

Contact Information

Organization Name: Habitat for Humanity of Chester County ED/CEO Name: Chris Wiseman
Address: 1847 East Lincoln Highway Coatesville, Pa ED/CEO E-mail: chris@hfhcc.org
Phone: 610-384-7993 Board Chair Name: Ted Zobian
Website: hfhcc.org Board Chair Approval (check here):
Year Incorporated: 1989 Primary Contact Name: Liz Price
FEIN: 23-2549743 Primary Contact E-mail:liz@hfhcc.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities Environment/Animal Welfare Education
 Health Human Services Religion

Mission: Our vision is simple: Seeking to put God’s love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.

Geographic Area Served Chester County

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: Habitat builds homes for low-income families, with varying family sizes, earning 30 to 60% of the Philadelphia Metropolitan Statistical Area Median Income (\$27,030 to \$54,060 for a family of four). Nearly 70% of our homeowners are single-parent head of household. Of the families who have self-identified their race/ethnicity, 70% are of African or African-American descent, 13% are Hispanic and 16% are Caucasian. Over the years, Habitat has built 3-6 homes per year with the majority of homes built in Coatesville where 31.5% of the population is below the poverty level.

Annual Budget \$5,192,000 8.7 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
89.5% of budget for program expenses 15# of Board Volunteers
4.9 % of budget for administrative expenses 2,500 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
5.6% of budget for fundraising expenses 25,000# of Volunteer Hours
100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

\$165,000 Bequest
\$50,000 Constance and Carl Ferris Foundation
\$27,500 Thrivent Faith Builds
\$15,000 Wells Fargo
\$15,000 WSFS

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building or General Operating ?

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$5,000

Proposal Summary: HfHCC is requesting a grant of \$5,000 for general operating costs to continue to build more homes for families in need during this time when fundraising dollars have decreased but the need for affordable housing has increased.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

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

Habitat for Humanity of Chester County (HfHCC) transforms lives and makes our communities stronger. By providing affordable housing options for low-income families, Habitat helps families who work and struggle with burdensome housing costs, trapped in poor, unsafe living conditions, to achieve the self-esteem, strength and stability that comes with homeownership.

HfHCC has a major impact on families and the community in Chester County. Over its 30-year history, HfHCC has built affordable homes for over 150 families in need in Coatesville, Downingtown, Phoenixville, West Chester, and most recently, West Grove. More than 500 adults and children are now living in their own homes, thanks to the volunteers and donors who contribute time and resources to make this possible. Providing a *“hand up...not a hand out,”* HfHCC offers low cost, 0%-interest mortgages that brings homeownership within reach for struggling families. Monthly mortgage payments made by homeowners are used to build other houses, helping more families in need.

As the need for affordable housing in Chester County continues to grow to critical levels, HfHCC is taking unprecedented steps to address that need. HfHCC is significantly expanding its construction programs and operations to new levels of achievement... building more homes, helping more families and having greater community impact. We are proud to be building 5 homes in West Grove and 3 homes in Coatesville during this difficult year.

2. Funding request

- **Description of key initiatives**
- **Specific needs & issues to be addressed**
- **Why it is important to fund this now**
- **How impact & results will be demonstrated**

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Need & Issues to be addressed

Low-income families in the City of Coatesville face high **rental rates and limited opportunities for homeownership**. Compounding these problems are low housing values and a high proportion of rental housing, negatively affecting Coatesville's growth and development. With almost one third of the population living below the poverty threshold, the need for affordable housing is great.

Escalating Rental Costs

Over the past 20 years, rental costs have increased very rapidly. Since rental costs are lower in Coatesville than the rest of Chester County, approximately 45% of all the Housing Choice Vouchers are located within the City of Coatesville (*Brenda Gomez, Housing Choice Voucher Program Director, Housing Authority of Chester County*). Families with vouchers pay less out of pocket for the difference between the actual rent charged by the property owner and the amount subsidized by HUD's program. Demand on existing supply, coupled with a lack of new construction of multi-family

rental units, enables property managers to increase rental rates. As of 2018, the U.S. Census Bureau listed the median gross rental price in Coatesville as \$1,087. High rent is particularly onerous to residents in Coatesville who tend to have incomes significantly lower than regional standards. A single wage earner making \$8 per hour would need to work almost 100 hours each week to afford the median rent in the City of Coatesville.

Homeownership Opportunities

According to the Chester County Planning Commission, the Coatesville area saw 928 housing units sold with a median price of \$220,000 in 2018 (*Chester County Planning Commission 2018 Housing Report*). The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines the affordable housing standard as paying no more than 30 percent of one's gross income on housing. Using this standard, a prospective homebuyer for the median price would need a yearly income of \$47,640 (principal and interest, insurance and taxes), while the Coatesville median household income is only \$39,577 (*U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts*). **Nationally, HUD considers households spending more than 30 percent on housing cost burdened and those spending more than 50 percent on housing severely cost burdened.**

High Rental Housing Population

Renter-occupied housing units account for 62% of total housing in Coatesville, more than double the rate in Chester County (25.4%) (*Censusreporter.org*). A high rental percentage creates a destabilizing effect on neighborhoods, as renters tend to be a transient population with little incentive to maintain properties (*U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts*).

Substandard Housing Units

Coatesville has a large number of deteriorated and substandard rental and owner-occupied housing units throughout the city. Many existing owner-occupied and rental housing units do not meet residential code requirements and need repair. Coatesville homeowners deserve access to affordable contractors producing high-quality work. Given the low incomes of Coatesville residents, a fixable home maintenance issue becomes a huge burden. With nearly 75% of homes constructed before 1980, the housing stock in the City of Coatesville is aging, leaving homeowners even more susceptible to troublesome repairs and updates (*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates*).

Struggling to provide basic needs, Coatesville families turn to unstable and unsafe housing situations out of necessity. Naturally, poor living conditions pose imminent threats to the health of families. Less tangible but equally severe precursors to homelessness include unemployment, illness of a breadwinner, and rise in rent.

Making Homeownership Affordable in Coatesville

The purpose of our program is to provide affordable homeownership opportunities for low-income families in need of decent, modest housing in Coatesville. The goals of the program include the following:

- Increase affordable housing stock in Coatesville by completing a 46-home neighborhood on a 12.5-acre plot in the City of Coatesville;
- Offer appropriate mortgage products to low-income families;
- Provide critical housing support services to low-income families;

- Incorporate energy efficient technologies and sustainable building practices in all activities;
- Strengthen existing strategic partnerships and generate new ones to holistically address community challenges; and
- Engage a broad collection of key neighborhood stakeholders, including local government, business, and most importantly, residents in creating and implementing solutions.

Why it is important to fund this project now and how results are demonstrated.

Due to COVID-19, we have observed an overall decline in philanthropic giving, as funds are being directed to relief efforts. However, this crisis has further highlighted the social and economic need for affordable housing. The loss of jobs during the pandemic has put families at risk of homelessness.

Decent shelter, the very foundation of Habitat's efforts and the catalyst of community change, lifts the financial burden of today and equips families with tools for tomorrow. Habitat homes change lives – for the families who help build them and pay an affordable mortgage or loan, along with volunteers offering a hand in difficult times.

Each family is unique in their needs, but the benefit is the same – a more stable and secure living environment that helps bring better health, stronger educational performance and added security for the lives of the families...and especially the children. We make a lasting impact for generations to carry forward.

We measure the effectiveness of our program by the completion of homes for low-income families in need. Of the 154 homes built or rehabilitated by Habitat volunteers in Chester County, only 5% have either gone to foreclosure or resulted in a deed in lieu of foreclosure exchange. The homeowner's investment of time during the construction of their home creates a sense of pride and ownership, thus making sense of such a low percentage.

Furthermore, Habitat home construction activity generates approximately \$1,000,000 in revenue for local businesses and suppliers each year. Affordable housing creates value in our community and provides a clear return on investment for our homeowners, volunteers and donors alike.