



**Chester County Nonprofit  
Innovation & Resiliency Grant  
Application**

**Submitted: October 12, 2020  
By  
Chester County Night School**



28 W. Market Street, Lincoln Biography Building  
West Chester, PA 19382  
610.696.8211 www.chescocf.org



**Chester County Nonprofit  
Innovation & Resiliency Fund  
Grant Request Form**

**Contact Information**

Nonprofit Org Name: Chester County Night School	ED/CEO Name: Jill Johnson/Leslie Heisman
Address: PO Box 40 (temporary)	ED/CEO E-mail: jill@chestercountynightschool.org
City, State Zip: West Chester, PA. 19381	Board Chair Name: Jolene Borgese
Phone: 610-692-4468	Grant Proposal Contact Name: Jill Johnson
Website: chestercountynightschool.org	Grant Proposal Contact E-mail: jill@chestercountynightschool.org
EIN: 23-6278321	Grant \$ Amount Requested: \$50,000
Year Founded: 1955	

*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: Jill Johnson	Date: 10-12-20
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**Nonprofit Field/s of Interest**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arts, Culture & Historic Preservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Health
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Environment & Animal Welfare	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Services

Figures	Current	PRE-COVID (as of 1/1/20)
Annual Operating Budget	\$150,000	\$460,000
Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff	2	# 3
# Board Volunteers	8	# 12
# Committee Volunteers	0	# 25
# Active Direct Service Volunteers	0	#0
Annual Volunteer Hours	25 hours/month	# 4 hours/month

**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.

<input type="checkbox"/> ChesCo Comm Fdn	<input type="checkbox"/> Brandywine Health Fdtn	<input type="checkbox"/> United Way ChesCo	<input type="checkbox"/> ChesCo Dept Comm Devel
<input type="checkbox"/> ChesCo Fund/W&Girls	<input type="checkbox"/> Phoenixville Comm Health Fdtn	<input type="checkbox"/> United Way S ChesCo	<input type="checkbox"/> ChesCo Dept Health
<input type="checkbox"/> Other significant funders: PPP & SBA Loan, Go Fund Me and Benchmark (\$5,000)			<input type="checkbox"/> ChesCo Dept Human Svcs

**Narrative:** In a few concise paragraphs, please explain:

**1. Mission**

**Chester County Night School (CCNS) is dedicated to building a strong community by offering lifelong learning experiences through education, cultural and recreational opportunities to people of all ages and backgrounds.**

Our mission and our culture are to connect people through the common goal of learning together, regardless of a person's age. Learning is social, and interaction with other people is vital to re-energizing oneself – something that is so desperately needed during these challenging times. We as human beings,

whether we are in the workforce or not, have to continue to learn in order to grow. CCNS builds habits of constant learning in all people, starting from pre-school and continuing through a lifetime. Building habits of constant learning is the crux of what we do, and we do it very well. This encompasses four unique strengths that we offer as an organization:

- Programming skills – 500 classes and UNIQUE experiences a semester
- Logistic skills – management of these classes, 200 instructors and 8,000 students annually– we are the size of a small college.
- Marketing skills-We do it all in-house with a staff of 21/2 people - a catalog that reaches the entire county, a database of nearly 30,000 people since the year 2000 and email blasts that reach 10,000 people each time
- Teaching skills. We vet our instructors. Many are former college professors, current public/private school teachers, financial experts, leaders in the community – all with special expertise and experiences they are willing to share - a collective group of experts that we bring together with the common goal of providing lifelong learning

### **Some examples of our success:**

1. We wouldn't have survived for 65 years if we weren't doing something right
2. We have been a pioneer to other community ed groups- many have followed our lead in policies, program ideas and sustainability. As an example, OJR School Board came to us several years ago and asked us to take over their entire program because they recognized us as a leader.
3. We have helped our local schools fulfill their mission of education for all not just for youth.
4. We have involved the community: our classes have come to churches, gyms, yoga studios, long term care facilities (Maris Grove, Sunrise), colleges (Widener), cooking schools, theaters, etc.

### **2. What geographic area is served? (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served)**

All of Chester County – our catalog is distributed to 175,000 Chester County residents twice a year

### **3. What population is served? How have your service numbers been impacted by COVID?**

We serve all ages, genders, races and economic diversities. Our core program is geared towards adults, and demographic studies have shown that our largest number of students are in the 50 and older age range. Our children's after-school and Summer enrichment camp reaches Kindergarten through grade 12 children.

### **4. What has been the impact of COVID-19, and how has your nonprofit responded?**

The year 2020 marked the 65<sup>th</sup> birthday of Chester County Night School. We had plans to celebrate this milestone with an expanded Anniversary catalog, class pricing “rollback”, new programing and expansion into other geographic areas.

Our Spring 2020 semester was targeted to begin in mid-March when the onslaught of COVID-19 cases started hitting the county. In a typical semester, revenue is \$215,000 with 2,700 students. Due to COVID-19, most of our indoor classes were cancelled resulting in \$62,000 revenue and 527 students for the semester. Additionally, in the spirit of good business, we refunded nearly 80% of our income for the semester. Similar results occurred in our Summer semester and our current Fall semester.

Our Board and Staff had to respond urgently to this crisis. We formed a Strategic Planning Committee whose sole purpose was to develop a short-term crisis strategy to keep the organization solvent in the coming months. Additionally, the Board revised our Business Plan to include new strategies for both short and long-term health and sustainability of the organization. An immediate financial audit was conducted by a Financial Advisor from an independent agency to determine cash flow sustainability and future projections if COVID restrictions were to continue.

CCNS was the FIRST community education group in the nation to reach out to our governing organization LERN (Learning Resources Network) recommending that they develop a COVID plan of action. LERN incorporated many of our strategies into their overall national plan for community education, recreation and college adult education programs. Quoted on their website: “We are grateful to Chester County Night School who was the first to recognize the urgency of this problem. Their initial concerns were instrumental in LERN forming a strategic plan to help our members deal with the crisis.”

Since our Spring 2020 semester was beginning when COVID cases were on the rise, our immediate solution was to shift many of our classes from in-person to an online format. However, since our program is based primarily on a social and interactive experience, we were substantially limited in the types of classes that could run on an online platform thereby limiting our major source of income. We developed several solutions:

1. CCNS organized a consortium of other local recreation and adult education agencies. We shared concerns, ideas and strategies. One major achievement was to share online class offerings which:  
a) gave us a more diverse program offering and b) widened our geographic and marketing reach.
2. We partnered with a national online education organization (ed2go) and offered over 100 classes including topics such as: computer skills, languages, writing, music, art, job skills, health and wellness and certification classes such as Paralegal training, Becoming An Optician’s Assistant, Personal Training, and a wide range of other professional certification training.
3. We contacted area nonprofits and local government policy makers and officials to brainstorm ways for ALL of us to survive this crisis.
4. We developed a program called “Adopt A Nonprofit” and submitted the proposal to Benchmark Federal Credit Union for further support. Our goal was to “match” worthy nonprofit organizations with other county organizations who would “Adopt” the nonprofit and help with their financial sustainability. Note: A copy of the “Adopt A Nonprofit” plans is available upon request.

**5. What would this funding be used for? How does this demonstrate innovation and resiliency in dealing with COVID impacts? What would be the community impact of this anticipated funding? Why is it important to fund this now?**

Most of our classes are held in county schools (West Chester, Downingtown, Owen J. Roberts and Phoenixville). Since there is great uncertainty when outside groups will be allowed to return, we need to develop innovative ideas for offering our classes to the community.

The funding would be used for the following:

1. Procurement of outdoor venues for socially distanced and safe classes.  
**“Outdoor Lifelong Learning: Let The Chester County Landscape Be Your New Classroom.”**

The money would be used for the rental of outdoor facilities (such as at parks and local businesses) and the rental of chairs, desks, tents and computer equipment (ie. LCD projectors/screens).

2. **Earn & Learn**

Now more than ever people are struggling to earn and maintain a living. People are starting in the workforce earlier and staying longer. This requires workers to upskill, reskill and learn more soft skills. CCNS fulfills this need through our job skills, business management, technology/computer and online certification prep classes. However with the COVID19 crisis, we need to make this a stronger focus of our vision.

To this end, we've created a Career Connection program where we are offering more online classes that focus on developing important professional skills such as: certification classes in areas such as physical therapy, pharmacy technician, becoming a paralegal; resume writing, computers, communication and marketing skills.

3. Expansion of Online Offerings – the money would be used for new online platforms that offer curriculum and teachers that would expand our current portfolio. Additionally, money would be used to market these programs to ALL Chester County residents. Due to COVID, we no longer have the financial resources to produce our catalog which reached everyone in the county. We need money to either continue the production of the catalog or develop innovative sources of marketing such as mass email marketing
4. Growth of our Lois Morris Scholarship which provides financially needy families the opportunity to send their children to our after-school enrichment classes and Summer Enrichment Camp.

**6. How much funding is sought? How does this compare to your annual operating budget and this year's projected deficit? What is the expected timeframe for use of funds?**

We are open to and grateful for any amount that is offered. However, to fulfill our strategic plan and short-term goal of sustainability through this crisis, we request \$50,000. This will allow us to secure the equipment and resources necessary for offering our program to the Chester County Community online and in outdoor settings.

The requested amount is approximately 10% of our total annual operating budget (during normal times). This year's projected deficit is approximately (\$310,000). The timeframe for the use of funds is for support for our Spring 2021 semester which typically begins in April and runs through June.

Please e-mail all materials as a word.doc and/or pdf to [grants@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org):

This <b>Innovation &amp; Resiliency Fund Grant Request</b> cover sheet & brief narrative
Current annual operating budget & most recent audit
501c3 determination letter
Current strategic plan. If none, explain why your nonprofit doesn't have a plan.
Support materials that strengthen the urgency of this funding request + indicate that your nonprofit is innovative and resilient (ie: COVID best practice research findings, consultant proposal/s, bids for COVID-related materials & equipment, etc.)

- Proposals will only be accepted by e-mail, on this grant form available at <https://chescocf.org/covidgrant/>
  - Receipt of grant proposals will be confirmed by e-mail.
- Grant proposals will be posted on the Community Foundation's website, in order to share with fund advisors, donors, grant panelists, and other funding sources.
  - Grant proposals will be reviewed weekly.
- We estimate grants awards will range from \$5,000 to \$50,000.
- For awarded grants, a written report on use and impact of this funding will be due within 6 months.

Please direct questions about **ChesCo Nonprofit Innovation & Resiliency Grants** to

Chester County Community Foundation  
28 W. Market Street, The Lincoln Building  
West Chester, PA 19382

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[grants@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org) 610.696.8211