thank you again for your support and partnership.

## \$50,000 and above

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation  
Bloomberg Philanthropies  
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Events DC  
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Bank of America  
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The International Association of Blacks in Dance, Inc.

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Sophia McAllister  
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## Donor Acknowledgements

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