

WILLIAMSPORT SUN-GAZETTE

STEP takes correct 'step' with annual endowment funds

We really like some of the "steps" that STEP is taking lately in the name of opportunity and self-help.

STEP is working toward creating a Housing Options Pathway Endowment Fund to add funding to its housing options programming.

Last year, STEP created a general fund called the STEP Endowment in honor of its 50 years of serving the community.

In 2014, it created the STEP Independent Living Pathway Endowment Fund.

The latest endowment will be created to help individuals and families secure and maintain safe, affordable and energy-efficient housing. It will help meet needs such as weatherization and home rehabilitation, which are always greater than what individuals or families receive in funding assistance.

STEP's big picture goal is to create a new endowment each year to help fund various aspects of STEP programming and rely less on local, state and federal funding.

That makes sense on two levels.

First, the endowments create a larger pool of funding that will allow for more impact with STEP funding.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it is an acknowledgement that it's not the government's job, or within its capability, to provide all of the funding to solve every problem.

And that's a reality all agencies must confront amid growing deficits for governments on the local, state and national levels.

STEP's leadership is correct to attempt to establish funding streams that will be there when the government can't be.