

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

Contact Information

Organization Name: Bridge of Hope Chester County
Address: P.O. Box 304, Exton, PA 19341
Phone: 610-280-0280
Website: <https://chestercounty.bridgeofhopeinc.org/>
Year Incorporated: 1989
FEIN: 81-0555073

ED/CEO Name: Edith Yoder
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Board Chair Name: Bethany Shue Nussbaum
Board Chair Approval (check here): ☒
Primary Contact Name: Jessica Henry
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Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: To engage Christian faith communities in ending family homelessness through neighboring relationships that demonstrate Christ's love.

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

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: families with dependent children who are homeless or in the process of eviction. Currently serving 8 families, we have served total of 12 families this fiscal year beginning April 2022. We anticipate serving 15 families by fiscal year end.

Annual Budget \$ 381,434 2 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
87 % of budget for program expenses 13 # of Board Volunteers
3 % of budget for administrative expenses 79 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
10 % of budget for fundraising expenses 2340 (2021-22) # of Volunteer Hours
100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources: Truist, Fann Family Foundation, Huston Foundation, James S. Herr Foundation, James Spring & Wire Co., The WW Smith Charitable Trust

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

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

Proposal Summary: Homelessness does not end when someone is provided with housing. Homelessness ends when someone has the ability to provide safe housing for their family, and the long-term resources to remain housed. Bridge of Hope has been ending family homelessness in Chester County for more than 30 years. Bridge of Hope's comprehensive program empowers families and ends the cycle of homelessness. We are requesting \$5,000 of general operating funds to help us serve 18 families in fiscal year 2023-24.



Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements & distinctiveness

Bridge of Hope was founded in Chester County, and has been ending family homelessness for more than 30 years locally and nation-wide since 2002. The Bridge of Hope model is a unique solution to family homelessness that differs from the traditional shelter or transitional housing program. **We work collaboratively to help families move into safe and sustainable housing, and achieve long-term stability by providing comprehensive post-shelter and Whole Family Case Management services for 12-18 months.** Rental assistance is also provided on average for 6-8 months on a decreasing basis to coordinate with education or job training opportunities, which helps families begin working on financial goals. Families are accepted into the program regardless of race, ethnicity, faith or past experiences.

The Bridge of Hope model includes a distinctive component called Neighboring. Neighboring is provided for each family by a group of 6-10 trained volunteers from a local Christian church/group who build intentional relationships of support. Neighboring Volunteers walk alongside the family facing homelessness providing tangible and emotional support; such as emergency childcare, help to find housing and move in, networking through their social connections, a ride if transportation breaks down, encouragement and friendship. Data continues to show that support systems are critical for ending family homelessness in every community. (Bassuk, 2015, Services Matter: How housing and services can end family homelessness.)

Previously known as Bridge of Hope Lancaster and Chester Counties, in late 2019 we restructured and the two counties each became a separate Bridge of Hope affiliate under the umbrella of Bridge of Hope National. As a founding location of Bridge of Hope, this structure provides direct support for our Chester County work by the National office. The Bridge of Hope network includes 23 independent Bridge of Hope locations across the country. Bridge of Hope Chester County ended homelessness for 11 families in FY 2021-22, which was more than double the number served the previous year. We were able to hire a part-time case manager in March 2022. Our goal for FY 2022-23 is to serve at least 15 families by March 31, 2023, the end of our fiscal year, and we are well on our way to meeting that goal. Our goal for FY 2023-24 is to serve 18 families to help meet the critical need in Chester County for services that end the cycle of homelessness.

Funding request

Family homelessness is a reality in our community. The Pennsylvania Department of Education reported more than 1,700 students in Chester County experiencing homelessness in the 2020-21 school year. This is a significant increase from the previous year. The current economic



impact of the pandemic has disproportionately affected low income families. Family homelessness is often hidden because rather than seek services, families attempt to live doubled-up, on couches, in cars, or in motels, in order to stay together. We believe children are the most vulnerable population experiencing homelessness, and therefore serve families with at least one dependent child under the age of 18. According to the Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, more than 80% of these families are headed by a single mother, also typical of families served by Bridge of Hope.

Chester County has a severe shortage of affordable housing, and the cost of rental housing has skyrocketed. The number of calls for help to our office has more than tripled in this past year. Single parent families are particularly vulnerable to the housing crisis, and need support to improve their financial position. The Bridge of Hope program ensures that families have the long-term resources to remain housed and end the cycle of homelessness.

In the Bridge of Hope program, the adults seek employment within a career that meets the family's financial needs while working to better their education, earning power, and establish a solid financial plan for their future. Without a home, a family's ability to meet other basic needs is extremely challenging, so we provide first months' rent and security deposit to move into a safe and sustainable apartment of their choice. Through rental assistance provided on a decreasing basis and holistic case management services offered, **families achieve three main outcomes at successful graduation: safe and sustainable housing, improved financial position through job training and employment, and supportive Neighboring relationships.**

The trauma of homelessness, and the underlying issues that may have resulted in homelessness such as domestic violence, health issues, or other crises have far-reaching impact on family health and well-being. Trauma can result in depression, anxiety and physical health concerns. For children, it impacts development and learning, as well as mental and physical health. The Adverse Childhood Experiences study (ACEs) found that the effects of poverty and trauma can be limited if the child has a consistent, buffering, loving relationship with an adult, particularly if that adult is the parent of the child. Providing time for the family to address their experience and needs can provide stability in the relationship between parent and child, and helps to build resilience.

Supportive relationships move families beyond the traumatic experiences and encourage the process of healing and wholeness. Intentional and supportive relationships in the spirit of cultural humility and mutuality can provide the tangible and emotional support often missing in the lives of families facing homelessness. Case managers coordinate with the Neighboring Volunteers and the family to encourage relationship building. Case managers also ensure a



strengths-based approach; that the goals and desires of the family are the foundation of the services they receive. These key service components are vital for providing long-term solutions to homelessness.

Bridge of Hope is committed to meeting the dire needs of families facing homelessness in Chester County with a daring plan to serve more families. We work closely with several school districts, shelters and other direct service programs who provide referrals to Bridge of Hope for families who need “next step” services to achieve housing and improve their financial position. **We are requesting \$5,000 of general operating funds to help us serve 18 families in fiscal year 2023-24. The cost of ending homelessness for one family in Chester County is approximately \$14,415. Your support will allow us to increase the number of families who are working to build stability and wellness, and end the cycle of homelessness.**

We invite you to partner with us to end family homelessness, for families like Tré and his mom Parthenia, who graduated from Bridge of Hope in Chester County this year:

Tré is a compassionate, engaging 18-year-old, with a bright future ahead. Recently graduated from high school, Tré is excitedly preparing for college on a football scholarship in the fall. Football has been a significant sport for Tré all through his childhood; he played on his high school team, and has had good coaches who challenged and supported him. Tré’s mother, Parthenia, found Bridge of Hope through the Chester County human services hotline. The family was experiencing long-term housing insecurity and she was seeking help. One of her primary goals was to find an affordable and safe place to live that would have room for the entire family. When they joined Bridge of Hope, they found housing, and were connected with a wonderful group of Neighboring Volunteers from a local church that pitched in to help with rides for the kids, projects and sharing occasional meals together. “They are the best people in the world,” Tré remarked. In fact, Tré has been inspired to study social work in college because of this experience. “I saw how much they wanted to help us and how much they cared. It made me want to get into social work.” He commented, “I haven’t had the easiest life... I want to help people, to make their lives better; to help them grow and learn from their life experiences.” Tré credits his mother for getting involved with Bridge of Hope, for working hard to make things better for the family and for encouraging her children to accomplish their dreams. “She is the rock of the family; the person [who] will push you to where you want to be... She will push you to the right spot. That’s why I love her so much.” This is what providing housing security, Neighboring and hope looks like. Tré, his mother Parthenia, and the whole family are flourishing!

Your support will allow more families, like Tré and Parthenia’s, to join Bridge of Hope Chester County, and receive encouragement and support as they end the cycle of homelessness.