

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date: May 20, 2019

**Contact Information**

Organization Name: Westside Community Center  
Address: 430 Hannum Avenue, West Chester, PA 19380  
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Executive Director/CEO Name: Ryan Enns  
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Board Chair Name: Michelle McGowan  
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Ryan@westsidecommunitycenterwc.org

Website: <http://www.westsidecommunitycenterwc.org>  
Year Incorporated: 2012  
FEIN: 46-0764528

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   
X 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:**

West Chester Area School District (students served primarily live in the Borough of West Chester)

**Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served:** The Westside Community Center (The Westside) serves 10 students (Middle and High School) through our core After School Program, Skate-Spot Program, Summer Soccer Camp and Enrichment Programs (LEAD & Thrive). 100% of students served are enrolled in the West Chester Area School District and predominantly live in poverty and come from single-parent households. Many students have experienced transient housing conditions, homelessness, abuse, food-insecurity, parents addicted to drugs/alcohol, are first or second generation immigrants and are struggling academically. In addition to our core programs, approximately 10 families are served through our Community Garden and over 255 adults receive free tax preparation services through our partnership with VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance).

**Mission:**

Westside Community Center's mission is to empower families and youth academically, socially and Spiritually; inspiring them to take on leadership roles in their community.

**Proposal Summary:** The Westside Community Center respectfully requests \$5,000 of general operating support.

**Annual Budget \$185,390**

74 % of budget for program expenses  
13 % of budget for administrative expenses  
13 % of budget for fundraising expenses  
*100 % total*

**2FT/2PT# of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff**

6 # of Board Volunteers  
26 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers  
560 # of Volunteer Hours

**Top 3-5 funding sources:**

Pilgrim Foundation \$10,000, Erie Insurance Foundation \$10,000, Individual donors, Special Events

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

## II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

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

In 2012, the Westside Community Center (The Westside) was founded with the mission of empowering families and youth in the West Chester area by helping them to develop academically, socially and spiritually. Ultimately, as individuals experience growth in these areas, our goal is that they will be inspired to become positive role models and leaders in the community.

In order to accomplish our mission, The Westside initially ran three distinct programs to serve community needs —The After School Program, The Community Garden and The Skate Spot. The Community Garden and Skate Spot were, and are still, open to all and the After School Program continues to serve middle and high school students in the West Chester Area School District. Over the past 2 years, we expanded our programming by instituting 3 new Enrichment Programs developed and facilitated in partnership with West Chester University students: LEAD (Leadership & Career Readiness), THRIVE (Nutritional Education) and EDGE (Leadership, Social and Diversity Empowerment) .

**Our distinctiveness lies in our holistic engagement with the community.** In addition to the programs that we run; The Westside also serves as a site where community members can access critical services such as free tax preparation done by VITA volunteers. Last year, 255 members of the community benefited from the tax preparation done by VITA volunteers at our location (Helping put \$426,765 federal dollars and \$19,965 state dollars back into people's pockets). We also partner with Young Lives, an organization who serves teenage moms and The Bridge Academy, an organization serving at-risk youth in Coatesville. Throughout the year we also host events such as skateboarding competitions, neighborhood barbecues, and movie nights in an effort to provide community resources and build healthy and impactful relationships throughout West Chester.

We are pleased to report that in our most recent survey of core students, 84% said The Westside helps them feel more motivated academically, 80% improved reading and/or writing skills and 72% plan to enroll in college or a trade school after high school. Additionally, over 80% said that since coming to The Westside they feel more confident, better about themselves, have developed new friendship and over 76% said The Westside helps them avoid alcohol, drugs, and skipping/dropping out of school.

### 2. Funding request

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

**After School Program:** The After School Program provides a safe place where middle and high school students can come to escape the stresses that they face on a daily basis. The program is open from 3-5:30pm on Monday- Thursday. Monday and Wednesday, we serve middle school students, Tuesday and Thursday we serve high school students. The Afterschool Program runs September - May and continues in a modified format during the summer. Over 65 students are served annually and an average of 20 -25 students attend daily.

- **Academic Support:** Students have access to WIFI and computers after school. Westside staff and volunteer tutors are available to assist students with homework, literacy and specific projects or subject areas.
- **Thrive:** Thrive is offered monthly throughout the school year and is facilitated by Nutrition Majors from West Chester University. Students learn how to take regular food products and make them into a healthy snack/meal (i.e. Black Bean Brownies, Healthy Ramen, & Oatmeal Power Bars).
- **The Edge:** The EDGE Project operates on Friday afternoons during the school year and exists to ignite a passion for equity, a deeper understanding of diversity, and a desire for community change through positive youth development. During the school year we conduct weekly meetings with teenagers, facilitating discussion and active learning, as a means to understanding identity, empathy, and advocacy. This program walks alongside youth as they explore strengths in their community and empowers them to take on leadership role in their community.

- **LEAD:** (Leadership Empowerment and Development) – This program runs throughout the summer and helps high school students to develop leadership and career readiness skills. Students participate in a series of workshops and/or discussions to help identify passions, career interests and have opportunities to meet with local businesses, explore career opportunities and work alongside staff/volunteers to set goals for post-secondary education/employment.
- **Girls' Program:** Girls' nights are hosted monthly for our high school aged girls. These evenings are an opportunity to connect girls with positive female mentors, discuss relevant topics (self-esteem, healthy relationships, bullying) and cultivate confidence, leadership and Spiritual development.
- **STEM:** STEM activities are provided monthly for students to gain hands-on experience with activities including; coding, operating drones and building robots.

**The Skate Spot:** The Skate Spot was created to serve as a much needed legal area for skateboarders to enjoy the sport they love. In a sub-culture where there are many negative influences, The Skate Spot is a positive and welcoming environment where youth and adults can be encouraged and experience the love of God in a unique and tangible way. Open on Tuesdays from May through November during the hours of 4pm to 8pm, The Skate Spot has received a great deal of community support. Approximately 35 skateboarders attend our Skate Grill and Chill on a regular basis. In addition to the daily free skate hours, the site also hosts various events and contests throughout the year.

**Community Garden:** The purpose of the garden is to provide local families with healthy, low-cost food options while also bringing together members of the community to engage in a project that instills a sense of pride in their neighborhood. The garden runs from April through November. In 2018 we successfully transitioned leadership to a local garden director who lives in the neighborhood where the garden exists. This has been our goal since the garden's inception, and we are thrilled to have a community member take on this leadership role.

**VITA:** (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) – The Westside hosts VITA volunteers from January – April to provide free tax preparation for those in our community who cannot afford, or are not able, to take care of it themselves.

**Summer Soccer Camp:** We offer an affordable week-long soccer camp in July for youth in our community. Youth who attend this camp would otherwise not be able to afford athletic training. The camp is run by collegiate athletes and includes food and drinks.

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

West Chester, PA is a beautiful town; but within it lie pockets of poverty often masked by the fancy town centers, parks and restaurants. The Westside is in its 6th year of serving approximately 100 disadvantaged, underserved youth in West Chester. Students served by The Westside are low-income, at-risk youth. The majority of students are minority youth (45% Latino, 27% African American, 16% Mixed Race, 11% White, 1% Other) and living in single parent homes. Additionally, many have experienced trauma (transient housing, homelessness, abuse, domestic violence, food insecurity), are English Language Learners, and are struggling academically. Over 36% will be the first in their families to graduate high school and 68% will be the first in their families to go to college. As a result, our students lack the motivation and guidance needed to reach their potential.

Rising costs of living in our community requires many of our student's parents to work 2-3 jobs to provide for their family. Consequently, many of our students are left home alone and unsupervised in the out-of-school time hours and many will not be fed until late in the evening (if at all). Research confirms that the hours of 3-6PM are, "the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and sex" and that hours spent alone afterschool are, "lost opportunities to help students grow and develop the skills and competencies to make positive life decisions that can lead to their future success" (After School Alliance).

The Westside seeks to prevent these outcomes by providing a safe and supportive environment during the critical out-of-school-time hours and providing a variety of academic supports, nutritional education, leadership development and recreational activities. The Westside is committed to serving the community in this manner because we know that

there is a need for FREE positive, educational and recreational opportunities to improve the health and well-being of youth and families in West Chester. We want to see the needs of our students met so they stay in school, graduate, and set goals for post- secondary education/employment.

Now in our sixth full year of operating the after school program, we are continuing to focus on building a firm relational and educational foundation for those who attend our program. The following are our core goals:

**Goal #1 = We want to build healthy relationships with those who participate in our program.**

We believe that positive relationships not only change lives, but that changed lives change communities. Our program is a “drop-in” program. Students are not mandated to come but instead attend because of the relationships that they have with our staff and volunteers. Students stay off the streets and out of trouble if they find people who care about them, are committed to getting to know them and then, because of relationship, help them succeed.

**Goal #2 = We want to continue building a program that equips students for academic and professional success.**

We recognize that learning is not something that comes easy to everyone. Our After School Program provides the resources necessary to ensure that students have the tools they need to succeed academically. These resources come in the shape of pencils, pens, paper, computers, internet and people. While making sure that students have the necessities to actually do work, we also make sure we have people who can sit down with them to tutor and ensure that they understand the content. Our staff is responsible for ensuring that our volunteers are trained, informed and have everything that they need to do their job. We also cultivate and steward relationships with West Chester University staff/students and The West Chester Area School District so we can work together to serve youth in our community.

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

Students and families served by The Westside face difficult circumstances including homelessness, addiction, language barriers, poverty, abuse, food-insecurity and/or illiteracy. Without The Westside, the majority of students served would be home-alone and/or on the streets, unsupervised - substantially increasing their risk for juvenile delinquency, substance abuse and other destructive behaviors. There is a rising need for free, drop-in programs available to middle and high school students in the Borough of West Chester, and Westside provides that. Financial support of The Westside is vital to ensure our community’s social, academic and Spiritual needs are met.

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

The Westside administers post program surveys and works with the schools to track student’s academic performance and graduation rates. Program outcomes are shared with stakeholders via newsletters, presentations and social media. The Westside’s impact is also demonstrated through students like Ranae. Ranae is a sophomore at WC East High School and began coming to The Westside’s After School Program at the start of the school year. Ranae struggles with depression and her mom passed away last year. Early on, staff noticed how she would seek attention in unhealthy ways; like being physically violent with others. Since becoming more involved, Ranae is now much “softer” and has learned to engage in conversation and ask for what she needs. She also started out not even bringing her backpack to the program, and recently she worked alongside Westside volunteers to finish her entire research presentation.

*\*Students name has been changed for confidentiality.*

### **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.

- **E-mail proposals to [grants@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org).** Receipt will be confirmed by e-mail.