

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.
- 99% of the grants issued by the Community Foundation are made possible through the generosity of the Fund Advisors who created donor advised funds. \$2.2+ million is granted annually to nonprofits in Chester County and beyond.
- 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
 - Operations and Technology
 - 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.

Per IRS regulations, applicants: must be charitable, tax exempt organizations with 501(c)(3) certification and cannot be individuals

- **E-mail proposals to 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 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*

Date: June 4, 2019

Contact Information

Organization Name: The Concept School
Address: 1120 East Street Road, PO Box 54
 Westtown, PA 19395
Phone: 610-399-1135
Website: <https://www.theconceptschool.org/>
Year Incorporated: 1972
FEIN: 23-7175285

Executive Director Name: William Bennett
Executive Director E-mail:
wmbennet@conceptschool.com
Board of Directors Chair Name: Randell Spackman
Primary Contact Name: Denise Glennon
Primary Contact E-mail: denisemglennon@gmail.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
 ___ Health ___ Human Services ___ Religion

Organization Information:

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

Chester County, Delaware County, SE Pennsylvania, and New Castle County, DE (12 school districts)

Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served: The Concept School (TCS) educates students in grades 7 – 12 who have learning challenges, such as ADD/ADHD, Anxiety/Depression, and Autism. At present, the student body numbers 26: 20 high school; 6 middle school. Our students were underserved in prior educational environments. TCS student retention is 83% (2014-2019).

Mission: The mission of TCS is to transform the lives of middle and high school students who learn differently by creating a safe and intimate educational environment where every student is welcomed, accepted, and becomes their authentic self.

Our students have been bullied or faced deep anxiety in other school environments because they were considered 'different.' Typical school social interactions are difficult, if not impossible, for them. As a result, they have profound difficulties focusing in class and their educational and emotional progress tends to suffer. In the small school environment provided by TCS, our students discover that it is safe to learn, make mistakes, and be themselves. TCS's curriculum follows the Pennsylvania Academic Standards.

Proposal Summary: TCS respectfully requests a grant of \$7,500 for General Operating Expenses to fund key initiatives in our Strategic Plan (outlined on p.2). To enrich our hands-on STEAM classes, we also request \$2,500 for 3 Nikon DSLR cameras, and \$1,000 for 3 Nikon Speedlight Camera Flashes.

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is: ___ Mission, Vision & Strategy ___ Governance & Leadership
 ___ Strategic Relationships ___ Fundraising & Development ___ Technology Other: _____

Annual Budget \$1,013,277 ___ 12.5 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
 ___ 75 % of budget for program expenses ___ 10 # of Board Volunteers
 ___ 21 % of budget for administrative expenses ___ 3 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
 ___ 4 % of budget for fundraising expenses ___ 35 # of Volunteer Hours/month

100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources: Tuition, Annual Golf Outing Fund Raiser, Annual Fund

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: General Operating: \$7,500;
 STEAM Photography Project: \$2,500 and \$1,000)

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

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

History: Founded in 1972 by a group of concerned educators led by Dr. Carol Tucker (Phd. Human Development), The Concept School (TCS) is a co-educational school that provides quality education for students in grades 7 through 12 who are in need of positive and responsive options for their academic growth. We excel at creating a challenging and supportive environment for students who have difficulty focusing in class, have been bullied or faced deep anxiety in other school environments, find social interaction difficult, or for those who need a nurturing, small school environment. Most of our students have social, academic, and/or other learning disabilities which have stood in the way of their success in other schools. Students come to us with diagnoses of ADD/ADHD, Anxiety/Depression, and High Functioning Autism.

Societal Relevance and Impact of the School: TCS's mission is now more relevant to adolescents than ever before. Psychiatric diagnoses among this age population have risen at an alarming rate in the last decade, reflecting the difficulties many young people face growing up in our world. Nationally, the odds of adolescents suffering from clinical depression grew by 37 percent between 2005 and 2014, (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health). It is estimated that 3 million adolescents ages 12 to 17 have had at least one major depressive episode in the past year (NIMH).

Here in Chester County, the 2017 PAYS study reported that 33% of adolescents (in grades 6, 8, 10,12) have experienced Depression, 13% have seriously considered suicide, 10% have made a suicide plan, 6% have cut or self-harmed themselves to relieve sadness/stress, and 3% have attempted suicide. Severe learning difficulties can result not only from adolescents' emotional concerns, but also from other psychiatric challenges. Across the country, Autism diagnoses rose 15 percent from 2012 to 2014, and now 1 in 59 children have received a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) by age 8 (Center for Disease Control). ADD/ADHD is also on the rise. The percent of children 4-17 years of age ever diagnosed with ADD/ADHD rose from 7.8% in 2003 to 11.0% in 2011-12 (Center for Disease Control). In fact, many of these diagnoses co-exist with other disabilities, making individual student access to education even more difficult.

Such troubling statistics underscore the very real social and emotional obstacles our vulnerable students face in the world, and indeed in traditional school settings. Chester County high schools typically have student:teacher ratios of around 15:1 and many students with such the afore-mentioned challenges, especially the quiet ones, can slip under the radar of even the most caring teachers and leadership. At TCS, our low student teacher ratio of 4:1 ensures that our students directly receive the type of academic, social, and emotional assistance that they need and deserve. Every morning before school, TCS's community of caring teachers and staff discuss students' current challenges, and collaborate on instructional and social-emotional learning strategies. Formal faculty meetings take place once a week to discuss successes and concerns and come up with solutions as needed. When a student is struggling academically, behaviorally, or emotionally, all staff know this and work together to help the student get through the day and the challenge, and achieve his or her potential.

The relevance and exigency of TCS cannot be understated: In a world where these adolescents have been disregarded, bullied, and undervalued, our kids will not fall through the cracks at TCS. Instead, the mission of every person associated with TCS is that our kids thrive and grow to become valuable and productive citizens of the world. Several of our parents report that TCS "saves lives," and are grateful to us for the

unique and caring support their children receive here. Our student retention rate is 83%; kids come to TCS and achieve the academic and social-emotional success that eluded them elsewhere, and they stay.

Faculty and Staff: TCS's highly qualified staff have degrees in their academic subject matter, psychology, counseling, and special education. In fact, over 65% have their master's degrees (our two math teachers each have 3 master's degrees, as well as many years of engineering and business management experience). On-going professional development is a priority for TCS. Our teachers are continually trained by experts in teaching and working with troubled adolescents. For example, this spring a Chester County IU training focused on Anxiety in the classroom, conflict resolution and Autism. Earlier in the year, expert Michael Fogel shared his knowledge on social media issues and how to reduce or eliminate bullying.

Curriculum: TCS's curriculum has been designed using the Pennsylvania Academic Standards. Teachers understand that every student responds differently to instruction; therefore differentiated instruction is the norm. Teachers design multisensory lessons and approaches to individual student needs and learning styles. The curriculum is adapted throughout the school year according to student progress. TCS teachers strive to create a culturally responsive classroom. The school promotes critical thinking, social-emotional learning, and character development.

Location: TCS and its Nature Center are located on a ten acre site at the intersection of 926 and Westtown Road in beautiful Chester County, Pennsylvania.

Student Residency and Referrals: Students come from all over Chester County and nearby Delaware County, southeastern PA, as well as New Castle County, DE. Some are referred by and paid for by their school districts, who find they cannot adequately address the individual student's needs. Some make their way via school counselors, doctors, educational consultants who have heard of the success of TCS. The most rewarding referrals are friends of existing students who have shared their positive feelings about the school climate and culture of TCS.

Outcomes: As stated, our students have a wide variety of learning needs, and we differentiate instruction and approach based on these needs. This is also true for their transitions out of TCS after graduation. Our new Transitions Coordinator comes to us with years of teaching and instructional support experience, and is instrumental in organizing our students and families for their futures. Approximately 30% of students go on to college after graduation. To get these students ready for college, the teachers create an individualized college preparatory curriculum. Our Transitions Coordinator provides advice and individual counseling on the college experience. In recent years, we've had students attend the University of Delaware, Gwynedd Mercy University, Rowan University, Immaculata University, and Jefferson University. Other TCS graduates enroll in community colleges or online universities. For many of our students, the trades provide an excellent career option. One of our recent female graduates is studying HVAC at Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology. Other students enter the workforce directly from TCS; one of our recent graduates was hired by an arborist within six months of graduation, and now works with him as a tree surgeon.

2. Funding Request

Strategic Plan: TCS is very proud to have completed its first ever, professionally-facilitated Strategic Plan, "Pathway to Vitality." Over sixty stakeholders, including parents, students, all board members, all staff, alumni and community leaders, were engaged throughout the 2017-2018 school year in evaluating our past and planning for the future. Key initiatives were identified, and are described below:

- 1. Vision and Culture:** The first initiative was to define and communicate our distinctive vision and culture. TCS's intentionally relaxed, but well-defined school culture, where its students feel physically, emotionally and psychologically safe to learn and take risks, is the driving force behind the

school's success. We created and adopted new mission and vision statements aligned with this culture. During the summer of 2018, we completely updated our website, to better convey the uniqueness of our program. www.theconceptschool.com

- 2. Professional Development:** The second initiative was to invest in the development of our outstanding staff and nurture a highly engaged board of directors. As a result, this past summer we hired a full-time counselor to work with students on strengthening their social-emotional skills, a second math teacher, and a Transitions Coordinator to work with the students on post-TCS plans. Our goal is to cap our student/teacher ratio at 5:1 as we continue to grow. We added three board members to expand our expertise.
- 3. Space:** The third initiative involves better use and design of our aging building and our unique Nature Center to support dynamic and purposeful learning experiences. Over the next one to three years, we plan a complete review of our indoor space for better classroom utilization, indoor fitness, and wellness space. The school's Nature Center has incredible potential for outdoor classroom, science, and nature experiences, along with 'Therapy Garden' development for our students. Our Space Committee is actively reviewing bids and plans for this project.
- 4. Community Outreach and Engagement:** The fourth initiative is to strengthen and support our student success by elevating our story and reputation through outreach and engagement. Our updated school signage and refreshed website were the first accomplishments in this area. We plan to become more visibly involved in the local community by posting events in local free papers, radio and social media, tying into community events, and exploring the use of our Nature Center for community events.

Specific needs and issues to be addressed:

Through the four key initiatives outlined above, the Strategic Plan will strengthen TCS and enhance the development and future success of our students. While vital to the success of the school, many of these initiatives are costly. We would sincerely appreciate General Operating funds to help fund these goals. At this time, we are unable to offer scholarship funds to our students. Grant funding would help us work toward growing an endowment, and enable us to offer deserving students financial assistance to attend our school. The TCS Technology and STEAM program would be greatly enhanced by an investment in our Photography program, which provides a tactile, visual, mathematic, social, scientific, and artistic way for our students to learn and grow. The purchase of 3 Nikon DSLR cameras and related flashes would be a tremendous addition to this initiative.

Why is it important to fund this now:

Through the Strategic Plan, TCS dedicated a full year to determine its key initiatives and goals. We have accomplished several of its short term goals already. The school's momentum for positive change is attracting new students and faculty. Increasingly in our complex world, socially and academically vulnerable adolescents need a school that is a safe haven, where they can learn and grow as positive, self-confident citizens. TCS is this school, and is more relevant than ever. In order to continue this positive momentum, it is imperative that we begin tackling some of the more complicated, more expensive goals in our plan. Receiving financial support from CCCF would give us much needed funding to carry out our vision of transforming the lives of our current and future students.

How impact and results will be demonstrated:

The results will be demonstrated through further implementation of our Strategic Plan, including professional development, sustained small class size and creative improvement of the physical spaces of the school.

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

E-mail completed proposals to grants@chescocf.org

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

Chester County
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

*Connecting people who care with causes that matter,
so their legacies make a difference.*

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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 website design and development; donor tracking and development software**
- **Marketing Materials**
- **Development of Financial management and control systems**

Please note the following regarding the grant process at the Chester County Community Foundation:

Donor Advised Funds: Approximately 99% of the grants issued by the Community Foundation are through the generosity of the Fund Advisors who created donor advised funds. Approximately \$2.2 + million is granted annually to nonprofits in Chester County and beyond.

Capacity Building Grants: The Community Foundation has a 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. Periodically, 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

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