

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 ###





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

Contact Information

Nonprofit Org Name: French & Pickering	ED/CEO Name: Bill Gladden
Address: 511 Kimberton Road	ED/CEO E-mail: Bgladden@frenchandpickering.org
City, State Zip: Phoenixville, PA 19460	Board Chair Name: Penny Hunt
Phone: 610-933-7577	Grant Proposal Contact Name: Bill Gladden
Website: www.frenchandpickering.org	Grant Proposal Contact E-mail: bgladden@frenchandpickering.org
EIN: 23-6429095	Grant \$ Amount Requested: \$48,000
Year Founded: 1967	

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: Bill Gladden Date: 11/3/2020

Nonprofit Field/s of Interest

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

Figures	Current	PRE-COVID (as of 1/1/20)
Annual Operating Budget	\$827,023	\$1,084,628
Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff	# 6.5	# 6.5
# Board Volunteers	#17	#17
# Committee Volunteers	#22	#226
# Active Direct Service Volunteers	# 0	# 4
Annual Volunteer Hours	#510	#1,960

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ChesCo Comm Fdn	Brandywine Health Fdtn	United Way ChesCo	ChesCo Dept Comm Devel
<input type="checkbox"/>	ChesCo Fund/W&Girls	Phoenixville Comm Health Fdtn	United Way S ChesCo	ChesCo Dept Health
	Other significant funders: William Penn Foundation, Blue Sky Foundation, Archie W. Berry Foundation, Board of Directors, Easements funded by Chester County Parks & Preservation/PA DCNR/Township partners/landowner donated value.			ChesCo Dept Human Svcs

No	Yes	Federal Single Audit
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is your nonprofit subject to a federal single audit (formerly known as the OMB Circular A-133 audit)?
	<input type="checkbox"/>	If yes, did your nonprofit's most recent federal single audit disclose any issues?
	<input type="checkbox"/>	If yes, have these issues been adequately addressed?

Narrative: In a few concise paragraphs, please explain:

- Mission:** The French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust mission is to preserve, steward, and connect people to the land in northern Chester County. We are proud to be a community-based organization that works collaboratively with landowners, local and state government, and other conservation organizations to ensure the preservation of the French and Pickering Creeks watersheds, which contain some of the most scenic lands in Pennsylvania and our county.

2. **What geographic area is served?** (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): *Northern Chester County.*) French & Pickering primarily serves northern Chester County, where its land trust activity takes place. However, in the past year, we have begun reaching beyond our primary service area through innovative educational programming. We also take part in the Delaware River Watershed Initiative, linking together conservation organizations throughout the four-state region that comprises the Delaware River Basin.

3. **What population is served? How have your service numbers been impacted by COVID?** In our land preservation efforts, we work with owners of large and small parcels of land in order to help protect sensitive areas from overdevelopment. The community we build around these preservation efforts goes beyond the landholders, however, and includes a network of thousands of donors, hundreds of people served by our programming, a volunteer force centered around our Preserves and our signature events, and our 7,000+ Facebook followers. We have faced several challenges this year in each of these communities. Our primary challenge was in fundraising, as our event-based fundraising model relied on bringing together these constituents to celebrate conservation. Two of our signature events, the French Creek Iron Tour and the Annual Auction, both shifted online. This shift required extra effort and more volunteer support as we navigated new online systems and promotional channels. Our Iron Tour came in at only 25% of its previous capacity. Our Auction, currently underway, no longer has a "Live" component, meaning we face loss of interest from many in the community, challenges with auction items that typically involve groups and travel. As a result, we are facing a significant decrease in revenue.

In addition, other events like our Landowner Event and other donor cultivation events were cancelled creating additional revenue challenges.

Land preservation has been successful, but has faced challenges such as a temporary moratorium on state land preservation funding, a ban on real estate settlements, and difficulty safely arranging negotiations that are a part of the process as well as arranging closings/settlements in the context of cautionary COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings.

What has been the impact of COVID-19, and how has your nonprofit responded? The pandemic has greatly influenced our operations. We have adapted, but at a price. Along the way we have provided valuable physical and mental health outlets to a public in crisis.

First, as mentioned, we have shifted our events online and tried to cultivate a wider community. During the Iron Tour, we created a successful social media campaign that resulted in a widely distributed press release about two of our riders, one in Pennsylvania, the other in Colorado. French & Pickering shifted its auction online to the OneCause/Bidpal online auction program, created video and program assets for online rollout, and launched an unprecedented promotional campaign on social media.

While this proposal has detailed our revenue impairments, we also incurred significant new expenses as a result of the pandemic. The most significant to date has been the impact on our preserves, including opening of the Great Marsh Uplands Preserve in Elverson. This Preserve of over 500 acres has a newly created three-mile loop trail. While a valuable natural space, it had not been publicly accessible until it was opened to provide socially distanced opportunities for outdoor passive recreation at a time when current facilities were overflowing with visitors. As

visitation increased and the need for more distance for visitors and additional parking, the need for improvements was clear. In addition to parking, increased foot traffic at the Thomas P. Bentley Nature Preserve has also necessitated the purchase of maintenance equipment and for construction.

4. 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?

We are requesting funding to cover the following expenses. Under each bullet, we will provide you with an explanation for why this funding is important to the organization and the wider community.

- **Online Pivot:** We have shifted to online platforms for events, programming, and office work, mostly utilizing Zoom. We are seeking funding to cover these expenses, as they are a critical component of French & Pickering's adapting its fundraising and programming to new modes of communication and development. Given French & Pickering's limited resources, our work to deploy existing resources and acquire a few new tools with extreme efficiency, speed and effectiveness exhibited great innovation and resiliency in the face of pandemic pressures related to preservation projects, programs and preserves.
- **Safe Public Access:** Covid-19 created an unprecedented surge in outdoor activity. To provide public access consistent with CDC and safety protocols, we opened a new Preserve to allow socially distanced visitation in response to higher foot traffic at our existing Preserve and are seeking to expand parking at the existing. We are seeking funding to cover the expenses related to safely accommodating this increased visitation through expanded parking, increasing trail opportunities for more distance between visitors, and increased onsite oversight of visitors by the preserve manager. In addition to costs incurred, we have included expenses for additional parking at the Bentley Preserve to ensure we can serve the increased outdoor access needs. Our increased public access showed innovation, resiliency and unprecedented community engagement for an organization that spent fifty years engaged only in pure land preservation. By expanding the capacity of our Preserves, we will connect many more people to outdoor activity into next year, providing critical local distanced outdoor experiences with pandemic conditions projected to continue through 2021.
- **Engagement:** French & Pickering's fundraising has been dramatically impacted. A typical year provides multiple opportunities for robustly attended outreach and engagement as well as appreciation events. These have not occurred because of the pandemic. A direct, and in some cases indirect, impact has been a decrease in private financial contributions. Evolving our outreach to engage with a larger number of potential supporters is vital for a viable organizational balance sheet. This will require the acquisition of complementary analytical software. As a result, we are seeking funding to pursue new fundraising products that can help us pivot to a more online platform to expand our philanthropic base with our existing staff levels. We are proposing purchasing the DonorSearch capability for our CRM, DonorPerfect, allowing us to do more complex data analysis and wealth profiling to help replace revenue that was not available in 2020 and is not expected as a result of the projected arc of the pandemic into 2021. This increase in individual giving revenue is critical if we are to offset the COVID-19 related revenue impairments thereby continuing our conservation projects, programs, and expanded public access.

5. 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?

We are seeking \$48,000 in funding, which represents 4% of our annual operating budget and 19% of our projected deficit. Most of our deficit this year comes from the slowdown in raised funds, meaning a grant from the Nonprofit Innovation & Resiliency Fund at CCCF will assist in rebuilding our fundraising operations and community outreach, and will make a major impact on the organization.

Rollout of a potential grant will take place in the next calendar year:

- **Online Pivot:** We have transitioned multiple events from in-person to online. We are currently undertaking our Annual Auction online and expect to be completed November 7th, with final processing of gifts happening by November 21st. Zoom lectures continue each month, with a planning calendar already extending into 2021. We initiated online lectures over the past year. We have generated multiple videos to try and engage with audiences we would see in person in normal times.
- **Safe Public Access:** We are undertaking parking lot upgrades in 2020 and into early 2021 at the Thomas P. Bentley Nature Preserve. The Great Marsh Uplands Preserve has recently reopened after construction,

meaning that the Fund would be reimbursing us for those past expenses which were a direct result of public safety concerns. Visits by the public are ongoing and we anticipate these facility improvements will continue to be needed to comply with distancing protocols throughout 2021.

- **Engagement:** The Trust is undertaking an aggressive fundraising plan at the end of 2020 and will be beginning deeper prospect research in 2021 in anticipation of recouping lost funds from this year. A grant this year that provides resources to acquire the software additions and accommodate time for training and implementation is a critical component of our organizational resiliency.

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
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West Chester, PA 19382

www.chescocf.org
grants@chescocf.org 610.696.8211