

Contact Information

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City, State Zip: Coatesville, PA 19320	Board Chair Name: Richard Saylor
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EIN: 23-2040210	Grant \$ Amount Requested: \$50,000
Year Founded: 1977	

In filing this application, the nonprofit certifies that it complies with all federal, state & local laws, including taxation; complies with current public health guidelines; and complies with coronavirus pandemic phased reopening restrictions.

Agreed by: 	Date: 10/30/2020
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Nonprofit Field/s of Interest

Arts, Culture & Historic Preservation	Education	Health
Community Development	Environment & Animal Welfare	x Human Services

Figures	Current	PRE-COVID (as of 1/1/20)
Annual Operating Budget	\$607,529*	\$425,000
Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff	#6	#4
# Board Volunteers	#18	#18
# Committee Volunteers	#0	#25
# Active Direct Service Volunteers	#10	#100
Annual Volunteer Hours	#2,000	#8,000

Funding: Please indicate if your nonprofit has received funding from any of these regional sources over the past few years. We will invite them to review this funding request.

x	ChesCo Comm Fdtn	x	Brandywine Health Fdtn	x	United Way ChesCo	ChesCo Dept Comm Devel
	ChesCo Fund/W&Girls		Phoenixville Comm Health Fdtn		United Way S ChesCo	ChesCo Dept Health
x	Other significant funders: Chester County Department of Aging Services					ChesCo Dept Human Svcs

*Working with the Chester County Department of Aging Services, Coatesville Area Senior Center has moved the congregate lunch program in-house giving Chef the opportunity to plan, source, and prepare menus that are culturally inclusive, and when possible, promoting fresh, local ingredients. This significant change to the program structure increases organizational revenue as the Chester County Department of Aging Services will reimburse Coatesville Area Senior Center for meals rather than outsourcing this service to a private vendor.

Our Mission

To provide a welcoming place where persons 50 and better can socialize and enhance their ability to live fulfilling and healthy lives.

Background

The senior center as we know it today was first introduced in New York City in 1943 to provide social activities, nutritious meals, and case management services to adults aged 60 and older, particularly those with low incomes. Seventy-seven years later, senior centers are recognized as one of the most widely utilized services supported by the Older Americans Act of 1965. An estimated 11,000 senior centers are helping millions of older adults from all walks of life to continue to thrive in their communities.

Today's successful senior centers are evolving to reflect a new view on aging – one that empowers the people they serve. Senior centers are connecting older adults with meaningful employment and volunteer opportunities, increasing access to valuable benefits and resources, and developing evidence-based program to help older adults manage their health and finances.

Coatesville Area Senior Center (CASC) was founded in 1977. The first location was the third floor of a downtown bank on Lincoln Highway in the City of Coatesville. Here, 'meals together' would inspire a formal senior center program. In 1981, the now incorporated Coatesville Area Senior Adult Center would purchase a centrally located, two-story building along North 5th Avenue. Through fundraising, a two-story addition, facility improvements, and the installation of an elevator would expand the footprint of the facility. North 5th Avenue would be home to CASC for more than 25-years. A unique opportunity would present itself in 2015, and soon CASC, working with the County of Chester, would acquire and renovate the former Pennsylvania Unemployment building located at 3rd Avenue and Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. In 2016, CASC would open the doors to this new, state-of-the-art building, where services would grow to reach nearly 120 individuals per day.

Downingtown Area Senior Center (DASC) originated in 1974 as a 'meals together' program. At its birth, four seniors would meet weekly in the original Downingtown United Methodist Church for a noon meal and light social time. As the popularity of the program grew, the need for a formal senior center was realized, and soon the Downingtown Area Senior Center would form. Moving with the Downingtown United Methodist Church, the church would serve as the home of DASC for more than 25years. In April 2002, DASC purchased 983 East Lancaster Avenue. The new, 5,000 square foot facility would be home to DASC until 2018 when DASC would sell its real estate to reduce costs and streamline efficiency. Today, DASC operates out of Thorndale United Methodist Church.

In August, Coatesville Area Senior Center was approached by Downingtown Area Senior Center with a request to partner to stabilize the Downingtown Area Senior Center. After careful consideration, it was determined that Coatesville Area Senior Center was best positioned to grow its geographic service area to include the communities served by the current Downingtown Area Senior Center. The proposed expansion of services, and consolidation of organizations, is endorsed by the Chester County Department of Aging Services and the Chester County Department of Human Services and includes the reassignment of contract funds originally awarded to Downingtown Area Senior Center to be transferred to Coatesville Area Senior Center.

To best serve the unique needs of two different geographic regions, Coatesville Area Senior Center believes it to be in the best interest of the organization to rename and rebrand. Recently, Coatesville Area Senior Center filed name reservation paperwork with the Pennsylvania Department of State as the board considers Brandywine Valley Active Aging (BVAA) with campuses offered in Coatesville, Downingtown, and virtually.

Our Geographic Service Area

Effective January 1, 2021, Brandywine Valley Active Aging (BVAA), formerly, Coatesville and Downingtown Area Senior Centers will serve the municipalities located within and around the Coatesville and Downingtown Area School Districts. Brandywine Valley Active Aging will offer two physical campuses; Coatesville and Downingtown and will continue to offer its virtual programming through the establishment of a Virtual Campus.

The Population We Serve

Brandywine Valley Active Aging will provide programs and services to nearly 3,000 adults who are primarily age 50 and older. These individuals are generally the most vulnerable due to income, health, and other socio-economic issues.

The Impact of COVID on the Population Served

While Covid-19 has changed the way senior centers provide services, at Coatesville Area Senior Center there has been no significant change in the number of individuals served. Though the physical facility remains closed for group activities, attendance in the drive-thru meal program, the information and assistance program, and the newly introduced virtual programs has kept average daily attendance at 115 individuals per day. Covid-19 has introduced new individuals to the services available and has displaced those who relied on community transportation options. For those who are not able to attend, Coatesville Area Senior Center staff remain in frequent contact.

What has been the impact of Covid-19, and how has your nonprofit responded?

The consequences of Covid-19 extend beyond the obvious, the closure of the physical facility, to the consequential impacts on fundraising (the mandate for large group gatherings negates most fundraising initiatives). Additionally, the organization has continued its strategic planning efforts, and while the final plan is not yet available, many of the results are being used as a tool to guide decision making while facing the current economic and health crisis. The board of directors and leadership, through careful planning and targeted fundraising, have been able to retain and grow staff to ensure the continuation of critical services (meals and information & assistance) and to implement new methods of program and service delivery (virtual programming and in-house congregate meal preparation).

What would be the community impact of this anticipated funding? Why is it important to fund this now?

With exception to individuals 65 and older, Pennsylvania is a slow-growing state. Of the nearly 13 million people who call Pennsylvania home, 18.7% are persons over the age of 65. In Chester County, with a population approaching 525,000, 16.3% are persons over the age of 65 (nearly 85,000). For more than 40-years, Chester County has been home to at least six (independent) senior community centers located in the population centers of Coatesville, Downingtown, Kennett Square, Oxford, Phoenixville, and West Chester.

Prior to Covid-19, an estimated 10-million older adults received one or more services from senior centers throughout the country. Understandably, the Coronavirus pandemic has resulted in the closure (temporary, we hope) of many senior centers across the nation, the commonwealth, and here in Chester County. Despite the growth of the older adult population, senior centers have faced a static, and in many cases, falling attendance rate. Keeping senior centers relevant during the pandemic, and planning for their organizational health in a post-pandemic environment has become a top priority for leadership teams at senior centers across the country.

Both Coatesville and Downingtown Area Senior Centers have endured struggles throughout their organizational life cycles. While the future of Downingtown Area Senior Center seemed uncertain, recent success at Coatesville Area Senior Center, including increased attendance, program expansion, and stabilized funding

(even during the Coronavirus pandemic), has positioned the organization to consider and evaluate the following in preparing for the future:

- **Market Saturation:** many of the programs and beneficiaries of CASC and DASC overlap in the communities served especially with the proximity of the current physical locations
- **Competitive Capacity:** informal collaboration (shared management) would make fundraising and communications strategies complex, competitive, and difficult to ensure equitability
- **Relevance:** both pre- and post-Covid fundraising, program development, and service delivery will be/have been challenging; particularly for DASC
- **Growth and Stability:** CASC believes it is well-respected and well-positioned which would allow CASC to strengthen and stabilize services to the Downingtown service-area

Use of Funds

Funds awarded will be used to recruit and retain a full-time Associate Director of Communications and Events and to create communications and marketing collateral.

Many nonprofits make the mistake of assuming that branding and brand awareness are reserved to commercial ventures such as Amazon, Coca-Cola, and Nike. However, like their for-profit counterparts, nonprofits should employ similar marketing and branding strategies. While BVAA does not aspire to attain global brand recognition, BVAA must increase its awareness and engagement with our local communities to ensure recognition, relevance, and recruitment (of each target audience).

To achieve our goals, BVAA must develop and utilize a communications and marketing plan that aligns with promoting the organization's mission and work. In the development of this strategy, BVAA must consider a target audience that includes business and community leaders, donors, elected officials, funders, volunteers, and most of all, those served.

BVAA will benefit from expertise in articulating our story in a consistent, yet innovative manner, describing our impact, captivating our audience, and drive support for the organization.

The selected candidate will be responsible for the development and implementation of a marketing and communications plan, the design of collateral, and the mentoring of the leadership team in the implementation and maintenance of the communications and marketing plan. Additionally, the individual will be responsible for planning and implementing the agency's annual Golf Outing and Moo & Brew fundraisers.

Innovation and Resiliency

Throughout the pandemic, Coatesville Area Senior Center has demonstrated adaptivity and innovation in the delivery of service. From drive-thru meal programs, to socially distanced outdoor events, and the implementation of virtual programming, CASC has focused on a return to core principles: ensuring older adults are supported with case management assistance; have access to nutritional meals; and provided opportunities for social engagement to ward off social isolation and depression.

The consolidation of the Coatesville and Downingtown Area Senior Centers as Brandywine Valley Active Aging sets the framework to ensure organizational resiliency throughout the pandemic and well into recovery. Strong leadership at the professional and board level provide the stability to position the organization for financial health and future growth. Grant funding will ensure effective communications strategies that will help the organization to attract donors, funders, volunteers, and clients.

It is believed that the consolidation will build:

- ✓ A higher public profile

- ✓ Greater market-share and advocacy
- ✓ Strategic and targeted fundraising
- ✓ Diversification of staff with greater range of skills
- ✓ Strengthened capacity to create new services while improving existing services
- ✓ Organizational effectiveness and efficiency
- ✓ Improved financial position with shared assets and reduced overhead
- ✓ Significantly improved return on investment (ROI) for the County of Chester and other funding sources

Amount of Funding and Budget Comparison

\$50,000 in requested funding equals approximately 8.5% of anticipated expenses.

Timeframe for Use of Funds

The grant award will be used for the 12-month period. At the conclusion of the grant period, the salary would be included in the organizational budget.

Strategic Plan

With funding provided by Chester County Community Foundation, Coatesville Area Senior Center has been working with Angela Greenwald, Ph.D. to complete a 3-year strategic plan. Using a process known as Appreciative Inquiry, Angela brings a strength-based consulting approach to planning. The final plan is anticipated in early 2021. Highlights of planning to date include:

Common Themes:

- Staff and Leadership
 - High-quality leadership exists leadership sets the bar high and walks the talk
 - Staff is very capable, committed, compassionate and passionate
 - Staff should be paid well to be maintained
 - Staff should be supported and appreciated not just for skill but for commitment
 - Investment in staff should include ongoing training and allowance for personal growth
- Volunteerism
 - Existing volunteers feel appreciate and valued
 - Focused recruitment to build volunteerism with specific skills
- CASC is a Beacon of the Community
 - The organization does not just meet, it exceeds expectations (especially during the pandemic)
 - Looked to as a role model
 - Must be expanded to meet needs
 - Collaborative, Flexible, and Responsive
 - Continued efforts at diversification of board, staff, and clientele
- Enhanced External Communications
 - Great work needs greater attention
 - Drive revenue through strong communications (build donor base, attract funders)
 - Make sure the organization is well known and appreciated
- Board Development
 - Board is making advance towards long-term planning
 - Board should consider a business/finance plan to ensure fiscal solvency
 - Board must lead the way to organizational success