

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

September 15, 2021

Contact Information

Organization Name: West Chester Public Library
Address: 415 N Church St, West Chester PA 19380
Phone: 610-696-1721
Website: wcpubliclibrary.org
Year Incorporated: 1888
FEIN: 23-1365982

ED/CEO Name: Victoria E. Dow
ED/CEO E-mail: vdow@ccls.org
Board Chair Name: Mary U. Brooks
Board Chair Approval (check here):
Primary Contact Name: Clare Quinn
Primary Contact E-mail: cquinn@ccls.org
Cell 484-639-7393

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: West Chester Public Library provides all community members equal access to information, ideas, and knowledge through books, programs, and other resources to support lifelong learning.

Geographic Area Served: West Chester Borough and the townships of Birmingham, East Bradford, Pocopson, Thornbury, West Goshen, and Westtown

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: This encompasses a population of approximately 58,000.

Annual Budget \$588,490 8.77 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
75 % of budget for program expenses 13 # of Board Volunteers
14 % of budget for administrative expenses 7 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
11 % of budget for fundraising expenses 298 # of Volunteer Hours (this does not include event volunteer hours)

100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources: Government, fundraising activities, trusts/grants, fines and fees

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: West Chester Public Library would present a workshop by From Privilege to Progress to library staff, board, and volunteers, inviting the entire Chester Co. Library System staff and community members in partnership with the Melton Center. The goal would be to create increased awareness of bias and inspire acts of anti-racism in attendees' personal and professional lives.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

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

Founded in 1872, WCPL moved into its current location at the corner of North Church and Lafayette Streets in West Chester in 1888. The original 19th century building still serves the community as its library, albeit with 21st century improvements and amenities incorporated during an extensive renovation and expansion in 2004-2005.

A member of the Chester County Library System, West Chester Public Library serves the greater West Chester community with materials, programs, and information for all ages. The library circulates over 150,000 items annually from its collection of 50,000 books, DVDs, CDs, e-books and magazines, and in normal conditions, sees 90,000 to 100,000 visits per year. The library seeks to provide a welcoming and open environment to all, both virtually and in person. The library's PCs and free Wi-Fi connection provide community access to the Internet as well as up-to-date document creation software. Among the more than 700 programs it presents annually in a typical year are children's story times and Summer Reading Club; materials and after-school programs for teens and tweens; and book discussion groups, author visits and special programs for adults. WCPL collaborates with a number of area organizations, including the Melton Center, St. Agnes, and the West Chester Area Day Care, to provide programs and services outside the library building.

In the extremely untypical year of 2020-21, library staff used tools such as Zoom and Kahoot! to serve the community during periods of physical closure and reduced hours. With a few changes to communications, scheduling, and dissemination, library staff demonstrated creativity in using these tools to keep library services going, including story times, children's and teen programs, the weekly English Language Learner's (ELL) Conversation times, the book discussion group, and most important of all, access to eBooks. Using those new tools, along with Facebook Live and Instagram stories feeds, the staff was able to present a variety of programs. In addition to weekly story times, the staff offered STEM/STEAM programs, book-themed posts and challenges for teens, a ballroom dance class, readings by local authors, and a bi-weekly trivia night. Borrowing and program numbers were nevertheless affected, with 40,000 fewer materials loaned than in a typical year and programming reduced by close to two-thirds compared with 2019.

Keeping up with the soaring demand for eBooks and audiobooks was our biggest challenge, one we shared with all the libraries in the Chester County Library System. By May, demand for e-materials had grown by some 50-60% over January-February 2020. Readers were looking for bestsellers, children's books, DIY and how-to books, science fiction and fantasy, and just about anything that was available to borrow. We spent the bulk of our \$16,000 e-materials budget by June.

2. Funding request

Key Initiative

In response to the needs of its diverse community and the increasing awareness in the United States of the continued impact of racist attitudes and actions, West Chester Public Library wants to enhance staff and board sensitivity to racism in their daily lives and to their individual power to act against it both in the library and in their personal lives by holding a workshop by Michele Saahene and Melissa DePino of From Privilege to Progress (P2P).

Specific Needs and Issues to Be Addressed

Two categories of the library's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan list objectives that depend on staff and board vigilance about racial attitudes. The first category, Community Engagement, targets this objective: Engage diverse segments of the community. The second category, Customer Value and Experience, includes as an initiative: Ensure that service is welcoming and friendly, improving customer service and interactions with staff.

Per the US Census as of 2019, nearly 25% percent of the residents of West Chester Borough are people of color (7.9 African American, 11.3 % Hispanic, Mixed race 2.5 % and Asian 2.4%) Library staff ranges from 0 to 15% people of color at any given time and the 13-member board currently includes one Black member and one Southeast Asian member. Library customers are diverse, but the staff and board believe that more can be done to attract, engage, and serve non-white area residents. After the adoption of the Strategic Plan, the library board created a Community Committee in August 2020 to look with new eyes at the library's signage, displays, staff, program offerings, books, etc., to assure that we are serving the needs of and representing our community. Several non-board representatives of the community were drafted for the committee, whose first act was to install a new welcome sign in many languages outside the main entrance.

In their workshops, P2P's Michelle Saahene and Melissa DePino connect with audiences on a personal level, allowing them to recognize their ability as individuals to effect change and providing tools they can use to do so. The library board and director believe that the P2P workshop will expand board and staff sensitivity to the diverse experience and needs of the community in a way that will be meaningful and resonant, inspiring empathy in their library work and lives.

Why It Is Important To Fund This Now

The library board and management believe national events, including the rise of white supremacy as an accepted ideology; the evidence of serious bias in various segments of society, including in police departments, local government, and school districts; and the rise of hate crimes, call for immediate and sustained action against racism at all levels, and especially in local libraries, which are intended to serve all community members without bias.

Timeline

The library would like to schedule the workshop for the first half of 2022.

About the Consultants

Michelle Saahene, a corporate project manager and life coach, and Melissa DePino, a communications professional for nonprofits, founded From Privilege to Progress after they met at a Philadelphia Starbucks in 2018, where they witnessed two innocent Black men being arrested as they waited to start a business meeting. DePino spoke up as Saahene recorded and tweeted a video of the incident. Their actions that day created national awareness of the differences between the White and Black experiences of daily life and inspired action, including the introduction of unconscious bias training for 8,000 Starbucks employees. Through their #ShowUp movement, they work to include others in the conversation about racial disparities with a commitment to learning together as a community, speaking up in everyday situations, and amplifying the voices of people of color.

P2P has been featured on WHYY's Radio Times, NPR's Code Switch, Matter of Fact with Soledad O'Brien, MSNBC's AM Joy, and Jada Pinkett Smith's Red Table Talk, and in numerous additional television, print and online outlets. They have spoken internationally to audiences ranging from 20 to 2,000 at corporations, conferences and events, universities and non-profit organizations, and are currently in the planning stages of the first annual Show Up Summit to be held in Northern California in 2021. They have presented workshops at

many companies and educational institutions, including Merck, The Hershey Company, Proctor & Gamble, University of Pennsylvania, Yale, and Tufts.

The cost of the P2P workshop is \$5,000 (see attached proposal). In order to maximize its reach and impact, WCPL has reached out to the Chester County Library System and The Melton Center, both of which will invite their staffs, boards, and interested people to attend. WCPL envisions workshop participation ranging from 50 to several hundred attendees.

How impact & results will be demonstrated

- A post-workshop survey will indicate that
 - At least 60% of attendees will feel they have gained greater awareness of the experience of racism in the daily personal and work lives of Black Americans.
 - At least 60% of attendees feel more able to speak up against racism in their work and daily lives.
 - At least 60% of attendees feel they have the tools they need to address and interrupt racist acts they witness in their work and personal lives.
- The workshop by P2P will inspire library staff and board to create a culture of authentic inclusion and diversity in their libraries/organizations, looking at operations, materials and programming with increased sensitivity and awareness of their efficacy in addressing the needs and wants of people of color and from other cultures.
 - The WCPL Community Committee will use takeaways from the workshop to shape its agenda.
- WCPL will incorporate recommendations from the workshop in procedures, practices, and programming, including the addition to all staff meeting agendas a discussion of staff experience with racism in the library and how staffers and others can use and have used the tools learned in the workshop to combat it.