

## GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

*The Chester County Community Foundation connects people who care with causes that matter, so their philanthropy makes a difference now and forever.*

- The Community Foundation is a collection of Funds: Field of Interest Funds + Donor Advised Funds.
- All Community Foundation Funds accept this grant application form.

**Proposals submitted by nonprofits will be considered for 2 types of grants:**

### 1) FIELD OF INTEREST & DONOR ADVISED FUNDS

- ◇ Proposals received **any time throughout the year** are eligible for funding consideration from the Foundation's Field of Interest Funds & Donor Advised Funds.
- ◇ Grant **awards** typically range from **\$500 - \$7,500**.
- ◇ Grant decisions are made **intermittently** throughout the year, as Fund Advisors desire.
- ◇ Proposals are **electronically shared** with Fund Advisors to assist them in making grant decisions.
- ◇ **General operating** grants are encouraged. Nonprofits should be specific about their mission, goals, and measurable outcomes.
- ◇ Grants **focus on Chester County** causes and issues, but **are not limited** to Chester County.
- ◇ Grants may be made to charitable nonprofits working in **all fields of interest** including arts, culture and humanities; education; community improvement; environment; religion; health; and human services.

### 2) FUND FOR CHESTER COUNTY CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE

- ◇ The goal of the Community Foundation's capacity building grantmaking is to **strengthen the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations serving the Chester County region**.
- ◇ Capacity building proposals received by **September 15** annually will be eligible for this special grant initiative.
- ◇ Capacity building projects should strengthen a nonprofit, in areas including:
  - Mission, Vision & Strategy
  - Governance & Leadership
  - Strategic Relationships
  - Fundraising & Development
- ◇ Grant **awards** range from **\$500-\$5,000**.
- ◇ NPO's with budgets \$ 750,000 or less preferred
- ◇ Grant monies are distributed by **February**.
- ◇ Nonprofits must be **located in and serve Chester County** to receive a grant from this special initiative.

- A proposal is considered "complete" when the Chester County Community Foundation has confirmed receipt of the **Grant Proposal Summary Sheet, Narrative and Attachments**.
  - Proposals are shared electronically online with Fund Advisors and the Grants Committee.
    - The electronic form is available at [www.chescocf.org](http://www.chescocf.org).

Per IRS regulations, applicants

- must be charitable, tax exempt organizations with 501(c)(3) certification
  - cannot be individuals
- **E-mail proposals are strongly encouraged to [grants@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org)**
  - Receipt will be confirmed by e-mail.

Please contact Kevin Baffa or Beth Harper Briglia at (610) 696-8211 or [grants@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org) if you have any questions. Thank you.

# I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

**One page only.** This page will be shared electronically with Grant Committee Members & Fund Advisors.

Note: If Philanthropy Network of Greater Philadelphia's Common Grant Application is used, the Community Foundation's Summary Sheet MUST accompany application.

To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit [www.chescocf.org](http://www.chescocf.org)

Date

## Contact Information

Organization Name: VisionCorps  
Address: 244 N. Queen St., Lancaster, PA 17603

Phone: 717-393-5894  
Website: [www.visioncorps.net](http://www.visioncorps.net)  
Year Incorporated: 1926  
[egruver@visioncorps.net](mailto:egruver@visioncorps.net)

Executive Director Name: Dennis Steiner  
Executive Director E-mail:  
[dsteiner@visioncorps.net](mailto:dsteiner@visioncorps.net)  
Board of Directors Chair Name: Zach Klipa  
Primary Contact Name: Edward Gruver  
Primary Contact E-mail:

Has your nonprofit ever applied to the Community Foundation? Yes  No  Not Sure

Has your nonprofit ever received funding from the Community Foundation? Yes  No  Not Sure

Donor Advised Fund(s)  Fund for Chester County  Don't know/Not sure

## Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities  Environment/Animal Welfare  Education  
 Health  Human Services  Religion

## Organization Information:

**Geographic Area Served** (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served):

VisionCorps provides diverse Adult and Youth Services programs to Chester County clients and also serves the following Southeastern/Central Pennsylvania counties: Lancaster, Lebanon, York and Adams.

**Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served:** VisionCorps serves a segment of society that is severely underserved: the blind and vision impaired individuals. The unemployment rate for vision impaired adults is a staggering 70 percent. That is a bleak outlook for those with vision problems, including children who will one day be entering the workforce. VisionCorps provides specialized services to teach vision impaired adults and youths the life skills they need to be independent and confident.

Since 2013, VisionCorps' impact on Chester County youths and adults has been significant. In 2013, VisionCorps specialists provided 339 hours of client service in Chester County. That number rose to 511 in 2014 and more than doubled in 2015 to 1,234. In 2016, VisionCorps' client hours provided to Chester County residents rose to 1,293. In 2017, that number increased again, this time to 1,577.

Over the past five years, VisionCorps' number of client hours provided in Chester County has more than quadrupled, a clear indication of the positive impact our specialists have on the community. VisionCorps specialists bring positive energy to every situation, engaging clients of all ages in personalized care and thus enriching their lives.

VisionCorps' number of Chester County clients served has likewise increased. In 2013, VisionCorps' client list in Chester County numbered 27 individuals. Just two years later that total nearly doubled to 50.

2017, the client list increased for the fourth straight year, this time to 82. In five short years, VisionCorps' number of clients in Chester County has more than tripled.

Even more impactful than the statistical data of Chester County clients served by VisionCorps are the testimonials received by our clients.

"The people at VisionCorps have been just what I needed," says Dennis, a retirement-age client in Chester County. "My reason for reaching out (to VisionCorps) was to find out what I don't know. VisionCorps has been very empathetic and understanding, very communicative."

Along with working with adults, VisionCorps specialists also reach out to preschools, child care and early education centers in Chester County and Southeastern Pennsylvania to provide free vision screenings for children in preschool settings. The free vision screenings are quick and non-invasive and help prevent vision impairment in children. If a possible eye problem is detected during the screenings, a referral is made for the child to see an eye doctor. Last year, VisionCorps provided free vision screenings for 689 children in Chester County, and 9 percent of those were referred to an eye doctor for an eye exam.

Jonathan, a father of a VisionCorps child client, speaks to the specialized care his daughter has received.

"VisionCorps has been with Leiana all along, since she was three months old. With early intervention and schooling that started at age three, Leiana has developed and grown tremendously."

Jenny, a mother of boys who are VisionCorps youth clients, has also seen positive results in her children.

"VisionCorps has been with us all along," she said. "The boys are seen weekly by VisionCorps staff and I really don't know what we would do without them."

**Mission:** VisionCorps' mission is empowering individuals with vision loss to attain independence.

**Proposal Summary:** For more than 91 years, Vision has been providing hope for individuals with vision loss. VisionCorps is not a government agency and relies on financial support from individuals and businesses. We are also seeking additional financial support from other donors to help us continue to provide a positive impact on children, adults and families.

Early childhood is a crucial time for the development of good vision. As children develop in the first years of life so does their vision. Eighty percent of learning in a child's first 12 years is through their eyes. To aid early childhood development, VisionCorps' KidSight program provides free vision screenings every year for more than 8,000 pre-kindergarten children, with nearly 10 percent of them being in Chester County.

Vision is precious. It's difficult to imagine living in a world designed for people with sight. Yet with the right training, tools and technology, children and adults who are blind or visually impaired can meet challenges with confidence. VisionCorps can help remove barriers to education, employment, information and independence. The generosity of grant makers will help support services and programs that are vital to meeting the unmet needs of area residents.

VisionCorps' programs include preventive service and education, vision rehabilitation training, youth enrichment activities, employment programs, grants and educational scholarships. These programs help provide a person who is blind or visually impaired with a great start to a brighter future.



## II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

*Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.*

### 1. Organization's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

Since 1926, VisionCorps has worked to instill independence in daily living skills in the blind and vision impaired, a segment of our society that is severely underserved. One of VisionCorps' goals is to eradicate unemployment for blind and vision impaired adults. VisionCorps provides services for vulnerable and at-risk adults through our Adult Services programs which stress education and rehabilitation.

VisionCorps specialists seek to build the self-esteem and work skills of the disabled and disadvantaged so that they are able to move into the workforce. Through our education and rehabilitation programs, VisionCorps clients have become independent and productive members of their communities. VisionCorps also provides employment at our facilities. In so doing, VisionCorps works to break the cycle of unemployment for blind or vision impaired adults.

Rehabilitation and Youth Services provide the tools and training and empower individuals who are blind or vision impaired to attain independence. The Enterprise Group focuses on employing more than 100 people who are blind in manufacturing, food processing and administrative services.

If a person is experiencing vision loss or impairment they need not go through the process alone. VisionCorps serves thousands of individuals who are blind or vision impaired through rehabilitation services. Current services include Adult Services, Youth Services and Prevention.

#### **Adult Services**

VisionCorps offers a wide variety of services to individuals with vision loss or impairment. Our specialists provide comprehensive rehabilitation programming to Chester County and Southeastern Pennsylvania clients. VisionCorps provides instruction in activities of daily living and support groups as well as safe and independent travel instruction, to enable individuals to live independently and maintain quality of life.

Adult Services include:

#### **Case Management**

Social Workers meet with Chester County individuals to assess, plan and coordinate services available through VisionCorps or community organizations.

#### **Low Vision Occupational Therapy**

Therapists provide individuals with the training and skills to remain independent in their daily living activities, such as safe kitchen skills, home maintenance and/or using assistive technology.

#### **Orientation and Mobility**

Orientation and Mobility Specialists provide individuals with skills to travel independently and safely.

#### **Support**

Adjustment to vision loss monthly events, peer-to-peer mentoring and friendly visitor services are available to Chester County individuals and families.

## ***Youth Services***

VisionCorps' Youth Services Department provides educational opportunities to children with vision loss and their families. Our Youth Enrichment Program provides recreational, socialization and other daily living activities to achieve independence.

## ***Prevention***

Prevention Services include preschool vision screenings, KidSight, as well as adult vision screenings.

## **2. Funding request**

A \$1,500 grant provides 150 free vision screenings for Chester County children through VisionCorps' KidSight Program. A \$5,000 grant helps provide Orientation and Mobility services. A \$10,000 grant will help underwrite VisionCorps' Case Management/Specialized Services.

### **• Description of key initiatives**

VisionCorps provides a wide variety of services to individuals in Chester County and Southeastern Pennsylvania with vision loss. VisionCorps' team provides comprehensive rehabilitation programming to numerous individuals every year. VisionCorps offers instruction in activities of daily living and support groups, as well as safe and independent travel instruction, to enable individuals to live independently and maintain quality of life. VisionCorps offers unique and diverse services to children, adults and families through KidSight, Case Orientation & Mobility and Case Management.

### **• Specific needs and issues to be addressed**

Low vision affects each person differently and requires individualized services and solutions. VisionCorps' rehabilitative services can restore functioning following vision loss, allowing clients of our Adult Services programs to live independently and have quality of life. As part of VisionCorps' comprehensive approach, clients are offered services such as Case Management and Orientation and Mobility services in the client's homes and in the community based on individual need.

Regarding VisionCorps' Youth Services Programs, 10 percent of preschoolers have a vision problem. VisionCorps' KidSight screenings are designed to detect conditions such as myopia, commonly known as near-sightedness (blurred distance vision), hyperopia or far-sightedness (blurred near vision), astigmatism (details may look blurred or distorted) and amblyopia (a condition in children where the vision is reduced because the eye and brain are not working together properly). Amblyopia is the most common cause of visual impairment in children and can cause permanently decreased vision if not properly treated in early childhood.

Because younger children cannot always verbalize when they are having difficulty seeing, VisionCorps' KidSight screenings play a vital role in our community and in the lives of children.

### **• Organizational impact if initiative is undertaken**

#### **• How will this grant enhance your organization's capacity?**

With an increasing demand for Chester County client services, VisionCorps seeks to increase its capacity to meet the demand. Grants of \$1,500, \$5,000 or \$10,000 will help offset VisionCorps' \$119,907 expenses in Chester County and increase our capacity to help adults, children and families.

- **How will this increase in organizational capacity be measured?**

VisionCorps' capacity to provide Adult and Youth Services to clients in Chester County and Southeastern Pennsylvania is measured by the increasing number of individuals our specialists see. A grant will help VisionCorps to continue to provide these crucial services.

- **Activities to implement the initiative. Please include a description of the expected activities; timeline and costs to implement the initiative. If external consulting services are required, include the anticipated costs and expertise of the consultants to be hired.**

The emotional adjustment to losing vision can sometimes be the most difficult part of the process. VisionCorps provides a number of opportunities for clients in Chester County and Southeastern Pennsylvania clients to talk to others who are in, or have been in, similar situations. Knowing they are not alone in experiencing vision loss and that there are others who have overcome similar challenges can be the first step in regaining one's independence. VisionCorps' staff help to facilitate a variety of educational and support groups where individuals receive a forum to share feelings, experiences and information among others experiencing vision loss. VisionCorps' one-on-one support is provided by clients who have already had vision loss. New clients coping with vision loss are paired with an experienced client to discuss experiences and feelings associated with vision impairment.

A \$1,500 grant for Youth Services enables VisionCorps Prevention Specialists to continue to provide free vision screenings for children in Chester County and Southeastern Pennsylvania in order to detect potential eye problems. Last year VisionCorps provided free screenings for nearly 700 children in Chester County. Nine percent of children screened were detected to have an eye problem sufficient enough to warrant referral to an eye doctor's office.

Costs to implement VisionCorps' KidSight Program in Chester County are as follows:

Salaries, Taxes & Benefits - \$9,806.64  
Program Expenses - \$569.33  
Building & Allocated - \$395.79  
Admin Allocations – \$1,059.61  
Total Expense - \$11,831.36

A \$5,000 grant helps fund or Orientation and Mobility programs. Low vision does not mean that Chester County clients have to give up your ability to get around. O&M Specialists enable Chester County individuals with vision loss to be independent by teaching them the skills and concepts to travel safely and with confidence. Our O&M Specialists work one-on-one to evaluate and set goals that match each individual's specific needs which can take place in a variety of settings. Skills learned can include human guide, how to use a white cane, safely crossing streets, how to use public transit and more.

VisionCorps' cost to implement Orientation and Mobility program in Chester County:

Salaries, Taxes & Benefits - \$15,396.79  
Program Expenses - \$893.87  
Building & Allocated - \$621.40  
Admin Allocations – \$1,663.62  
Total Expense - \$18,575.69

A \$10,000 grant helps underwrite VisionCorps' Case Management program in Chester County and Southeastern Pennsylvania. Case Management offers a full range of inclusive services to Chester County clients and it all begins with case management. A member of our team meets with every new client in order to assess and determine vision-related goals. Services are provided for each client on an individual basis and family members are invited to participate. VisionCorps' case managers facilitate adjustment to blindness education and peer-to-peer support groups for clients who are struggling to adjust with their visual impairment. Other services include information and referral to local and national services available, client and disability advocacy, and individual and groups counseling.

Salaries, Taxes & Benefits - \$22,192.40  
Program Expenses - \$1,288.40  
Building & Allocated - \$895.67  
Admin Allocations – \$2,397.89  
Total Expense - \$26,774.36

### **Why it is important to fund this now**

VisionCorps' positive impact on Chester County and Southeastern Pennsylvania grows year-by-year; our client hours provided in Chester County have more than quadrupled over the past five years. Last year, VisionCorps specialists provided 1,577 client hours and visited nearly 40 Chester County day cares, preschools, early learning centers and children's academies.

As we continue to see an increase in the need for financial assistance, additional support is needed to close the gap between the assistance we grant and the contributions we raise. VisionCorps does not receive government funding. Still, we provide support for a variety of needs that otherwise would go unmet. It is important no Chester County client is turned away from VisionCorps for financial reasons.

### **3. How impact and results will be demonstrated**

VisionCorps' positive impact on the community is found in the increasing number of adults, children and families served over the years. In Chester County the number has risen from 339 five years ago to 1,577 last year. VisionCorps' positive impact among its clients can be found in the following testimonials:

*"When glaucoma took my sight I was filled with fear. All I did was ask, 'What am I to do? 'What about my family?' Thankfully, VisionCorps had answers for all my questions. I really don't know how my family and I would have managed without their help."*

*"Excellent program. We appreciate being able to offer this to our families."*

*"Thank you for screening at preschools!"*

Advances in technology are opening up a new world of opportunity for people who are blind or visually impaired. VisionCorps' training, guidance and support are vital resources for children and adults in our community who are dealing with the challenges of blindness and vision impairment.

### III. ATTACHMENTS

*E-mail or mail this support information*

1. Copy of 501 (c) (3) federal tax-exempt letter
2. List of Board of Directors, with their affiliations
3. Most recent annual report and financial statement, audited if available
4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year and current fiscal year to date
5. If capacity building initiative, itemized budget (including external consultant's proposal, if applicable)
6. Current strategic plan. If your nonprofit does not have a current strategic plan, explain why.

*If Philanthropy Network of Greater Philadelphia's Common Grant Application is used, the Community Foundation's Summary Sheet MUST accompany application. Available at [www.chescocf.org](http://www.chescocf.org)*

E-mail completed proposals to [grants@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org)

Please contact Kevin Baffa or Beth Harper Briglia at (610) 696-8211 or [grants@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org) if you have any questions. Thank you.

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COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
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**CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT PROPOSALS**

**“Capacity building is whatever is needed to bring a nonprofit to the next level of operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational maturity, in order to more effectively and efficiently fulfill its mission.”** *National Council of Nonprofits*

**Capacity building initiatives may include (but are not limited to) projects which address:**

- **MISSION, VISION & STRATEGY:** Organizational Assessment; Strategic & Business Planning
- **GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP:** Board Development; Executive Transition/Succession Planning; Leadership Development; Staff Training & Professional Development
- **STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS:** Coalition Building; Collaboration; Mergers & Acquisitions; Strategic Restructuring
- **DEVELOPMENT:** Donor Identification, Cultivation, Development & Stewardship; Development Campaigns (Annual, Capital, Planned Giving, Major Gifts); Earned Income Development; Social Enterprise Feasibility & Development; Marketing, Branding & Communications
- **OPERATIONS:** Business Continuity Planning; Financial Management; Human Resources; Volunteer Management; Industry Certification; Risk Management; Technology Improvements

**Capacity Building Grants have been used to fund the following initiatives:**

- **Strategic Analysis, Plan development and implementation**
- **Technology enhancements, including donor tracking and development software**
- **Website Design & Development**
- **Marketing Materials**
- **Development of Financial management and control systems**

**Please Note:** @99% of the grants issued by the Community Foundation are through the generosity of the Fund Advisors who created donor advised funds. @\$2+ million is granted annually to nonprofits in Chester County and beyond.

The Community Foundation has a small pool of unrestricted funding to support capacity building initiatives. A separate grant proposal (using the same application format) must be submitted to be considered for a capacity building grant.

To inform donors of grant proposals that have been received by the Foundation, the grant proposal cover sheet and narrative are posted on the Community Foundation’s website with a link to the nonprofit’s website. Quarterly, our donors are mailed a written list of all grant applications received, and directed to the grant proposal webpage so they can review active grant proposals. Community Foundation staff also discuss active grant proposals during donor meetings, when donors are interested in the causes served by the nonprofit.

E-mail completed proposals to [grants@chescofc.org](mailto:grants@chescofc.org)

Please contact Kevin Baffa or Beth Harper Briglia at (610) 696-8211 or [grants@chescofc.org](mailto:grants@chescofc.org) if you have any questions. Thank you.

