

GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

- The Chester County Community Foundation **connects people who care with the causes that matter**, so their philanthropy makes a difference **now & forever**.
- We are **a collection of Field of Interest & Donor Advised Funds** with **\$5M + granted annually** to nonprofits in Chester County & beyond.
- **99%** of our grants are made by our generous Fund Advisors, who make grant decisions all year.

Proposals submitted by nonprofits are considered for 2 types of grants:

Field of Interest & Donor Advised Funds (No Deadline)

- ◇ Grants **focus on Chester County** causes & issues but are not limited to Chester County.
- ◇ Charitable nonprofits working **in all fields of interest** are considered for grant awards. (I.e., arts, culture, & humanities; education; community improvement; environment; religion; health; & human services)
- ◇ **General operating** grants are encouraged. Nonprofits should be specific about their mission, goals, & measurable outcomes.
- ◇ Proposals can be submitted **anytime all year**.
- ◇ Grant decisions are made **intermittently** all year, as Fund Advisors desire.
- ◇ Grant **awards** typically range from **\$500-\$7,500**.

Fund for Chester County Capacity Building Grants (Due 9/15)

- ◇ For eligibility in this grant program, nonprofits must be **located in & serve Chester County**. NPO's with budgets of \$500,000 or less are given preference.
- ◇ The goal of capacity building grantmaking is to **strengthen the effectiveness of NPO's serving the Chester County region**, in areas including:
 - Mission, Vision & Strategy
 - Governance & Leadership
 - Partnerships & Collaborations
 - Operations & Technology
 - Fundraising, Development & Marketing
- ◇ Proposals must be submitted by **September 15** to be eligible for consideration.
- ◇ Grant **awards** typically range from **\$500-\$5,000**, with monies distributed by **February**.

- Use this form @ www.chescocf.org to apply online for grants from all Community Foundation Funds.
- **Email proposals to grants@chescocf.org**
- Proposals are considered "complete" when CCCF has **confirmed** receipt of the **Grant Proposal Summary Sheet, Narrative & Attachments**.
- Proposals are shared electronically and online with Fund Advisors, Donors & Grant Panels.
- Per IRS Regulations, applicants **must be** charitable, tax-exempt organizations with 501(c)(3) certification & **cannot** be individuals.

Please contact Grants Administrator **Kevin Baffa** at **(610)-698-8211** or grants@chescocf.org with any questions.

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

Date: 08/04/2022

Contact Information

Organization Name: It Takes a Village Community Giving
Address: PO Box 520, Downingtown, PA 19335
Phone: 484-364-5598
Website:
Year Incorporated: 2017
FEIN: 82-0711838

ED/CEO Name: Jennifer Smialowicz
ED/CEO E-mail: admin@ittakesavillagecc.org
Board Chair Name: Michelle Terry
Board Chair Approval (check here):
Primary Contact Name: Jennifer Smialowicz
Primary Contact E-mail:
admin@ittakesavillagecc.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: Serving underprivileged families in Chester County with food and emergency assistance through community support and donations.

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

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: It Takes a Village helps the community serve those suffering from homelessness, food insecurity, and poverty in Chester County by providing and maintaining twelve open-access food boxes. The food boxes provide anonymous access to food, toiletries, and personal care supplies to an estimated 4,000+ individuals each year. We estimate that each food box serves at least one person a day which accounts for 3,650 people served per year. We also help an average of 50 families annually through our Neighbor-to-Neighbor program which provides emergency grants, financial assistance, groceries, clothes, and toys to families experiencing emergency financial hardship.

Annual Budget \$19,304

74.5% of budget for program expenses
5.5% of budget for administrative expenses
20% of budget for fundraising expenses
100 % total

.25# of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
4 # of Board Volunteers
100 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
150 # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources: 1. Individual giving 2. Special fundraising events (i.e., Ida Flood Fund or Holiday Program) 3. Corporate giving 4. Recurring monthly donations

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

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

Proposal Summary: Primarily focusing on women and children in need, we commit that 100% of individual donations go directly back into the Chester County community. It is critical to expand our funding so we can continue to expand awareness of our existing programs and attract more community members to approachable community giving. This includes erecting more food boxes throughout Chester County, opening additional spots in our Neighbor-to-Neighbor program, and increasing communication with other organizations.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

Nonprofit's history: It Takes a Village (ITAV) was formed in 2016 by a group of Chester County community members seeking tangible ways to support their neighbors in need at the grassroots level, creating authentic connection and compassionate support. We received 501c3 status in March of 2017. The concept was and continues to be to reach out to possible donors and those in need through our website, and social media, such as our Facebook page where individuals can join our group. Members of this group are referred to as "Villagers." The number of Villagers grew to 1500 within the first three months and is now over 3000 who, through encouragement, volunteerism, and donations keep our food boxes filled and support families in emergency need.

It Takes a Village has facilitated many community projects including backpacks for children in foster care to a random acts of kindness campaign. Core programs include food boxes which began in 2017, and the neighbor-to-neighbor program which began in 2018. Due to its administrative flexibility and commitment to direct 100% of individual donations to those in need, It Takes a Village has become the local 'go-to' charity to both collect and provide quick emergency aid within our community, as demonstrated during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Within hours of the announced US shutdown, we provided emergency food and cash relief to over 50 families who could not work, before government aid mobilized. We also provided immediate support to over 40 families affected by Hurricane Ida Flooding in Downingtown and Coatesville in 2021.

In Q4 of 2021 It Takes a Village hired its first part-time Executive Director to focus on enhancing the core programs, expanding fundraising, and leveraging grants to build our capacity within the community.

Goals: Our priority goals for 2022 include the following (additional goals are listed on our strategic plan):

- **Improve Communication:** Improve ITAV's program awareness with other organizations and social workers and increase donor education and follow through.
- **Food Box Program:** Erect 3 new food boxes in Title 1 school districts in Downingtown (DASD). Goal is to erect food boxes throughout DASD in partnership with school administration. Target donors for monthly box buddy funding to ensure boxes are consistently filled with food. Target high traffic boxes as well as those that don't receive as many contributions from volunteers.
- **Neighbor-to-Neighbor program:** An estimated 6 families a quarter or 24 families for full year (FY) 2022. Average spend per family is \$300. We will require \$7,200 in donations to fund the program FY 2022.
- **Our stretch goal for 2022 (and beyond)** is to create (or partner with another local 501c3) to offer the community a brick-and-mortar "free store" where those in need can visit twice monthly to "shop" for non-food necessities like paper towels, toilet paper, diapers, tampons and other feminine products, toiletries, personal care items and a limited selection of donated household supplies such as pillows, linens, dishes, etc. This would be a complement to the food box program and would allow more interaction and opportunity to refer those in need to other community programs.

Key achievements & distinctiveness: Since inception It Takes a Village has been fully funded by grassroots donations. This organization has a proven ability to mobilize a large group of small-scale donors and volunteers via social media. The average cash donation based on Fiscal Year 2021 is \$75, but our reach extends far beyond as we cannot track donations made to food boxes which we estimate could exceed \$75,000 per year. In addition to bringing awareness to food insecurity in our community, It Takes a Village is a small and nimble organization that has been able to respond quickly and efficiently to unique local emergency situations such the COVID-19 pandemic and the destruction caused by Hurricane Ida.

Our unique methods and social media platform also mobilize selfless compassion and awareness of local need within our community in ways that can't be easily quantified. We estimate over 2,500 local community members

stock our food boxes whenever it fits their schedule – creating opportunities for children, families, and individuals to participate in compassionate giving at any time. It also brings awareness that ‘Yes, food insecurity affects our seemingly affluent community, and you can help!’. An estimated 4,000+ individuals are served by our food boxes per year, but the awareness and connection created by this accessible method creates positivity and support that can’t be offered within four walls.

Key Achievements include:

- It Takes a Village raised over \$15,000 in the first 48 hours to fund the Hurricane Ida Flood Fund. Funds were quickly redistributed to those in need. In addition to direct cash grants, we provided grocery gift cards, Lyft gift cards for transportation, new appliances, and funds for temporary housing. We also provided electrical supplies for volunteers in need of turning on power.
- We installed and maintained twelve open-access food boxes across Chester County.
- We implemented Neighbor-to-Neighbor program to provide immediate short-term solutions to help fill the gap during an emergency of need. This gap occurs when a family loses a job, is on unpaid leave due to health issues, when traditional services like government funding are not immediately available, or a surprise bill leaves a family short for the month. Our Neighbor-to-Neighbor program provides short term assistance to families who are in critical need. In 2020 and 2021 we helped over 70 families “fill the gap” as well as giving them support and hope.

We are distinctive in that we are the only nonprofit in Chester County that provides an organized system of food boxes and who focuses accessible ways to give back and who provide short term assistance to “fill the gap.”

Description of key initiatives: It Takes a Village has two core programs to support those in need throughout Chester County. The first is our community food boxes which began in 2017. Sometimes called blessing boxes, these open containers are a gathering place for neighbor-to-neighbor giving. The boxes are unlocked and can be either stocked or shopped at any time, by anyone, for any reason. These are meant to be great resources for the homeless, families down on their luck, people in between benefit payments, hungry school students or just anyone. They work on the honor system and have been a wonderful success so far!

Our second program is our Neighbor-to-Neighbor program committed to ‘filling the gap’ for those in need within our community. Perhaps a family is suddenly unemployed and in a pinch for groceries and winter clothes for the kids while they apply for new jobs and await unemployment assistance. Maybe a loved one is having a medical crisis and every spare dollar of the household has gone toward medications, leaving food, and rent budgets stressed. Perhaps it has been a tough month and it is a child’s birthday, and they could really use some help with gifts and a cake so they can feel special, loved, and unaffected by the stress of our adult world. Anyone in need within Chester County can apply for our program. Donations are made in the form of both new and used good as well as financial donations in the form of grants. We also use our Neighbor-to-Neighbor processes to quickly respond to local emergency need situations, like COVID-19 in 2020 and hurricane Ida flood damage in 2021.

Specific needs & issues to be addressed: The primary needs and issues addressed by ITV are poverty and food insecurity. According to the Chester County Planning Commission the total population in Chester County in 2019 was 524,989. Approximately 3.4% of all families in Chester County fell below the poverty line. “Individuals and families in our community are considered food insecure when they have limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate food to feed their families. Almost 75,000 individuals in Chester County were at risk for food insecurity — pre-COVID-19. During 2020, Many More were Confronted with Uncertainty. With the onset of COVID-19 and skyrocketing unemployment, many people found themselves in need of a food pantry for the first time, while those already in need experienced greater financial burdens.” [Chester County Food Bank]. In 2022 the cost of food and other basic necessities continues to rise.

Why it is important to fund this now: It is critical to continue to grow our village and our reach in the community so we can continue to offer a safe space for families to overcome food insecurities and fight poverty. Our programs are nimble, and we can flex with the drop of a hat. ITAV has been incredible in supporting our

community with unforeseen challenges such as COVID 19 and Hurricane Ida. In addition to offering a reprieve to impoverished local families, ITAV is a community of likeminded individuals who want to help their neighbors. Often it is hard to figure out how to help and where to contribute even when you have the time and money. Our village makes it easy for neighbors to help one another. ITAV has BIG goals for 2022 as we continue to extend the reach of our programs and volunteer community.

How impact & results will be demonstrated: Results are measured threefold. It is first measured by the engagement of our village. This includes how quickly our social media platform is growing and the consistency of posting and commenting. Second results are measured by how often our food boxes are stocked and how quickly they empty. The food boxes are maintained 100% by volunteers and there is a lot of pride in cleaning and stocking the food boxes. They empty quickly and status updates are posted on our social media platform. Lastly, success is measured by the number of people in Chester County that we can assist through our Neighbor-to-Neighbor program. In 2020 over 50 families were assisted through our Neighbor-to-Neighbor program.

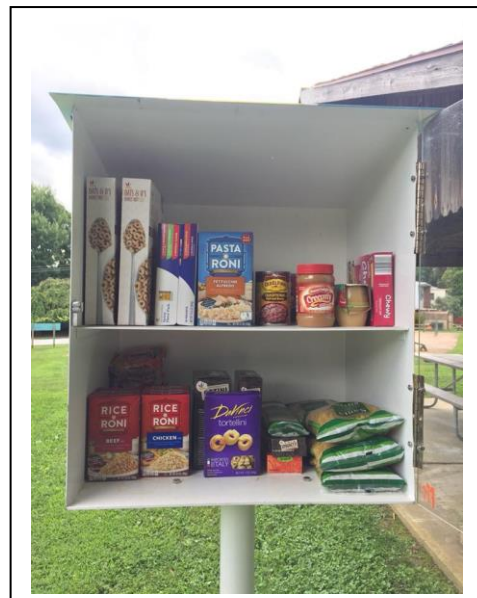
When surveying recipients of our Neighbor-to-Neighbor program in 2021 we found:

- 84.2% of recipients agreed that the assistance provided by It Takes a Village provided temporary relief while seeking long term assistance.
- 89.5% agreed that the donations through Neighbor to Neighbor improved their personal situation in a substantial way. Some quotes directly from recipients include:

"I just want to express a huge thank you from my children and I, to you and this amazing village. The look on my children's faces with receiving something new, something just for them, brought good tears to my eyes. They were beyond excited. The many generous gifts we have received, without a doubt has put my mind at ease with being able provide better for them. I have had many sleepless nights and many tears have fallen from my face throughout this hard time. I am blessed to have come across and to be a part of this village. To know, see and feel the generosity that I witness and receive through this village, gives me encouragement to keep my head up and keep going. I made the right choice! Not the easiest at all, but the right choice. Again, to you and the whole village family, my family and I, would love to say THANK YOU to each one of you! My heart is beyond full and blessed"

Specific to the food box program, former Downingtown Mayor Josh Maxwell was quick to sponsor the initiative, "Downingtown is known as a 'Good Neighbor' Community so when the folks at It Takes a Village contacted me to help, I was happy to assist. There's a real need for this kind of thing in every community, but especially the Coatesville Area, so I was glad to hear they'd be placing them not only in Downingtown, but throughout the county."

We currently have 12 food boxes located in strategic spots throughout Chester County. Each box was constructed and decorated by community volunteers.



III. ATTACHMENTS

E-mail or mail this support information

1. Copy of 501 (c) (3) federal tax-exempt letter
 2. List of Board of Directors, with their affiliations
 3. Most recent annual report & financial statement, audited if available
 4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date
 5. If capacity building initiative, itemized budget (including external consultant's proposal, if applicable)
 6. Current strategic plan. If your nonprofit does not have a current strategic plan, explain why.
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