

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

Contact Information

Organization Name:
Youth Community Forward DBA YCF
Address:
PO Box 53, Kennett Square, PA 19348
Phone: (610) 793-4229
(610) 331-2201
Website: under development
Year Incorporated: 2013

Date: 2/28/19
Executive Director Name:
Karen D'Agusto (Board Chair)
Executive Director Email:
kdagusto@aol.com
Board of Directors Chair Name:
Karen D'Agusto
Primary Contact Name:
Susan Singer
Primary Contact Email:
ssinger120@mail.com

Has your nonprofit ever applied to the Community Foundation? Yes ___ No X Not Sure ___
Has your nonprofit ever received funding from the Community Foundation? Yes ___ No X 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 X Education
X Health X Human Services ___ Religion

Organization Information:

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

All of Chester County with an emphasis on southern Chester County, Coatesville and Phoenixville.

Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served:

All residents with a main focus on immigrants. We know we have reached more than 3,000 people through our educational initiatives and most likely thousands more through collaborations with churches, local organizations and events.

Mission: To 1) build youth leaders by providing educational and life skill programs in order to make positive and lasting changes in the lives of children and teens; 2) to create community partnerships that enlist human and fiscal resources to enhance the lives of Chester County residents; and 3) to advocate for the Rights of Chester County residents regardless of immigration status.

Proposal Summary: Our request is for general operating funding to assist local impoverished immigrant and migrant families with living expenses and the legal costs associated with seeking lawful immigration status in the United States, including asylum, permanent residency and US citizenship. Such costs may also include the cost of psychological testing often required of asylum seekers.

Annual Budget \$10,500 ___ 0 ___ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
___ 90 ___ % of budget for program expenses ___ 8 ___ # of Board Volunteers
___ 5 ___ % of budget for administrative expenses ___ 50 ___ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
___ 5 ___ % of budget for fundraising expenses ___ 500 ___ # of Volunteer Hours
100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources: Individual donations; Donations from religious organizations, in particular the Unitarian Church of West Chester; Kennett Run Charities.

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 2,500.00

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

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

Youth Community Forward (hereafter YCF) was originally founded as a collaboration with the Chester County 4-H Program, to provide educational programming and summer camps for the children of immigrant and migrant workers. In January 2018 YCF expanded its focus to include helping immigrants to understand their legal rights regarding Immigration and Customs Enforcement, citizenship, detention, and deportation.

We also supplement the work of local community organizations and faith-based communities in assisting local impoverished immigrant and migrant families with living expenses and the legal costs of seeking lawful immigration status in the United States including asylum, permanent residence and citizenship. Such costs could also include psychological testing which may be required of asylum seekers. Immigration law is lengthy and complicated, and navigating it is costly. There is a great need for assistance with immigration, citizenship and asylum-related legal fees here in Chester County, and therefore that is a funding priority for YCF.

Recent accomplishments include:

- developing a 15-page "Know Your Rights" booklet in English and Spanish along with wallet-sized "Know Your Rights" cards. We have printed and distributed over 1,000 of these documents throughout communities in southern Chester County;
- sponsoring a Citizenship Application Workshop with a local immigration attorney to assist people in completing their applications;
- participating in local festivals to distribute information and educate the community; and
- assisting families whose spouses were detained and deported, including helping one mother and her children return to their country of origin to reunite with her husband, who had been deported.

YCF acts as a bridge in the community, connecting individuals and families with organizations that can help; we also collaborate with and support groups that serve immigrants. While a few organizations offer classes on citizenship, YCF's Citizenship Application Workshops with local immigration attorneys are somewhat unique. YCF also acts as a bridge in connecting organizations in the community who wish to collaborate on supporting the immigrant community. For example, we worked with a religious organization that provides limited funds to subsidize the cost of legal fees, housing and living expenses. YCF provided additional funding to supplement the funding the organization could provide. We also volunteer for organizations serving the immigrant community.

YCF relies on its collaborations throughout the community to help us understand and respond to needs as they emerge. For example, a YCF board member acts as an affiliate and liaison with ACOLA, the Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs, a branch of the Kennett Square Borough Council. The YCF liaison attends monthly meetings, provides volunteers when needed and offers support.

2. **Funding request**

Our request is for general operating funding to support the following initiatives:

- Continue to educate the immigrant community regarding their legal rights by providing up to date information on immigration and removal (deportation) operations in collaboration with attorneys.

- To support the individuals and families while they go through the process of applying for legal immigration status, visa and citizenship applications, and assist with expenses related to the asylum process.
- To support families who have already experienced a deportation.
- To support legal residents towards a path to citizenship.

Grant funds would be used for attorney fees, including completing visa and citizenship applications; psychological testing, transportation and interpreter fees; expenses pertaining to relocation to the country of origin for those who have to be reunited with family who have been deported; and passport fees and travel expenses, for children born in the US but who must return with their parents to their country of origin.

- **Specific needs and issues to be addressed** - As a result of the immigration enforcement policies that have been enforced without discretion for the last several years there are multiple crises occurring throughout Chester County, many in our own backyards. A few get published throughout the media but most do not. Here are just a few of their stories:
 - A young family had been living in Chester County for a number of years. As they were undocumented, they had no papers and could not take advantage of most public services, but they were getting by. Life was so much better here than where they came from, where they were being persecuted. The husband/father had a steady job, and the mother did babysitting. They were on a family outing and were stopped by the police for what was most likely an illegal traffic stop. When the father, the driver, had no papers, the police contacted Immigration and Enforcement (ICE). They picked the father up and left the family stranded on the side of the highway during the night. He spent months in detention, and was then deported, leaving the family in even worse poverty than when he was here. After months of living here on their own, YCF and other individuals and organizations raised enough money to reunite the family back to their country of origin, where they now live in a home with no plumbing or running water. There is no work. The husband tried to return to the US as he is desperate to support his family. He was caught and placed in federal prison for months before being deported again. Returning to the US without permission after being deported is a federal crime and this man may never be allowed now to return legally to the United States.
 - A family had been living in the county for decades. The wife and all of the children were born here in the US. The husband/father was undocumented. Both parents worked and had been able to provide for their family; one child was starting college and one was on the way. They decided it was time for the husband/father to apply for legal status with the hope of then obtaining citizenship. They went to their immigration interview and after the interview was over, the husband/father was immediately detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and later deported due to the current administration's unwillingness to exercise discretion even in humanitarian situations. The family is now living on the edge; the mother is working part-time, and relying on friends and some public assistance to aid in their meager existence. The children are separated from their wonderful and loving father, and their college dreams are in jeopardy. The husband/father is back in his country of origin and cannot find meaningful work.
 - Another concern are the “Dreamers.” There are more than 3,000 “Dreamers” or DACA recipients (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) living here in Chester County. They are physician assistants, nurses, paralegals, veterans, and more. In the healthcare field, they fill a particular void, by being bilingual and working in underserved rural areas. They are required to be exemplary citizens and have been living in limbo for decades. Some who have not been in their country of origin since they were babies have already been deported. Parents of DACA

recipients have never received any special protection under the law. Their lives are filled with uncertainty and fear, every day.

- **How will this grant enhance your organization's capacity?** This grant will supplement the assistance we are able to provide for immigrants in Chester County and will have a direct and positive impact on their lives. It would significantly enhance our ability to fulfill our mission to build community partnerships and support immigrants living in Chester County, regardless of their resident status.

For example, it costs approximately \$1,000 to retain a lawyer to start an application for a visa for a person who is a victim of a violent crime or labor trafficking; it costs \$725 in fees to US Citizenship and Immigration Services to file a citizenship application. Immigrants living with low wages find it virtually impossible to raise these funds and in most cases, an attorney is needed, making the cost even higher. A fee waiver may be granted for citizenship applications for those living below 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, but even then an attorney's assistance would still be required. YCF's participation in helping to pay for visas and citizenship applications, and especially for psychological evaluations for asylum seekers who have been victims of trauma, is critically important.

- **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.**

Grant funds would be used to continue YCF's work of educating the community by focusing on additional areas that are underserved, such as Coatesville, while continuing to work in the southern Chester County communities where we are already active. A 2019 goal is for us to provide more assistance with legal fees for immigration, citizenship and asylum seekers.

- **Why it is important to fund this now** - In spite of the wealth of this county, these individuals and families are among the most impoverished. Many are homeless and have come here with nothing, seeking a safe environment where they can live and work. For others, this is their home, where they have been living, working, and paying taxes for a very long time. They are here because life in their country of origin was unbearable. They love and appreciate this country and are grateful for the opportunities it provides.

However, immigrants in Chester County are living in fear and their existence is in jeopardy. They are afraid to go to work. Their children are afraid to go to school, for fear of coming home to an empty house. They are wary of asking for help, as they may not speak English fluently or are afraid they will be turned over to ICE. They are proud and are not seeking handouts; those who can, prefer to pay their own way. This is an urgent situation and all indications are it is only going to get worse. Assistance is urgently needed for these community members who contribute so much to our quality of life.

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

We keep detailed records about how funds, such as this grant, are used. Whenever appropriate and possible, we follow up with attorneys and community and faith-based organizations to obtain updates about the status of those who have received YCF's support, keeping in mind that for the safety of those being helped, confidentiality is an essential priority.