

# 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 09/14/2018**

## Contact Information

Organization Name: RSVP

Executive Director Name: Michele Moll

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Year Incorporated: 1980

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Board of Directors Chair Name: Robert Leib

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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): NA

**Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served:** RSVP provides direct services annually to 11,000 vulnerable individuals in the Greater Philadelphia area through its Volunteer Impact Programs; and places volunteers in 150 nonprofit agencies to enhance their capacity and service delivery. In Chester County, RSVP's Volunteer Impact programs have directly served 1,000+ residents this past year, including disadvantaged preschool students and their families; k-4 elementary school students with reading difficulties; and disadvantaged secondary school students to improve their math capability and STEM career awareness. RSVP has also provided volunteers to improve the capacity and service delivery of nine Chester County nonprofit agencies.

**Mission:** RSVP empowers volunteers to help meet critical human needs in Greater Philadelphia through its Volunteer Impact Programs assisting vulnerable populations and by providing volunteers to other nonprofit agencies.

**Proposal Summary:** RSVP is requesting a \$5,000 general operating grant to expand our programs and services in Chester County, including our Family Literacy Program (FLP), which broadens the reading exposure and involvement of disadvantaged preschoolers and their families; our America Reads Program, which provides one-on-one reading tutors for elementary school students having difficulty so that they read on grade level by 4<sup>th</sup> grade; our My Free Tutor (MFT) Program, which provides individualized virtual math tutoring program and STEM career awareness presentations for disadvantaged secondary school students and low-income veterans; Volunteer Executive Consultants (VEC) program, which provides capacity building assistance to small and mid-sized nonprofits through

consultations and management assistance workshops; and community links which places volunteers in nonprofit agencies to enhance their capacity and service delivery.

**If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:**

\_\_\_ Mission, Vision & Strategy    \_\_\_ Governance & Leadership    \_\_\_ Strategic Relationships  
\_\_\_ Fundraising & Development    \_\_\_ Technology    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Annual Budget** \$849,079 \_\_\_\_\_ 12.7 \_\_\_\_\_ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff  
\_\_\_\_\_ 83 \_\_\_\_\_ % of budget for program expenses    \_\_\_\_\_ 24 \_\_\_\_\_ # of Board Volunteers  
\_\_\_\_\_ 9 \_\_\_\_\_ % of budget for administrative expenses    \_\_\_\_\_ 1200 \_\_\_\_\_ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers  
\_\_\_\_\_ 8 \_\_\_\_\_ % of budget for fundraising expenses    \_\_\_\_\_ 83,900 \_\_\_\_\_ # of Volunteer Hours  
*100 % total*

**Top 3-5 funding sources:**

**Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)**  
**United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey**  
**Pew Charitable Trusts**  
**Janssen Pharmaceuticals**  
**Patricia Kind Family Foundation**

**Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation:** \$5,000 \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Organizational Information

**Agency Mission:** To empower volunteers to help meet critical human needs in Greater Philadelphia through its Volunteer Impact Programs which provide direct services to 11,000 vulnerable individuals as well as volunteer capacity building support to other nonprofit agencies. **History and**

**Description:** RSVP was founded in 1973 as part of the Older Americans Act to provide meaningful activity to senior volunteers in Montgomery County by placing them in nonprofit agencies. In 1980 RSVP became self-sponsored and incorporated as a 501(c) (3) with its own Board of Directors and the capability to develop its own programming. Beginning with Volunteer Executive Consultants in 1983, RSVP went on to develop programs assisting vulnerable populations including disadvantaged preschool students and their families, at-risk children and youth, those with low literacy and STEM skills, low-income frail elderly, and seniors with issues regarding health insurance and public benefits. Over the years, five of these programs received national recognition from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the Points of Light Foundation, and Proliteracy. *In the past three years RSVP expanded two programs into Philadelphia and received two CNCS grants to engage volunteers in Delaware and Chester Counties with a focus in Chester County on education, food services, and capacity building.*

## 2. Funding Request

We are requesting a \$5,000 grant to expand the following programs & services in Chester County.

### **FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM (FLP)**

RSVP developed FLP in 1992 with a start-up grant from the Knight Foundation to help break the cycle of illiteracy. In 1995 FLP began its 23 year collaboration with Montgomery County Head Start and in 2016 with Children's Village in Philadelphia by implementing its multifaceted approach to broadening the reading exposure and involvement of disadvantaged preschoolers and their families, based on key elements in the research most closely correlate with the reading success: parents reading aloud with their young children and the availability of children's books in the home. Through these collaborations FLP recruits, trains, and places volunteer readers in classrooms; obtains new gift books six times a year for each of the 669 participating students with accompanying reading tips for their parents; and conducts parent workshops on the importance of reading to their child's future and how to help their child 's reading at home. The collaboration also includes a home/ school reading incentive program called The Lucky Readers Club. Lucky is a stuffed Dalmatian mascot in each classroom who "loves to read" and who is sent home with children on a rotating basis in special tote bags along with books from the class library and a journal. During these visits students and their parents and siblings read to Lucky and record their activities in the journals which are returned to the classroom and shared. At the end of each school year, Montgomery County Head Start & Children's Village parents complete FLP evaluative questionnaires which are entered into Survey Monkey for analysis. Results from June 2018 are as follows: 75% of parents said their child looks at, "reads" books, or asks to be read to more than in September; 83% said they better understand the importance of reading to their child's future; 81% said they better understand how to help their child improve at home; 80% said they are reading more to their child (averaging 4.3 books a week); and 64% said other children in the family are more interested in reading than before. **FLP in Chester County:** This year FLP further expanded by partnering with Kennett Square's Kindergarten Readiness Program through which 21 daycare & family centers serve low-income, primarily Spanish-speaking families whose children do not attend preschool and who enter kindergarten unprepared. FLP provides the literacy component of the program, conducting 10 family workshops, as well as staff trainings about the Lucky Readers Club. The family workshops attended by 500 children, parents, & siblings this year include fun literacy activities (e.g., writing letters in shaving cream); modeling parent/child reading( including those who don't speak English by looking at the pictures to tell the story); and books, toy Luckys, and reading tips in special tote bags to take home.**2018 outcomes:** 85% of Kennett Square's Kindergarten Readiness parents said this was their first family workshop; 93% said the workshop was very helpful; 96% said that as a result they would read more to their child; and 92% said they were better prepared to help their child at home. FLP has

also signed an agreement with the Chester County Intermediate Unit to begin implementing the program in Chester County Head Start classrooms. **2019 Plan:** Continue partnership with Kennett Square's Kindergarten Readiness Program. Continue to expand FLP in Chester County Head Starts where, to date, FLVP has placed seven volunteer readers in Coatesville, Kennett Square, Phoenixville, West Chester, and Downingtown Head Start classrooms where they read with children individually, in small groups, and with the class as a whole. Conduct parent reading aloud workshops at each of the seven Chester County Head Start sites. Identify additional funding sources to purchase Lucky Readers Club books and materials for all Chester County Head Start classrooms.

### **AMERICA READS**

**History & Description:** America Reads, established in 1996, recruits, screens, and trains volunteers to provide individualized, weekly reading tutoring to young elementary school students having difficulty so that they read on grade level by 4<sup>th</sup> grade. These are children who, without intervention, can fall further and further behind caught in a self-perpetuating cycle of underperformance and low self-esteem. We know from research that children who are not reading at grade level by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are likely not to catch up, resulting in deficits that will compromise their future learning and increase their risk of dropping out of school. America Read's volunteers are trained to create a nurturing environment in which students feel comfortable taking the risks needed to succeed. This past year, 165 America Reads tutors spent 9,065 hours working with 1,900+ students in 61 Montgomery, Delaware, and Chester County elementary schools. **June 2018 Outcomes:** 108 teachers completed end-of-year assessments of those students who worked with America Reads volunteers for at least six sessions. Results from June 2018 are that 86% of students improved their reading comprehension and fluency; 82% improved their reading confidence; and 73% were reading at grade level or making progress towards reading at grade level. **America Reads in Chester County:** This past year 11 trained volunteers tutored 153 students at Clan, New Garden, Phoenixville ELA, Mary D. Lang, and Barkley elementary schools. Four new tutors are about to be placed at Phoenixville ELA, Greenwood, Schuylkill, and Kennett Square elementary schools. **2019 plans:** Continue recruiting, screening, training, and placing additional volunteer tutors in Chester County elementary schools. As with all of our educational programs, volunteers must have criminal background checks and child abuse clearances, and, for those not living in the area for 10 years, FBI fingerprint checks.

### **RSVP'S MY FREE TUTOR (MFT)**

**History & Description:** MFT, developed in 2013, addresses the STEM educational and occupational gap between disadvantaged secondary students and veterans and their more advantaged peers by providing weekly individualized virtual math tutoring through MFT's interactive web application ([myfreetutor.org](http://myfreetutor.org)) and by scheduling interactive STEM career presentations to groups of students throughout Greater Philadelphia. This past year trained volunteers tutored 34 disadvantaged secondary students in Philadelphia and the *College Access Center at Widener University (which several Kennett Consolidated students attended) until it closed this year*, and 28 low-income, first generation college-bound veterans through Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) at the University of Pennsylvania. June 2018 outcomes: Math teachers reported that 80% of students improved their math ability, with 30% making significant improvement and 50% some improvement. **Virtual tutoring in Chester County:** Currently we are providing only STEM career presentations in Chester County, although virtual tutoring is available to all secondary schools and programs serving disadvantaged students or veterans. We are currently talking to Migrant Education in West Chester and The Garage in Kennett Square about providing both tutoring and STEM talks this coming year.

**STEM presentations in Chester County:** This past year STEM career presenters have held informative, interactive sessions about their careers, the paths they took to get there, and obstacles they faced along the way to 310 students at Kennett, Coatesville and West Chester East High Schools and at the annual Chester County Futures Career Expo. **2018 Outcomes** from student evaluations at the end of each session are that 60% said their knowledge increased as a result of the presentation. 35% said they wanted to learn more about the field that was presented. **2019 plans:** Continue recruiting,

screening, and training additional tutors and presenters as needed. Begin scheduling STEM presentations at The Garage in October and continue talks with Migrant Education. Continue to provide STEM presentations to at Kennett, Coatesville, and West Chester East High Schools; Chester County Futures and additional interested schools and programs.

### **NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING**

**Volunteer Executive Consultants (VEC)** utilizes the skills and expertise of volunteers to provide team consultations and management assistance workshops to small and mid-size nonprofits otherwise unable to afford consultative services. This past year, VEC volunteers provided short or long-term team consultations to 45 agencies in greater Philadelphia and management assistance workshops for 300 nonprofit representatives to help them fulfill their missions. 81% of the agencies who completed the consultative process improved their organizational capacity.

**Community Links:** In addition to these programs, RSVP provides volunteer support for area nonprofits, including 800+volunteer hours at Chester County: Chester County Meals on Wheels; Chester County OIC; The Clinic; Phoenixville Hospital; and Southeastern Veteran Center.

**Why we are requesting a grant now:** Each of these programs is currently expanding its impact in Chester County and needs funding to do so in a fiscally responsible way.

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

RSVP has specific performance measures for each program, which were reviewed and refined in 2013 through an organizational effectiveness grant from The Philadelphia Foundation. Each program has a logic model with well-defined goals. Performance measures in the form of questionnaires or interviews evaluate client progress toward those goals. For instance, America Reads end-of-year questionnaires ask teachers to assess students' improvement in reading fluency and comprehension as well as the number of students reading on or making progress toward reading on grade level.

