CCCF COVID-19 Rapid Response Mini-Grants
Per IRS Regulations, applicants must be charitable, tax exempt organizations with 501(c) (3) certification & cannot be individuals.

Background/Eligibility
The Community Foundation’s COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund provides flexible resources to Chester County nonprofits that are disproportionately impacted by coronavirus and the economic consequences of this outbreak. This is designed as a flexible short-term response fund to provide relief for a variety of unexpected costs. We envision three funding priority levels:

- **Front Line Grants** fund community-based nonprofits that have increased demand for services due to COVID-19. These nonprofits have deep roots in community and a strong track-record serving people who are immediately and disproportionately suffering from this crisis. This includes services to financially vulnerable people who work in industries without sick leave &/or health care; homeless people; and health-challenged vulnerable people. Grants are intended to complement the work of public health officials and expand local capacity to address acute needs of the outbreak as efficiently as possible. These grants are NOT of the scale to support larger public institutions that are strained by increased demand for services. Examples of the types of nonprofits in most need of Front Line Grant Support, as service numbers rise: community-based health clinics; food bank & food pantries; meal delivery programs; homelessness programs.

- **Service-Challenged Grants** fund nonprofits that are modifying their in-person service delivery modes extremely rapidly due to COVID-19, and need assistance to do so. These nonprofits likely need additional assistance to upgrade sanitation protocols and obtain cleaning supplies & service personnel. This includes: youth centers, recreation centers, child care, senior services, adult day care, community-based education programs.

- **Collateral Damage Grants** fund nonprofits facing extreme difficulty because of lost revenue due to closures and cancellations, as well as other challenges.
COVID-19 Rapid Response
Mini-Grant Letter of Request

Date: April 1, 2020

Contact Information
Organization Name: Association for the Colonial Theatre
ED/CEO Name: Ken L. Metzner
Address: 227 Bridge Street, Phoenixville, PA 19460
ED/CEO E-mail: ken@thecolonialtheatre.com
Phone: (610) 917-1228
Board Chair Name: Marian Moskowitz
Website: www.thecolonialtheatre.com
Primary Contact Name: Emily Simmons
FEIN: 23-2846336
Primary Contact E-mail: emily@thecolonialtheatre.com

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)
   Patrons hail from across Chester County for film, concerts, and special events, as well as from within Montgomery and Delaware counties and the greater Philadelphia region. The annual Blobfest and live concerts and comedy shows draw visitors from beyond these locales – even from out of state.

2. What population is served, what has been the impact of COVID-19, and how has your nonprofit responded?
   Populations served: The Colonial welcomes the general public to its iconic Phoenixville venue. Last year, the Colonial entertained, inspired, and informed over 73,000 individuals; over 7,000 (~10% of total attendance) of these patrons enjoyed free admission. These were individuals utilizing tickets to community events distributed and hosted by other social service providers and nonprofits; children, guardians, and caretakers visiting for free summer concerts; and patrons visiting for free films. In addition to distributing thousands of tickets annually, the Colonial Theatre also facilitates reduced rate arts event rentals for area nonprofits through its new Sparks Project and partners with Phoenixville Hospital’s Senior Circle to offer reduced admission to Wednesday features and Sunday classics.

   Impact of COVID-19: The indefinite closure of the non-profit Colonial Theatre has decimated cash flow. The vast majority (approximately 70%) of the theatre’s revenues come from attendance-driven programs: films, live arts, events, concessions, and rentals. Our inability to serve patrons on-site also depresses income from screen advertising, sponsorship, and grants restricted to programming. In the first week of the Colonial’s closure, the theatre also had to refund over $30,000 in tickets to upcoming concerts and films that were cancelled or postponed. Since the Colonial Theatre closed on March 13, contributions have been the sole source of cash flow. Individual donors, including our Board, theatre patrons and members have responded to our direct solicitations during this crisis appeal. The Colonial has not yet received any emergency relief from the government or private grant makers, but it is carefully reviewing all available funding opportunities and applying where eligible. These potential sources include the SBA convertible loan.

   In a typical month, the Colonial Theatre sells thousands of tickets. Those thousands of patrons spend additional dollars on concessions when they visit - and at small businesses in the surrounding community. Though the Colonial is not a direct service provider like our non-profit peers, we play a critical role in the local economy that is now on indefinite hold: one that will be vitally important to the economic and community recovery process after stay-at-home orders are lifted. Visitors to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations spend an average of over $30 per person at surrounding businesses. This undoubtedly helped Phoenixville recover from Phoenix Steel’s closure several decades ago, and it can assist again - but only if we are able to ensure operational continuity. Of course, the emotional and mental benefits of the arts are well-documented and can also help rebuild morale when we regain direct social contact.

   Colonial Theatre’s Response
   As mentioned, the Colonial Theatre launched a crisis appeal on March 13. In the direct solicitation, mainly conducted by email, we explained the impact of the closure to members, donors, and patrons, and requested their immediate help. To compensate members for the loss of their ability to attend events during the closure, membership expiration dates will be extended. This will negatively impact future cashflow. Hourly employees, namely box office and concession staff with
variable schedules, received a final paycheck consisting of all hours for which they had been scheduled for the pay period following our closure. Salaried office staff and house management continue to be paid and are working remotely to address administrative, development, marketing, and governance tasks. There have been no major changes to policies or infrastructure necessitated by the stay-at-home orders, except as they pertain to the total cessation of programming.

Virtual marketing and programming strategies, like online watch parties of films in the public domain or select on-demand films (Best of Cat Video Fest, Fantastic Fungi) are being offered via social media to maintain some level of patron engagement. Some film distributors have begun to offer new feature film releases on demand but because the suspension of programs is indefinite and the Colonial’s very existence relies on physical attendance, we are not currently offering tickets to experience new film releases at home. We would rather avoid habituating streaming, since 'community' is central to the Colonial Theatre's mission to nurture community by celebrating the power of film and the performing arts to entertain, inform, and reveal meaning. As of the date of this submission, we plan to put only recurring annual films on sale beginning with the fall Rocky Horror Picture Show event in October, which is an annual sell-out. The Borough of Phoenixville has cancelled its events through mid-May, possibly signaling a more distant endpoint to the stay-at-home orders. The Colonial puts tickets on sale for its annual Blobfest event at the end of May. The much-anticipated event attracts thousands to the Borough of Phoenixville and netted $31,000 for the Colonial in 2019. Several new programs - including one that directly benefits social service providers and small nonprofits called the Sparks Project - have been indefinitely suspended.

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?

The Colonial Theatre is seeking at least $5,000 through this mini-grant opportunity. This is about 10% of the over $50,000 needed to cover one month of current operations during the COVID19 closure (i.e., without in-person film, live arts, or events). The figure includes utilities, staff salaries and benefits, insurance, donation and membership databases and expenses to ensure the facility and its delicate projection systems are properly maintained for our eventual re-opening. The monthly amount also includes interest payments on a loan required to complete the facility expansion into the adjoining bank building. Funding provided will be used for these specified expenses as it is received, to ensure continuity of operations and the Colonial Theatre’s eventual, successful re-opening.

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.