



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

**Contact Information**

Nonprofit Org Name: Friends Association for Care & Protection of Children	ED/CEO Name: Jennifer Lopez
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City, State Zip: West Chester, PA 19380	Board Chair Name: Matthew Holliday
Phone: 610-431-3598	Grant Proposal Contact Name: Emily McClure
Website: <a href="http://www.friendsassoc.org">www.friendsassoc.org</a>	Grant Proposal Contact E-mail: <a href="mailto:e.mcclure@friendsassoc.org">e.mcclure@friendsassoc.org</a>
EIN: 23-1381006	Grant \$ Amount Requested: \$50,000
Year Founded: 1822	

*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: Emily McClure	Date: 10/23/2020
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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	\$1,087,489	\$ 968,319
Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff	14	# 8
# Board Volunteers	17	# 14
# Committee Volunteers	15	# 15
# Active Direct Service Volunteers	60	# 500
Annual Volunteer Hours	400	# 13,000

**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 Fdn	Brandywine Health Fdtn	x United Way ChesCo	x ChesCo Dept Comm Devel
x ChesCo Fund/W&Girls	Phoenixville Comm Health Fdtn	United Way S ChesCo	ChesCo Dept Health
Other significant funders:			x ChesCo Dept Human Svcs

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

- Mission**
- What geographic area is served?** (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served)
- What population is served? How have your service numbers been impacted by COVID?**
- What has been the impact of COVID-19, and how has your nonprofit responded?**
- 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?**
- How much funding is sought? How does this compare to your annual operating budget and this years' projected deficit? What is the expected timeframe for use of funds?**

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

[www.chescofc.org](http://www.chescofc.org)  
[grants@chescofc.org](mailto:grants@chescofc.org) 610.696.8211

**The Chester County Nonprofit Innovation & Resiliency Fund**  
Friends Association for Care & Protection of Children  
Eviction Prevention Court (EPC) Pilot Program

**Mission**

Friends Association for Care & Protection of Children is an innovative and forward thinking non-profit organization providing Emergency Shelter and Homelessness Prevention Programs to families experiencing homelessness or housing instability in Chester County. Serving as a vital resource and safety-net for some of the most vulnerable in our community, we are on the cutting edge of service delivery focusing on a holistic approach that not only prioritizes rapid re-housing, but also addresses the unique and complicated life situations that are factors for families living without the stability of a home.

**Friends 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 empower them as they build on existing strengths and skills and work together to build resiliency, stable housing, educational opportunities and economic self-sufficiency.

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

Friends Association serves all of Chester County.

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

Friends Association supports 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. Each year, Friends Association assists approximately 100 families/380 individuals in achieving or maintaining housing stability, through our emergency shelter and homelessness prevention programs with a 90% rate of long-term housing stability.

Friends Association works directly with Chester County's Coordinated Entry System and has seen an increase in the volume of calls during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent Chester County data shows a substantial increase in the number of calls specifically for Rental Assistance. The first two weeks of October had more calls than any other entire month of 2020 (122 in the first two weeks). The projected number of calls for the month of October will show a 309% increase in Rental Assistance calls from pre-COVID numbers. Calls for Housing Needs are also up 106% since March 2020.

We are currently serving 60 families (a 30% increase since this time last year) and anticipate a significant increase in the need to provide increased rental subsidies and eviction payments as we move through the next 6-12 months. Throughout the next Fiscal Year, we project we'll assist an additional 30 new families in our prevention programs, and an additional 6 families in our shelter, over and above current caseloads, due to COVID-19 and resulting financial hardships. Additionally, we will serve 40-50 households (families and individuals) in our newly established Eviction Prevention Court (EPC) Pilot Program.

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

In Chester County, unemployment remains high and the fallout from simultaneous health and financial crises has impacted the entire community. Long term negative effects, however, are exponentially more profound for those living in poverty and those lacking the social and capital networks and resources to survive periods of job loss or decreased wages. At Friends Association, we are witnessing a drastic increase in need for our services, increases in calls for support and an increase in additional supportive services for those already in our programs.

With high levels of rent-burdened community members and a lack of available affordable housing, thousands of Chester County residents are at risk of eviction. Tenant advocates project that many of those affected will be African Americans and households led by women, both of which are historically more likely to be evicted.

Friends Association was able to pivot to meet the needs of our clients quickly after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our staff began working from home and meeting with clients virtually. For the first week to two weeks, we addressed the needs of families to make sure that they were safe, secure and had the proper items at home for quarantine. From there, we began to address the educational needs of our families, helping to establish internet access, create email addresses and managing online learning capabilities. Additionally, we assisted families with basic need support as cases presented.

We wrongfully assumed that the families housed in our Family Center Emergency Shelter would remain there throughout the crisis. Since March 2020, we have moved 9 families into long term stable housing and have been able to use streamlined services to accomplish this.

As of now, staff members are following a strict protocol for any in-person meetings and our agency has adopted a phased re-opening strategy along with rigid cleaning protocols. We are happy to report that we have had no reported COVID related illnesses at the Family Center Emergency Shelter or with staff. We remain diligent in our efforts to minimize exposure and give our clients the resources they need to stay safe and healthy.

**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?**

Friends Association launched Chester County's first Eviction Prevention Court (EPC) Pilot Program on September 1, 2020. This is an innovative, direct response to the COVID-19 crises and the overwhelming wave of evictions that communities will see as moratoriums are lifted and individuals are unable to remain stably housed. It is the county's first program to simultaneously provide free legal representation, financial assistance and linkages to social services for individuals and families facing eviction and housing instability. As a resiliency-focused organization, the EPC was designed using best practices to improve the well-being of clients and the entire system.

The EPC's services will directly mitigate the devastating impact that eviction and homelessness have on our community. Eviction is never a successful solution and the program aims to bring tenants, landlords, and the court system together to engage in solutions that provide maximum success. Chester County will see a strong return on investment through the EPC as studies indicate \$12+ in savings per every \$1 invested in eviction prevention programs.

While a federal moratorium is in existence until the end of the year, filings began in the County's District Courts when the state moratorium was lifted on August 31st. The pilot began in one District Court (15-4-02/Downingtown) and we anticipate a phased roll out county-wide as funding allows. With the initial establishment of the EPC program, we anticipate serving 40-50 households throughout the first year. By the end of the calendar year, Friends' goal is to be working in two District Courts. Funding this program now is essential for the continued roll out into Chester County. As the only program providing this service, its success will create direct and substantial impact for our community.

To date, Friends Association has contracted with one attorney to provide EPC services for six hours per week. Volunteer attorneys have also offered their services to support the program and Legal Aid of Southeastern PA has offered ongoing support as needed. One full time staff member was hired and will

begin on November 16, 2020 to facilitate the program and assist households with ongoing case management as needed. Actual results of the program from September 1, 2020 to October 13, 2020 are as follows:

There were 42 Landlord/Tenant cases filed in the Downtown District Court (15-04-02) within this time period. Of those cases:

- 19 made contact with Friends Association either prior to the hearings or on the day of the hearings. Friends' attorneys negotiated the following agreements:
  - 5 units were able to relocate without evictions
  - Pay-and-Stay agreements were reached with 5 units
  - 3 landlords were presented with the CDC order, thus continuing the eviction hearings until 1.7.2021
- Of the 19 cases in which we provided services a total of \$79,067.93 was owed. We negotiated reductions in amounts owed for one case (\$5,000 reduced to \$3,500). Friends provided \$8583.95 in financial payments and a fellow housing partner provided \$1,537.37.
- Additionally:
  - 2 units were referred out to other legal services as they fell outside of the program guidelines – one was connected to pro bono services in West Chester and one was connected to the Legal Clinic for the Disabled in Philadelphia
  - 2 cases were continued based on discussions with Friends' attorneys and Landlord representatives
  - 2 cases were based on Undesirable Tenant charges and were unable to reach agreements
- In an effort to stabilize households who enter the EPC program, Friends offers ongoing case management, if needed. Nine households have since accepted this service and are being matriculated into Friends programming or that of partner providers.

**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?**

Friends Association seeks a grant for \$50,000 in support of the county's first and only Eviction Prevention Court (EPC) Pilot Program. This funding will be used within the first year of programming (9/1/2020 – 9/1/2021) and have substantial impact on its success. With positive results already being seen in the initial weeks, we anticipate and are preparing for continued success county-wide and an increase in services provided when the federal moratorium is lifted on January 1, 2021. As part of the EPC Program, we are also planning Eviction Awareness marketing campaigns to bring important information to community members county-wide.

The EPC Pilot Program was established as a direct result of the COVID-19 and the increased need for immediate assistance in mitigating the evictions stemming from the simultaneous health and financial crises. However, the need for this program for low-income communities is much greater than the current capacity of the pro bono legal system and, therefore, a critical permanent community need. Moving through the first year of the pilot program, we aim to expand to three District Courts within the county. From there, Friends Association will determine the funding requirements to continue expansion into the entire county.

While not incorporated into our FY2021 annual operating budget, funds that have been raised to date have been outside of our normal revenue streams. We aim to incorporate the program into part of our core budget and future funds will be raised from private and public donors to support it. Studies show that

when a tenant is represented by legal counsel, more times than not tenants remain stably housed. Eviction prevention programs make moral and financial sense and through diverse fundraising strategies, Friends Association has the capacity to align our efforts to make sure that this program becomes an establishment of Chester County's safety-net system.