

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Contact Information

Date: 11-24-2021

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: Lynn Majarian, 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 Environment/Animal Welfare Education
 Health Human Services 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

14 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

12 # of Board Volunteers

3 % of budget for administrative expenses 75 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers (pre-COVID)

3 % of budget for fundraising expenses 4,000 # of Volunteer Hours

100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Individual contributions \$1,413,169.64

Other contributions \$24,000.00

Fundraising events \$85,000.00

Grants \$362,000.00

Food donations \$680,000.00

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

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

Proposal Summary: KACS seeks funding to help support its three main programs: the Kennett Food Cupboard, Emergency Assistance, and Bridges Out of Poverty. KACS is almost entirely funded by contributions, both monetary and in-kind (food, primarily). The granted funds will be used for all three programs which have seen unprecedented growth in participation in the Food Cupboard, and also in demand for emergency services due to COVID, and the subsequent housing emergencies resulting 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. As an example of “emergency services”, KACS recently had to provide emergency services after the flooding of Hurricane Ida. 89 individuals were displaced having lost most of their possessions, and KACS found temporary housing for them.

KACS recently hired a full-time Coordinator for the Bridges Out of Poverty Program, which features the Getting Ahead workshops. In the past, most of the KACS services were “reactive” whereas the Getting Ahead workshops are “proactive” giving participants (referred to as “investigators”) a chance to change to an upward trajectory for their lives.



Chester County Community Foundation Grant
Proposal Narrative
Funding for General Operating Expenses
November 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 89 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

Target beneficiaries of the Food Cupboard are those living at 350% of the federal poverty level or below (i.e., \$90,125 for a family of four) and residing in the Kennett Consolidated, Unionville-Chadds Ford, and Avon Grove School Districts in Southern Chester County. The program addresses basic nutrition requirements for those in our community experiencing need. We are currently serving 4,900 unduplicated people in our Food Cupboard. In the past 12 months, KACS has had over 22,000 visits to the food cupboard, and that represents a 75% increase from the year before.

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. In January we hired an additional Emergency Assistance Advocate to help manage the continued high volume.

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. If there is no shelter space available, we can pay for an emergency hotel stay. After Ida, we placed 30 families in hotels, and are helping another 89 with emergency assistance.

2. Funding request

- Description of key initiatives

KACS seeks funding to help support its three main programs: the Kennett Food Cupboard, Emergency Assistance (EMA), and Bridges Out of Poverty (BOP). KACS is almost entirely funded by contributions, both monetary and in-kind (food, primarily). The granted funds will be used for all three programs which have seen unprecedented growth due to demand for assistance, fueled in large part by the cascading effects of COVID. The BOP Getting Ahead workshops were making a positive impact on the community until they had to be curtailed because of distancing protocols.

- Specific needs & issues to be addressed

For the Food Cupboard, we will use the granted funds to purchase items that are always in short supply. We receive many of our Food Cupboard items as donations from grocers and individuals, but there are items that never seem to come to us to satisfy demand via contributions. Specifically, we would use the funds to purchase meats, dairy, and eggs, as well as paper products, hygiene items, etc., for participants to choose from to add to the dry and canned goods that we offer in the Food Cupboard.

When necessary, we also provide grocery store gift cards when the participant family needs specialized items we do not have in stock.

We continue deliveries to homebound participants each month, with those numbers increasing. To keep our participants at Luther House safe, we make monthly ‘doorstep’ deliveries. Outreach continues to these vulnerable seniors, and we are currently delivering to 94 households.

For Emergency Services, we will continue to cover expenses for temporary housing and for financial assistance with utilities, etc., as needed.

For Bridges Out of Poverty, granted funds will be used as seed money to get the workshops up and running again after the hiatus due to COVID. Specifically, with the planned four workshops per year, we will need to train facilitators to lead the “investigators” (participants) on their path to new lives.

- Why it is important to fund this now

For the Food Cupboard, we cannot accurately forecast what the demand for food and related items will be for the coming year. We can look at the historical rise in demand from year to year, and then, accounting for the atypical upsurge due to COVID, we can conservatively predict that food insecurity will not diminish, and as our impact in the community becomes better known, we will monitor the range of probabilities and will need to be prepared. We do not turn anyone away, and if we run short of food and items, we will have to struggle to find emergency funding to keep up with demand.

For Emergency Services, we cannot predict emergencies, either for any individual family, or like the emergencies caused by Ida and other natural calamities, for the community at large. We do see a continuing need, and we must be prepared for any eventuality.

For Bridges Out of Poverty, and the Getting Ahead workshop, Why now? The Getting Ahead experience is transformational. Can we let any more time go by before we offer the necessary number of Getting Ahead workshops and help the many families who can take their first steps out of poverty toward a more stable life in their community?

Indeed, why now? We have the ability and the will to help the lives of hundreds of people each year. All we lack are the funds to do it.

- How impact & results will be demonstrated

Measurements of Success – Food Cupboard

We have established specific targets for the many parts of Food Cupboard, including number of households served per month, number of pounds of food distributed per month, number of Luther House residents and homebound participants served, outreach to schools, educational materials distributed about healthy eating and self-sufficiency.

Measurements of Success – Emergency Services

In 2020, KACS increased the internal limits of assistance twice during the year from \$2,000 to \$3,000 and now a maximum of \$5,000 per qualified household to meet the needs created by the economic fallout of the pandemic. KACS 0% interest Emergency Loan program was not used because repayment of the loan was not possible due to the unstable employment climate from shutdowns and quarantine. Going forward, it will be important to revive this program to help participants transition out of poverty.

Measurements of Success – Bridges Out of Poverty

We intend to hold four Getting Ahead workshops in 2022 for 15 “investigators” and two facilitators per workshop, running for 16 weeks. Getting Ahead has structures in place to maintain contact with “graduates” to offer support as needed.