The ALS Association Greater Philadelphia Chapter encompasses a large geography that includes the eastern half of Pennsylvania, south and central New Jersey and Delaware. Annually we serve approximately 1,200 people living with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Of that population, we currently serve 43 families in Chester County, which is about 3.4% of our families.

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is a progressive neuro-degenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord. As motor neurons deteriorate, voluntary muscles die and individuals lose the capacity to walk, talk, swallow and eventually breathe. On average, prognosis after diagnosis is 2-5 years. As symptoms progress and gradually take away an individual’s independence, loved ones provide most of the care, which can become around-the-clock care. Often, the spouse may have to quit work to help with the care, meaning a loss of income and medical insurance. Families experience emotional, physical, psychological and financial challenges as the disease progresses. Medical insurance helps, but often high co-pays and deductibles make some services unattainable and they do without valuable assistance. To help families cope, The ALS Association Greater Philadelphia Chapter provides a multitude of services, such as 8 multidisciplinary clinics specializing in ALS care, In-home custodial care, loan of durable medical equipment and assistive communication devices, van transportation, accessibility (ramps and stairglides) and education and recreational programs. No service fees are charged. The Chapter relies solely on fundraised dollars to provide its services that include special events, 7 Walks to Defeat ALS throughout our geography, private foundation funding and individual donations. Coronavirus has already caused the Chapter to cancel 1 event, postpone 3 Walks and potentially cancel one of the Chapter’s biggest annual fundraising events. These actions could potentially diminish revenue totaling over $1 million, not counting the thousands lost from donors who are now facing their own financial challenges due to social distancing. ALS patients are a vulnerable population as their respiratory systems may already be compromised, making it extremely dangerous to contract the Coronavirus. It is imperative to offer services safely and as recommended by the federal government, as we continue to provide our services. During this unprecedented time, the Chapter is offering virtual support sessions, the availability of social workers and nurses for questions/emergencies by phone and email, telemedicine visits at clinic, (treatment through computer access with patient and specialists) as
well as the provision of multiple virtual resources for caregiving. Most importantly we have continued the Chapter’s In-Home Care Program that provides custodial care of up to 12 hours a week with activities of daily living by a home health aide. Last year, 1,649 hours at a cost of $39,805 were provided to Chester County patients alone by the Chapter; we anticipate surpassing that amount this year. A grant of $5,000 would help subsidize some of the lost revenue due to the Coronavirus pandemic, and enable us to continue care programs, such as the in-home care program for ALS families living in Chester County. This amount represents less than 1% of our total Care Services Program budget and will cover approximately a 2 to 3-month period for Chester County patients. In these challenging times, the ALS Association is grateful for consideration of any amount the Foundation deems appropriate. Thank you for this opportunity to apply.

Please email grants@chesocf.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@chesocf.org. Beth, Steph, Cierra or Kevin will answer you.