

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

One page only. This page will be shared electronically with Grant Panel Members & Fund Advisors.

Note: If Philanthropy Network's Common Grant Application is used, CCCF's **Summary Sheet MUST accompany application.**

To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit www.chescocf.org

Contact Information

Date: 9-12-2021

Organization Name: Kennett Area Community Service
Address: P.O. Box 1025
Phone: 610-925-3556
Website: www.kacsonline.net
Year Incorporated: 1993 (as a nonprofit)
FEIN: 23-2215441

ED/CEO Name: Leah Reynolds
ED/CEO E-mail: leah@kacsonline.net
Board Chair Name: Lynne Seligman, President
Board Chair Approval (check here):
Primary Contact Name: Wright Horne
Primary Contact E-mail: wright.horne41@gmail.com

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities
 Health

Environment/Animal Welfare
 Human Services

Education
 Religion

Mission: "Strengthening the community in Southern Chester County through food, housing, and crisis services."

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served):

Southern Chester County

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: KACS provides financial support and basic needs — food, rent, utilities, emergency housing, and referral services — to low-income persons experiencing food insecurity and housing insecurity in Southern Chester County. We also work to prevent homelessness and provide rapid re-housing for households experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness. In the past 12 months, we have had over 22,000 visits to the Food Cupboard. The emergency assistance team has helped more than 516 unduplicated families with case management and many others with crisis services.

Annual Budget \$ 2,797,068

94 % of budget for program expenses

3 % of budget for administrative expenses

3 % of budget for fundraising expenses
100 % total

14 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

11 # of Board Volunteers

75 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

4,000 # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building or General Operating ?

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$10,000

Proposal Summary: KACS seeks consulting services to help us update and complete our Strategic Plan. We started our current strategic plan a few years ago, but the pandemic interrupted the process, and in addition, we are now a radically different organization than we were when this strategic plan was first drafted.

Further, the current strategic plan, while only a year or so old, did not anticipate the pandemic or its impact on the organization. Now that we have seen how quickly and severely a situation like this can affect our organization, we want to use strategic planning to carefully plan for our recovery, for long-term sustainability, and for increasing our positive impact on the community.

Chester County Community Foundation Grant Proposal Narrative

September, 2021

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

Kennett Area Community Service (KACS) was established in 1954, and the past 67 years have seen agency growth and transition. KACS has grown from an all-volunteer agency with one program to fifteen employees (twelve fulltime and three part time) and three full-featured areas of focus: Food Cupboard, Emergency Assistance, and our leadership in the Bridges Out of Poverty initiative.

Our organization, our mission, and our programming

KACS provides financial support and basic needs — food, rent, utilities, emergency housing, and referral services — to low-income persons experiencing food insecurity and housing insecurity in Southern Chester County. We also work to prevent homelessness and provide rapid re-housing for households experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness. These services are especially needed by those termed ALICE – Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed.

Other services of KACS include an emergency assistance program that provides case management, rental assistance, security deposit assistance, utility assistance, emergency hotel stays and crisis services. For instance, the recent Hurricane Ida gave us the opportunity to find housing for the victims of the flooding from the storm.

Additionally, we work to reduce poverty for households in crisis through referrals for appropriate safety net supports; referrals to CareerLink; and more broadly via our work in the local Bridges Out of Poverty initiative, including Getting Ahead workshops. This plan aligns with the Chester County Decade to Doorways plan requiring skilled, strengths-based case/relationship management, data collection and maximized resource utilization.

Our mission is “Strengthening the community in Southern Chester County through food, housing, and crisis services.” We envision a community without poverty where everyone can live well.

Our impact on the community, with data, outcomes

In the past 12 months, KACS has had over 22,000 visits to the food cupboard. The emergency assistance team has helped more than 516 unduplicated families with case management and many others with crisis services. KACS has paid out \$679,710 in emergency assistance. They have seen housing emergencies result from layoffs, temporary school and business closures, positive COVID tests, hospitalizations, and household quarantines due to a family member testing positive or dying from COVID. We have continued to work with households who have non-COVID-related emergencies as well.

In 2020 we saw a significant increase in first-time KACS participants. During the first nine months of the pandemic, 59% of the Emergency Assistance households that identified COVID-19 as a factor were completely new to KACS. They had never come to KACS for food or emergency assistance in the past.

In 2020, 98 households returned for assistance at least one more time after their initial emergency. In January and February of this year (2021), we have already provided financial assistance to 77 unduplicated

households. These payments go directly to the landlord or to vendors such as PECO, local heating oil companies, and hotels. These numbers are pre-Ida.

Our caseloads have more than doubled since before the pandemic. We hired a temporary part-time intake worker in April to help manage the surge in new Emergency Assistance cases. However, as the pandemic continued, it became clear that our caseloads were not returning to pre-pandemic levels, and the existing Emergency Assistance team was stretched too thin. In January we hired an additional Emergency Assistance Advocate to help manage the continued high volume.

If there is no shelter space available, we can pay for an emergency hotel stay. After the flood in Avondale last year, we temporarily housed 13 households including 28 adults and 17 children at a local hotel. Because of Ida, we have housed 30 families in hotels, and are helping another 85 with emergency assistance.

In Avondale, the Red Cross worked with these families for one week before reaching out to KACS for ongoing support and case management. Although we worked with a total of 26 households affected by the flood, only 13 were literally homeless when we opened their cases. We paid for hotel rooms and provided case management for months before everyone found permanent housing.

In 2020, we rehoused 35 households from homelessness or imminent homelessness. This includes families and individuals that were in hotels as well as households that faced eviction and we assisted them with new housing before they became homeless.

2. Funding request

KACS asks the Chester County Community Fund to please consider a capacity building grant of \$10,000 to cover the costs of strategic planning consulting services.

KACS is seeking consulting services to help us update and complete our strategic plan. We started our current strategic plan a few years ago, but the pandemic interrupted the process, and in addition, we are now a radically different organization than we were when this strategic plan was first drafted.

Further, the current strategic plan, while only a year or so old, did not anticipate the pandemic or its impact on the organization. Now that we have seen how quickly and severely a situation like this can affect our organization, we want to use strategic planning to carefully plan for our recovery, for long-term sustainability, and for increasing our positive impact on the community.

We want to do more than just survive. Without the comprehensive planning process, we are concerned that we could be too concerned with short-term needs to focus on the bigger picture for the future.

The Board is pro-active in the operation and mission of the organization, and together with the senior staff, welcomes the possibility of a renewed effort to complete and update the plan.

There is a long term and continuing consensus among the senior staff and the Board that a good strategic plan will benefit the organization, and will assist in the day-to-day management of KACS as well as prepare us for the future.

We believe that a successful strategic plan is an organic document, not just something to sit on a shelf. It should have strategies, goals, and objectives, with enough detail to be able to assign line-item responsibilities to Board and staff, with timelines for reporting and completions.

We further realize that our staff is “fully employed” carrying out our mission, and that a poorly constructed strategic plan can burden staff with new responsibilities. They would be correct to ask, “If you want me to do these new tasks, what would you have me stop doing?” We will be judicious in assigning strategic plan tasks to current staff, and understand that there may be a need for additional staffing to implement it.

Thus, positive results would show successful completion of tasks, updates completed, responsibilities and timelines well defined, a realistic timetable for review and further updates, and the reporting of achievement of goals defined in plan.

Timeline:

When funded, we will be able to distribute an RFP (already prepared) to suitable consultancies, with an expected response date, along with other dates in the strategic planning process. Start to finish (funding as the beginning point), we anticipate beginning working with the consultant within 75 days after the issuance of the RFP. After that, we anticipate the process to last for 6 months.

We will be asking for detailed proposals with hours for each section of the process, etc., including active participation with the Board and senior staff, where appropriate. Further, we will be specifying the following tasks:

1. Perform and document background research and analysis necessary to provide a thorough understanding of KACS's successes and challenges, and to serve as a basis for the updated strategic plan and recommendations. This may include:
 - a) Analysis of the organization's history and culture
 - b) Interviews or focus groups with current and past board members and other community stakeholders as part of an analysis of internal and external perceptions of the organization
 - c) Review of KACS's bylaws, mission statement, and other governance materials as they include and/or pertain to the mission of KACS as well as current best practices
2. Facilitate all meetings of the Board and senior staff in a process to update the current Strategic Plan so it will effectively guide the organization forward through the next 5 years.
3. Provide leadership, direction and expert consultation and advice related to the development of an effective strategic plan, including roadmaps for successful implementation with applicable timetables and anticipated outcomes.
4. Provide recommendations for a sustainable business model that includes:
 - a) staffing needs for the organization to effectively fulfill its mission and ensure long-term success
 - b) future programming to increase effectiveness and reach of KACS's mission
5. This plan should identify specific fundraising, grantmaking, communication, and programming objectives for the organization to pursue over the next 5 years in pursuit of its mission.