

# I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

**One page only.** This page will be shared electronically with Grant Committee Members & Fund Advisors.

Note: If Philanthropy Network of Greater Philadelphia's Common Grant Application is used, the Community Foundation's

**Summary Sheet MUST accompany application.**

To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit [www.chescocf.org](http://www.chescocf.org)

**Date: 7/20/20**

## Contact Information

Organization Name: Friends Association for Care & Protection of Children

Executive Director/CEO Name: Jennifer Lopez

Address: 113 West Chestnut St.,

West Chester, PA 19380

Phone: 610-431-3598 ext.222

Website: [www.friendsassoc.org](http://www.friendsassoc.org)

Year Incorporated: 1939

FEIN: 23-1381006

Executive Director/CEO E-mail: [lopez@friendsassoc.org](mailto:lopez@friendsassoc.org)

Board of Directors Chair Name: Matthew Holliday

Primary Contact Name: Emily McClure

Primary Contact E-mail: [e.mcclure@friendsassoc.org](mailto:e.mcclure@friendsassoc.org)

Has your nonprofit ever applied to the Community Foundation? Yes  No  Not Sure

Has your nonprofit ever received funding from the Community Foundation? Yes  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

Human Services

Religion

## Organization Information:

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

We serve all families with children experiencing or at-risk of homelessness in Chester County.

**Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served:** We serve the most vulnerable families and those with the greatest barriers to permanent housing. Each year 100 or more families, or approximately 350 individuals, are assisted in securing long-term, permanent housing.

**Mission:** Friends Association promotes the independence of families with children by providing shelter, programs and services that prevent and end homelessness in Chester County, PA.

**Proposal Summary:** Friends Association seeks funding to establish Chester County's first Eviction Prevention Court (EPC) Pilot program to address the upcoming wave of evictions stemming from the COVID-19 crisis.

## **If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:**

Mission, Vision & Strategy  Governance & Leadership  Strategic Relationships

Fundraising & Development  Technology Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Annual Budget** \$ 1,087,489

8 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

81 % of budget for program expenses

14 # of Board Volunteers

9 % of budget for administrative expenses

700 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

10 % of budget for fundraising expenses

5,000 # of Volunteer Hours

100 % total

**Top 3-5 funding sources:** Chester County Dept. of Comm. Dev., United Way of Chester County, foundation grants, fundraising events.

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



**Chester County Community Foundation**  
**Grant Proposal FY2021- Eviction Prevention Court (EPC) Pilot Program**

Friends Association is the longest running child welfare non-profit organization in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and has its roots in Quaker tradition. Beginning in 1822, a group of abolitionist women in Philadelphia came together to dedicate resources toward providing a home for children who had lost their parents, many as a result of being held captive and enslaved. Throughout the years, the organization has changed and evolved but has always focused on the protection of children and on recognizing the inherent value of each member of society.

Beginning in 2010, Friends began to focus its mission entirely on ending family homelessness in Chester County. Friends currently provides programs and services that prevent homelessness and promote the independence of families with children. We are unique in that we focus on keeping families together during times of crisis while connecting them with highly personalized case management, community resources, and skill-building. We support all families experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness in Chester County structured as they are when we meet them, including single moms and dads, two-parent, multi-generational, grandparent, and LGBTQ+ families.

The overarching goal of Friends' programming is to make homelessness for families in our community rare, brief and non-recurring by providing emergency shelter for families who have lost their homes, and through prevention programs that keep families stably housed while providing essential wrap-around services. Friends provides *Trauma-Informed Care* that acknowledges the widespread, long-term impacts of trauma and responds by integrating knowledge about trauma into all policies and practices.

A *Housing First Approach* means we ensure families achieve safe, stable housing as quickly as possible and without preconditions. Once stability is achieved, Housing Navigators work with each family to develop strategies to reach personal goals.

To ensure that we disrupt the intergenerational cycle of poverty, Friends implements a *2-Generation* model of service delivery. The core components of this whole-family focused approach include: creating peer and family networks; coaching; supporting early learning opportunities; creating employment pathways; mental, physical and behavioral health coverage; asset building and financial independence. This approach builds a legacy of economic security that passes from one generation to the next. It is our vision to provide these services to all vulnerable families throughout our community.

**Funding Request:**

According to the AP, data projects that 28 million renters are at risk of eviction because of the impact of COVID-19. Tenant advocates expect that number to increase significantly unless protections are put in place, and project that many of those affected will be African Americans and households led by women, both of which historically are more likely to be evicted.

In 2019, there were 2,504 Landlord Tenant filings across Chester County and 899 Orders of Possession Entered. The highest number of filings were made in District Court 15-4-02 and the most Orders entered in District Court 15-1-05. The moratorium on eviction is set to be lifted on August 31, 2020 in Pennsylvania. Based on high unemployment rates and the reduction of work hours, Chester County will be facing a wave of evictions that will ultimately place an enormous burden on social service agencies and the community at large.

Friends Association will launch an Eviction Prevention Court (EPC) Pilot program that will mitigate and address the significant and devastating impact that evictions have on vulnerable populations and those living in poverty. There is currently no program in Chester County that can provide both financial assistance and legal representation to prevent evictions.

**The Solution:**

The EPC Pilot program will be designed to stabilize vulnerable families and individuals in one District Court jurisdiction (15-4-02) who are facing eviction by providing them with free legal and social services support on the day of their eviction hearing. Additionally, the program will provide financial assistance to prevent evictions and connections to long-term financial and social supports needed to stabilize housing. The EPC program will initiate in one District Magisterial Court (15-4-02) and expand in a phased rollout throughout the county.

Essential components of successful court-based programs across the country include:

- Day-of, onsite services
- Access to financial assistance
- Access to staff trained in local landlord-tenant law

**Target Population:**

- Individuals or family scheduled to appear in MDJ#15-4-02 for a hearing;
- Household income must be at or below 50% Area Median Income (AMI);
- The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to maintain permanent housing;

**Proposed Process:**

Prior to Hearing:

- Pilot Magisterial District Court will select one day per week (i.e. Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m.) to schedule landlord-tenant hearings.
- Written notification of EPC pilot program is included as an attachment in the hearing notification to all persons receiving an eviction notice from MDJ#15-4-02

Day of Hearing:

- Court staff will provide basic information on EPC pilot program to all tenants checking in. Judge will hear cases for which no tenants have appeared in court first.
- Friends Association staff will screen tenants who are present in Court and interested in the program. Screening will include:
  - Reason for eviction and any documentation and evidence that the tenant brought to court;
  - For nonpayment of rent, staff will review reason for nonpayment and future ability to pay rent, tenant's ability to pay arrearages and whether EPC financial assistance would be sufficient to prevent eviction;
  - For violation of lease cases, staff will briefly interview client regarding circumstances of the violation;
  - A social service eligibility determination
- EPC Attorney will review the completed screening and conduct a free, short-term (10 minute) legal consultation with the tenant. The purpose of the consultation is to assess the case and any counterclaims, and prepare a negotiation or defense, which may include any or a combination of the following:

- Reduction in arrearages or fees
- Pay and stay terms
- Vacate without eviction
- Other as appropriate
- EPC Attorney will meet with the Landlord/Property Manager to confirm amount of rent due and to negotiate an agreement prior to the hearing.
- While the attorney is meeting with the Landlord, Friends staff will meet one-on-one with the tenant to complete a Housing Stability Plan and follow-up plan, which may include referrals to supportive services such as:
  - Financial counseling, credit repair
  - Employment services
  - Childcare subsidy services
  - Health and behavioral health services
  - Domestic Violence services
  - Veteran services
  - Other legal services

#### Hearing:

- The attorney presents case and any negotiated mediation/settlement to the Court. Judge reaches determination on case and mails notification of judgment to landlord, tenant, and Friends staff.
- An EPC Payment Letter and Agreement Letter (if the tenant is offered financial assistance) outlining the amount of financial assistance and the agreed upon payment terms between the tenant, landlord, and Friends Association. Copies are provided to the tenant and landlord.

#### Follow-Up:

- Friends staff will work with the tenant for at least 90 days following the hearing to ensure the following:
  - Tenant connected with supportive services as identified in Housing Stability Plan;
  - Tenant is complying with terms of agreement (payment plan)
  - Make additional referrals for more intensive social services/supports as needed.

#### Community-Wide Benefits:

The proposed EPC Pilot program will have benefits for tenants, landlord, courts, and the community at large.

- Tenants receive needed assistance with eviction support and housing stability.
- Landlords receive assistance with a streamlined approach to eviction and will have the opportunity to recuperate lost financial revenue by working with tenants on payment solutions.
- Courts will receive support from the EPC program and over time, as the program expands, we hope to see a reduced number of eviction cases filed, resulting in improved use of county and court resources and an improved community confidence in the Justice System.
- Chester County will see a strong return on investment (studies show up to \$12+ per every \$1 invested in eviction prevention programs) and stabilize community members as it rebuilds from a devastating financial crisis.
- The pilot will be scaled to additional Magisterial District Courts in a phased process pending outcomes.