

JONAS C., MARIAN D., & ROBERT H. ERB CHARITABLE FUND REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



I. SUMMARY SHEET

(One page only. This page will be shared with Grant Committee Members.)

Date:

Contact Information:

Organization Name: **Phoenixville Public Library**

Contact Name: **Lauren Coy**

Address: **183 Second Avenue**

Contact Title: **Dir. of**

Phoenixville, PA 19460

Development

Contact E-mail: lcov@ccls.org

Phone: **610-933-3013**

Fax:

Web Address: www.phoenixvillelibrary.org

Year Incorporated: **1896**

Has your nonprofit previously applied to the Community Foundation:

Yes No

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture and Humanities

Environment/Animal Welfare

Health

Human Services

Education

Religion

Organizational Information:

Geographic Area Served: **We provide services to East Pikeland, Charlestown, Phoenixville Borough, and Schuylkill Township.**

Annual # of Clients & Description of Population Served: **The Library serve a population in Chester County of approximately 37,700 individuals**

Mission Statement: **The Mission of the Phoenixville Public Library is to provide access to information and services that address the educational, cultural, and recreational needs of the community the Library serves.**

Organization Description:

Annual Budget \$ **1,100,208.84**

7 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid

Staff

12 % of budget for program expenses

7 # of Board

Volunteers

85 % of budget for administrative expenses

18 # of Active Non-Board

Volunteers



___ 3 ___ % of budget for fundraising expenses
of Volunteer Hours
100 % total

___ 864.25 ___



Top 3-5 funding sources:

Phoenixville Area School District
Passport Applications
State Funding

Proposal Information:

Grant Amount Requested: \$40,000

Summary Description of Grant Purpose:

The Phoenixville Public Library (PPL) is a free and safe space in the community that advances education, literacy, social connections, and the well-being of individuals and the community at large. Evidence that even in the digital era, the PPL has diligently adapted to the times and desired by the public. There is a common public misconception that all Libraries are funded by the government. The County, State, and Phoenixville Area School District (PASD), due to the Carnegie agreement, funds approximately 65% of our operating budget. To offset the costs, we look to diversify our revenue streams through other sources of income and from generous funders like private and charitable foundations.

We take great pride in our vision of building a strong community. Our doors are open to anyone and everyone. We serve some of the most vulnerable community members that seek out our free health and human services, career support and also just a quiet, warm space. Furthermore, our librarians and staff serve the community as navigators and connectors to an abundance of information, resources and community programs provided by other organizations. The vast majority of the Library's programs are free for everyone who uses them. The grant support would go to bolster these services. Financial stability will allow us to be innovative and adopt researched-based services to meet the ever changing short and long-term needs of our community and surrounding areas.



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II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

The Phoenixville Public Library is a vibrant, community-based institution rich in culture, education and socialization. The Library is a free and safe space in the community that advances education, literacy, social connections, and the well-being of individuals and the community at large. Evidence that even in the digital era, the Library has diligently adapted to the times and desired by the public, even in the depths of a pandemic. We are not simply a place where books are on shelves. We truly engage any and every member of this vibrant community.

The Public Library of Phoenixville began its existence in 1896 when a group of prominent citizens took advantage of a law passed by Pennsylvania legislators making it legal for school districts to own and operate public libraries. There were no libraries affiliated with public schools. The school Directors agreed to foster a public library, which was called the Public Library of the Phoenixville School District. A small collection of books from the Young Men's Literary Union, founded by Reverend Joseph F. Jannison, a private subscription Library set up in the mid 1850's, formed the core collection of the new Library, which was housed in a succession of rented buildings. The original library was founded by a small band of forward-thinking business men who formed the Phoenixville Library Company in 1843. Library usage at that time was available for an annual membership of \$5.00 for a single share of the stock certificate.

Circulation of the collection has more than doubled from the 1970's to the present day, making the Phoenixville Public Library the third largest circulating collection in the Chester County Library System. Carnegie's goal was to provide information access, through libraries, for the intellectual and educational development of citizens. Phoenixville Public Library Trustees have continued to support this goal for more than 125 years.

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Phoenixville Public Library puts social service into action. Libraries help the people of this community, and its surrounding areas, with everything from enrolling for a program, attending a class with their child/grandchild, needing a computer for their job search, or a place to peruse the books, a study space, a warm place to sit and everything in between. It is imperative that one of the most effective levelers of society be allowed to thrive rather than fade away. It can only do so with increased financial support from the entire community.

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While the vast majority of the Library's programs are free for everyone who uses them, they cost the Library more money than is available from tax-based funding sources. It takes the generosity of funders to make a library great. Operating assistance is urgently needed to help the Library keep pace with the ever-growing needs of library users. This needed support for the Library helps to advance our outreach, our programming for all ages and access to all we offer to the entire community and its surrounding areas. Our programs give people the opportunity for lifelong learning and discovery. Support from the Erb Charitable Fund would allow the Library to continue to thrive as a community resource for everyone who needs it. The funding will go directly to supporting the Library, its programs, outreach and events, as well as our services we offer to the Phoenixville and surrounding communities.

The Library is unique in that it is the only Carnegie Library in Chester County. It has the most popular story time programs in the 19 locations of the Chester County Library System and is third in circulation item numbers. It is an established, viable, community-building institution that works to serve Phoenixville's educational, cultural and recreational needs. It is not difficult to evaluate whether the population utilizes the Library and its resources. The Library keeps track of card members, visits, circulation, programs and computer usage. Moreover, evaluations and surveys are filled out for programs that are held.

In an American Librarian Association (ALA) article, adequate funding was stated as the key to providing the resources and services valued by the people who visit public libraries. The Pew Research Center surveyed Americans to see just how well public libraries are measuring up. Most Americans report that they value the role of the public library in the community and have had positive experiences at the library. Americans 16 years and older (90 percent) reported that closing the library would have an impact on the community. The study further reports that:

- 95 percent of Americans ages 16 and older agree that the materials and resources available at public libraries play an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed
- 95 percent say that public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading
- 94 percent say that having a public library improves the quality of life in a community

We are crucial for our community to thrive and succeed. We serve over 39,000 residents of Phoenixville and surrounding communities. Unless it is around a specific program or event, we do not have assessments for our patrons for day-to-day use, due to our confidentiality and privacy rules. Repeat visits are the best indicator and best measurable outcome we have of our services. Some measures we can track are:

- Continue customer satisfaction surveys
- Check the collection usage and circulation rates monthly
- Increased number of library cardholders and active users
- Increased amount of operational revenue
- Increased program attendance
- An increase of print, online and social media coverage
- Increased market of library hosted events, classes and trainings
- Increased attendance at cultivation and fundraising events
- Increased number of private meetings held
- Increase circulation and library visits (through classes/events)





- offering desirable materials

Today, the Library serves a population of 39,000 community members by consistently providing opportunities to read, learn, create, connect, and support individual well-being. We offer a variety of services that meet the different needs of our constituents of all ages. For example, we provide early learning initiatives, which plays a crucial role in a child's cognitive development. Research has shown that reading to children is essential in their language development as well as in memory, motivation, and curiosity. The healthy upbringing of children affects their core life skills, decision making and their health later in life. We offer reading incentive programs to increase literacy rates for all youths and adults. No matter one's socioeconomic status, the Library opens its doors to all individuals regardless of race, gender, religion or sexual orientation, which allows for the socialization of different people to come together to form a tight-knit community.

