

A group of diverse young people, including children and teenagers, are smiling and posing for a photo. They are wearing various casual clothing, including t-shirts and hoodies. The background is slightly blurred, suggesting an outdoor or semi-outdoor setting.

# THE STEPS COALITION

## Organization Overview

**Presented by Jonathan A. Green, MBA**  
Executive Director

**Presented to the USM Association of Office Professions**  
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# About the Steps Coalition

The Steps Coalition, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, started operations in 2006 to give voice to low to moderate income communities in the restoration process following Hurricane Katrina and has continued its work through the 2008/2009 recession and the BP Oil spill of 2010.

During this time, Steps has advocated for underrepresented communities like East Biloxi, North Gulfport, and Moss Point/Pascagoula/Gautier under our operating principles which are:

**Affordable Housing | Environmental Justice | Human Rights | Economic Justice  
Preservation of Historical Communities**

Consequently, it is our objective to undertake redevelopment projects in these communities that reflect their cultural heritage and the dignity of the people that reside in them, and to engage them civically so that they have a voice in those issues that directly impact their wellbeing.

*“...From Advocacy to Investment...”*



# Our Mission and Vision

- **Mission:**

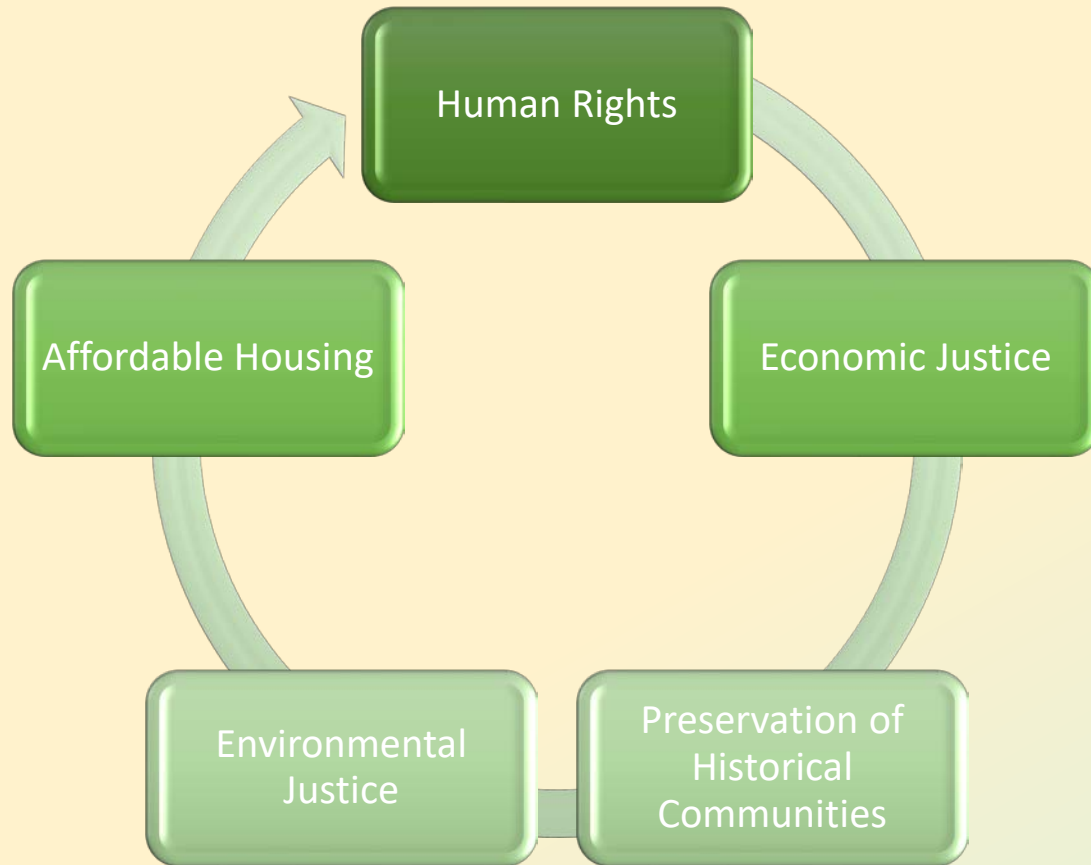
- The mission of Steps Coalition is to build a democratic movement to create and support a healthy, just, and equitable Mississippi Gulf Coast. Comprised of 20+ nonprofit organizations and community members, Steps convenes and provides space for the community to define and advocate for its priorities – to build capacity and leadership and provide a voice for the community – by facilitating communication, coordination, and collaboration among its members.

- **Vision:**

- Local neighborhoods are involved in the decision-making processes that affect their lives and the future of their communities, and non-profits, faith-based and civic organizations, and all people work together for a healthy, just and equitable Mississippi Gulf Coast.



# Our Guiding Principles



- **Affordable Housing:** We must ensure affordable housing for all residents if we are to have a healthy, diverse community and robust economy.
- **Economic Justice:** We must invest in all communities to support working families and the overall health of South Mississippi residents.
- **Human Rights:** We must insist that fairness guides how we rebuild our housing, our communities, our economy, and our coast.
- **Preservation of Historical Communities:** We must choose rebuilding solutions that promote diverse, family-friendly neighborhoods that reflect the fullness of our history and heritage.
- **Environmental Justice:** We must maintain a healthy balance between commercial development, residential communities and natural resources.



# Legacy Programs

- Gulf Coast Regional Collaborative (WKKF): Workforce Development (2016-2019)
- Steps Coalition CDFI Fund (MRBF): Community Development Financing (2019-Present)
- Solar Together Program (AF): Renewable Energy Policy Research (2017-2018)
- North Gulfport Water Quality Education and Leadership Program (EPA): Youth Development (2016-2019)
- Environmental Justice Program (RF): Environmental Stewardship/Advocacy (2018-2019)
- Coastal Communities Economic Development Workshops (NCAT): Food Justice Program (2019)
- Model Contractor Development Program (MDA): Small Business Development (2018)
- Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Campaign (Anonymous): Civic Engagement (2019)



# MAIN STREET REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

- Establish Main Street as the gateway to East Biloxi
- Rebrand as the “East Biloxi Civil Rights Cultural Corridor”
- Make a “destination” for out of town visitors and residents
- Reestablish mixed-use development to create sense of community and catalyze economic development throughout East Biloxi
- Use vacant lots to develop “in-fill” housing and retail/business opportunities
- Provide mixed-income affordable, quality, housing for LMI and working families
- Remediate the impacts of inevitable gentrification | “Place Making”
- Increase family stability and community wealth by ensuring an equitable redevelopment process



# COMMUNITY SOLAR FARM



Steps Coalition in collaboration with the Mississippi Chapter of the Sierra Club and Gulf Coast Community Foundation is in the process of developing a **\$3.0 million, 1.5 mega watt** Community Solar Farm that will serve low-to-moderate income (LMI) residents on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

## Goals of the project include:

- Make solar energy available to residents who typically could not benefit from it because of the installation cost or limitations of their dwelling (e.g. multi-family housing)
- Provide program subscribers with significant rate savings on their monthly electricity bills via Virtual Net Meeting (VNEM)
- Reduce the “Energy Burden” of Low-Moderate-Income (LMI) Families
- Give the community access to a renewable, resilient, carbon neutral (zero carbon emissions) source of energy



# 2020 CENSUS COMPLETE COUNT

Steps Coalition in collaboration with several of our community-based partner organizations is leading a complete count initiative to ensure that all Mississippi Gulf Coast residents are accurately counted in the 2020 Census so that our communities receive the funding and representation that they are entitled to.

Steps raised and deployed **\$150,000** in foundation funding for this effort to ensure that hard-to-count populations on the Mississippi Gulf Coast are included in the 2020 Census.





# GULF SOUTH FOR A GREEN NEW DEAL



Steps Coalition is part of a coalition of NGOs anchored by the [Gulf Coast Center for Law and Policy](#) that have developed a Gulf South (TX, LA, MS, AL, FL) specific policy platform based on the United States House of Representatives' [Nonbinding Resolution for a Green New Deal](#).

The goal of the coalition is to draft policy recommendations for local, state, and federal lawmakers that address the specific needs of the Gulf South in the context of climate justice and resilience and all the potential that such a policy focus entails.

# Steps Partnerships

## Partnering Opportunities

- Joint Program Development/Funding
- Civic Engagement Collaborations
- Board of Directors Volunteers
- Program Volunteers
- Donor/Major Gifts Program
- ***Other? – Make a proposal!***

## Who We Partner With

- Nongovernmental Organizations
- Regional Chambers of Commerce
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Educational Institutions
- Regional Business Councils
- Local/State/Federal Agencies
- Economic Development Entities
- For Profit Entities
- ***You and/or your organization?***

# A Sampling of Our Partners

- Back Bay Mission
  - <https://thebackbaymission.org/>
- Boat People SOS
  - <https://www.bpsos.org/bpsos-gulf-coast>
- Boys & Girls Clubs of the MS Gulf Coast
  - <https://www.bgcgulfcoast.org/>
- Climb CDC
  - <https://www.climbcdc.org/>
- Disability Connection
  - <http://disabilityconnection.org/>
- East Biloxi Community Collaborative
  - <http://www.eastbiloxicc.org/contact/>
- Hancock Resource Center
  - <https://www.hancockhrc.org/>
- Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance
  - <https://yourmira.org/>
- Mississippi Center for Justice
  - <https://www.mscenterforjustice.org/index.php>
- Moore Community House
  - <https://www.moorecommunityhouse.org/>
- Program Believe/New Bethel CDC
  - <https://newbethelcdc.org/>
- Open Doors Homeless Coalition
  - <https://www.opendoorshc.org/>





THANK YOU!



# Contact Information

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