



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

The Chester County Community Foundation accepts applications from selected nonprofit charitable causes for the **Erb Charitable Fund**, a fund of the Chester County Community Foundation.

**Proposals are due by Wednesday, March 1, 2023.** Upon review of the initial proposals, a site visit may be conducted of the finalists. Grants will be awarded in the fall. Grant awards typically range from \$30,000 - \$50,000.

Please use the attached Grant Proposal Format to apply for a grant.

Grant applications should be submitted electronically by Wednesday, March 1, 2023 to [grants@chescofcf.org](mailto:grants@chescofcf.org). The e-mail heading should read: Grant Proposal Submission- Erb Charitable Fund

Please note that all grant applications will be available electronically on the Chester County Community Foundation's website for additional consideration for grant funding by the Community Foundation's Donor Advised Fund Advisors.

Questions? Please contact:  
Stephanie Stevens, Grants Director & Outreach Officer  
Chester County Community Foundation  
28 West Market Street  
West Chester, PA 19382  
[www.chesdcocf.org](http://www.chesdcocf.org)  
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# 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: 3/1/2023

### Contact Information:

Organization Name: RSVP Volunteers  
Address: 901 East 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Ste 200  
King of Prussia, PA 19460  
Phone: 610-834-1040  
Web Address: www.rsvpmc.org

Contact Name: Lydia Messinger  
Contact Title: Development Mgr  
Contact E-mail: lydiam@rsvpmc.org

Year Incorporated: 1972

Has your nonprofit previously applied to the Community Foundation: Yes  No

### Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture and Humanities  
 Human Services

Environment/Animal Welfare  
 Education

Health  
 Religion

### Organizational Information:

**Geographic Area Served:** All of Chester County, as well as Montgomery, Delaware and Philadelphia

#### Annual # of Clients & Description of Population Served:

RSVP Volunteers serves 11,000+ vulnerable, disadvantaged children, families, individuals, veterans and seniors across Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties. This proposal is specific to efforts in Chester County.

#### Mission Statement:

RSVP improves the lives of vulnerable populations in the community by focusing on education and wellness, and by providing support for nonprofits through skill-based volunteer programs. We utilize the wide variety of experience and expertise of our volunteers to facilitate our programs.

#### Organization Description:

Annual Budget \$ _____	_____3_____ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
81 % of budget for program expenses	_____24_____ # of Board Volunteers
_____8_____ % of budget for administrative expenses	_____1200_____ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
_____11_____ % of budget for fundraising expenses	_____33,200_____ # of Volunteer Hours
100 % total	

**Top 3-5 funding sources:** Americorp Seniors, Montgomery County Health and Human Services, Chester County ARPA, United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey

### Proposal Information:

**Grant Amount Requested:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_45,000\_\_\_\_\_

**Summary Description of Grant Purpose:** Support for RSVP's Educational Support Programming



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### II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

*Please provide the following information clearly and concisely.  
Proposals of 1 or 2 pages are strongly encouraged.*

#### 1. Organization's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

RSVP of Montgomery County (now RSVP Volunteers) was established in 1973, as part of the Older Americans Act, placing senior volunteers in nonprofit agencies to enhance their well-being and that of the community at large. In 1986, RSVP of Montgomery County received 501(c)(3) status, creating programming in response to critical needs. These in-house programs, now using adult volunteers of all ages, provide direct service to 7,500 vulnerable individuals each year including disadvantaged pre-school students and their families; at-risk, low-income elderly; those with low-literacy & STEM skills; seniors needing assistance navigating Medicare and public benefits; & nonprofits needing capacity building assistance. Over the years, five of these programs have received national recognition from the Corporation for National and Community Service (now AmeriCorps Seniors), Laubach Literacy (now ProLiteracy), and the Points of Light Foundation. During recent years, RSVP has broadened its footprint to include all of Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties.

RSVP recruits, interviews, screens, places, monitors, and provides recognition for a pool of 1,200+ volunteers who each year provide direct services for vulnerable individuals and enhance the service delivery and capacity of nonprofit agencies in Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties. RSVP's in-house programs address the needs of disadvantaged preschool students and their families, students (4th grade to college) struggling with math; elementary school students with reading difficulty, the STEM divide between disadvantaged students and their peers, senior wellness, seniors with health insurance and public benefit issues, nonprofits needing management assistance and most recently digital inequity.

#### 2. Funding request:

**A. Specific Chester County needs and issues addressed** RSVP is requesting funds to sustain and expand literacy and math/STEM educational programs for disadvantaged/at-risk students.

**B. Organizational impact (for general operating proposals) or project impact (for project proposals)**

These programs are aimed at narrowing the educational and achievement gap between those who are disadvantaged and their more advantaged peers to lead productive, self-sufficient lives in line with the following data from the Bureau of National and Economic Research (NBER): "Simply put, more education leads to much more income...better-skilled workers are more equipped to manage a range of situations in their work environment, improve their technical and domain expertise, and strive for higher positions within their current place of employment and elsewhere. Cognitive skills also improve a worker's efficiency and productivity, making them more attractive to employers." "Approximately 3 in 10 U.S. workers have a profession in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields, where workers earn on average \$36,000 more, on a yearly basis, than their

counterparts in non-STEM professions." "Better math skills increase salary by \$21,000 per year. Improvement in reading and writing could bring an \$11,000 increase."

### **C. Overall strategies to implement the organization's mission (or project)**

RSVP's Family Literacy Program Incorporating STEM: Working in collaboration with, and in support of Chester County Head Star, this program provides screened and trained volunteers in Head Start classrooms through a hybrid of in-person and virtual volunteerism, based on if the school is allowing inperson volunteers. The goal of the volunteer placement is to enhance the reading and STEM awareness of all enrolled students. In addition, workshops are conducted to educate parents on how to encourage learning and reading at home. RSVP also distributes gift books, three of which are STEM-related, to each student six times a year with accompanying reading and STEM tips for parents. Based on prior outcomes, we anticipate the following outcomes during the 2022-2023 school year: 88% of teachers will report that students working with RSVP volunteers increased their interest in learning and helped students become better prepared for kindergarten.

Elementary School Literacy Coaches: RSVP has been providing individualized reading coaching since 1992 in schools. Since the start of the COVID related closures and volunteer limitations, RSVP equipped the program to operate hybrid and/or 100% virtually, using a leveled reading website through which students read books for 30+ minutes twice a week to their volunteer, discuss what they have read, and then complete comprehension quizzes tracking their progress. Since September 2021, 200 students have received regularly occurring, one-on-one virtual reading coaching with the following outcomes: 70% of teachers reported that volunteer coaches helped students improve their reading skills; 73% of students said they looked forward to reading with their coaches; 68% felt better about their reading. We project similar outcomes for the 2022-2023 school year.

My Free Tutor (MFT), developed in 2013, provides individualized virtual math tutoring to students, grade 4 through college. We project helping 50 students on an ongoing, twice weekly basis during the coming school year with the following short-term outcomes based on previous results, as measured by class participation, homework, test scores and overall grade: 90% of students will improve their performance in math class with 50% "improving significantly" and 40% "improving somewhat".

STEM Career Presentations: Developed as an outgrowth of My Free Tutor in 2014, this program provides volunteers with expertise and experience in a wide variety of STEM related careers to speak to classes of students. These STEM Career Presenters share details about their careers and the paths they took to get there. During Covid and resulting school closures, RSVP transitioned to virtual presentations by creating a STEM Career library of video recordings of volunteers presenting on 44 different careers, with an additional seven videos in process about medial careers by staff at CHOP King of Prussia. During the past year and anticipated for the current school year, these presentations are accessed by 1,000 students at 25 schools and organizations in Philadelphia and Montgomery, Chester, and Delaware Counties. Based on previous results, we anticipate that 65% of attendees will report that they gained insight and interest in STEM careers, with the desire to learn more.

### **D. Why it is important to fund this now:**

COVID and the related school changes/closures have resulted in a significant negative learning slide in education. RSVP's educational programs address this problem and make significant positive efforts.

“In NAEP, when we experience a 1- or 2-point decline, we’re talking about it as a significant impact on a student’s achievement. In math, we experienced an 8-point decline — historic for this assessment,” she said.

Education researchers generally equate a 10-point decline with a year of learning.

Pennsylvania eighth grade math scores fell eight points on a 500-point scale, (from 281 in 2019 to 273 this year). Fourth grade scores slipped 5 points over the same period (from 250 to 245).

In reading, Pennsylvania’s fourth graders’ scores fell 3 points on a 500-point scale (from 219 in 2019 to 216 this year). Eighth graders’ reading scores fell 3 points during the same period (from 262 to 259). (More: <https://patch.com/pennsylvania/across-pa/covid-caused-set-back-pa-math-reading-skills-nation-s-report-card>)

### **3. Timetable, with anticipated outcomes and their relevance to the nonprofit’s mission**

RSVP offers these programs on an ongoing basis during school hours and after school, year round. Additionally, RSVP offers a summer program following the same structure. Children meet with their reading or literacy coaches twice a week for 30 minutes.

Additionally, RSVP is beginning to work with the Melton Center to offer after school literacy building.

### **4. How impact and results will be demonstrated**

COVID closures have impacted student's literacy skills. Our programs are a great tool to continue to address educational needs as we move forward.

The educational disparity between disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers is wide and pervasive and has been laid bare and exacerbated by Covid-19. "The covid-19 pandemic will take existing academic achievement differences between middle-class and low-income students and explode them. The academic achievement gap has bedeviled educators for years. In math and reading, children of college-educated parents score on average at about the 60th percentile, while children whose parents have only a high school degree score, on average, at the 35th percentile. -Richard Rothstein

Each program has a logic model and data collection tools to support and show impact.

Our educational programming will be formally evaluated at the end of the school year.

We anticipate impact will be consistent with 2021-2022 outcomes as follows:

FLP 2021-22 Outcomes: 88% of teachers reported that students increased interest in reading and learning due to the virtual volunteers; and 89% said the virtual volunteers helped students become better prepared for kindergarten. MFT 2021-22 Outcomes: 90% of students said this was the first time they had received math tutoring and that it helped them in math class overall; 40% of students improved their grades somewhat; 50% improved significantly the value of dedication, hard work and perseverance. Reading Coaches: 2021-22 Outcomes: Teachers reported that 96% of tutored students advanced to the next grade level with 84% affirming that this program improved overall grade-level reading.