

I. **CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**
GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET *One page only.*

Contact Information

Date: September 14, 2021

Organization Name: Volunteer English Program in Chester County

Address: 790 E Market St., Suite 215

West Chester, PA 19382

Phone: 610-918-8222

Website: <http://volunteerenglish.org>

Year Incorporated: 1986

FEIN: 22-2685077

ED/CEO Name: Terri Potrako

ED/CEO Email: terri.potrako@volunteerenglish.org

Board Chair Name: Theresa (Terry) Marran

Board Chair Approval (check here):

Primary Contact Name: Terri Potrako

Primary Contact Email: terri.potrako@volunteerenglish.org

Organization Information

Field/s of Interest: Arts, Culture & Humanities Education Health
 Human Services Religion Environment/Animal Welfare

Mission: The Volunteer English Program (VEP) connects volunteers with adult English language learners to provide free one-to-one tutoring and cultural enrichment that empowers immigrants to be successful.

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

Volunteer English Program (VEP) serves adults who live and /or work in every community of Chester County. The highest concentration of active students live in West Chester (25%), Phoenixville (20%), and Coatesville (11%).

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

VEP serves adult immigrants, ages 18 and older. This past fiscal year, VEP served a total of 274 adults, of which 77% were female. Fifty-Five percent (55%) of active students report "low income" levels based on Federal Poverty Guidelines. Currently, VEP students speak 24 languages and are from 46 countries of origin. Latino/Hispanic community members make up the largest ethnic group at 60%, followed by Asian/Southeast Asian/Pacific Islanders at 21%, and 16% Middle Eastern or white (European).

Annual Budget \$ <u>\$383,393</u>	<u>3.87</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>66</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>10</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>16</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>212</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>18</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>7,736</u> # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources: The Chester County Nonprofit Innovation and Resiliency Fund; Phoenixville Community Health Foundation; Ivywood Fund % Mary Summers and Rogers Smith; Rotary, District 7450 Southeastern, PA; Brandywine Health 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: \$5,000

Proposal Summary: VEP respectfully requests a capacity building grant of \$5,000 to purchase 200 licenses for access to an online software toolkit for teaching English as a foreign language along with a training and tech support package from the software developers. This new resource will enrich several aspects of VEP's work by increasing opportunities for online student learning and success, enhancing tutor instruction, and increasing access to high quality ESL instructional material. With these licenses, VEP will be able to continue offering digital engagement strategies to support adult immigrants as they learn English both online and in-person, while bridging gaps in digital literacy that the COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

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

History VEP was established in 1986 by 14 compassionate and motivated individuals who recognized the need for West Chester residents to achieve English literacy. Efforts resulted in an ESL tutoring program that evolved into the current model. During 35 years of uninterrupted service, VEP has become an independent, 501.c.3 organization, exclusively dedicated to providing student and goal-centered, one-to-one tutoring in English literacy and cultural enrichment for immigrants who live or work in Chester County.

Goals As an organization, our long-term vision continues to be that volunteers will power our work and personify a spirit of generosity and openness. As a result, our communities will be enriched by the experiences and contributions of immigrants, and they will have the essential language and cultural skills needed to find their place, their purpose and their voice. To achieve this vision, VEP will focus on several long-term goals:

- * Promote diversity, inclusiveness and equity in all actions.
- * Advocate for our communities by empowering current and future generations of new English speakers.
- * Provide sound governance and leadership to remain an independent, 501.c.3 non-profit, community benefit organization.
- * Create sustainable growth to meet anticipated census demand.

Key Achievements As a resilient and innovative institution, we have swiftly adapted to changing environments and immigration waves. Two significant achievements are VEP's longevity within the Chester County community and the students' progress in life. Recent key organizational achievements include:

- * Remained open throughout the pandemic by adapting a predominantly in-person approach into a virtual model of instruction.
- * Advanced technology infrastructure to increase communication with constituents; improved our ability to collect impact data; and, expanded cloud-based business services.
- * Mobilized staff to reach growing immigrant populations in rural parts of the county.
- * Increased tutor engagement and retention through professional workshops, meet-ups and virtual training for volunteers.
- * Launched small group virtual instruction through a new CCIU Head Start partnership.

Distinctiveness VEP's distinctiveness derives from the adaptability, flexibility, and accessibility of the program model. For over three decades, VEP has been serving immigrants through an individualized, student- and goal-centered approach to English language learning. This approach has allowed the program to be responsive to the shifting social contexts and the demands of our students' lives. Tutors design weekly instruction around the student's goals, which allows tutors to pivot lessons toward each student's most pressing language-learning needs. The program, offered free of charge, meets students wherever they are on the continuum of literacy and English proficiency, regardless of income or residency status. The year-round, community-based, non-classroom model respects the needs of adults to learn at locations and times conducive to their busy lives, which makes the program accessible and achievable for all.

2. Funding request

Description of key initiatives

The pandemic accelerated VEP's plan to offer aspects of our program online. Incorporating a variety of socially distanced and digital engagement strategies have been essential to VEP's success over the past 18 months. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of VEP students (according to a VEP survey from July 2021) are meeting with their tutor virtually, which means they would benefit from having access to high quality online learning materials to support their instruction.

Funding will support the purchase of 200 licenses (100 students and 100 tutors) for access to an online software toolkit for teaching English as foreign language. Each license is comparable to the cost of a proficiency leveled instructional workbook, and would serve as a virtual workbook while also providing additional learning opportunities for students and lesson plans for tutors. The multifaceted toolkit has been thoroughly researched by VEP staff and board members who are professionally trained and experienced in TESOL/TEFL, also seasoned VEP tutors have vetted and tested the product. All agree the toolkit will increase student learning, enhance tutor instruction, and provide greater access to a wide variety of ESL learning materials.

Specific needs & issues to be addressed

The Volunteer English Program fulfills an unmet need in Chester County by offering a free community-based, one-to-one model of instruction to adult English language learners (ELLs). The success of VEP's mission is realized through the progress made by VEP students working with their one-to-one tutors on a regular basis for at least one year. In order to remain current with the recent shift to socially distanced and remote learning strategies, VEP needs access to quality online ESL resources that allow us to teach, manage, and support students virtually. This software aligns with VEP's financial and operational objectives to incorporate blended learning solutions into our program to supplement tutor instruction, increase student-tutor access to quality online materials, and support overall adult student learning.

How will this capacity building initiative impact your nonprofit?

This new technology will impact VEP's capacity to more effectively and efficiently carry out operational and programmatic aspects in order to fulfill our mission of empowering immigrants to be successful. After piloting the software with a selected group of student-tutor pairs, VEP determined it will allow us to better serve students by enhancing three essential aspects of VEP's work.

1. Increase opportunities for online student learning. This toolkit serves as an online text book for VEP students who are meeting with their tutor virtually. It also offers more opportunities for students to complete lessons asynchronously.
2. Enhance tutor lesson planning. VEP tutors come from all walks of life and professional backgrounds. Individuals do not need to have professional teaching experience to become a volunteer. This software gives all tutors equal access to high quality lesson plans to meet their student's learning needs. Quality lesson plans are expected to enhance tutor instruction and therefore student success.
3. Increase staff efficiency and effectiveness in distributing quality resources to support student success. Students' goals change frequently and more quickly than their proficiency advances. This means they may need the same proficiency level workbook but the focus for instruction changes to a different aspect of English. With the addition of the ESL toolkit, active pairs have independent access to the equivalent of over 20 additional workbooks. Therefore reducing the dependence on staff to find and purchase resources for new learning goals.

How will this impact be measured?

The impact of this capacity building initiative will be measured through multiple factors that include student progress in English language proficiency, progress toward their specified goals, and length of student and tutor retention.

Description of the expected activities

The following table outlines VEP's timeline and the costs to implement the ESL toolkit. Please see attachments for the price quote from the vendor.

The primary activity this grant will support is purchasing licenses to access the ESL toolkit. Once the licenses are purchased, VEP program staff will be able to onboard active students and tutors who will be using the resource and provide ongoing mentorship and case management.

Timeline	Activity	Total Costs	CCCF Grant
January 2022	Purchase 100 additional licenses	\$2,000	\$2,000
April 2022	Renew 100 piloted licenses	\$2,000	\$2,000
January 2022	Activate software training and support	\$700	\$700
January through December 2022	Onboard students and tutors, and provide ongoing case management (\$25/hr x 2hrs x 48wks)	\$2,400	\$300
Total Cost		\$7,100	\$5,000

Why it is important to fund this now

It is important to fund VEP's purchase of the software toolkit for teaching English because it will allow the organization to teach and manage our students' digital learning more effectively and efficiently. More than ever, VEP must remain available for the community of immigrant neighbors and co-workers experiencing uncertainty as Chester County continues to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. VEP students have described the urgency to speak and understand English in order to provide for their families and feel safe. VEP students are part of the 9.6% (or 50,400) foreign born residents in Chester County, 20,000 of whom consider themselves Limited English Proficient (LEP) speakers (US Census 2010). For these individuals, tasks such as making a phone call, talking with a neighbor, interviewing for a job, or calling 911 for emergency help are hindered by their ability to communicate in English.

VEP provides critical educational support to an average of 275 adult English language learners (ELL) annually through one-to-one tutoring and cultural guidance. Research has shown that spending a minimum of 100 hours annually in adult basic education programs, including English as a Second Language (ESL) programs such as VEP, positively impacts adult and family issues such as poverty, family literacy, economic prosperity, crime reduction, and other social issues ("The Case for Investment in Adult Basic Education," ProLiteracy).

VEP's one-to-one model of instruction offers high-quality education to adults that other programs can't reach. Many immigrants work long hours and cannot attend regular English as a second language (ESL) classes. Throughout the pandemic, VEP has remained open to our public by offering language instruction that is secure, confidential, and modified for social distancing. The majority of students and tutors have turned to virtual instruction and meeting over Zoom, FaceTime, or What'sApp. Investing in high quality ESL software is essential in helping VEP support immigrants as they learn English in order to survive and thrive in the 21st century digital environment.

How impact & results will be demonstrated

Impact and results will be demonstrated in the following ways:

1. 100 student-tutors pairs (200 individuals) will actively use the license for an average of 3 hours per week.
Measurement tool: Proprietary ESL toolkit report and CiviCRM reports on instructional hours
2. 75% of active students who are using the ESL toolkit will demonstrate progress in English language proficiency and progress towards achieving self-selected goals.
Measurement tool: Data from standardized assessments, CiviCRM Proficiency Report on segmented students, and student functional gains surveys.
3. 75% of all active students and tutors will complete a minimum of one year of instruction
Measurement tool: CiviCRM retention report.

III. ATTACHMENTS

E-mail or mail this support information

Included Attachments

1. VEP IRS Tax Determination Letter
2. VEP Board of Directors 9.1.21
3. VEP FY2020 Annual Review
4. a. VEP Statement of Activities Compared to Budget and Prior Year final-unaudited
4. b. VEP 08.31.21 YTD P&L Budget Vs. Actual
5. VEP ESL Toolkit Price Quote
6. VEP Strategic Plan 2021