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)*
   Bridge of Hope Chester County serves all of Chester County.

2. **What population is served, what has been the impact of COVID-19, and how has your nonprofit responded?**
   Bridge of Hope is a Christian faith-based solution to family homelessness which has been operating in Chester County for more than 30 years. We serve families facing or experiencing homelessness with at least one dependent child under the age of 18. Family homelessness is sometimes referred to as invisible because rather than seek services, families attempt to live doubled-up, on couches, in cars or in motels, in order to stay together. More than 80% of families experiencing homelessness are headed by a single mother, and although they are often employed, they hold low income positions that do not provide benefits or a cushion for crisis. Bridge of Hope families enter our program having experienced the trauma of homelessness and daunting financial challenges often complicated by a lack of education, childcare or transportation. More importantly, many of our families face these challenges alone.

   We believe homelessness is much more than a crisis of housing, it is a crisis of relationship, or social poverty. When there are limited support systems in place for a family, a crisis is quickly exacerbated. In order to provide a “bridge of hope” to our families, we provide a support system of a group of 6-10 Neighboring Volunteers from a local church, along with rental assistance for rapid rehousing, and case management services. The Neighboring Volunteers provide tangible support such as transportation, emergency child care, help obtaining housing and furniture, and leveraging networking connections. This powerful combination provides an opportunity for families to journey toward long-term stability and financial security.

   Due to the COVID-19 crisis, many Bridge of Hope families have lost their jobs. We also have several who are working as medical assistants or CNAs, and have had difficulty obtaining childcare and transportation for work. We are providing support through additional financial assistance for utility bills, food and childcare. We are also working to negotiate with landlords to try to preserve housing for...
current and past families served by Bridge of Hope. We provide rental assistance, but the need is quickly outpacing our budget.

We have seen a significant increase in calls for support the past couple weeks. We are processing the intake of three families locally, and are working to quickly stabilize them in very challenging conditions. There are many more families seeking help. Families who were living “on the edge” prior to the pandemic – or moving from friend to friend cannot find shelters or places to safely stay as fewer people want someone new in their household, and shelters are not accepting new intakes.

In addition to increased front line expenses, we are experiencing and anticipating collateral damage from the COVID-19 crisis. Our primary fundraising event, the Annual Spring Gala Luncheon, which nets over $100,000 for Bridge of Hope Inc. was scheduled for May 8, and has been postponed to August 27, though we recognize that it is very possible that the later date will need to be canceled. The delay of the event and loss of income from sponsorships, which should be incoming now, is significantly impacting our revenue. Additionally, each summer two regional businesses host a benefit Golf tournament raising $45,000 net for Bridge of Hope Inc. With one of those businesses currently closed and the other operating under limited capacity due to the pandemic, we are not certain that this event will be held this summer. The proceeds from these two events have typically provided the cash flow that we need during spring and summer. Without these events, we are seeking support to not only meet current needs but also to be able to meet increased calls for help which we have been receiving in the past several weeks, since the beginning of the stay-at-home order in Chester County.

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?

Bridge of Hope Chester County respectfully requests $5000 to provide additional assistance for families who have lost jobs, and who are struggling to bear the financial impact of COVID-19. The operating budget for Bridge of Hope Chester County is $178,890, which is part of Bridge of Hope Incorporated’s total budget of $930,426. Support of $5000 is just under 3% of the Chester County budget, but would provide vital assistance for several families devastated by this crisis. The assistance will be utilized immediately for current families in Chester County, and any additional support may also provide Bridge of Hope the critical ability to accept new families into the Chester County program.

Please email grants@chescocf.org

_x_ This Brief COVID-19 Rapid Response Mini-Grant Letter of Request
_x_ Copy of annual operating budget or most recent audit
_x_ 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.

Beth, Steph, Cierra or Kevin will answer you.