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 Field of Interest and Donor Advised Funds with $2.5+ million granted annually to nonprofits in Chester County and beyond. 99% of the grants issued by CCCF are made possible through the generosity of the Fund Advisors, who make grant decisions throughout the year.

Proposals submitted by nonprofits are considered for 2 types of grants:

### Field of Interest & Donor Advised Funds (No Deadline)

- Grants focus on Chester County causes and issues, but are not limited to Chester County.
- Charitable nonprofits working in all fields of interest are considered for grant awards. (i.e. arts, culture, and humanities; education; community improvement; environment; religion; health; and human services)
- General operating grants are encouraged. Nonprofits should be specific about their mission, goals, and measurable outcomes.
- Proposals can be submitted anytime throughout the year.
- Grant decisions are made intermittently throughout the year, as Fund Advisors desire.
- Grant awards typically range from $500-$7,500.

### Fund for Chester County Capacity Building Grants (Due 9/15)

- For eligibility in this grant program, nonprofits must be located in and serve Chester County. NPO’s with budgets of $750,000 or less are preferred.
- The goal of CCCF’s capacity building grantmaking is to strengthen the effectiveness of NPO’s serving the Chester County region, in areas including:
  - Mission, Vision, & Strategy
  - Governance & Leadership
  - Strategic Relationships
  - Operations & Technology
  - Fundraising & Development
- Proposals must be submitted by September 15 to be eligible for consideration.
- Grant awards typically range from $500-$5,000, with monies distributed by February.

- All Community Foundation Funds accept this grant application form. An electronic form is available at [www.chescof.org](http://www.chescof.org).
- Email proposals to grants@chescof.org; Proposals are considered “complete” when CCCF has confirmed receipt of the Grant Proposal Summary Sheet, Narrative, and Attachments. Proposals are shared electronically with Fund Advisors, Donors, and Grants Committees.
- Per IRS Regulations, applicants must be charitable, tax exempt organizations with 501(c)(3) certification and cannot be individuals.

Please contact Grants Administrator, Kevin Baffa, at (610)-698-8211 or grants@chescof.org with any questions.
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 9/18/2019

Contact Information
Organization Name: Orion Communities (Orion) Executive Director/CEO Name: Kris Keller
Address: 237 Bridge Street, Phoenixville, PA 19460 Executive Director/ E-mail:
Phone: 610.415.114 Board of Directors Chair Name: Keith Burress
Website: OrionCommunities.org Primary Contact Name: Kris Keller
Year Incorporated: 1977 Primary Contact E-mail: Same as above
FEIN: 24-2074061

Organization Information:
Field/s of Interest:
___ Arts, Culture & Humanities ___ Environment/Animal Welfare ___X Education
___ Health ___X Human Services ___ Religion
Mission: Orion offers hope for individuals and families experiencing hardship due to poverty, disability,
or illness by building bridges that lead to self-reliance.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): Primarily Chester County but clients also come from other areas of Southeastern PA

Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served: Individuals living with poverty, illness or disability

Annual Budget $748,000_______________________ 7.2___ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
84___% of budget for program expenses 12___ # of Board Volunteers
9___% of budget for administrative expenses 75___ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
7___% of budget for fundraising expenses 6000+___ # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources:
Community Coalition - $85,000, Community Clothes Charity - $30,000, The Philadelphia Foundation
(Milton Applebaum) - $20,000. 2 private donors – anonymous between $43, 270 and $45,000.

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building ___ or General Operating ___X__?

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:
___Mission, Vision & Strategy ___Governance & Leadership ___Strategic Relationships
___Fundraising & Development ___ Technology Other: ______________________________

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: $___5000__________

Proposal Summary: Orion addresses unmet needs for the most vulnerable in the community without the receipt of government funding whether it’s help to avoid eviction or bus tokens to get to work, children’s books or computers to close the academic gap. Orion is neighbors helping neighbors.
II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

1. Nonprofit’s history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

2. Funding request
   • Description of key initiatives
   • Specific needs and issues to be addressed
   • Why it is important to fund this now
   • How impact and results will be demonstrated
   • For capacity building grant proposals:
     o How will this capacity building initiative impact your nonprofit?
     o How will this impact be measured?
     o 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. Include external consultant proposals if applicable.

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 proposals to grants@chescocf.org. Receipt will be confirmed by e-mail.
  - Please contact Grants Administrator Kevin Baffa at (610) 696-8211 grants@chescocf.org with questions.

Chester County
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Connecting people who care with causes that matter, so their legacies make a difference.
WHAT IS CAPACITY BUILDING?

Capacity building helps bring a nonprofit to the next level of operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational maturity, in order to more effectively and efficiently fulfill its mission.

Capacity building may include (but is not limited to) projects which address:

- **MISSION, VISION & STRATEGY**
  - Organizational Assessment - Strategic Planning - Financial Planning

- **GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP**
  - Board Development - Executive Transition/Succession Planning - Leadership Development - Staff Training & Professional Development

- **STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS**
  - Coalition Building – Collaboration - Mergers & Acquisitions - Strategic Restructuring

- **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

- **OPERATIONS**

Capacity Building Grants have been used to fund:

- Strategic plan development
- Technology enhancements, including website design; donor tracking software; computer hardware
- Marketing plan & marketing materials development
- Financial management and internal control system improvements

- **E-mail proposals to grants@chescocf.org.** Receipt will be confirmed by e-mail.
- Please contact Grants Administrator Kevin Baffa at (610) 696-8211 grants@chescocf.org with questions.
History: Orion Communities began 42 years ago to address gaps in services for people living with poverty and disabilities. Orion has never received government funding and the organizational focus continues to serve the ‘poorest of the poor’ and people who fall through the cracks of the social service safety net.

In 2014/2015, the Board of Directors restructured Orion to better address unmet needs for our most vulnerable neighbors. The response has been very positive. In December 2014, Orion averaged 15 clients per month and now averages well over 200 clients each month. Funding and volunteers have also increased and diversified allowing Orion to balance support of our neighbors in need with sustainable organizational growth. In 2016, Orion moved to a larger office and in the winter of 2019 expanded again to better meet the needs of the growing family centered program offerings.

Mission implementation and programming begin with the clients expressed need. Orion is able to gift $6000-10,000 per month to help families avoid eviction, get to work and appointments, keep food on their table, and more. In 2018, 1190 households were assisted and financial assistance from Orion averaged just $70/household.

Description of key initiatives: Orion takes a micro/macro approach to problem solving for our under resourced neighbors. For the individual or family who comes to the door, Orion helps secure life’s basic essentials and works with our clients to develop plans to move towards a more sustainable future. Orion engages the larger community and builds partnerships to help address larger systemic challenges. Orion has been the catalyst for a local winter night shelter for the homeless, creation of a Borough council-led task force to generate solutions for affordable housing challenges.

Orion works to improve the health and well-being of everyone in our community. Here is a brief summary of Orion’s programs:

- **BRIDGE CASE MANAGEMENT** is the provision of short-term case management to assist in a period of transition, crisis or change.
- **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE** provides critical funds and budget training to assist with basic needs or to keep community members from catastrophic losses.
- **TECHNOLOGY RESOURCE CENTER** provides free access to computers, phones, fax, and copier to bridge the gap that leads to disparity in education, health, and finances.
- **COMMUNITY OUTREACH** assesses needs, raises awareness and develops a collaborative approach to serve the most vulnerable in the community.
• STARS is a reading, digital literacy and computer/book giveaway program that engages both children and parents to improve academic performance plus enhance communication with the children’s schools and teachers.

• GLAD is a ‘trauma informed’ program for single mothers designed to help participants expand their parenting and life skills.

This year, Orion received several new funds to assist our case managers in stabilizing families: 1) PLAN for transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing (which is fully-funded and valued up to $175,000 per year), 2) one-on-one budget coaching for under-resourced clients, and 3) restricted use funds for education, veterans, etc.

There is now a council working to implement the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Task Force requested by Orion; this video explains how Phoenixville is working together to address the need for more affordable housing options... https://youtu.be/Q4iNuBMPpxc

Two articles were published in the past year that highlight Orion's work ... https://www.phoenixvillenews.com/orion-communities-provides-haven-of-opportunities/article_e3ce1b93-8edf-5f26-aa4e-e3c146ceefef.html


**Specific needs and issues to be addressed:** The reality is 9.1% of Phoenixville Borough residence live below the Federal Poverty Line. In 2018, 28% of Orion’s 1190 client households were homeless for all or part of the year and 97% lived below the Federal Poverty Level. Ten percent of local school children do not have computers in the home. Nationally it is recognized that reading in the home is the biggest indicator of success in school yet we know that while middle class homes have 25 books for every child, low income households have only 1 book for every 300 children.

Orion works to stabilize our most vulnerable families in times of crisis and provide the tools to move towards a brighter tomorrow.

**Why it is important to fund this now:** Between 2012 and 2017, the number of rental units in Phoenixville Borough with rent below $1000/month decreased by 460 and the number of units over $1000/month increased by 745. The government recommends that families not spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Working at a local restaurant in town, making $10/hour for 40 hours per week results in $1600/month. Thirty percent of income would be $480 for rent and there just aren’t apartments in that range. As a result, we see neighbors spending 50-80% of their income on housing, sometimes more than 90%. This makes them vulnerable to sudden income changes, unexpected medical bills or household repairs.

Approximately 10-15% of Orion clients come from both Pottstown and Coatesville, with poverty levels exceeding 20% and 30% respectively. Fourteen percent of Chester County residents are food insecure. It is reported by the Housing Authority of Chester County that a local resident earning
minimum wage would have to work 110 hours each week to earn enough money to live in the county without need of any financial assistance.

Rents are rising, employment advancement opportunities for low income employees are limited, government resources for those in need are shrinking. People who are under or un-employed, have a disability or mental health challenge are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet – this is where Orion gets involved.

**How impact and results will be demonstrated:** OSAT (Orion Sustainability Assessment Tool) collects input, output, outcome and impact. Orion helps with critical, pressing and immediate challenges to secure life’s basic essentials and our goals focus on moving our clients out of Crisis towards Stable. Here is a breakdown of levels:

- **Crisis** – in personal danger from lack or imminent loss of basic essentials
- **Safe but Fragile** – basic essentials met for immediate needs
- **Vulnerable** – putting plan in place for next 2-3 weeks
- **Stable** – secure/confident about immediate needs for 30-60 days
- **Thriving** – launched, feeling confident about next six months or more!

Examples of statistics from Orion’s programming in 2018:

1. **Housing** - 384 unique households were assisted (987 individuals) and had 420 cycles of need (some clients returned for additional housing support) – 90 client household cycles started in Crisis and 60% of those moved out of Crisis.
2. Additionally, 100% of clients know where and when to get food to avoid hunger and 99%+ of clients report improved well-being by having come to Orion for supportive services.
3. **STARS** - 140 children & 20 parents participated in digital literacy/STEM training; 71 computers and over 2500 children’s books were gifted; internet access was provided to 5 households.
4. **GLAD** – 17 single mothers and their children participated in the first 3 cycles of parenting and life skill trainings. Feedback from the first participants influenced minor program tweaking as mom’s asked for alum sessions to continue to build and reinforce skills learned.

A single mom with 2 young boys had an aunt living with them who died suddenly. The aunt had been the one to get the children off to school and ensured that meals were prepared while mom balanced going back to school with part time work. The passing of this aunt was traumatic to the whole family. The school district referred the family to Orion for GLAD and case management with great success. However, the mom shared that she felt like she and her children had forgotten how to have fun. Fortunately, Orion received a gift specifically for summer treats and the family took a trip to the Jersey Shore. The story continues - her youngest requested a book from the STARS bookshelves and it became a nightly ritual for mother and son to read together and the mother reports that the book and reading time “healed” her son from the recent trauma. The boys are doing well in school, the family plans to participate in STARS this fall, mom is starting to work with an Orion money management coach and plans to join the GLAD monthly alum meetings.

Each family and their circumstances are different. Orion has the compassionate professionals and access to supportive resources to positively impact the trajectory of lives for our neighbors in need. Thank you for consideration of this request.