

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date: 8/22/2023

Contact Information

Organization Name: The Fund for Women and Girls
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Board Chair Approval (check here):
Primary Contact Name: Kim Andrews
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Website: <https://www.thefundcc.org/>
Year Incorporated: 1996
FEIN: 76-0724241

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: The Fund for Women and Girls leads and unites the community through philanthropy and advocacy to ensure that women and girls have resources and opportunities to thrive.

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

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

Our advocacy and philanthropy programs impact over 16,000 Chester County residents each year. Our grantmaking program serves over 25 nonprofit organizations each year whose stakeholders are 75% female, 56% people of color, and 44% children. Our youth and other direct programs serve almost 100% women, girls, and gender expansive people.

Annual Budget <u>\$562,843</u>	4 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
68.4% of budget for program expenses	15 # of Board Volunteers
15.9% of budget for administrative expenses	50 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
15.7 % of budget for fundraising expenses	2,500 # of Volunteer Hours
<small>100 % total</small>	

Top 3-5 funding sources: In FY23 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023) our top three funding sources included: An anonymous donor, Claneil Foundation, and The Roemer Foundation.

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: \$ \$7,500

Proposal Summary: The Fund for Women and Girls requests a general operating grant in support of our grantmaking and advocacy programming. These funds will support initiatives such as: 1) the creation of a research taskforce for our Blueprint Special Report focused on race and gender equity in Chester County, 2) reinvigorated youth programming that prepares the next generation of community advocates and philanthropists and 3) adult programming that creates effective community philanthropists and shapes civic leaders in our community.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

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

History and Distinctiveness: The Fund for Women and Girls *leads and unites the community through philanthropy and advocacy to ensure that women and girls in Chester County have resources and opportunities to thrive.* The Fund was founded in 1996 by Chester County women who realized that the wealthy county could do more to advance women and girls and meet the needs of underserved communities of color. The new organization sought to make our community more just, equitable, and healthy for everyone by strengthening women, girls, and their families.

Since then, The Fund has granted nearly \$4.25 million to 90+ nonprofit organizations to strategically address persisting needs, including homelessness, domestic violence, and women's health. With the addition of "Moving Her Forward" Impact Grants in 2020, a portion of this funding also supports organizations, collaborations, and other initiatives that go beyond direct service to change or create systems and policies that promote equity. The majority of The Fund's grants are allocated through a community-led process that combines philanthropic training with the expertise and lived experience of community participants. Our adult Grants Allocation Committee distributes over \$190,000 each year and our youth-focused Girls Advisory Board distributes \$20,000 in grants annually.

Recognizing that effective grantmaking requires a deep understanding of the environment and circumstances of women and girls in our area, in 2005 The Fund began to produce [Blueprint Reports](#) that provide detailed data and research on the state of women and girls in Chester County. We most recently published our *Fourth Edition Blueprint Report* in Fall 2022. The Fund uses data from the Blueprint to establish our philanthropic and advocacy priorities. Nonprofits, agencies, and organizations across Chester County also use the Blueprint's findings for fundraising, budget planning, program development, and staff deployment. Grant proposals using Blueprint data have brought millions of additional dollars into Chester County supporting direct services, jobs, and offices.

In 2019, The Fund established GirlGov Chester County (now renamed CivicG+) in partnership with the Women and Girls Foundation of Southwestern Pennsylvania. This youth civic engagement program teaches local high school girls and gender expansive students entering 10-12th grades about civics, government, advocacy, policy, and leadership. In January 2024, we will be building on this foundation to introduce Civic+, an advocacy program for young adults. As women and girls continue to face challenges in Chester County, The Fund is working to build a community that can advocate for positive policy change.

The Fund's vision is that women and girls have equality and security, making our communities stronger and more vibrant for everyone. The Fund is a vital partner and leader, known for its boldness, connectivity, and creativity as it brings together and supports individuals and organizations around a shared commitment to the well-being and self-determination of women and girls.

Goals: The Fund for Women and Girls is currently finalizing a five-year strategic plan that outlines our goals and actions. The Fund's strategic goals are:

- **Grantmaking** – Build a hub of high impact philanthropy and grantmaking to advance women and girls, strategically investing funds into our community while centering grantee organizations and those they serve.
- **Advocacy** – Lead Chester County with research, connections, and convenings to effect measurable systemic change for women, girls, and gender equity.
- **Engagement** – Enhance communications, events, and strategic partnerships to engage internal and external stakeholders in Chester County, as well as regionally and nationally.
- **Fundraising** – Cultivate, diversify, and expand broad financial support with varied revenue sources and collaborative funding that fully supports the strategic goals of The Fund.
- **Capacity & Equity Building** – Create a culture of inclusion, belonging, and respect while investing in organizational innovation, comprehensive evaluation processes, and best practices in all areas of our work.

Key Achievements:

- Since our founding in 1996, The Fund has provided \$4.25 million in grants to 90+ Chester County organizations, supporting tens of thousands of women and girls who were direct service recipients.
- Since 2005, The Fund has produced and distributed four editions of our Blueprint Report, a deep data dive on the state of women and girls, nonprofits in Chester County.
- In almost twenty years of operation, our youth programs, Girls Advisory Board (GAB) and CivicG+ (formerly GirlGov Chester County) served almost 300 girls and youth who have continued to create change as they have moved outward to universities, the working world, volunteer service, and civic engagement.

- Since our first grantmaking committee 26 years ago, almost 400 women and a few men participated in our annual grantmaking committees, learning about nonprofits in Chester County and becoming more knowledgeable philanthropists in their lives, resulting in a more philanthropic county.
- As part of advocating for the policies, practices, and systems that support women and girls in Chester County, we honor local women, corporations, and nonprofits through our high-profile Champions of Change Awards at our Champions of Change Breakfast event in the fall and through our annual inspirational Making a Difference Luncheon in the Spring where we award our Kitchen Table Award to a woman who has provided support and opportunities to women and girls in our county.

2. Funding request

Description of key initiatives: The Fund ignites change in Chester County through grantmaking, advocacy, and community engagement, and we request general operating support which facilitates these activities.

GRANTMAKING: The Fund distributes nearly \$250,000 in grants each year to local nonprofit agencies serving women and girls. Funds for these grant awards come from an endowment established for that purpose. We need general operating support to run our Grants Allocation Committee (GAC), Girls Advisory Board (GAB), and the critical infrastructure needed to distribute all grant funding.

- **Core Grants & the Grants Allocation Committee (GAC):** Operating for over 20 years, GAC distributes over \$190,000 in Core Grants annually. New community members join GAC each year so they can learn more about philanthropy, the nonprofit sector, and advancing women and girls in Chester County. These community residents combine their own lived experience with philanthropy training from The Fund to evaluate grant proposals, visit select nonprofits to gain firsthand understanding of community needs and projects, and use a gender lens to make a consensus decision about how the grant funds will be strategically allocated. GAC's priority areas are set, in part, by findings from The Fund's *Blueprint Report*. In addition to providing funding to meet critical needs, GAC creates a cohort of community philanthropists. After serving on GAC many participants continue to strengthen the nonprofit sector in Chester County by serving on nonprofit Boards, volunteering at local organizations, or strategically donating to advance women and girls.
- **'Moving Her Forward' Impact Grants:** Impact Grants focus on swift responses to pressing needs in the community. Recommended by staff, these Impact Grants support systems-level changes and leverage impact through collaborative funding, focusing on the needs identified in the Blueprint Report.
- **Girls Advisory Board (GAB):** A nationally recognized grantmaking program, GAB provides local high school students with an opportunity to learn about the deep and varied needs of women and girls in Chester County and equip themselves with the skills required to address these needs. The participants learn about philanthropy, conduct site visits at local nonprofits, and collaborate with their peers to provide up to \$20,000 in grants to local organizations. This year, GAB members will also participate in community service activities and speed networking events with women from the business, nonprofit, government and education sectors. GAB empowers the next generation of community philanthropists.

ADVOCACY: The Fund's advocacy is guided by the findings and recommended actions steps in our Blueprint Reports. Alongside this research, we have youth and young adult programs that provide nonpartisan civic engagement education so participants can implement solutions to meet identified challenges for women and girls.

- **A Blueprint Gender and Racial Equity Special Report:** As The Fund prepared the *Fourth Edition Blueprint Report* released in 2022, we recognized that certain data – particularly data disaggregated by race – was often unavailable. Shortcomings in data collection in Chester County, Pennsylvania, and the United States create a gap in understanding the challenges of women and girls of color. Identifying this need for information, The Fund will produce a **Blueprint Gender and Racial Equity Special Report**. In Fall 2023, The Fund will convene a taskforce consisting primarily of women of color who are experts in research, data collection, and program development and implementation. The taskforce will be led by Fund Board Member, Dr. Chasity Riddick, Assistant Professor of Instruction at Temple University College of Public Health. The Special Report will be completed, printed, and distributed in 2025. The data and findings will be updated and included in all future Blueprint Reports to ensure full representation of women and girls of color in Chester County going forward.
- **CivicG+:** Entering its fifth year, CivicG+ (formerly GirlGov Chester County) fosters civic engagement of young women and gender expansive youth by providing educational experiences through meetings, events, service projects, and other opportunities. Additionally, the cohort conducts research into topics of their choosing, developing a deep understanding of their issue and proposing ways they can make a meaningful change for women and girls through civic engagement. Past projects have included mental wellness in schools; environmental justice; diversity, equity, and inclusion in schools; and ending period poverty in schools. This year, CivicG+ is also partnering with youth-serving organizations in the county. The Fund will serve 100 additional high schoolers through one day civic engagement workshops at these sites throughout the community.
- **Civic+:** The Fund is building on the success of CivicG+ and launching a civic engagement program for young adults. Through Civic+ we aim to serve 20-30 young adult women and gender expansive young adults. With a focus on equipping participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to be active and informed citizens,

Civic+ provides a transformative space where young adults explore the intricacies of democratic processes, advocate for causes close to their hearts, and contribute meaningfully to shaping public policies that resonate with their values. Through engaging workshops, mentorship opportunities, and hands-on experiences, Civic+ empowers participants to make their voices heard, fostering a generation of confident advocates who drive positive change in their communities and beyond. By promoting civic awareness and involvement, Civic+ lays a foundation for a more equitable, inclusive, and socially conscious society.

COMMUNITY BUILDING & ENGAGEMENT: A safe and equitable future for all women in Chester County requires a strong and united community. Through our Champions of Change Breakfast and our Making a Difference Luncheon, The Fund educates and inspires people from across sectors to advance women and girls.

- **Champions of Change:** Champions brings together individuals and organizations committed to women's economic advancement and equity in the workplace. We honor an individual, a company, and a workforce development nonprofit (a new award this year) during the breakfast to increase awareness of the disparities and challenges women face in the workplace, and present solutions to advance professional equity.
- **Making a Difference Luncheon:** This gathering brings together 250 individuals from the nonprofit, business, and government sectors to recognize a phenomenal individual who is advancing women and girls in our community through The Fund's Kitchen Table Award.

In addition to these events, The Fund delivers programming that educates and engages the wider public. For example, we have partnered with the Chester County Women's Commission to host a monthly zoom series focused on findings from the *Blueprint Report*. We partner with local experts to provide information about topics such as women's history in Chester County, sexual assault, mental wellness, political participation, and more.

Specific needs & issues to be addressed

The Fund's *Fourth Edition Blueprint Report* captures the challenges and progress made in our community for women and girls. Below are just some of the issues that The Fund addresses through its grantmaking and advocacy.

- **Gender Wage Gap:** The ratio of women's earnings to men's earnings in Chester County is 74.4%, compared to Pennsylvania (79.3%) and the United States (81.6%). This ratio increases into a wider earnings gap for Black (64%) and Hispanic (53.1%) women.
- **Self-Sufficiency Standard:** While median earnings for women in Chester County (\$59,598) exceed those in Pennsylvania (\$43,791) and the United States (\$43,215); this income falls far below the amount necessary to meet basic needs in the county. For women of color, median earnings in Chester County are even lower (\$38,093 for Black women and \$35,839 for Hispanic women).
- **Health:** Women in Chester County face higher death rates from Breast Cancer than women in Pennsylvania, and suicide rates among women in Chester County (7.5%) are much higher than in Pennsylvania (6.0%) and the United States (6.1%).
- **Education:** While educational attainment for women has improved in the county, female students face higher levels of debt and pay off debt more slowly due to the gender wage gap.

Why it is important to fund this now: General operating support is a strategic investment during a critical juncture in our organization's history. This fall we will unveil a new Strategic Plan that will guide us for the next five years. This Strategic Plan will strengthen our programming, grow our impact measurement, and build a stronger community that centers equity and justice. This funding will allow The Fund to expand our youth programming, generate a critical Blueprint Gender and Racial Equity Special Report, strengthen our existing grantmaking and advocacy programming, and develop additional measurements for the long-term outcomes of our programming.

How impact & results will be demonstrated: The Fund measures the impact and results of our programming through a variety of methods. We utilize pre- and post-program surveys to measure the extent to which participants in our Grants Allocation Committee, Girls Advisory Board, CivicG+, and Civic+ programs increased relevant skills and knowledge. This year we are developing a survey with Dr. Michelle Wade, Associate Professor of Business & Public Management at West Chester University, to measure the longer-term outcomes of civic engagement and philanthropy among the alumni of our grantmaking and advocacy programs.

For the Blueprint Gender and Racial Equity Special Report, we will accomplish the following results: evaluate the existing Blueprint Reports for gaps in information about women and girls of color, determine what topics will be explored in the Special Report, identify existing data and create mechanisms to collect new data to inform these topics, select a lead researcher and partner organizations to assist with the collection and analysis of this data, outline a timeline for research and publication, and support fundraising initiatives to fund research, publishing, and outreach for the Special Report.

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. Current strategic plan. If your nonprofit does not have a current strategic plan, explain why.

Please note, The Fund for Women and Girls is currently in the process of finalizing our Strategic Plan which will guide operations for the next five years. We will provide The Chester County Community Foundation with a copy of this latest Strategic Plan as soon as it has been approved and finalized by our Board of Directors.