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## Mini-Grant Letter of Request

CCCF is seeking grant applications for a fund whose mission is “to provide funds for educational computer hardware or software, and other tools for children of economically marginalized communities who are underrepresented and have been denied the full complement of educational equipment needed to successfully compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” We estimate that each mini-grant will range from \$2000 to \$3000.

Date: April 5, 2021

### Contact Information

Organization Name: The Garage Community & Youth Center  
Address: 115 S. Union St. Kennett Square, PA 19348  
Phone: 610-444-6464  
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FEIN: 10-0007967

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### **In a few brief paragraphs, please explain:**

- 1. What geographic area is served?** *(If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served)*  
Southern Chester County, primarily the Greater Kennett Square and West Grove area.
- 2. What population is served?**  
The Garage serves a diverse group of students comprising 74% Latino, 6% African American, 10% Mixed race, and 10% Caucasian. Garage students range from grades 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> and primarily attended Kennett Consolidated School District or Avon Grove School District. Our target population is from economically depressed households with parents who work long hours in the mushroom industry and face numerous language and cultural challenges; these students lacked the home academic support needed to overcome these challenges because the majority of their parents do not speak English and have not completed their own secondary education. Many students come from single parent and economically disadvantaged households, of which neither the mother nor the father is the primary caretaker. The students who come to The Garage face substantial struggles and are looking for support to navigate through complex issues such as domestic violence, dysfunctional homes, addiction, desire to drop out of school, self-mutilation, teen pregnancy, peer pressure related to drugs/alcohol/sex, language barriers, and peer/familial discouragement regarding academic achievement.
- 3. How has your nonprofit responded to address the question of the “digital divide” and access for the population that you serve to computer hardware, software and other technology needs?**  
Since our inception, The Garage has recognized that many vulnerable students experience the “digital divide”, lacking access to computers, printers, or internet of any kind. For 20 years in Kennett Square and 10 years in West Grove, our centers have provided technology access to thousands of students. Both centers have fully functional computer labs with additional Wi-fi access for students with their own devices.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools and programs were forced to transition to all virtual, widening the digital divide that many Garage families had already been experiencing. In March of 2020, when students across the world were first experiencing virtual school, Garage families began to share with our staff team the struggle of adapting without the necessary technology required. For the final months of the 2019-2020 school year, The Garage partnered with the Kennett Consolidated School District, Avon Grove School District, the Kennett Library, and the Jennersville YMCA to ensure that all students received a school laptop and a borrowed hotspot to complete the school year. However, our staff team also learned that due to geographic locations, hotspots are not always capable of providing equitable access to virtual school; laptops for emerging bilinguals does not replace the need for the personal linguistic interactions that lead to language acquisition; and with continued and frequent interruptions, students simply lost the focus and motivation to continue with online school.

At the end of August 2020, when local schools returned to all virtual platforms, our staff team was more equipped and prepared to support our vulnerable student population with access to technology and internet. Reopening with four locations, both Garage centers as well as borrowed space at Kennett Presbyterian Church and Chatham Financial, for the 2020-2021 school year. The Garage has now served 154 youth with in-person daytime virtual school support. Both of The Garage's locations were approved as Comcast Lift Zones for additional student access. Additionally, the bandwidth on the organization's paid internet contract has been increased twice in order to meet the demand required for all students to download and upload assignments, utilize Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and other platforms required by schools this year. The Garage purchased laptops in order to supplement school provided equipment in the event of a malfunction, as well as lend out to students in need.

**4. How much funding is sought? How does this compare to your annual operating budget? What will the funding be used for? What is the expected timeframe for use of funds?**

The Garage respectfully requests \$3,000 for the purpose of purchasing additional computers for both the Kennett Square and West Grove Garage centers. As this very unusual school year comes to an end, The Garage is preparing for our 2021 summer program. Specifically, this year, our programs will have an increased academic component, acknowledging that the "summer-slide" compounded by the "COVID-slide" will leave vulnerable populations of youth further behind their middle-class peers. Computers purchased with the support of donors through the Chester County Community Foundation will help to alleviate the inequitable education access that many of our students have experienced. Computers will be utilized by students at the Garage throughout the year, in an ongoing basis, as needed for education, workforce development, social-emotional development, and enrichment programs. Further, The Garage recognizes that access to technology should not be siloed to these specific academic and program uses, and students will have access to computers during open hours at the centers, to simply utilize for their own personal use. By purchasing high quality equipment, The Garage expects these computers to be utilized by our students for many years to come. These specific funds would be outside of our approved 2021 Organizational budget, and an additional extra support for current and future Garage students!

Please email [grants@chescofc.org](mailto:grants@chescofc.org)

- This Brief Mini-Grant Letter of Request
- Copy of annual operating budget or most recent audit
- 501c3 determination letter

Request letters will be posted on the Community Foundation's website, in order to share with fund advisors, donors, grant panelists, and other funding sources. Please direct general questions & inquiries about this grant application to [grants@chescofc.org](mailto:grants@chescofc.org). Beth, Steph, or Kevin will answer you.