

I. OPEN HEARTH GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

One page only.

Date 3/27/20

Contact Information

Open Hearth Inc.

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610-792-9282, x202

Website: www.openhearthinc.org

Year Incorporated: 1991

FEIN: 23-2652023

Executive Director Name: Kelly Raggazino

Executive Director E-mail: kraggazino@openhearthinc.org

Board of Directors Chair Name: Edwin Santiago

Primary Contact Name: Kelly Raggazino

Primary Contact E-mail: kraggazino@openhearthinc.org

Has your nonprofit ever applied to the Community Foundation? **Yes X** No__ Not Sure__

Has your nonprofit ever received funding from the Community Foundation? **Yes X** No__ Not Sure__

Donor Advised Fund(s) Fund for Chester County ___ Don't know/Not sure

Field/s of Interest:

___ Arts, Culture & Humanities

___ Environment/Animal Welfare

___ Education

___ Health

X Human Services

___ Religion

Organization Information:

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served):

All of Chester County and portions of Montgomery County

Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served: Open Hearth serves members of our community who are the most vulnerable, including single parents, displaced families, and those coping with mental health diagnoses as well as drug and alcohol dependency. Our clients come from diverse racial, cultural, and geographic backgrounds. Our programs served 659 individuals in 2019. In addition, we responded to over 400 information and referral calls.

Mission: Open Hearth, Inc., a leader in resource coordination and community building efforts, provides innovative programs to support and empower people to end the cycle of homelessness, acquire affordable housing, a means of transportation, workforce opportunities, and achieve financial viability.

Proposal Summary:

Open Hearth is requesting \$10,000 to fund efforts to end chronic homelessness in Chester County. These funds will be utilized for two of our programs—our Targeted Homelessness Resource Coordination Program and our Continuum of Care Permanent Supportive Housing Program.

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is: N/A

Annual Budget \$1.95 M

93 % of budget for program expenses

4.5 % of budget for administrative expenses

2.5 % of budget for fundraising expenses

100 % total

12 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

7 # of Board Volunteers

14 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

423 # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Chester County Department of Community Development, The United Way of Chester County, The Community Coalition, and Phoenixville Community Health Foundation

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$10,000

II. OPEN HEARTH GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

3 pages maximum

1. Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

Open Hearth, Inc. was originally formed in 1989 as a local grassroots committee to assure equal housing opportunities. We were incorporated as an independent nonprofit organization in 1991. We believe our greatest strengths are staying abreast of emerging issues and best practices and then developing programs and effective partnerships to meet the needs of the community we serve. Because of this, we have expanded our services to include asset building, financial education and coaching, transportation solutions, and robust resource coordination. Our core belief is that the answer lies in prevention and education. Open Hearth has taken a strong and dedicated leadership position in the community regarding housing, quality of life and financial stability. We have been an active participant and collaborator in **Decade to Doorways** (Chester County's 10-year plan to end homelessness) since its inception. In 2018 our Executive Director was asked to chair Decade to Doorways' Governance Board. She also chairs **Phoenixville Area Cross-Systems Partnership** and serves on the **Phoenixville Council of Affordable Housing**. Open Hearth staff also serve on multiple community advisory boards and committees. The following is a description of a few of our programs—The award-winning **Financial Insight and Resource Management program (FIRM)** is a comprehensive assessment program centered on financial education which is designed to help individuals and families gain basic awareness of their financial situation and oftentimes discover the root cause of their financial hardship. The **Family Savings Partner Program (FSP)** is the only county-wide asset development program to support the financial viability of individuals and families as they plan for their future. FSP provides a match of a family's savings to be used toward the purchase of an asset goal such as a car, post-secondary education, or a first home. Our **Financial Navigator** serves as a point of entry for the United Way of Chester County Financial Stability Center, providing resource coordination and financial coaching. The **Phoenixville Area Resource Network (PARN)** is a monthly drop-in networking meeting for staff from local social service agencies, created and administered by Open Hearth for over 13 years. We have published six editions, and distributed over 260,000 copies, of the popular **Help Book: A Health and Human Services Guide**, in partnership with the Phoenixville Community Health Foundation.

2. Funding request

Description of key initiatives

Open Hearth is requesting \$10,000 to fund our efforts to end chronic homelessness in Chester County. These funds will be utilized to support two of our programs—our Targeted Homelessness Resource Coordination Program and our Continuum of Care Permanent Supportive Housing Program. In 2017, Chester County contracted with the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) to provide guidance and recommendations to support the work of the Decade to Doorways (D2D) Partnership, which is charged with implementing the community plan to prevent and end homelessness in the County. NAEH made several recommendations in their report, one of them being to create a strategy to end chronic homelessness in the County. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines chronic homelessness as a household headed by someone with a documented disability who also has either a history of homelessness that is 12 consecutive months long or who has experienced 4 or more instances of homelessness over the past 3 years (that also total 12 months). NAEH was confident that not only was the chronically homeless population in the County manageable, but the County also had the resources to end chronic homelessness within a few years, reaching a standard called functional zero. Functional zero is defined as when the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness in a community is zero, or if not zero, either 3 or .1% of the total number of individuals reported in the most recent point-in-time count, whichever is greater. In an effort to reach the goal of ending chronic homelessness, Open Hearth, in close partnership with Chester County's Department of Community Development and various other community

providers, established the **Targeted Homelessness Resource Coordination Program**. As of January 2020, Open Hearth's employee, Amber Campman, filled the new, full-time, Targeted Homelessness Resource Coordinator (THRC) position. She is responsible for creating, managing and overseeing the County's by-name list and resource coordination efforts. A by-name list is a real-time, up-to-date list of all people experiencing homelessness - unsheltered and sheltered - which is generated with data from street outreach and the county's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). More communities have begun implementing this strategy to end chronic homelessness after several have cited by-name lists as playing a major role in their achievement of ending veteran homelessness.

To ensure that we have a system in place that is able to accurately track everyone who is experiencing homelessness in our community in real time, we are partnering with Community Solutions, a nonprofit that developed a program called Built for Zero, a "rigorous national change effort working to help a core group of committed communities end veteran and chronic homelessness". Built for Zero supports communities in developing real time data sets of people experiencing homelessness, optimizing local housing resources, tracking progress against monthly goals, and accelerating the dissemination of proven strategies. As a partnering agency, Open Hearth has access to Built for Zero data coaches that can help us guarantee data reliability. We will also have access to their team's expertise, keeping us abreast of proven best practices and generating data to evidence the need for deploying existing resources more efficiently. Additionally, we will attend their learning sessions, which occur three times per year, that offer focused support from the Built for Zero team and federal partners from HUD, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) and Veteran Affairs (VA). To date, with Built for Zero's support, three communities have measurably and sustainably ended chronic homelessness and 33 communities are driving measurable reductions in homelessness, month over month. The role of the Targeted Homelessness Resource Coordinator (THRC) includes the following responsibilities:

1. **Manage the data:** the THRC and the County's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Program Coordinator will work closely together to review the inflow of individuals and households that have been verified as experiencing homelessness and ensure that the County's HMIS data is then fed to the Built for Zero data system.
2. **Oversee case conferencing:** the THRC will organize and host weekly (at minimum) case conferences with service providers across multiple service systems as identified by the Ending Chronic Homelessness Workgroup. The permanent supportive housing resources in Chester County are not infinite, and thus we will rely on our existing prioritization tools and these weekly case conferences to target these valuable resources for those who need them the most.
3. **Chair the D2D Ending Chronic Homelessness workgroup**, which is comprised of leaders of key cross-system partners including Brandywine Hospital as well as Chester County's Departments of Aging, Community Development, Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol and Adult Probation & Parole. The workgroup is tasked with implementing systemic changes in services and housing program protocol(s) to better serve those who meet chronic homelessness criteria.
4. With coaching from Built for Zero, **complete the federal application** to verify that Chester County has effectively ended chronic homelessness.

With Open Hearth managing the county-wide effort to identify and serve those experiencing chronic homelessness, we are able to target and coordinate entry to the County's largest housing resource for this population – the **Continuum of Care Permanent Supportive Housing Program (CoC)**. Support is still needed to fully fund a critical piece of the CoC program—the Supportive Services Coordinator position. CoC is a federal housing program funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The CoC

program serves individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness and have a documented disability. In Chester County, the CoC funds are used to provide tenant-based rental subsidies to participants who rent independently throughout the county. The program is designed to target those with the most barriers to finding permanent housing and to address chronic homelessness. These individuals and households primarily include those with serious and persistent mental illness, chronic use of alcohol and/or drugs, and HIV/AIDS or other disabling physical health conditions. Most households have extremely low incomes, and guidelines do not exclude anyone from being accepted into the program based on criminal background, credit history or eviction history. Open Hearth began serving as the administrator of the CoC program in November of 2016 when Chester County's Department of Community Development awarded this contract to our organization. Since then, approximately 80 households annually have been fully managed by one Open Hearth staff person, the Permanent Housing Program Coordinator (PHPC). The PHPC's responsibilities include verifying program eligibility; monthly processing of rent and utility checks; monthly invoicing; adjusting rent based on participant income; and annually recertifying household income, updating fair market rents and performing inspections on all units.

Historically, all participants who were referred into the CoC program worked with an ongoing service provider related to their disability. As of 2019, approximately 50% of participants in the CoC program remained involved with a supportive service provider, yet multiple participant crises occurred within the households that Open Hearth served over the past few years. Open Hearth continues to successfully administer this program, but we learned from our experience that the Permanent Housing Program Coordinator (PHPC) position does not have the capacity to also provide the much-needed case management and resource coordination for those served. For this reason, we established the full-time CoC Supportive Services Coordinator (SSC) position in September of 2019. The SSC, Laura Davis, provides supportive services to participants and prospective participants in the CoC program. The SSC works closely with the PHPC to offer an array of resource coordination and case management services directly related to housing stability, which aligns with best practices for the supports offered in permanent supportive housing projects nationwide. These services are individualized based on the needs of each household or individual and, based on best practices, are guided by the program participant, who exercises choice in the types of services offered to them, the goals they work towards, and how frequently they meet with the SSC. The SSC's annual goal is to help 25 participants in crisis remain housed. Furthermore, the SSC is actively working with the PHPC to implement the "Move On" strategy which is designed to create more movement and openings within the CoC program and to ensure that the program is continuing to serve the most vulnerable. Currently 26 CoC households have been identified as having potential to move on. The move on goal for this year is 10, since criminal histories typically eliminate some candidates for Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8 vouchers) provided by the Housing Authority. A shift in how new applicants are identified for CoC, where they are no longer required to be referred in by their supportive service provider, means that as we continue to accept new applicants to the program, some of the most vulnerable members of our community will not be involved with any supportive services or community resources that can help them find stability within their housing. They may or may not have the knowledge, ability or desire to connect to these resources without support from within the housing program structure itself, making the role of the SSC all the more vital to reaching the goal of ending chronic homelessness in Chester County.

Funding is urgently needed because the CoC program is at full capacity. Without full funding for her position, the SSC will be unable to continue working with participants to move them on to other housing options. That means there won't be room to accept any currently homeless individuals into this program; the program that is designed to end chronic homelessness.

III. ATTACHMENTS

1. Copy of 501 (c) (3) federal tax-exempt letter
2. List of Board of Directors, with their affiliations
3. Most recent annual report (N/A) and financial statement, audited if available
4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year and current fiscal year to date
5. If capacity building initiative, itemized budget (including external consultant's proposal, if applicable)
6. Current strategic plan. If your nonprofit does not have a current strategic plan, explain why.