

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**.
- ◇ Nonprofits **budgets** must be **\$500,000 or less**.
- ◇ 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: 9/9/22

Contact Information

Organization Name: Aavidum
Address: PO Box 64, Lititz, PA 17543
Phone: 484-368-2969
Website: www.aavidum.com
Year Incorporated: 2010
FEIN: 27-3668412

ED/CEO Name: Francesca Pileggi
ED/CEO E-mail: francesca@aavidum.org
Board Chair Name: Jim Presto
Board Chair Approval (check here):
Primary Contact Name: Francesca Pileggi

Primary Contact E-mail: francesca@aavidum.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities
 Health

Environment/Animal Welfare
 Human Services

Education
 Religion

Mission:

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

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: Aavidum is present in elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools throughout Chester County and we would like to expand our reach to impact every Chester County School District. We currently have clubs in Collegium Charter School, Downingtown Area School District, Kennett Consolidated School District, Oxford Area School District, and West Chester Area School District. Currently, Aavidum serves 10,000 students and educators in Chester County and through the proposed grant, we would like to increase that number to 30,000.

Annual Budget \$88,321.00

52% of budget for program expenses

47% of budget for administrative expenses

1% of budget for fundraising expenses

100 % total

0 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

14 # of Board Volunteers

25 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

4,000 # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources:

1. Lancaster County Extraordinary Give – online giving day
2. Grant Funding (specifically Rite Aid Foundation grant & PA Care Partnership grant)
3. Aavidum Virtual 5K

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: \$4,000

Proposal Summary: As students' mental health needs continue to increase, Aavidum would like to unite Chester County schools for a county-wide revitalization and launch of student-driven mental health and suicide prevention efforts through The Talk, Aavidum's signature high-energy, student-facilitated, interactive workshop.

In order to accomplish a Talk workshop, Aavidum will undertake the following activities:

1. Connect with administration at two schools that are interested in potentially hosting the workshop. West Chester Area School District and Downingtown Area School District have both expressed interest in this opportunity. Aavidum will work with these districts' administrators, Aavidum club advisors, and Aavidum student leaders to discuss and plan the logistical details of the event to ensure the best possible impact for the members of the Chester County community.
2. Reach out to existing Aavidum schools to ask for their assistance in inviting Chester County schools that do not currently have an Aavidum presence. Work together to develop and implement a plan to gain these school's participation.
3. Request sponsorships from local businesses, mental health providers, and/or suicide prevention groups to help cover additional program expenses. Collaborate with these community institutions and invite them to have a presence at the Talk workshop if they are interested.
4. Invite Chester County middle and high schools to register to attend the event. Work to follow up with schools that may not respond to initial communication until all of the spots for the workshop are filled.
5. Train the student workshop facilitators so that they are prepared to have "the Talk" about mental health and suicide with the peers at the workshop.
6. Plan and complete logistical details such as ordering materials, securing lunch, and requested technology needs.
7. Hold the Talk workshop.
8. Provide continued support and outreach to the newly trained schools. This will include feedback, ideas, and encouragement. Also provide Zoom meeting opportunities for Chester County Aavidum students to connect with the different schools in the area to share about ideas and support each other's endeavors.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

Aevidum Grant Proposal Narrative Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements & distinctiveness: The idea for Aevidum was born at Cocalico High School in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in 2003 after a student died by suicide. After his death, students, teachers, and administrators refused to remain silent and began an important conversation about mental health and suicide prevention. The small group, originally called A Helping Hand, grew and grew until the students renamed the group Aevidum in 2007. The word Aevidum, which was created by students and comes from Latin roots, means "I've got your back." In 2009, Aevidum received SADD's National Activity of the Year Award out of 10,000 schools. At this point, neighboring schools started reaching out to Cocalico to adopt the program. Aevidum incorporated in 2010 and began rapidly spreading its message to other schools across Pennsylvania through its student-led club model. There are now Aevidum clubs in 250 schools across the state. Aevidum's goals include:

- Spread crucial mental health information and resources among school personnel and students.
- Decrease the stigma associated with mental health issues.
- Ensure every student knows whom he/she can go to when faced with a difficult issue (counselors, teachers, coaches, administrators, etc.).
- Create cultures of care, compassion, and connectedness to promote protective factors within schools, ensuring students have one another's backs.
- Provide opportunities for peer-to-peer conversation and encouragement.
- Provide authentic opportunities for students to use their gifts and talents to make a difference.
- Begin the important conversation about mental health at a young age, creating more opportunities for prevention and early intervention.

Many Aevidum students struggle with their own mental health challenges or have experienced the effects of a friend or family member's mental health challenges. While counseling and direct therapeutic services are crucial, Aevidum provides other important elements of recovery: empowerment, connectedness, and purpose. These protective factors transform students' self-esteem and provide effective coping skills. The following testimonial highlights this benefit: "This club saved my life. I lost a friend of mine to suicide and began feeling suicidal myself. I helped my assistant principal get [Aevidum] started my senior year, and continued it by starting it and becoming the president on my college campus. Aevidum gave me a purpose. Counseling helped, but actually being able to help people and save lives helped so much with my healing process. Last year in a club meeting, I shared my story. And by sharing, a girl pulled up her sleeves and showed her cut up arms. She's now in counseling and I whole-heartedly believe Aevidum saved her life. This club is wonderful and can do so many great things. It not only can save lives and help people, but it gives people a purpose in life - it makes them feel like they're making a difference in the world." – Austin, Club Member Aevidum takes a unique approach compared to most programs in an engaging, student-driven, authentic way. From the start of Aevidum, our organization has focused on letting students create the atmosphere and programs their school needs (with appropriate adult assistance to ensure safety and suitability). All of our programs are truly student-developed. They have a youthful, authentic voice that frequently lacks in programs developed solely by experts. Instead, Aevidum believes in bringing the students together with the experts so that the students can translate the experts' messages into language and formats that they know will most sincerely resonate with and impact their peers. Elevating student voices, ideas, and perspectives in a genuine, meaningful way is the hallmark of what makes Aevidum's approach to youth mental health and suicide prevention unique. Lastly, Aevidum and its students have presented at national conferences, including a plenary session at the American Association of Suicidology, as the first ever student group to present. Aevidum has been endorsed by leading mental health professionals, school superintendents, school principals, teachers, counselors and, most importantly, students who continue to embrace this life saving initiative. Aevidum students have been recognized by lawmakers in Pennsylvania and Washington DC as part of efforts to bring mental health awareness and training to schools. Aevidum has also appeared in newspapers, on radio, and on TV across the nation, including

a feature on Good Morning America. Description of key initiatives: Using a Club model, Aavidum schools participate in monthly campaigns, and are supported by Aavidum as they implement these campaigns and customize them to their own school climates. The clubs spread the Aavidum message of “I’ve got your back” as they focus on support and prevention, and work to transform their school cultures to focus on care and advocacy. Beyond the Clubs program, Aavidum also presents The Talk workshop – a signature in-school kickoff platform that introduces students to Aavidum in an energized and youth-focused way. This free training allows schools to adopt Aavidum in authentic and engaging ways and provides struggling students with opportunities to rise as leaders as they advocate for a cause that has personally touched their lives. In 2017, Aavidum launched its Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Curriculum for middle and high school students. This program is available for free, immediate download on Aavidum’s website, and has been downloaded over 2,500 times. Aavidum also launched Little Aavidum, a free social-emotional curriculum and club model for elementary students, which has been downloaded over 500 times from Aavidum’s website. Aavidum also holds an annual conference to unite, empower, and equip student leaders and adult advisors with knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm to be strong advocates. Our 2022 Conference included 200 students and 50 educators from 40 different Pennsylvania schools. In the past two years, Aavidum has also added “Aavidum Mind”, a mindfulness program for educators, and “Aavidum Friend to Friend”, a peer support training for youth, and many other resources. Specific needs & issues to be addressed: Aavidum believes in the importance of identifying youth with mental health issues and helping them to access care. In the US, 21% of children ages 9 to 17 have a diagnosable mental or addictive disorder that causes at least minimum impairment (US Dept of Health & Human Services). Unfortunately, only 20% of these children are identified and receive mental health treatment due to the many factors that prevent access to care (U.S. Public Health Service). With half of all lifetime cases of mental illness beginning by age 14, Aavidum gears its initiative toward students (NIMH). The 2013 Review of School Climate Research revealed that school climate affects students’ self-esteem and a wide range of emotional and mental health outcomes. Additionally, in early teen years, “a positive school climate is predictive of better psychological well-being” (Thapa et al., 2013, p. 4). Aavidum strives to incorporate its message of empowerment and support into the climate of schools. By embracing Aavidum’s “I’ve got your back” message, schools are able to authentically grow cultures of kindness, compassion, and advocacy within their buildings. We believe that launching Aavidum initiatives in Chester County schools will not only increase student well being, but also foster secure, considerate environments where struggling students recognize it is safe to relay their concerns to a peer or a trusted adult. As a result, students who are dealing with mental health issues will be better able to access services. The Talk will provide enthusiasm and energy to encourage an open dialogue about mental health for students in Chester County. The potential ripple from this single event is very impactful. The 185 participants will return to their 12 schools ready to initiate mental health and suicide prevention programming for their entire student bodies. They will also share their knowledge with their families and other connections, impacting tens of thousands of Chester County residents. Why it is important to fund this now: Aavidum is requesting funding to address the significant mental health issues impacting youth as a result of the pandemic through authentic, energetic youth-focused and youth-led initiatives. We hope to empower students to use their gifts and talents to raise awareness of mental health and suicide prevention, encourage help-seeking, and transform their school cultures to better promote protective factors like connection, sense of purpose, and coping strategies. The Surgeon General’s 2021 advisory on Protecting Youth Mental Health states, “In 2019, one in three high school students and half of female students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, an overall increase of 40% from 2009.” Emergency room visits for suicide attempts among adolescents also rose during the pandemic. There is no doubt that schools need strong programs and resources that are not cost-prohibitive to address these concerns. The 2019 Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) data revealed that 36.3% of Pennsylvania students reported thinking “at times I think I am no good at all.” Similarly, 38.0% of students reported they felt sad or depressed MOST days in the past 12 months. Overall, 16.2% of students had seriously considered attempting suicide. It is undeniable that Pennsylvania youth are facing mental health challenges and need creative, authentic, powerful

opportunities to heal from their challenges and genuinely support one another. Aavidum's programs serve as solutions to the lack of identification, diagnosis, and treatment for mental health issues and also help to strengthen school climates. Students hold assemblies where they perform songs about self-esteem. They create dynamic PSA campaigns that encourage all students to save the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Crisis Text Line numbers in their phones. They design and paint elaborate murals in the halls of their schools that promote help-seeking. They leave positive, accepting notes on each and every students' lockers. Because the messages are consistently and creatively delivered by peers, they are better received by other students.

How impact & results will be demonstrated: Aavidum hopes to at least double the number of Aavidum clubs in existence in Chester County and be present in at least 75% of the Chester County school districts. This will be achieved through active participation in The Talk workshop and the successful establishment of an Aavidum club at each school. To measure the success and impact of The Talk, Aavidum has designed a survey that is given to students and teachers at the end of the workshop. It asks questions specific to our goals of changing attitudes and decreasing stigma surrounding mental illness and suicide, promoting comfort and confidence in help-seeking and making referrals, and understanding the importance and value of connected, healthy communities. Results of the surveys will assist us in knowing that we achieved our desired outcomes.

Lastly, we also look at qualitative data by interviewing participants after the Talk and at the end of the school year to hear students' and educators' experiences. These metrics are important to Aavidum as we evaluate our programming and look for creative ways to continue to support our Clubs.