

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date: 9/10/21

Contact Information

Organization Name: Bridge Academy & Community Center
Address: 578 Olive St. Coatesville, PA 19320
Phone: 610-466-9505
Website: www.thebridgeacademy.org
Year Incorporated: 2002
FEIN: 20-0881049

ED/CEO Name: Jordan Crans
ED/CEO E-mail: Jordan.Crans@gmail.com
Board Chair Name: Seth Windle
Board Chair Approval (check here):
Primary Contact Name: Jordan Crans
Primary Contact E-mail:
Jordan.Crans@gmail.com

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities Environment/Animal Welfare Education
 Health Human Services Religion

Mission: The Bridge Academy & Community Center's mission is to equip youth and families with the tools necessary for academic achievement, life skills, creative expression, spiritual growth and leadership.

Geographic Area Served: *Coatesville Area School District, primarily the City of Coatesville.*

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

Annual Budget \$482,000

82 % of budget for program expenses

15 % of budget for administrative expenses

3 % of budget for fundraising expenses

100 % total

5FT/2PT # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

7 # of Board Volunteers

52 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

1000 # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources: Iron Mountain, Brandywine Health Foundation, Pilgrim Foundation & Connolly Foundation.

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building or General Operating

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

Mission, Vision & Strategy Governance & Leadership Partnerships & Collaborations

Fundraising, Development & Marketing Technology Other: _____

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$2,054

Proposal Summary: The Bridge Academy & Community Center (The Bridge) respectfully requests a \$2,054 Capacity Building Grant to help fund technology upgrades for the organization. Funding will specifically be used to cover a 2-year subscription for an electronic student/volunteer check-in system (Ministry Tracker) as well as the start-up fee to have our student and volunteer's information seamlessly imported into the new system and to purchase text credits so we can more effectively communicate with parents and volunteers via the system.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

1. Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements & distinctiveness

The idea for The Bridge was planted in 2001 and in early 2002, an official 501(c)(3) was established. During 2002, a Board of Directors was recruited and the search for a permanent location began and resulted in using 570 Olive Street, Coatesville PA. In 2018, The Bridge expanded with the purchase and renovation of 578 Olive Street; an adjacent building that provides additional space for staff offices, group meetings and program activities. Since 2002, The Bridge has matured into a thriving organization that is making a tremendous impact on the City of Coatesville. The Bridge's Executive Director, Jordan Crans, has been involved with The Bridge since 2003, playing several roles before transitioning to Executive Director in 2008. Each year has brought further community relations, more effective programming, and continued collaboration between other organizations in Coatesville.

Today, The Bridge is open 4-5 days a week, providing a variety of academic, enrichment and spiritual programs for children from PreK-12th grade as well as programs, services and resources for local mothers. In addition to our regular programs, The Bridge partners with more than 15 organizations and churches to meet the ongoing needs of our student's families including back to school supplies, Christmas presents & trees, winter coats, clothing, and holiday dinners (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter).

All of The Bridge's programs and services are designed around the following core goals:

- 1) Provide a safe, supervised and supportive environment for students during out-of-school time hours.*
- 2) Reduce hunger.*
- 3) Motivate and equip students academically.*
- 4) Create opportunities for students to be creative, express themselves and learn new skills.*
- 5) Empower youth to become leaders in their community.*
- 6) Foster Spiritual exploration and development.*
- 7) Connect students with positive adult role models.*
- 8) Cultivate positive peer-to-peer friendships.*

We are pleased to report that in our most recent survey of core students, 97% of students said they feel safe at The Bridge, 100% feel supported, 97% increased confidence and self-esteem, 95% are doing better in school and 84% improved reading, writing or math skills. Additionally, since attending The Bridge, 100% of students have made new friends, 87% are getting in trouble less, 100% say The Bridge helps them avoid sex, drugs, alcohol and skipping/dropping out of school and over 90% say they want to be a leader and make a difference in their community.

2. Funding request

The Bridge Academy & Community Center (The Bridge) respectfully requests a \$2,054 Capacity Building Grant to help fund technology upgrades for the organization. Funding will specifically be used to cover a 2-year subscription for an electronic student/volunteer check-in system (Ministry Tracker) as well as the start-up fee to have our student and volunteer's information seamlessly imported into the new system and to purchase text credits so we can more effectively communicate with parents and volunteers through the system.

• Description of key initiatives

The Bridge has researched and tested several student database systems. Once funding is secured, The Bridge will move forward with investing in a 2-year subscription to Ministry Tracker (\$69.99/month). Ministry Tracker has all of the features needed to effectively capture and report our data while also including a variety of customizable

features. Ministry Tracker has proven to be the most affordable option without sacrificing quality. The implementation of Ministry Tracker will enable us to better implement the following:

Track Attendance: Ministry Tracker will make daily check-in quick, simple and efficient. The Bridge will be able to not only track attendance, but also student's participation in individual programs (ie. Mr. Jack's Bible Club, Mom's Club, Teen Night etc.). Having access to this type of information electronically will enable us to provide more accurate details to funders about the level of participation in each of our programs as well as the demographics of students we are serving.

Measure Retention Rates: Funders recognize that the frequency of student engagement significantly influences our capacity for impact. Ministry Tracker will enable The Bridge to not merely run details regarding the frequency of a student's participation but also their retention rate from year-to-year.

Evaluate Programs: Ministry Tracker will simplify the production of evaluation reports requested by funders while also increasing accuracy and detail. Report data will also be used to enhance communications via our social media, annual reports, and newsletters to more strategically keep our stakeholders informed about their return on investment when supporting The Bridge.

Strategize Recruitment: The ability to run detailed reports on student's attendance will allow us to more effectively strategize our volunteer recruitment efforts. It will enable us to better identify the times/programs that need additional support as well as other specific needs (i.e. Need more elementary tutors, more meals, etc.).

- **Specific needs & issues to be addressed**

The Bridge currently utilizes excel spreadsheets to track student attendance. This was initially helpful in allowing us to keep a record of who was served as well as demographic data. However, as The Bridge has continued to grow, the use of excel spreadsheets is increasingly complicated and limiting. Our foundation funding has increased significantly over the past year and the use of Excel is very limiting in the types of reports we can run for funders. As funding becomes increasingly competitive, funders are not suggesting data, they're requiring it. Our staff are spending too much time manually trying to pull information together for reports to align with specific dates/demographic requirements. Funders do not only want to know how many students attended during the grant period, but they want to know what the ethnic, gender and age breakdown of those students is and how many fell below the poverty line and/or what city's those students reside in. For The Bridge to continue growing and effectively meeting the needs of our community, it is essential that we have an upgraded system in place to more effectively track and report data so we can continue to not only sustain, but to further grow and diversify our funding base.

- **Why it is important to fund this now**

As The Bridge's enrollment and programs continue to expand it is critical that we continue to increase our funding base to cover operating expenses and increased staffing needs. The Bridge has received funding from several foundations that request data we cannot easily provide. Our current system requires extensive staff time to manually merge and calculate data. The Bridge is also currently being considered by several new funders that we know will expect detailed reporting if funded (i.e. The Nelson Foundation, Emergency Aid of PA, etc.). Increasing our data collection and reporting systems will significantly increase our eligibility for funding opportunities that are necessary for our organization's continued growth and sustainability.

Additionally, a significant portion of the funding received for The Bridge is restricted to specific program activities or traditional operating expenses. Capacity building funds allow us the flexibility to direct funding to much needed technology upgrades so we can more effectively carry out our mission and better communicate both our impact and needs to stakeholders.

- **How impact & results will be demonstrated**

The impact and result of purchasing and implementing Ministry Tracker will be demonstrated through increased funding not only from local foundations, but also individuals and corporations as they become more informed (through our increased and more detailed reporting) about the impact their investment has on our community.

Impact will also be demonstrated by increased student attendance and parent satisfaction as The Bridge can more quickly and effectively communicate with parents and volunteers directly through the software system. This will keep parents and volunteers better informed about schedule changes, special events and emergency closures, etc.

Capacity Building Proposal:

- **How will this capacity building initiative impact your nonprofit?**

Upgrading the organization's electronic check-in system will save a substantial amount of staff time and resources that can be better invested into the direct planning and implementation of our programs. Additionally, the capacity to run more detailed reports about not only the quantity, but demographics and retention of students we serve, we will position us to be more eligible for funding from new funding sources – ultimately enabling our organization to continue expanding our reach in the community through the development of new programs and resources.

- **How will this impact be measured?**

The impact will be measured through running financial reports to assess increased funding from not only local foundations, but also individuals and corporations as they become more informed (through our improved reporting) about their impact on investment. Impact will also be measured via attendance/retention records and internal staff surveys to assess if the amount of time spent collecting/importing and reporting on data has been reduced and if the quality and efficiency of those tasks has been increased.

- **Description of the expected activities; timeline & costs to implement the initiative. If external consulting services are required, include the anticipated costs & expertise of the consultants to be hired. Include external consultant proposals if applicable.**

Once funding is secured, it will take approximately 3 months to fully upgrade to Ministry Tracker:

Step One: Purchase a 2-year subscription to Ministry Tracker (\$69.99 x 24m = \$1,679).

(A 2-year subscription is more cost-effective and allows time for upgrading to the new system, generating increased data and securing new funding sources.

Step Two: Hire Ministry Tracker's software team to seamlessly import our student and volunteer's data from excel files into Ministry Tracker so no data is lost (\$50 x 3 hours = \$150) – this includes not only student's attendance, but all of the student's, parents and volunteer's contact information. (1 Month).

Step Three: Train staff to use Ministry Tracker (2 months).

Step Four: Pay one time installation fee (\$25) and purchase text credits (\$200) to communicate with parents and volunteers directly through Ministry Tracker.

Step Five: Begin using Ministry Tracker!

III. ATTACHMENTS

1. Copy of 501 (c) (3) federal tax-exempt letter (Attached)
2. List of Board of Directors, with their affiliations (Attached)
3. Most recent annual report & financial statement, audited if available (Attached)
4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date (Attached)
5. If capacity building initiative, itemized budget (Attached)
6. Current strategic plan. (Attached)