

The First Steps Fund

Lexington Baptist Association

The First Steps Fund is designed to enable LBA churches to intentionally pursue mission partnerships for advancing the gospel in hard, dark places.

Guidelines:

- What is the First Steps Fund?
 - An initial investment of \$24,000 from LBA cash reserves has been approved. Individuals and/or churches can contribute to this fund with future donations.
 - Up to \$2000 may be requested per church per year to allow at least 12 churches to participate.
- Who is the First Steps Fund for?
 - All churches with a demonstrated commitment to the Lexington Baptist Association.
 - First Steps Fund application must be submitted by or recommended by the pastor over missions.
 - Churches should identify the potential person/ministry and plan for ongoing mission partnership.
- Where are the “hard, dark places” to be engaged?
 - Those people or areas most resistant to the gospel or least impacted by kingdom ethics.
Examples...
 - National: NAMB Send Cities, few evangelical churches, population less than 2% evangelical.
 - International: IMB partners, Unreached People Groups, Joshua Project or GSEC identified.
- When can the First Steps Fund be used?
 - This fund is initially designated for use within the 2024 calendar year. Unused funds will roll over into 2025 and beyond.
 - Checks will be issued monthly after approval by First Steps Committee.
- Why has the First Steps Fund been developed?
 - To keep the global vision of gospel advance in front of our congregations.
 - To eliminate the financial barrier that might hinder churches from engaging in hard, dark places.
 - To be faithful and responsible stewards of the resources God has provided us.
- How will the First Steps Fund be administered?
 - A First Steps Fund application is submitted to the Lexington Baptist Association
 - The First Steps Committee will review the application.
 - Applicants will be notified of the committee’s decision and approved funds will be disbursed to the LBA church.
 - A post-trip report should be made to the LBA for receipting and accountability.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: “Why has the First Steps Fund been created?”

A: “Our purpose for existing is to foster cooperation among LBA churches for the sake of the gospel both here and abroad. We believe that our collaboration will enable our churches to accomplish more together than we could individually. We also believe that the essential task of the church is to make disciples of all peoples on earth and we acknowledge the biblical priority of the unreached in our Great Commission efforts (Rom 15). Yet the unreached in our day most often live in places that are historically resistant to the gospel. It can be hard for many of our churches to envision their congregations engaging in hard, dark places, so we have created the First Steps Fund to help eliminate the financial barrier to this kind of frontier mission work.”

Q: “What is meant by the phrase ‘hard, dark places?’”

A: “This phrase is our best attempt to describe regions and people groups of the world who have the least access to the gospel or show the least evidence of being transformed by the gospel. Several factors to consider would be the evangelical percentage of a people group, the number of evangelical churches in a region, the gospel materials available in a language, and the progress of any known church planting movements. For points of reference, we would point churches towards NAMB’s Send Cities (33) and the IMB’s research on unreached people groups (GSEC map) or the Joshua Project.

Q: “What kind of mission projects will the First Steps Fund support?”

A: “The goal of our association is to support our churches, not replace them. This fund is designed to enable LBA churches to pursue potential mission partnerships for advancing the gospel in hard, dark places. If a church wants to partner with a new church plant in Las Vegas or develop a long-term partnership with an IMB worker serving an unreached people group, the First Steps Fund may be used to send some of their leaders to visit that field worker or bring that worker to visit their church.”

Q: “What kind of mission projects would the First Steps Fund not support?”

A: “This fund is designed to push our churches into new places and to new people groups, emphasizing those with little to no gospel access. It is not intended to sponsor pre-existing mission work. If a church takes regular mission trips to Los Angeles or Brazil, the First Steps Fund would not be used to send a new team member on that trip next year.”

Q: “Who can apply for the First Steps Fund?”

A: “Because our goal is to foster long-term partnerships for LBA churches, the application for the First Steps Fund must be submitted or recommended by the pastor responsible for missions in that church. The application will ask for details on the partner or people group to be engaged, as well as the church’s potential plan for ongoing partnership. The First Steps Fund application form will be made available to all LBA churches and any approved funds will be directed to that church for use as requested.”

Q: “Is the First Steps Fund the same as SendMe?”

A: “No. We want to steward well the resources we have been given. Rather than duplicating an existing program, the First Steps Fund is designed to act independently or to supplement the SendMe program, as pastors return from a SendMe trip and want to now involve their congregations in a long-term mission partnership.”

Application for the First Steps Fund through the Lexington Baptist Association

Please complete and return to:

Lexington Baptist Association
Attn: First Steps Committee
P.O. Box 85422
Lexington, SC 29073

Or send by email to:

lba@mylba.org
Subject: First Steps Fund Application

Applicant Information

Name: _____
Title or Position: _____
Home Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
LBA Church Information:
Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Missions Pastor/Leader: _____

Potential Mission Partnership

Name: _____
Location: _____
UPG or SendCity: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

First Steps Fund Planning

Proposed Dates: _____
Estimated Cost: _____ Amount Requested: _____
Intended Use: _____

Ongoing Partnership Plan: _____

Pastoral Endorsement

“I know and recommend this applicant to explore a potential mission partnership for our church using the First Steps Fund. Our church will prayerfully engage in this plan and we will facilitate the use of these funds as described in this document.”

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(pastor over missions)