

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 5/18/2023

Contact Information

Organization Name: Orion Communities
Address: 237 Bridge St, Phoenixville, PA 19460
Phone: 610-415-1140
Website: OrionCommunities.org
Year Incorporated: 1977
FEIN: 23-2074061

ED/CEO Name: Kris Keller
ED/CEO E-mail: KKeller@OrionHope.org
Board Chair Name: Keith Burress
Board Chair Approval (check here):
Primary Contact Name: Ava King/Kris Keller
Primary Contact E-mail: AKIng@OrionHope.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: At Orion, we believe all individuals deserve equitable access to life's basic needs. We offer hope for individuals and families experiencing hardship due to poverty, disability, or illness by addressing immediate crises and supporting discovery of individual pathways to self-reliance. We listen, collaborate, and honor all people, no exceptions. Orion seeks to address systemic challenges by modeling inclusivity and belonging while seeking to assure all voices are heard at the decision-making table.

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

68% Chester County, 27% Montgomery County, 5% other/transient

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

95% live below the Federal Poverty Line; 21% were homeless for all or part of 2022; 1451 households, 3500 unique individuals

Annual Budget \$ 1,690,000 _____ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

84 % of budget for program expenses 14 # of Board Volunteers

8 % of budget for administrative expenses 160 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

8 % of budget for fundraising expenses 5,535 # of Volunteer Hours

100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Pxv Community Health Foundation, Community Coalition, W.W. Smith Charitable Trust, private donors

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

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 10,000 _____

Proposal Summary: Without government funding, Orion assists under-resourced local families and help our neighbors move towards a healthier and more self-reliant future. In 2022, Orion worked with 1450 households and provided case management, resources, and over \$300,000 in direct aid to secure life's basic needs such as shelter, food, transportation, and access to medical care. Orion strives to provide supportive services with compassion, creativity, and collaboration. To further understand the local needs, please see Inquirer article from May 29, 2023 <https://www.inquirer.com/jobs/labor/labor-market-burnout-wages-philadelphia-federal-reserve-20230529.html>

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

1. Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements & distinctiveness

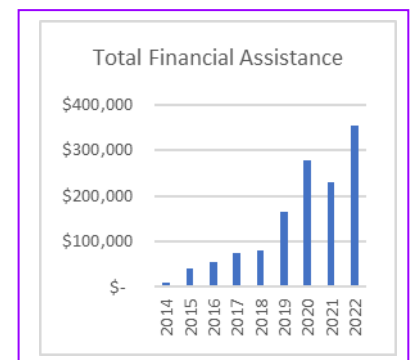
What a journey it's been! Forty-five years ago, Orion was founded to support unmet needs of vulnerable neighbors who had little support when State Hospitals were closing. Today, our goals continue to focus on addressing unmet needs for marginalized and at-risk residents and help create a brighter and more stable future for all community members.

What makes Orion stand out among many other non-profit organizations? Orion's ability to meet people where they are. Each individual and family that either calls or enters through Orion's front door has different needs, which are unique to their past, present, or future life circumstances. Annually the statistics remain similar – 95% of Orion's clients live below the Federal Poverty Line of \$30,000 for a family of 4; 20% are homeless for all or part of the preceding year; 30% identify as being differently abled. Because Orion does not accept government funds, Orion has the flexibility to customize services to meet each individual's needs. Our goal is to not duplicate services but connect people with available resources and seek community collaboration when possible or, when other services are not available or cannot be secured in a timely manner, Orion provides direct support or programming to help stabilize under-resourced neighbors.

An example of Orion's crisis approach was visible during the early days of the pandemic. While many community agency's doors closed and services were limited, Orion created ways to support neighbors in need. Phoenixville's Mayor declared Orion an 'essential business' and although not on the medical frontline of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery, Orion was on the economic frontline. Orion initiated rotating teams of staff working from home and office, created a reception desk in the front window with an intercom outside the office and set up a sidewalk internet café to provide computer access to neighbors looking for jobs or applying for government funding.

There have been a lot of changes since our founding 45 years ago, but Orion continues to help people who fall through the gaps in the social service safety net or who don't know where to turn in times of crisis.

During the past 8 years, Orion has grown from an annual budget of \$85,000 to over \$1.5 million. Orion received the GSK Impact Award in 2021 and in 2021/2022 received the Compass Award of \$200,000 pro bono consulting services. In December 2022, Orion received a \$100,000 commitment to grow our hotel program to help people move from homelessness to permanent housing and a separate \$100,000 commitment to expand our STARS – Literacy program to close the academic gap for children from under-resourced households.



2. Funding request

• Description of key initiatives

Orion's dedicated staff provide a skilled and compassionate approach to support at-risk neighbors during a crisis or challenging time. A family may have an eviction notice, the utilities could be shut off or the inability to pay a necessary car repair could jeopardize employment. The team of Case Managers work together with individuals, families, and other organizations to provide support, education, emergency assistance and help in creating a workable, realistic, and achievable plan for those in transition. The goal for Orion's programs is to deliver timely and critical support with respect, dignity, grace, and a smile.

Bridge Case Management is the cornerstone of our work. Orion's Case Managers annually provide services to 3000-3500 unique individuals in need helping to connect to critical resources and create plans for moving towards a more sustainable future. Through the **Financial Assistance Program**, funds can be provided to avoid eviction, keep the heat and lights on or get to medical appointments or a new job. Additionally, in 2022, Orion provided hotel stays to 89 local households moving from homelessness to permanent housing. Total direct aid exceeded \$300,000 to help stabilize 1450 families. Orion's **Technology Resource Center** provides free access to computers, internet, phones, fax, and copier along with supportive staff and volunteers for those who need tech support. With **Community Outreach**, Orion works to raise awareness and engage community stakeholders to understand and address systemic challenges. In support of this work, Orion has adopted the Bridges Out of Poverty model and hosts workshops with partner nonprofits to develop a common language across Chester County so that together we can reduce and eliminate local poverty.

Additionally, Orion provides programming specifically developed to support under-resourced families. The **GLAD** program (Gutsy Ladies Achieving Their Destiny) is a trauma informed program for single mothers that addresses parenting skills, goal setting and building resources. Literacy and digital literacy training occurs with **STARS** (Sharing Technology Advances Reading Skills) which provides STEM instruction for school aged children as well as books to help bridge the educational gap experienced by low-income families.

- **Specific needs & issues to be addressed**

The requests for assistance continue to grow and not always in obvious ways. In 2019, Orion received calls from 16 households with residents who were 65+ years of age, in 2022 the number jumped to 118 and most of that was due to housing insecurity. Requests for assistance with basic essentials from bus passes to heating oil to shelter is expected to continue to grow as housing costs continue to rise, wages remain stagnant for low-income workers and people on a fixed income struggle to adapt to inflation with fewer elders having pensions and social security not keeping pace with medical costs and stretched budgets.

Out of this awareness of the changing needs for seniors, and with the support of PCHF, Pxxv. Senior Center and Ann's Heart, Orion helped organize a Phoenixville Elder Summit in January 2023 that has resulted in a monthly Elder HUB of community organizations strategizing together to support our local seniors.

This has always been Orion's model, to listen at the street level – note and share trends with community stakeholders to garner support in addressing unmet needs. Orion takes a micro and macro approach to supporting under-resourced households. The first focus at the micro level, stabilizing neighbors to be safe, fed, sheltered and able to continue with their own self-reliance such as getting to work and appointments. This is complimented with the macro approach, identifying trends that need to be shared with partner agencies and community leaders both for education reasons and to address systemic challenges.

Orion does not want to be providing the same services for the same families due to a lack of community awareness or action to address larger issues. Examples of Orion's macro initiatives include being the catalyst for the Code Blue Shelter of Phoenixville, petitioning Borough Council along with 13 co-signers to create the Affordable Housing Task Force, and initiating conversations that led to the Elder Summit.

- **Why it is important to fund this now**

The resource gap between poor households and wealthier neighbors is growing. Orion has a history of collaborating with local agencies, religious organizations, and nonprofits to address these needs effectively and efficiently. In recent years, Orion has helped develop new Chester County alliances to address the growing needs in a coordinated effort that makes the best use of our collective resources.

During the summer of 2022, nonprofits across Chester County collected videos of people who have experienced homelessness as part of an initiative with The Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania to understand the variety and depth of housing challenges across the state. Not wanting to miss an opportunity, the Chester County nonprofits asked Commissioner Josh Maxwell to host a conference with elected officials to see the videos and hear challenges and recommendations from the nonprofits who work with housing security every day.

<https://www.mychesco.com/a/communities/chester-county-commissioner-josh-maxwell-hosts-community-groups-and-legislators-to-discuss-affordable-housing/>



As a result of the impact of the housing conference, the nonprofits and Chester County Department of Community Development formed the Allies for Affordable Housing in Chester County and continue to meet monthly to share local experiences with the goal to continue providing relevant affordable housing information and suggestions to local leaders and elected officials so we can address local poverty together.

Education on the realities of under-resourced families can be a full-time job. Fortunately, Chester County is becoming a 'Bridges Community'. Bridges Out of Poverty is a national model to help communities build an understanding of, and language around, local poverty so they can develop local solutions to end poverty. About 5 years ago, several Chester County nonprofits realized that we all were working with Bridges Out of Poverty and had valued the program enough to pay for certifying staff as trainers to provide community leadership workshops. This led to the formation of the Chester County Bridges Coalition to support each other's training efforts, share new material, and contemplate how we can support the creation of the whole County becoming a Bridges Community to address the growing needs of families with low-income. The Chester County Bridges Coalition has been a gift of collaborations that inspire cooperative county-wide discussions which support under-resourced individuals and families.

- **How impact & results will be demonstrated**

Recognizing that Orion's primary focus is on emergency services for households falling through the cracks net or who don't yet know where to turn, Orion has been compared to an ambulance providing services to bridge through a crisis and/or to connect to longer term support such as signing up for food stamps or applying for a housing voucher. To track the impact, Orion created OSAT (Orion's Sustainability Assessment Tool) to capture status through clients' cycle of need at intake and exit: Crisis, Safe but Fragile, Vulnerable, Stable, and Thriving.

Orion works at the street level and our communities work best when we have opportunities to be neighbors helping neighbors. This winter a woman called Orion seeking assistance with repairing the heater in her home. Her husband had recently died but when he was alive, he would have fixed the problem. She had been sleeping in a cold home for weeks. She was hesitant about calling and felt guilty about seeking help from Orion because she felt like she was taking away from those "really" in need. She finally was cold enough to become brave enough to make the call and she met with a Case Manager. Orion was able to team up with a community partner to cover the full amount of the repair. Additionally, the Case Manager was able to help her connect with other community services. She shared her experience with friends and neighbors who didn't realize she was in need, and they stepped in to help in other areas of her life, including home repairs and providing rides to the store and appointments. She no longer felt isolated and she shared, "You gave me so much more than financial assistance; thank you for helping me see how many people care about me."

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.
- Use this form @ www.chescof.org to apply online for grants from all Community Foundation Funds.
 - **Email proposals to grants@chescof.org**
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*Connecting people who care with causes that matter,
so their legacies make a difference.*

WHAT IS CAPACITY BUILDING?

Capacity building helps bring a nonprofit to the next level of operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational maturity, in order to more effectively & efficiently fulfill its mission.

Capacity building may include (but is not limited to) projects which address:

- **MISSION, VISION & STRATEGY**
Organizational Assessment - Strategic Planning - Financial Planning
- **GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP**
Board Development - Executive Transition/Succession Planning - Leadership Development - Staff Training & Professional Development
- **PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS**
Coalition Building – Collaboration - Mergers & Acquisitions - Strategic Restructuring
- **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING**
Major Gift Donor Identification, Cultivation, Development & Stewardship - Development Campaigns (Annual, Capital, Planned Giving) - Earned Income Development - Social Enterprise Feasibility & Development - Marketing, Branding & Communications
- **TECHNOLOGY & OPERATIONS**
Business Continuity Planning - Financial Management - Human Resources - Volunteer Management - Industry Certification - Risk Management - Technology Improvements