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## COVID-19 Rapid Response Mini-Grant Letter of Request

**Date: March 24, 2020**

### **Contact Information**

Organization Name: **West Chester Area Senior Center**  
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### **In a few brief paragraphs, please explain:**

- 1. What geographic area is served?** *(If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served)*  
West Chester Area Senior Center (WCASC) serves older adults from the Borough of West Chester and seven surrounding townships which include: East and West Goshen, Westtown, Thornbury, East Bradford, Willistown, and Birmingham.
- 2. What population is served, what has been the impact of COVID-19, and how has your nonprofit responded?**  
WCASC remains steadfast in our commitment to serve our community's seniors and provide a wide variety of programs and services for 3,400 older adults each year. We continually strive to enhance and expand our programs to respond to the growing interests and needs of our community's seniors and support their efforts to remain healthy, active, engaged in their community, and to be as independent as possible. Those we serve include:
  - Older adults with ages ranging from 60 – 100+
  - 45% who self-report as low income (we are unable to require this information but our estimate is higher at 60-70%)
  - 30% who are nutritionally insecure due to low income, medical condition(s), or inability to shop or prepare food
  - 35% with ambulatory challenges
  - 40% who live alone and lack family support

Vital among our programs are the Meals and Supplemental Food Programs. On average there are 1,800 – 2,000 participants in these programs annually. Research shows that seniors are most vulnerable to nutrition insecurity and even malnutrition. Senior hunger and food insecurity have become an expansive issue in our country, state, and county. As defined by a study published in *The Journal of Nutrition* when someone is food insecure, it means there is "limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods."

WCASC served 28,400 meals last year. We regularly see an increase in participation in this program and **70% of the participants report that these meals are their main source of nutrition.**

### **Meal Program**

- Breakfast and lunch served 5 days/week throughout the year, with meals that are 1/3 RDA and are planned with the supervision of a Registered Dietician.
- Daily hot, and made-to-order, breakfast open to the general public in addition to our membership and prepared and served by volunteers many of whom are members themselves.

In addition, and very important to the overall nutrition of those we serve, our Supplemental Food Programs offer a variety of additional opportunities for participants to receive a variety of food items to take home to support overall health and nutrition. This program is done in partnership with the Chester County Food Bank, local grocers, and farmers.

### **Supplemental Food Programs**

- Food Box Program – Monthly, Year-Round to pre-qualified Individuals
- Farm Market Vouchers annually during the growing season
- Local produce delivery and distribution seasonally (approx. 5-6 months yearly)
- Weather Emergency Food Packages annually (January/February)
- Grocery distribution year-round

Due to the COVID-19 health crisis we had to close our Senior Center on March 13, 2020 which has had a tremendous impact on the participants in our Meals and Supplemental Food Programs who now have very limited access to food. Many of these older adults face serious financial issues, have no family support, and some who cannot or should not leave their homes during this crisis due to their significant health issues such as: diabetics, those with heart conditions, transplant recipients, cancer patients, and others with compromised health and/or immune systems. This poses a dangerous threat to their nutrition and overall health and wellbeing. We have identified the most vulnerable individuals that we serve and are making home deliveries of foods that are essential to their sustained nutrition. We are also offering curbs-side “stay in your vehicle” pick up at the Senior Center for those that can get out or have someone that can pick up for them.

In addition to WCASC’s purchase of food on a weekly basis we are working closely with the Chester County Food Bank which provides a once a week delivery of nonperishable foods, and with local restaurants who contribute packaged meals (2 thus far) to secure as much food as possible for distribution. Our Senior Center staff (five) package and deliver a wide variety of nutritional food items and the prepared meals to 150+ seniors in serious need. We are also reaching out to our friends and donors to support this important project. The cost of purchasing food is approximately \$1,200 - \$1,400 per week.

We intend to continue to making deliveries twice weekly for as long as necessary. A COVID-19 Rapid Response Grant from the Chester County Community Foundation would have a tremendous impact on our ability to continue this vital effort and truly make a difference in a senior’s life.

**3. How much funding is sought? How does this compare to your annual operating budget? What will the funding be used for? What is the expected timeframe for use of funds?**

WCASC respectfully requests \$4,000 for our Emergency Food Delivery Program. Our Annual Operating Budget for FY ending June 30, 2020 is \$791,236. The grant would represent .005% of our operating budget.

\$4,000 will be used for the purchase of food to be distributed weekly. This grant would fund 3 – 4 weeks of food for 150+ seniors in need. The funds would be expended immediately upon receiving the grant.

Please email [grants@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org)

This Brief COVID-19 Rapid Response Mini-Grant Letter of Request

Copy of annual operating budget or most recent audit

501c3 determination letter

Request letters will be posted on the Community Foundation’s website, in order to share with fund advisors, donors, grant panelists, and other funding sources.

Grants will be processed a few times monthly.

We estimate mini-grants will range from \$500 to \$5000.

Please direct general questions & inquiries about the Rapid Response Mini-Grants to [grants@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org).  
Beth, Steph, Cierra or Kevin will answer you.