

THE CRIME VICTIMS' CENTER OF CHESTER COUNTY

Enhanced Service Provision through Improved Marketing



ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

The Crime Victims' Center of Chester County (CVC) is grateful for the opportunity to request a grant in support of our efforts to revise and enhance the brochures we currently use to inform Chester County residents of our services. Your consideration of a grant in the amount of \$5,000 to revise four different brochures and cover the cost of printing for each one.

History and Mission

MISSION: The Crime Victims' Center of Chester County, Inc. (CVC) is a nonprofit agency providing free, immediate, and confidential crisis response and compassionate support to children and adults impacted by sexual violence and all other crimes. We provide assistance through counseling, advocacy, resources, and education. CVC fosters community awareness and understanding through its comprehensive outreach and prevention programs.

HISTORY: Established in 1973 as the Rape Crisis Council, CVC began as part of a grassroots effort by a number of concerned local individuals to provide assistance and services to victims of sexual assault and their families. The unifying goal was to develop an atmosphere that would encourage victims of sexual assault to seek appropriate medical, psychological, and criminal justice system assistance. Services to victims of sexual assault were critically needed because there was a lack of reporting and fear of publicity, it was misunderstood and underestimated in the community, and there were no set standards for treating cases of sexual assault. At that time, victims had no voice in the legislation or in the court system.

Over the years, our organization has grown substantially in scope and depth of services including prevention education programming, measurable client impact and has gained immeasurable recognition from the legal and law enforcement community. Today, CVC serves as the only comprehensive organization in our County that provides free (regardless of income), immediate and compassionate support to victims of all crime. These crimes range from sexual assault, child abuse, and homicide to property crimes, identity theft, robbery, and stalking/ harassment. Annually we reach over 20,000 adults, children and seniors through purposeful collaboration and interaction with (12) county school districts, the Chester County Intermediate Unit, (3) hospitals, (44) municipal police departments, (2) state police barracks, the Chester County District Attorney's Office, the Chester County Detectives, (19) Magisterial District Courts, and the Court of Common Pleas, the Child Advocacy Center of Chester County and the Chester County ACES Coalition.

Current Programs and Activities

Direct Services

Our clients need not have been victimized recently, nor decide to pursue criminal charges to obtain our services. By maintaining this broad definition of "victim" in our work, CVC is able to support those who remain impacted by victimization earlier in their lives (e.g., childhood sexual abuse). There's no cutoff time for our services, because there is no defined timeline for healing. So not only are we assisting victims and families that have been impacted by recent crimes, but also individuals who are coming forward now about their victimization many years ago. Additionally, our agency provides services to all victims – even if they haven't reported the crime to law enforcement. Numerous individuals decide for very personal reasons to not pursue a case within the justice system, whether because of

embarrassment, shame, fear of mistreatment or concerns with immigration status. CVC believes that recovery from victimization should be afforded all members of our community, including those who would otherwise suffer in silence. To that end, our services are free, regardless of income and CVC has no requirements to disclose income or personal resources to obtain services

- Two, 24-hour hotlines available 365 days/year
- In-person crisis response to crime scenes, hospitals, police stations and more
- Accompaniment to appointments such as: forensic rape exams, police questioning, legal proceedings and medical appointments
- Assistance with Emergency Protection from Abuse orders
- Advocacy on behalf of the client in medical, legal and interpersonal interactions
- Individual Counseling
- Provision of various group counseling options, specific to unique client sub-group needs (e.g., incarcerated victims)
- Assistance with complex restitution and compensation claims
- Assistance in understanding and preparing Victim Impact Statements
- Notification services (e.g., court dates, offender release)

Prevention and Education Program

CVC's Prevention and Education (P/E) program educates all members of the community about violence prevention, the impact of victimization on individuals, families and the community, and available resources for those affected by crime or violence. Specifically designed to influence the youngest members of our community through partnerships with school districts throughout Chester County, our P/E program provides age-appropriate, evidence-based curricula to students from kindergarten through high school. Our programs inform and empower participants and are practical in their application. Older students are provided opportunities to reflect on their experience after programs with anonymous assessments. P/E staff are trained in a variety of evidence-based curricula developed by leaders in the fields and have undergone rigorous outcome testing before becoming available for use in school. P/E educators also can draw from these curricula to inform their original programming for the schools, while exploring avenues in which they can facilitate these full programs for members of the community.

Programs for school age children (k-12) are administered in direct partnership with schools in the Chester County region (Including but not limited to Coatesville Area, West Chester, Avon Grove, Kennett Consolidated, Oxford Area and Unionville-Chadds Ford Area). It is our sincere hope to be able to extend our reach further into the CASD and have been pleased to be invited to do conduct more programming in North Brandywine Middle School. School prevention programs cover numerous topics and are focused on current issues in violence prevention, including:

- Bullying
- Child and personal safety
- Internet safety and cyberbullying
- Sexual harassment and assault
- Respectful relationship and dating violence
- Identity theft

Presentations, when appropriate, are followed by a short, age-appropriate discussion of participant impressions. This evaluation is used to determine how much students learned and to gain insight to group attitudes and behaviors.

CVC also provides programming tailored to parents, teachers and administrators. Representing a functional shift in CVC's strategic approach to mission delivery, we are investing more time in developing strong ally groups within the community, especially those within schools and in the home. Research

shows that pairing proven interventions in the classroom with students and the concurrent education of adult figures in their lives maximizes the positive impact on the community.

To that end, the P/E program invests in relationships and spending time “training the trainers,” allowing messages of prevention to be reinforced long after CVC educators have left campus and reaching into homes. While we continue to maintain an important body of work with the students, additional priorities have evolved including community needs assessments, implementation of new training techniques and time spent fostering positive administrator relationships. In the end, CVC’s work in prevention and education is turning the tide of violence in our communities-- one training and one program at a time. We hope to leverage your Foundation’s support to further our work in the Coatesville area.

PURPOSE OF THE GRANT ~ ENHANCED SERVICE PROVISION THROUGH IMPROVED MARKETING

CVC serves those who live or experience crime victimization in Chester County. Our overarching direct service goal is to **provide professional, personal and effective advocacy and support to all clients** who seek our services through the hotlines, during a criminal case or by referral. We also provide PE programming to students, parents, and all residents in Chester County. Our overarching P/E goal is to **help shift the community understanding of violence** by providing current, evidence-based education to all members of the community, with a focus on the next generation of residents. All of our services are free, regardless of income. For this reason, our vision is that we could reach every resident of Chester County so they are aware of both of our direct services and prevention and education programming. To assist with that marketing, we have created four difference brochures. One, a general brochure about CVC, a brochure about RASA (Rights and Services Act) and VOJO (Victims of Juvenile Offenders). Although they are provided to residents almost daily, these three brochures have not been completely reviewed and revised since 2017. We would also like to create a new brochure for our Prevention and Education offerings. We get asked regularly about the types of programming we can offer and would like to create a brochure highlighting our programs. If awarded, this grant would cover staff time in addition to the printing costs for each brochure. Our staff will be assisted in this project by our Communications Committee which consists of community volunteers as well as board members, two with extensive marketing experience. We are grateful for their help and guidance in this project.

We are seeking a grant as we rely very significantly on government funding through both state and federal sources. That funding has remained level since 2018 and grants like this allow us to continue to spend our government funding on our biggest expense, our staff.

WITH GRATITUDE

Simply stated, no other organization provides the critical and targeted services that CVC have historically and effectively provided. As the only comprehensive victim services organization in the county, CVC serves as a critical safety-net provider throughout all communities in Chester County. It is our sincere hope that this request will be funded so we can improve the messaging and marketing of our services through this project and inform even more residents of Chester County about how we can help.