

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Contact Information:

Date: August 9, 2019

Organization Name: Baker Industries, Inc. Executive Director Name: Richard L. Bevan
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Malvern, PA 19355
Phone: (610) 296-9705 Board of Directors Chair Name: Richard C. III
Website: www.bakerindustries.org Primary Contact Name: John H. "Turk" Thacher, Jr.
Year Incorporated: 1989 Primary Contact E-mail: turk@bakerindustries.org
FEIN: 23-2560245

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

Human Services

Mission:

- **EMPLOY** those who have the most difficulty in getting and holding jobs,
- **TEACH** the work ethic through real work experience,
- **ACT** as a transition step toward gaining and maintaining outside employment, and
- **HELP** those who are both able and unable to move on to reach their highest level of achievement.

Geographic Area Served: The Philadelphia Metropolitan Area including all of Chester County

Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served: We employ a mix of low/no-income, vulnerable adults, specifically people with disabilities, those with substance use disorder, ex-offenders, and the homeless. We touch the lives of between 150 and 300 individuals, of which an average of 50 workers successfully transition into becoming independent and productive members of their communities.

<u>Annual Budget</u> \$ <u>2,321,000</u>	<u>7</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>85.73</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>260</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>6.45</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>22</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>7.82</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>2,000+</u> # of Volunteer Hours
<u>100</u> % total	

Top 3-5 funding sources: The sale of our services, Edwin Hall 2nd Charitable Trust, Two Fundraisers, Individual Donations, and Triumph Group Charitable Foundation

Is this grant proposal for: General Operating? yes

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 5,000 (Grateful for any Grant)

Proposal Summary: Baker Industries is a diverse and inclusive 39-year old nonprofit workforce development program that provides hope and opportunity for low/no income vulnerable adults as described above. Our purpose is to integrate these individuals into the workforce through regular work at one of our two industrial facilities in an accepting and trauma-informed environment. Program participants are paid a real wage while learning fundamental work and collaboration skills and participate (while still getting paid) in workshops, counseling, and coaching designed to foster self-esteem and job readiness. On average we engage about 200 individuals each year from the Philadelphia Metropolitan region in our program. Over our history an average of 50 participants progress to better work in the regular economy, becoming independent and productive members of our community. For those who are unable to be mainstreamed, we provide long-term employment at our Malvern Facility. We do this without reliance on any government support.

II. Cheater County Community Foundation Grant Proposal Narrative:

History

The world is a very different place than it was when Charlie and Weezie Baker began our work rehabilitation program some 38 years ago in their garage in Chester County with their son Justin and one other individual to begin to fill the void they realized for a learning work environment for high-functioning disabled people. As the business grew and more disabled individuals became employed, the operation was moved to its own work site in Suburban Philadelphia. In 1988, a second Baker work site was established in Philadelphia to employ ex-offenders, homeless persons, and recovering substance abusers, who also typically have extreme difficulty getting jobs. Our mission, and the need for our mission, is still very much the same: we offer hope. For those who have very few options in today's job market, we provide the opportunity to be included in, rather than excluded from, the regular work force.

We are requesting a grant of \$5,000 for General Operating Support for our very special workforce development program. Baker Industries is a diverse and inclusive 39-year old nonprofit workforce development program that provides hope and opportunity for low/no income vulnerable adults – individuals challenged with disability, parole/probation, substance use disorder, and homelessness. Our purpose is to integrate these individuals into the workforce through regular work at one of our two industrial facilities in an accepting and trauma-informed environment. Program participants are paid a real wage while learning fundamental work and collaboration skills and participate (while still getting paid) in workshops, counseling, and coaching designed to foster self-esteem and job readiness. On average we engage about 200 individuals each year from the Philadelphia region in our program. Over our history an average of 50 participants progress to better work in the regular economy, becoming independent and productive members of our community. For those who are unable to be mainstreamed, we provide long-term employment at our Malvern Facility. *The entire premise of our program is that there is no better setting in which to teach good work habits than a real place of work which is driven by concepts similar to the general workplace.* As a workforce development program, Baker Industries has trained thousands of vulnerable adults in work ethic and work skills. While our basic program has remained very much the same, we have continually altered and improved our approach.

Recently, we have begun to understand that job success is about more than job performance, particularly when serving a population dealing with the neurological, biological, psychological, and social effects of trauma (all of our management team and staff have been trained in trauma-informed care). To address these needs, we have on staff a certified recovery specialist, a crisis counselor and a job coach working with our participants both individually and in groups on how to move beyond painful personal histories. While our program has been very successful for many people, we believe that by working to address the effects of trauma on our participants, many more in our program will realize their goal of economic and personal stability. Baker Industries believes there to be no other organization in this country that does what we do, successfully blending these very different types of individuals in a work training and rehabilitation program and doing so without any government operating support.

The need that our workforce development program fulfills continues to grow every year as there just are not enough programs available to reach out to the four segments of the disadvantaged vulnerable adult population that we try to assist. The City of Philadelphia projects over 35,000 returning citizens transitioning from incarceration to our community each year. The US Department of Labor estimates that only 19% of disabled adults participate fully in the work labor force. Substance abuse, fueled by the opioid crisis, is exacting a terrible toll across our region in lives and resources. These chronic problems inhibit the ability of our city and region to grow and prosper. Experts agree that stable employment is essential to help individuals achieve stability and sustain progress. By helping individuals transition to the regular workforce, we are improving individual, social, and financial health for families and communities and helping reduce the burden on strained civic and government resources. The vast majority of our handicapped population tends to remain in our program as there are so few employment opportunities for them. Because we do not accept any government support, there are no limitations on how long they can remain in our program; and as a result, Baker tends to become their social world as well as their work world. Helping these four groups of people will enable them to begin to liberate themselves and those around them from the cycles of poverty, violence, crime and dependence that had previously trapped them. The benefits of such a transformation both to the individual and to the community are priceless.

Recognizing the challenges that our participants face outside our program workplace; we continually seek to partner in the communities we serve. We have made a concerted effort to expand our network and partnerships in center-city Philadelphia. We believe in the power of partnership and will continue to build relationships that help serve our participants and our community. A partial list includes:

- **The Philly Manufacturing Growth Network** – “off the sideline – into the workforce” – a group of Philadelphia Manufacturers working specifically with Baker to provide employment opportunities for our program participants. (WWW.PHLMFG.com)
- **Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce** – we are actively participating in the Chambers Roadmap for Growth and hosted a recent visit from the City’s Director of Commerce – Harold Epps.
- **Philadelphia Re-entry Project** – we are a member and have participated in multiple panel discussions and working groups to improve the re-entry of returning citizens from incarceration to work and the community.
- **Wilma Theater** – creative partner with their Portable Studio in our new enhanced readiness program.
- **Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts** – creative partner in our enhanced job readiness program.
- **Philadelphia Works** – working with CareerLink and other career planning services to support our participants in their search for employment.
- **Philadelphia R.I.S.E. Program** – working with them to promote the Fair Chance Hiring Initiative.
- **Temple University School of Criminal Justice** – partnership on research study on reentry.
- **Connection Training Services** – providing job search and networking support to Baker participants.
- **Family Services – Montgomery County** – providing opportunities for women transitioning from incarceration.
- **Timothy School** – students of this school for disabled young adults spend time at Baker gaining work experience.
- **Corporate Partners** – terrific volunteer and financial support from Triumph Group, Bryn Mawr Trust, CubeSmart, Vanguard, OSI Soft, SEI, BNY Mellon, and Fox-Roach.
- **School & Alumni Groups** - we continue to have multiple groups volunteer to work for all or part of a day from: Philadelphia Kappa Kappa Gamma Alumni Group, Malvern Prep, Friends Central, and Villa Maria Academy.

Why is it important to fund this now – The Baker Program is in its 39th year. We are a Social Enterprise, and while some tout social enterprise as the new, cutting edge approach to social services, at Baker Industries, we have been rather quietly operating a successful, self-sustaining workforce development program using business methods for 38 years! Every year our two primary challenges remain the same – find more customers to enable us to expand our program and find new funders/donors to complete our revenue cycle. Our program is sustained by the hard work and efforts of our board, management, and supervisory team – finding new customers for our services and locating new sources of funding/support. It is their effort that has allowed us to continue to make a positive impact on between 200 and 400 lives each year.

It seems very clear that the minimum wage will go up, particularly at the state level, most likely in 2019 – it is simply a matter of when and how much. At our current level of work every dollar of increase will cost Baker approximately \$86,000. A minimum wage of \$12.00 would result in a \$408,500 cost increase to Baker. We know from experience that we cannot simply raise our prices to cover this cost increase. While we have managed to accumulate reasonable cash reserves, we will need all the additional financial support that we can get to help us weather this storm while we try to stabilize our pricing.

Our Impact – Our impact is measured in the number of participants we serve in a calendar year and the number of participants who progress each year to better employment and more stable, independent lives. Over the past two decades, our total number of participants served has averaged close to 300, moving up or down based on the amount of work we are receiving from customers. Our number of participants progressing to better employment has averaged 50. We are still in a business-building mode after losing our biggest customer at the end of 2017. As a result, we are anticipating a total number served of about 150 in 2019, with 30 graduating to better jobs (significantly better jobs).

Our program strategy to meet our outcome goals (number of participants served and number of participants progressing to better employment) is to continue to refine our model of real work experience and job readiness support.

Our increased focus on job readiness support comes from decades of experience working with individuals who have often not held a “real” job in many years. Life skills are as important as work skills. Our newest program addresses capabilities like decision making, critical thinking, dealing with ambiguity and other factors that build resilience and confidence. On-site coaching and counseling provide 1:1 support as individuals navigate personal challenges. We also focus on the more tactical skills related to job search, interviewing and successful behaviors when starting a new job. Our goal is to improve our “batting average” and see a higher percentage of individuals who enter our program progress to better employment.

Our donor strategy is focused on continuing to earn the trust of existing sources while expanding our network of individuals and foundations that invest in our program. Our mission has never been more relevant as the Philadelphia community struggles to unlock the employment value in the very populations we serve. We are increasingly seeking civic and corporate partnerships to address the economic and social opportunities inherent in better integration of hard to employ adults into the workplace.

Finally, we are devoting significant senior management resources to our customer strategy of improved account management and new business acquisition to reach our budgeted revenue goal. Specifically, we are investing in stronger business partnerships with selected customers where we can provide excellent service and value in return for strong collaboration with our team. Because our participants face many challenges, we do best with business partners who work with us on process improvement, scheduling, work-flow, etc. When these partnerships extend to temp assignments and job opportunities, it is even more of a win/win.

Our three-pronged strategy can be summarized as follows: improve the participant, donor and customer experience to expand our proven program to more hard-to-employ adults and create stronger communities.

Our decades long impact in the community is clear. Over 10,000 individuals have participated in our program. Over 2,000 individuals have progressed to better employment and an opportunity to break the cycle of poverty and dependence that has defined so many of their lives. Families and communities have been strengthened. [Baker Industries changes lives.](#)

Some Alumni testimonials:

“Baker helped me a lot with my life meaning – they taught me how to communicate and be a better person and to be open minded....it meant a lot to be in a family environment and feel like I was able to do any tasks that they put me on to.” **Javier Troch, Northeast Metal, left Baker in 2019**

“Baker changed my outlook on life. They taught me – how to listen to others, how to run a team of people, and how to approach different problems. If you show up and allow others to help, you will get the help you need – They Care!!” **Anquetta Gray, QSI, left Baker in 2018.**