

## 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 ###





**Contact Information**

Nonprofit Org Name: Community Warehouse Project of Chester County	ED/CEO Name: Glenda K. Brion
Address: PO Box 218	ED/CEO E-mail:gbrion@communitywarehouseproject.com
City, State Zip: West Chester, PA 19381	Board Chair Name: Glenda K. Brion
Phone: 484-473-4360	Grant Proposal Contact Name: Glenda K. Brion
Website:www.communitywarehouseproject.com	Grant Proposal Contact E-mail: gbrion@communitywarehouseproject.com
EIN:61-1658782	Grant \$ Amount Requested: \$50,000
Year Founded: 2012	

*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: Glenda K. Brion	Date: 11/18/2020
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**Nonprofit Field/s of Interest**

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

Figures	Current	PRE-COVID (as of 1/1/20)
Annual Operating Budget	\$157,650	\$ 157,650
Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff	1	1
# Board Volunteers	6	6
# Committee Volunteers	0	10 (Special events)
# Active Direct Service Volunteers	0	25
Annual Volunteer Hours	0	1,560

**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.

ChesCo Comm Fdn	Brandywine Health Fdtn	United Way ChesCo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ChesCo Dept Comm Devel
ChesCo Fund/W&Girls	Phoenixville Comm Health Fdtn	United Way S ChesCo	ChesCo Dept Health
<b>Other significant funders:</b> WW. Smith Foundation; Emergency Aid of Pennsylvania; Quest for the Best Foundation			ChesCo Dept Human Svcs

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

- Mission:** To provide furniture and household goods to Chester County families and individuals in need and at no charge.
- What geographic area is served?** (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served)  
The Community Warehouse Project (CWP) serves clients from throughout Chester County.
- What population is served? How have your service numbers been impacted by COVID?**

The beneficiaries of our mission are women, children, families, and veterans who have experienced homelessness or near homelessness due to a financial crisis or personal tragedy or loss and are now poised to rebuild their lives and

turn an empty house or apartment into a home. They have worked with local housing/homelessness prevention agencies to help them get back on their feet. Traditionally, CWP serves approximately 300 individuals or families per year. For the 2 months of our county-wide 'stay at home' order we were unable to serve any clients at all. As our county entered the green phase we have been able to serve new clients on a very limited basis. However, in consultation with our network of homelessness prevention partners we have concluded that the ongoing economic turndown due to COVID and the impending lifting of the moratorium on evictions on January 1, 2021 will most certainly cause a surge in new clients for CWP.

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

##### **a. Description of how we used to do business**

Prior to COVID reaching our county, CWP worked with an uncomplicated service model. Clients would be approved to participate at CWP by one of our many housing/homelessness prevention partners. They would visit our warehouse with their case worker and sometimes family members. They would spend about one hour choosing furniture and household goods and would then arrange for family, friends, or neighbors to help them pick-up and move the furniture into their new home. This sometimes required multiple trips with cars, small pick-up trucks or vans.

##### **b. Public Health Issues raised by this model**

Our traditional service model no longer meets mandated or 'suggested' health and safety restrictions and puts our 1 paid employee (our Executive Director), our clients, and their family members at risk for contracting and/or spreading the virus. Our warehouses are obviously indoor structures and they are packed full of generously donated furniture and household goods. It is virtually impossible to socially distance by 6 feet and the minimum time of 1 hour needed to search and choose furniture far exceeds the recommended 15 minutes. Even though our clients and their families have been wearing masks this model is still fraught with serious health and safety issues for all involved.

##### **c. Our Response—Redesigned Service Model**

Acting remotely by telephone and Facetime, our Executive Director is now our sole point of contact with agencies and clients. With their health and safety in mind, we have asked all CWP volunteers to remain at home even though they were so helpful in helping with client visits and cataloging donations. Our Executive Director now selects furniture and goods that best meet the client's expressed needs. However, this new practice still leaves us with a need for furniture moving and transport as clients are now due to COVID restrictions unable to engage friends and family members to help with this task. In the past, we have also had some volunteers who were willing to use their own vehicles to help transport but as an organization we decided that although commendable and welcomed help, this practice posed too great a liability.

Transportation has always been a draw on our organization's annual budget but now, more so than ever, as we must rely only on contracted vendors to ensure that our clients have what they need for their new home. CWP has worked with The Movesmith and John Rubart of Drops of Jupiter LLC. in the past and both companies have provided competitive pricing especially in light of the amount of furniture needing to be moved as our clients are in need of just about everything to start their lives over. Both companies are conveniently located in Chester County, available quickly, dependable, willing to comply with public health guidelines, are familiar with CWP business operations, and have been well-received by our clients. As funding allows, we will continue to contract with these vendors to ensure that our operation can run smoothly and safely.

#### **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?**

The funds requested in this grant would be used solely to pay The Movesmith and Drops of Jupiter, LLC for transporting furniture and home furnishings to CWP clients.

This proposal demonstrates innovation in that it enables Community Warehouse Project to continue serving a very vulnerable population while also complying with PA Covid-19 Guidance for Businesses guidelines. The use of conference

calls and Facetime to understand the clients' needs and preferences combined with the use of local vendors to deliver the needed furniture and furnishings ensures the safe and efficient support of our clients.

Resiliency is typically thought of as the ability to bounce back or recover from adversity. However, another critical aspect of resiliency is the ability to maintain functioning and program effectiveness during a crisis. Resilience is demonstrated when an individual or organization can adapt to challenges and adversity in a way that enables them to continue to meet their goals and fulfill their mission. The Community Warehouse Project's Redesigned Service Model enables it to do just that - To provide furniture and household goods to Chester County families and individuals in need and at no charge.

With the additional funding provided by this grant, we expect to serve approximately 156 clients during the next six months. However, a "client" is often a family so the total number of Chester County citizens positively impacted would be much higher.

This funding is urgently needed now because we cannot provide services to our clients in our traditional model and keep both them and Community Warehouse Project's single staff person safe. Specifically, we cannot allow our clients to arrange their own transportation by depending on family members, neighbors, and friends. These informal arrangements result in too many people spending too much time in the warehouse. As an added benefit, having to arrange their own transportation was a significant source of added stress to many of our clients. They often struggled to find individuals to move the furniture and they typically could not afford to hire movers or rent a trailer or van. Consequently, this grant will also remove a significant source of stress from our clients.

**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?**

Community Warehouse Project is seeking \$50,000 in funding from **The Chester County Nonprofit Innovation & Resiliency Fund** to help cover about 70% of our Transportation Budget. We estimate that with the rise in client needs due to our stalled economy that CWP will serve approximately 6 clients per week for the next 6 months. At a cost of \$450 per move/furniture transport our transportation budget needs will be \$70,200.

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. CWP does not have a strategic plan at this juncture. As funding allows our Board of Directors will engage with a consultant to lead the planning process.
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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