

**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](http://www.chescocf.org)

Date 12/13/2021

**Contact Information**

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 Website: [www.coatesvilleareapubliclibrary.org](http://www.coatesvilleareapubliclibrary.org)  
 Year Incorporated: 1877  
 FEIN: 23-1365314

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 Board Chair Approval (check here):   
 Primary Contact Name: Spencer K. Williams  
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**Organization Information:**

**Field/s of Interest:**

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

**Mission:** The Coatesville Area Public Library provides information, programming, and technology to the residents of the greater Coatesville area to promote literacy, build community and enrich lives. The library's collection includes all of the defined fields of interest and more.

**Geographic Area Served** (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): The CAPL provides both traditional and non-traditional library services to community members across the greater Coatesville area including the City of Coatesville, Modena and South Coatesville Boroughs, and Caln, East Fallowfield, Valley and West Bradford Townships.

**Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:** As a public library, the CAPL provides equitable and individualized service to 36,000 community members, including children and youth, adults, and seniors, regardless of social or economic status, to meet their needs for knowledge, connections to community organizations and access to private and public resources, such as job sites and state benefits programs.

Annual Budget \$ <u>281,790</u>	<u>6</u>	# of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>82</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>6</u>	# of Board Volunteers
<u>16</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>15</u>	# of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>2</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>2025</u>	# of Volunteer Hours
<small>100 % total</small>		

**Top 3-5 funding sources:** Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, local municipal funding; private foundations and donors

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

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 5,000

**Proposal Summary:** The Coatesville Area Public Library is requesting \$5,000 to provide children's programming.

## Coatesville Area Public Library

### **1. Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness:**

Since 1974, the Coatesville Area Public Library (CAPL) has served a crucial role in the social, educational, and personal development of the residents of the greater Coatesville area. During this time, Chester County has experienced a seismic change in character, transitioning from rural farmlands with a few semi-urban centers to suburbs housing workers commuting to Philadelphia and to a multitude of light industrial and professional businesses, many of them offering high paying jobs in technology and pharmaceuticals. While the rest of Chester County experienced an economic boom and an influx of job opportunities, the City of Coatesville faced the opposite reality. Due to the downturn of the steel industry, unemployment for residents of the greater Coatesville area significantly increased. A lack of private investment and very limited public transportation has resulted in prolonged social and economic hardships for residents, particularly those living in the City of Coatesville. Today, over 25% of residents live in poverty, which is often multi-generational. Families struggle to meet their basic needs for food, safe housing, medical care, and job training. Many family structures are fractured due to incarceration, substance abuse or death of parents of young children. Simply put, the social and economic issues faced by residents in the City of Coatesville represent an anomaly in the wealthiest county in the Commonwealth.

Throughout these significant changes, the CAPL remains a steady force for good by providing information, programming, and technology for the 36,000 residents of their service area, with a mission to promote literacy, build community and enrich lives. During the pandemic in 2020 and early 2021, library staff transitioned educational programs to a virtual format, and continued to provide books to patrons through curbside delivery. The library's website was updated frequently to highlight local health department information and links to online resources to help educate and entertain children, families, and adults throughout the mandated lockdown.

As a public library, the CAPL serves all residents equitably, regardless of their social or economic status, providing both traditional and non-traditional services to community members. While the traditional view of a library as a place to do research or to borrow books remains strong, the CAPL also provides many non-traditional services as a centralized source of information regarding public and private benefits and community organizations, which address the needs of low-income families. The CAPL's 10 public computers allow residents without home computers or internet service the ability for children to do research to complete homework assignments and for adults to search for job training and employment opportunities. As a community hub, the library hosts recruiting events for local companies and provides space for local human services providers to meet with families.

Library patrons of all ages look to this library for interesting programs and opportunities to interact with others with shared interests. The ability of the CAPL to provide high quality programs, particularly for children and adolescents is crucial to the healthy and positive development of the next generation of informed and productive citizens.

### **2. Funding request:**

#### **Description of key initiatives:**

The Coatesville Area Public Library is respectfully requesting \$5,000 to provide a variety of children's programming at the library for the next 12 months. These free programs provide valuable educational and pro-social opportunities for children and adolescents in the greater Coatesville area.

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

Public libraries today serve a vital role in meeting the diverse needs of their local communities. Many residents in the greater Coatesville area lack the funds and private transportation needed for their children to participate in clubs and activities. This is one reason why the library's ability to deliver positive, high-quality programs tailored to address the developmental needs of children is crucial. For pre-school age children, the library offers weekly family story time sessions where staff reads a book, followed by a song and a craft activity, designed to accommodate little hands. Family story time provides multiple benefits for children and their parents; the congregative setting teaches children valuable socialization skills such as the use of an "inside voice" and how to interact with peers in a group. Children develop their curiosity and vocabulary by hearing someone read out loud and singing. Story time also helps parents (who may not be comfortable readers) develop their literacy and build their awareness of the cognitive and emotional benefits of reading to their children. Family story time also builds connections between adult attendees who develop natural support networks, easing loneliness and anxiety for new parents and for grandparents and other kinship relations in the community who have become primary caregivers. Family story time programs introduce the library as an available resource to community members, as a source of books for those who cannot afford to purchase them, and for access to computers for those families who do not have their own at home. On average 40 children attend weekly in-person story time.

For school age children and adolescents, the library provides weekly activities after school and on the weekends to stimulate cognitive development, curiosity, and build social skills in a safe and easily accessible location. "Super Saturday" programs include Book Bingo and STEM programs such as learning about and building Brush Bots. The CAPL also partners with other community organizations such as The Arts and Athletics Club and Therapy Dogs International to provide opportunities for area youth to participate in positive, enriching activities which build self-esteem and provide deterrents to anti-social behavior such as drug, alcohol and tobacco use, truancy and criminal behavior. The library's programs and affiliations provide equitable opportunities for all children to increase their knowledge and skills.

Summer programming is an important part of the library's outreach to children. During this past summer, the library presented 2-3 programs weekly, focused on a "Tails and Tales" theme. Over 115 enthusiastic children participated in the various activities including animal pose yoga classes, Lego building club, painting and crafting classes, and animal bingo. Children met and learned about reptiles including snakes, lizards and turtles with Jessie Rothacker from the [Forgotten Friend Reptile Sanctuary](#). Dawn White, from the [Indian Run Environmental Education Center](#), presented owls and hawks in a program on "Birds of Prey". These unique educational programs provide local children with personal experiences to help them understand and appreciate wildlife, the environment and nature. Every summer program is designed to encourage children to search for and check out books on the topic, which increased the number of books borrowed during the period.

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

Funding from the CCCF will strengthen the CAPL's financial position ensuring that the library's staff can continue to provide these valuable programs to children and youth in the community. After a year of the inability to socialize and congregate, these programs are integral to restoring a sense of normalcy and enthusiasm for children and families in the community. High quality educational and social programming can help reduce the feelings of isolation, anxiety and depression which impacted so many children during the pandemic. They provide positive diversions for youth who have limited or no opportunity to engage in private costly athletic or arts clubs by offering them easily accessible, welcoming alternatives to aimless and potentially negative interactions.

The library's activities for children continue throughout the year and the new youth services assistant, Erika Haak, is continually working to develop new program ideas to appeal to different age groups. Potential programs include "Nature's Little Explorers" which is designed for ages 3-5 and their caregivers. Programs such as "Fur, Feathers and Scale", "Turtle Time" and "Animals on the Move" introduces preschoolers to a variety of animals and their habitats. Funding will support the staff time dedicated to children's programming, supplies, and the fees for guest presentations and classes. Funding will also permit the library to give books to child participants to take home to encourage reading. Many children don't have books of their own and truly appreciate having a book of their own. These programs serve to introduce many children to the library as a resource for a view into a new world filled with opportunities and promise. It is crucial to continue this work to connect with children and adolescents to show them a bigger world than the one they see outside their window. Funding for year-round children's programming will enable the library to expand their current work to include more topics of interest for different age groups, with a goal of increasing participation by 50% over the next year. Thanks to a generous capacity building grant from the CCCF, the CAPL will be able to significantly improve the quality of virtual programming which will also be used to create more children's programming content.

The library's 2021 annual operating budget projects a very slim surplus. The library lost crucial revenue in 2020, continuing into 2021 due to significantly reduced transaction fees and the inability to rent their community rooms to the general public. Reduced revenue impacts operations including staff levels and funds available for programming. The CAPL is dependent upon discretionary funding from state, county, and local municipalities for 78% of the organization's revenue. None of that money is guaranteed and is subject to change at any time. In fact, local municipal funding which represents 20% of revenue is not typically received until the second half of the year, making it extremely difficult to plan expenditures.

Philanthropic funding for children's programming ensures that current and future programs can proceed as planned without interruption. As mentioned, Ms. Haak is continually working on ideas for additional programs, by connecting with youth groups and schools to determine topics of interest and to generate enthusiasm for programs. After a successful summer which showed high levels of community participation, library staff want to build on this momentum to attract more children and youth to programs throughout the next year.

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

The CAPL measures the impact of every in-person and virtual program based on the number of attendees and views of each live and recorded program as well as participant surveys to determine reactions and suggestions. As a result of increasing the variety of content and the scope of outreach, Director Williams anticipates an increase in library visits, an increase in the number of requested library cards and in the number of materials borrowed from the library. This plan will also help the CAPL's finances, specifically state and county funding which is partially based on the number of patrons, the number of programs and participants. All of these figures are reported annually to the state and by the library system. This investment in children's programming has the capability to pay for itself in future state revenue, although the real benefit will be derived from hundreds of happy and productive children and adolescents who choose positive activities which stimulate their minds and build their self-esteem.