

## 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. Electronic grant applications are only 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 headquartered and providing services in Chester County, as evidenced by legal address in Box C of IRS 990

### 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 headquartered in Chester County, PA, as evidenced by the legal address in Box C of the IRS 990
- 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
- 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 ###





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

**Contact Information**

Nonprofit Org Name: Phoenixville Public Library	ED/CEO Name: Lara Lorenzi
Address: 183 Second Avenue	ED/CEO E-mail: <a href="mailto:llorenzi@ccls.org">llorenzi@ccls.org</a>
City, State Zip: Phoenixville, PA 19460	Board Chair Name: Michael English
Phone: 610-933-3013	Grant Proposal Contact Name: Chris Porcelli
Website: phoenixvillelibrary.org	Grant Proposal Contact E-mail: <a href="mailto:cporcelli@ccls.org">cporcelli@ccls.org</a>
EIN: 22-2709529	Grant \$ Amount Requested: \$20,000.00
Year Founded: 1896	

*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: Christopher Porcelli	Date: 10/14/2020
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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 type="checkbox"/> Community Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Environment & Animal Welfare	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Services

Figures	Current	PRE-COVID (as of 1/1/20)
Annual Operating Budget	\$930,500	\$1,018,211.00
Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff	12.60	14.97
# Board Volunteers	9	9
# Committee Volunteers	8	8
# Active Direct Service Volunteers	0	22
Annual Volunteer Hours	0	(July to December) 1,059

**\*\*The Library's fiscal year is July to June.\*\***

**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 checked="" 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
Other significant funders:			<input type="checkbox"/> ChesCo Dept Human Svcs

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

**1. Mission**

The Mission of the Phoenixville Public Library is to provide access to information and services that address the educational, cultural, and recreational needs of the community the Library serves.

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

The Phoenixville Public Library (the Library) serves a population of 37,700 individuals comprised primarily of community members from the Phoenixville Borough, Schuylkill Township, Charlestown Township, and East Pikeland Township. In 2019, the Library had over 124,000 visits, which equates to approximately 400 visits per any given day the Library is open. In that time the Library hosted approximately 1,000 programs, which had a little over 16,000 participants.

Furthermore, the Library is a member of the Chester County Library System, which serves the Chester County population at large as well as provides strategic direction, policies, and resources to its member libraries. No matter where one is located in Chester County, they have access to the Library's materials and online resources.

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

The Library serves all individuals no matter one's socioeconomic status, race, gender, age, religion, or sexual orientation. The Library is open to all and serves the most vulnerable and the wealthiest of community members alike. In this regard, the Library serves as a melting pot for the community. To understand and address the specific needs of the community, Library staff collaborate with civic organizations, neighboring nonprofits, and local municipalities. Together, we created a strategic plan, which includes goals of providing technology and expanding services to underserved community members.

From the months of March to July the Library building was closed to the public. In that time, the Library transitioned to offering new online services as well as promoting existing online resources to the quarantined community. Given the Library's ability to share important information effectively to the masses, we also kept critical information circulating within the community from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Chester County Emergency Management, U.S. Census Bureau, and Voter Services, to name a few, in the midst of a statewide shut down. There is evidence that in economic hardship, libraries are utilized more for their information, free resources, and services. We found this to be evident in the time of the Library building being closed when we saw an increase in online engagement. For instance, our Facebook engagement grew by 234% from people interacting with our posts. Furthermore, our page views also grew, which we believe correlates to being a trusted institution for information in times of uncertainty.

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

COVID-19's highly contagious nature has created challenges for the Library given we are a highly trafficked public space with many different interactions within our geographic area. The Library has an abundance of resources for the community to use and the pandemic has caused a barrier to access those resources. The many community members who rely on us for technology needs, informational needs, and other resources have been drastically affected. For instance, to illustrate the demand for access to internet and computers, over 15,700 hours of internet sessions were logged over the 15 computers in the Library in 2019.

As a response, we continue to push forward to support our community to the best of our abilities in ways that coincide by local and state safety measures. One of our new services is providing curbside pickup for patrons to collect their materials without human contact. This service has proven to be our most popular offering. Additionally, we have created new virtual services that address a variety of needs ranging from technical help, early childhood learning, career assistance, and much more. We have also focused our communications to the public about existing resources such as reference services, eBooks, audio books, and other digital subscriptions.

Furthermore, the Library has faced economic hardships due to certain revenues not being available because of COVID-19. One of the Library's primary revenue streams is the Passport Acceptance Program. During the time of quarantine, the program was suspended due to travel stoppage. We recently reinstated the program at the direction of the U.S. Department of State; however, the demand is not the same as pre-COVID. Additionally, while the Library was closed, all Library fees were frozen. As a result, the Library had to make an approximate \$87,700 budget cut, which resulted in program budget cuts and staff layoffs. Moreover, the Library experienced increased expenses from

purchasing protective gear, additional cleaning supplies, and bolstering our online services. Since March, the Library has invested approximately \$12,500 in cleaning supplies and protective gear alone.

**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?**

Funding would be put toward our operating budget and would be spent in three primary ways that we believe support our newly adapted programs and services. Furthermore, the requested \$20,000 is in line with a few of the grant's funding foci, which are: 1.) infrastructure improvement due to COVID, 2.) higher operating costs related to cleaning, and 3.) innovation technology to support virtual services and programs.

The first way the grant money would be spent is towards the continuing expense of cleaning supplies and protective gear. The Library is currently operating in a phased reopening plan to ensure the health and safety of community members while we operate to the best of our abilities in providing services. We had to readapt our floor plan and create strategies for each phase of our reopening demonstrating resiliency in how we are pushing forward in continuing to serve community members. The Library has already had to make a sizable investment in cleaning supplies and equipment such as masks, gloves, hand sanitizers, sneeze guards, and other equipment. This will continue to be a pressing expense as traffic through the Library continues to pick up as people grow more comfortable in going out in the world again.

Furthermore, and most excitingly, the Phoenixville Public Library Foundation recently purchased a book locker to answer the need for community access to the Library during all hours of the week. This contains 24 book lockers as well as a computer console for checking out reserved materials. The book locker is an innovative addition to our amenities so that those who cannot make it to the Library during our limited hours will have access to Library materials. The grant funds will be used for the annual service fee and upkeep of the book locker. It is also worth noting that the book locker will help increase the circulation flow of material in the community, which is a benchmark of a healthy library. Not only will community members have greater access to materials, but the Library would be able to continue to serve the community in a greater capacity if Chester County would need to transition to the yellow phase again in the future.

The grant funds will also be used for technological purposes. Providing virtual services and programs has been a key pivot in providing the community with free resources. However, to have more of a presence online we had to make additional purchases in new software and subscription services, such as Zoom. This funding would be used to help offset the costs of the Zoom subscription fees. This grant will help us to continue to provide online services, ensuring that community members can utilize the wealth of Library resources from home.

Finally, the third way this grant will be used is in expanding the Library's operating hours. Before COVID-19, the Library operated 57 hours a week. Due to budget constraints and staff layoffs, the Library is now only open 45 hours a week. This grant would help with the operating costs of increasing hours of service by investing in the current Library staff and as mentioned above, the cleaning materials used within serviceable hours. Expanding our service hours would be a positive impact on the community, especially the underserved community. For instance, by expanding our hours of service, we can offer more computer lab sessions that address the need for individuals who don't have access to the internet or for the job seeker, where almost all job openings only exist online.

**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?**

The Library is requesting \$20,000 to be used towards cleaning supplies, protection equipment, bolstering our online services, and expanding our hours of operation. The funds will be used immediately as needed. Given the \$87,700 budget cut and the unexpected reallocation of \$12,500 in our initial annual budget, these funds are needed. As an established and trusted institution in the Chester Counter area, individuals turn to the Library for information, resources, connection, and help. This funding will go a long way in ensuring the health and safety of our community as well as provides us the means to be innovative in transitioning services traditionally done in person to an online platform. On behalf of the Library, thank you for your consideration.

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  
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West Chester, PA 19382  
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[grants@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org) 610.696.8211