The Chester County Nonprofit Innovation & Resiliency Fund
Administered by the Chester County Community Foundation
In cooperation with regional funders, donors, united funds and County government departments

Recognizing the importance of the nonprofit sector to the high quality of life throughout Chester County, the Chester County Commissioners have allocated $3.5M to help nonprofits recover with innovation and resiliency. This funding is from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Per the CARES Act, grants must cover unforeseen financial needs and risks created by the COVID-19 public health emergency. This includes grants to implement and publicize the safe resumption of programs and services. The Community Foundation seeks proposals to support innovative, resilient COVID recovery needs, such as:

- Program and service redesign, in light of social distancing and public safety requirements
- Innovative technology to support virtual, mobile and/or pop-up programs and services
- Redesigned and reconceived marketing, fundraising and special events
- Strategic planning pivoting, refinement and revisions in light of COVID-19
- Partnership, merger, consolidation and/or acquisition activities due to COVID-19 impacts
- Infrastructure improvements due to COVID, including plexiglass dividers, technology upgrades, etc.
- Higher operating costs related to cleaning and social distancing requirements
- Other one-time or increased expenses incurred related to COVID-19.

This is a competitive, time-sensitive grants process. Grant decisions will be made weekly, on an ongoing basis. Only electronic grant applications are accepted by e-mail. No paper applications are accepted.

Eligibility
- Nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization formed and active in 2017 or earlier
- Nonprofit must be located and providing services in Chester County

Priority Preference for Grant Funding
- Nonprofits that provide clear evidence of how they aim to/are reshaping their programs, services, administration, marketing and fundraising, to safely provide services and thrive in light of COVID impacts
- Nonprofits with substantial costs to comply with COVID public health requirements
- Nonprofits that serve a diverse constituency, and are governed and managed by diverse leadership

Ineligible Entities
- Nonprofits NOT located in Chester County, PA
- Nonprofits NOT delivering services in Chester County
- Nonprofits that did NOT experience revenue loss due to the coronavirus pandemic and/or nonprofits that have no additional costs associated with the coronavirus pandemic
- Nonprofits that were NOT operational as of December 30, 2017
- Government or government-owned or controlled entities
- Churches or religious organizations with respect to their primarily religious activities and/or their activities which limit participation to members of the church or religious organization. Religious entities with social & human service outreach programs must provide 501 ( c ) ( 3 ).
- For-profit businesses
- Private clubs/organizations that limit membership for reasons other than capacity
- Nonprofits primarily engaged in lobbying or political activities
- Nonprofits NOT compliant with all federal, state, & local laws, including taxation
- Nonprofits NOT compliant with current public health guidelines, including coronavirus pandemic phased reopening restrictions  

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Contact Information

Nonprofit Org Name: Home of the Sparrow
ED/CEO Name: Michelle E. Venema
Address: 969 East Swedesford Road
City, State Zip: Exton, PA  19341
Phone: 610-647-4940
Website: www.homeofthesparrow.org
EIN: 232775004
Year Founded: 1994

ED/CEO E-mail: mvenema@homeofthesparrow.org
Board Chair Name: Elizabeth Hodgson, Esq.
Grant Proposal Contact Name: Kathleen Sanger
Grant Proposal Contact E-mail: ksanger@homeofthesparrow.org
Grant $ Amount Requested: $40,050

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: Kathleen Sanger  Date: October 28, 2020

Nonprofit Field/s of Interest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art, Culture &amp; Historic Preservation</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Health</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>Environment &amp; Animal Welfare</td>
<td>X Human Services</td>
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Figures

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>PRE-COVID (as of 1/1/20)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Operating Budget</td>
<td>$1,355,500</td>
<td>$1,241,941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff</td>
<td># 11</td>
<td># 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Board Volunteers</td>
<td># 10</td>
<td># 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Committee Volunteers</td>
<td># 17</td>
<td># 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Active Direct Service Volunteers</td>
<td># 652 FY19 year end</td>
<td># 720 FY20 year end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Volunteer Hours</td>
<td># 8,863</td>
<td>&quot; # 7,758 &quot;</td>
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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
- x Brandywine Health Fdtn
- x United Way ChesCo
- x ChesCo Dept Comm Devel
- x ChesCo Fund/W&Girls
- x Phoenixville Comm Health Fdtn
- x United Way S ChesCo
- x ChesCo Dept Health
- x ChesCo Dept Human Svcs

Federal Single Audit

- x Is your nonprofit subject to a federal single audit (formerly known as the OMB Circular A-133 audit)?
  - x If yes, did your nonprofit’s most recent federal single audit disclose any issues?
  - x If yes, have these issues been adequately addressed?

Narrative: In a few concise paragraphs, please explain: ATTACHED WITH PROJECT BUDGET

1. Mission
2. What geographic area is served? (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served)
3. What population is served? How have your service numbers been impacted by COVID?
4. What has been the impact of COVID-19, and how has your nonprofit responded?
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?
6. 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@chescocf.org:

| This Innovation & Resiliency Fund Grant Request | 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. This grant form is 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  
www.chescocf.org  
grants@chescocf.org  610.696.8211
1. **Mission** - Home of the Sparrow’s mission is to partner with women facing homelessness to secure housing, achieve long-term stability, and chart new paths for their futures.

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

3. **What population is served?** How have your service numbers been impacted by COVID? We serve single woman and single mothers and their children. Services numbers have decreased slightly due to:
   - A decrease in our outreach efforts due to the mandated shut down; we were unable to be physically present at our outreach sites.
   - Fewer women were housed via our pre-Senior Bridge and Shared Housing Programs. Like realtors, we were not able to take women on “tours” of our homes or the homes of people offering rooms for rent in the early days of the pandemic.
   - The moratorium on evictions has also decreased the number of women we normally help via our Eviction Prevention Program. However, we are preparing for the spike in calls on January 2 after the moratorium is lifted on December 31, 2020.

4. **What has been the impact of COVID-19, and how has your nonprofit responded?** We are pleased to report that throughout the pandemic, our client funding remained at pre-pandemic levels. However, the amount of financial assistance now being requested has increased because the depth and scope of needs has widened significantly due to lost wages or total unemployment. We have responded by seeking additional funding to address the many financial needs of our women including:
   - paying a portion of back rent or current rent in larger amounts than was average pre-COVID
   - paying a portion of delinquent utility bills
   - assisting in restocking pantries
   - helping to meet any pressing needs of children (tutoring, mental health counseling, technology for learning at home)
   - paying a portions of a woman’s mental health treatment via contracting with private health care professionals
   - assisting with expenses that have been delayed (i.e. car repairs)
   - assisting with the needs of family pet if applicable

5. **What would this funding be used for? How does this demonstrate innovation and resiliency in dealing with COVID impacts?** Answer below follow the attached project budget.
   - **Increase productivity**
     - On March 13, HOS was able to pivot overnight from working in the office to working seamlessly from home because of a major investment in technology three years ago. That investment proved invaluable – we never closed. A staff member was in the office every business day from March 16 until all employees returned in June when Pennsylvania went “green.” We understand, first-hand the importance of ensuring that our hardware and software matches our ability to meet our mission with privacy, safety and security. Now we need six new laptop computers. Three would replace the aging laptop computers used by our volunteers and interns. They “inherited” the old program coordinator laptops from six years ago. Now that we have expanded our office footprint (described in detail below), we can invite our office volunteers to join us once again, if they are comfortable. We could never accomplish all that we do with our small staff; we rely on volunteers, several of
whom are long-time “assistants” in our office performing data entry, scanning documents for e-filing, research, list clean-ups, etc.

- Two new computers will enable two program coordinators to work in a faster environment. We anticipate that the current computers can be re-furbished and given to two of our families. The final computer is desperately needed to replace the oldest computer in the building – that of our finance computer. For security reasons, we dedicate one laptop to run Quickbooks which can be accessed remotely by our bookkeeper. The laptop currently serves its purpose quite well, but at the slowest speed. The financial work performed by our CEO and bookkeeper would go much faster with a new laptop.

- A new monitor has been requested by the director of programs to have a more comprehensive “view” of all her tasks and open programs as she, too, uses a laptop which, of course, has a fairly small screen.

**Mobile Communication with Participants**
- Although not expensive at its basic level, we hope to subscribe and learn how to effectively use mass texting to reach our participants quickly and via the format they prefer – text messaging. After the initial input of all data, our director of programs will be able to segment participants to quickly communicate news, opportunities, issue reminders, ask questions, and simply to touch base (especially with our graduates).

- We would also use this service to contact our growing millennial donors while utilizing a method they prefer.

- New smart phones are needed to outfit our program coordinators with a uniform tool to communicate with participants. Currently, only two staff use an “HOS cell phone;” others use their personal phones (with an app that blocks their personal phone number). We wish to stop our staff from using their own data plans to perform their jobs and to manage a single phone-type which can be loaded with the same apps and programs, data, and capabilities. This would increase overall efficiency.

**In House Video Production**
- Who would have guessed a year ago that it is now common place to assemble a 30-second video in an afternoon, upload it to YouTube so that an organization could watch it at their next meeting or church service. Fortunately at HOS, we have two staff members who are very adept at video production, on camera work and editing. However, the videos we are producing are only possible because of the hardware that is owned personally by staff including a camera and Mac computer loaded with iMovie. With continued social distancing, the need to communicate our mission, and needs via video will increase. We have worked with experts in the field to assemble a set of tools that will arm us with the capability to produce videos in house without using technology owned personally by staff members.

**Office Technology for Social Distancing**
- Again, HOS is fortunate that it made an investment a few years ago in rental space in an adjacent building that we call the “annex.” Additional space was needed to accommodate the many bulk donations we receive especially paper products, cleaning supplies, food drives and the like, a place to host our holiday party for families, and room to store and prepare hundreds of silent auction items for the annual gala. For economic reasons, we never added telephone service, Wifi or Internet to the space. However, COVID changed
that. We recently added 6 phones to our contract and fitted up the space with all the business tools to operate as an office. Now, two of our program coordinators can work in private offices in the annex, providing even more space between the staff that continue to work in the farmhouse. In addition, their move next door enables our office volunteers to return in person and have a space to work safely and socially-distant from staff and each other.

- **Virtual Meetings**
  - Zoom appears to be a part of our lives now and we would like to invest in a business account for meetings of any length of time, with a greater number of participants, and advanced capabilities like breakout rooms especially necessary as we pivot to virtual fundraising solutions.

- **Client Financial Assistance**
  - Two things are happening at once – HOS has forfeited two fall fundraisers (our annual fashion show and a golf classic that was to be held for our benefit) and there is an increase in the level of financial assistance and counseling hours women need to achieve the same stability as in pre-pandemic times.
  
  - The fall fundraisers were budgeted to net $100,000. We did pivot quickly and created a brand-new event called “Decorating for a Mission” which has raised $17,000 to date. That leaves us with a $93,000 deficit or $93,000 fewer dollars available to provide direct financial assistance to women who come to us for help.
  
  - The eviction moratorium is postponing the spike in need which is coming in just a few weeks. We have enough data from the past several months to make an educated assessment of what is to come: First, women facing eviction will need $1,000 more than was historically needed in order to avoid homelessness. Second, women who enter our supportive housing program will require $2,500 in financial assistance during their time with us as opposed to $1,250.
  
  - Just between these two programs, that equals an additional $207,000 in need against a known loss of $93,000 (not counting a possible loss of $185,000 in April 2021 if our annual gala must be cancelled again).
  
  - We have been very successful at applying for and receiving emergency COVID relief funds from donors and grant makers. We also received PPP funds and our balance sheet is strong with a robust savings account. However, we have learned that being prepared for the unexpected is essential (something we also teach to each of our participants). We are closing the gap through our current fundraising strategies.
  
  - With that in mind, we are seeking a grant from the Chester County Community Foundation as well as the DCD via its second round of COVID relief funding. To ensure that funds are not duplicated, any DCD funds would be used to support women facing eviction and any CCCF funds would support the needs of women in our supportive housing program (see the detail provided in question 4’s answer). If, by chance, we do not need all the client assistance grant money provided by CCCF, we will notify you immediately. We are trying our best to have funds available to say “yes” to all the needs of our families.
6. What would be the community impact of this anticipated funding? Why is it important to fund this now?

The impact on the community is fewer women and children experiencing even one night of homelessness. The life-long effects of experiencing something as traumatic as homelessness effects everything from mental health, success in education, future earning potential, and interpersonal relationships – just to name a few. Home of the Sparrow can prevent evictions, keep women in the apartments that they can, under normal circumstances afford, and help women acquire safe, affordable apartments via assistance with down payments and first-last month’s rent. In addition, we provide the professional, expert counseling that ensures the wrap around care and services a woman needs to develop the tools and skills to achieve self-sufficiency. According to endhomelessness.org, the cost to the public to re-house someone who is already homeless is $40,000 and that does not include the emotional cost of coping with the trauma of having been homeless (Decades to Doorways concurs with this figure). Chester County need not incur this expense – if we have the funds available, we can stabilize a woman’s housing.

It is important that the funding be received now as the need for our services is growing and will spike to unprecedented levels in January after the eviction moratorium is lifted. We are unique in that we can respond to a woman’s needs quickly and creatively – our network of partners and our keen knowledge of the County enables us to stitch together solutions quickly. Combine this talent with robust funding and the result is helping women in profound ways that changes the trajectory of their lives.

The Zoom account, laptops, computer monitor, video equipment, cell phones and texting technology will keep Home of the Sparrow at the peak of performance to handle client and donor communications. We can’t afford to lose the momentum we have and this technology will help us remain prepared for whatever the future holds.

6. 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?

We seek $40,050 in funding. $18,045 would be spent within 6 weeks of a grant award. The remainder would be spent within six months of the grant award. $40,000 is 3% of our operating budget.