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)**
   All of Chester County

2. **What population is served, what has been the impact of COVID-19, and how has your nonprofit responded?**
   Easterseals provides Early Intervention Evaluation services to families with children birth to three years of age to determine, using measurable criteria, the eligibility of a child for Early Intervention services funded by the Chester County Office of Mental Health/Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities. Evaluations are performed to determine the eligibility for services of a child by a single professional capable of addressing all developmental areas or a team of professionals usually consisting of two or more professionals representing education, physical therapy, occupational therapy and/or speech therapy. Evaluations are conducted using established testing tools to determine the functional skills and developmental levels of the child in all areas, and helps identify specific family strengths and needs.

   It is critical for children to receive evaluations in a timely manner to maximize developmental gains should a child be deemed eligible for ongoing Early Intervention Services. If a child is determined to be eligible for services, Easterseals provides a comprehensive recommendation for the type of intervention and assistance in development of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Without this evaluation services may not be provided and critical time will be lost in intervention. With proper intervention early in life children will gain greater functional capabilities, reduce the need for services later in life and have a greater opportunity to cognitively and developmentally “catch-up” to their peers before kindergarten.

   The COVID-19 crisis has ended all in-person evaluations. Easterseals provided immediate response to this pandemic by putting into action our contingency plan for virtual evaluation services. By March 19th we had presented this plan to our partners at the Chester County Office of Mental Health/Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities and on March 23rd we provided our first Early Intervention Evaluation to a Chester County Family. We have since trained additional staff on Go-To-Meeting (our preferred virtual service delivery platform), adjusted evaluation methods to suit a variety of home environments, and continued to share best practices and resources to maximize our ability to provide evaluations in a comprehensive, timely and effective manner.

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?**
   Easterseals is seeking $5,000 to support continued implementation of virtual services and employment of our staff members residing in Chester County (12 individuals). While we are providing services it is unclear what the rate of reimbursement will be, how many referrals will be received, how many families will accept a virtual evaluation and what the needs of sustaining virtual evaluations will be. Due to the uncertainty of referrals and demands for services we are sustaining current staffing levels. Easterseals has continued to pay and provide full benefits for all full and part-time staff.
We believe that in order to provide quality services to the community we must ensure quality of life for our staff – in a time of crisis this meant ensuring continued employment and not further straining public resources for as long as possible. We are working to identify ways to engage staff in productive activities such as virtual training to secure Continuing Education Credits, compliance seminars and prep-work for fall programming so that we can supplement the time they are not working directly with families. This grant would help support any costs associated with these additional activities.

We were confident in our ability to provide comprehensive virtual evaluations; by keeping our staff employed and ready to serve we were able to respond to the needs of Chester County swiftly. Easterseals has an approximately $20,000,000 operating budget for FY 2019-2020; Chester County evaluations make up 2.75% ($547,658) of our overall operating budget.

Please email 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.
Beth, Steph, Cierra or Kevin will answer you.