

# I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date: Sept 13, 2023

## Contact Information

Organization Name: Downingtown Community Education Foundation      ED/CEO Name: Jackie Fenn  
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## Organization Information:

### Field/s of Interest:

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

**Mission:** The Downingtown Community Education Foundation will inspire our youth to learn, grow and thrive and engage teachers, parents and community to enrich students' learning experiences.

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

Downingtown Area School District encompassing 8 municipalities – Downingtown Borough, East Brandywine, East Caln, Upper Uwchlan, Uwchlan, Wallace, West Bradford and West Pikeland.

### **Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:**

DCEF serves the 13,000+ students, 1,200 staff as well as the residents in the Downingtown Area School District. DASD is the 20<sup>th</sup> largest district in the state. Last year over 2,200 students participated in after school and summer enrichment programs, summer reading in our mobile book club, got a jump start on their school career in our Kdg JumpStart program or attended a job fair to learn more about employment opportunities after graduation or find a summer job.

**Annual Budget** \$481,000 rev

76 % of budget for program expenses

20 % of budget for administrative expenses

4 % of budget for fundraising expenses

*100 % total*

1.45 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

16 # of Board Volunteers

4 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

700 # of Volunteer Hours

### **Top 3-5 funding sources:**

Program fees from our fee based programs

West Pharmaceutical Services – Herman O West grant (we are a capstone organization)

EITC donations (S&T Bank, First Resource Bank, Meridian Bank, Univest Bank, Mid Penn Bank)

Special Event Sponsors (Golf outing, Wizards game)

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: \$4,500

**Proposal Summary:**

DCEF began the process of updating our Strategic Plan in August 2023. The SWOT analysis identified a weakness in marketing – specifically social media presence, as well as in brand/awareness. The board has identified improvements to our Marketing efforts as a means to achieve some of our other goals around building relationships with other community organizations, increasing our volunteer base, fundraising and participation in our programs.

Current staffing is 1.45 FTE. The FT Associate Executive Director manages all after school and summer enrichment programs and Job Fair. This encompasses approximately 3,000 participants and part time teachers. The PT Executive Director handles all fundraising (special events & donations), financial reporting & accounting, board development, donor management, community relations, marketing (website, program promotion materials, special events collateral materials and annual report), special project construction coordination and supervision of associate executive director. Neither staff have the capacity or specific skill set to launch a successful, on-going social media presence.

We would like to hire a PT person (3 hour a week; as a 1099 subcontractor) to focus on social media in addition to providing any additional support to other marketing efforts as time/resources permit. We believe we can hire an experienced, knowledgeable PT person for \$30/hour to provide this support.

Budget: 3hrs/wk x \$30/hr x 50 weeks = \$4,500



## **II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**

### **Downingtown Community Education Foundation**

*to Inspire, Engage, Enrich*

**MISSION:** The Downingtown Community Education Foundation will inspire our youth to learn, grow and thrive and engage teachers, parents and community to enrich students' learning experience.

**OVERVIEW & FOCUS:** The Downingtown Community Education Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization governed by a volunteer board of directors that was formed in 2008 to provide non-tax generated funding necessary to further the Downingtown Area School District's mission to educate all children to meet the challenges of a global society by providing an individually responsive learning environment characterized by outstanding academic and personal achievements in partnership with family, students, and community. DCEF unites various constituencies within the community – students and teachers, parents and alumni, businesses and community groups – creating the fabric of a strong, vibrant community. Our purpose is to support the creativity and passion of students, teachers and school administrators for the good of our local and global communities.

#### **WHAT DCEF DOES:**

##### **INSPIRES STUDENTS TO LEARN, GROW & THRIVE:**

DCEF offers unique after-school programs and summer programs. Some programs focus on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Math) and others, like Kdg JumpStart, the summer Mobile Book Club and the Home Visits for new students, focus on helping students be successful in their school careers. DCEF is the only education foundation in PA to offer year round enrichment programs for its students. Many of these programs are at no cost to students and families. DCEF is committed to ensuring that programs that do have a cost are available to all students, and every child has the opportunity to participate. We provide financial assistance and full scholarships. No child is turned away.

DCEF supports the district's vision for students to be college/career ready by hosting a Job Fair for all Juniors and Seniors in high school. DCEF partnered with 26 local businesses and some national organizations to help students learn about possible careers post high school. It was also an opportunity for students to seek summer employment as well. Over 700 students participated.

DCEF supports students' desires to pursue their passions and do good by offering Student Empowerment Grants. We encourage students to identify problems in their school or community and suggest creative solutions for change.

##### **ENGAGES TEACHERS TO ENHANCE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES:**

DCEF funds teacher venture grants for programs, projects and/or activities that emphasize new approaches to teaching and expand learning opportunities. DCEF is an "incubator", funding programs on a small scale to determine viability, impact and scalability for all students in the district. DCEF has provided our teachers and students with unique and innovative educational opportunities. This past year we supported a student garden at the Marsh Creek 6<sup>th</sup> grade center to help increase food security in our

community; funded an outdoor teaching area at Beaver Creek Elementary (Title 1 school); and initiated a Mobile Book Club that used our Innovation Lab as the vehicle. The book club was open and available at no charge to all children in the district and stationed at Kerr Park, Johnson Park and two Title 1 schools making accessibility easier for a number of families.

#### **ENRICHES OUR COMMUNITY:**

DCEF believes that public schools are an integral fiber of a strong community. Impact reaches beyond grants and programs. DCEF provides assets and educational opportunities for a boarder community – families, youth organizations, and seniors.

The Innovation Lab that brings STEAM opportunities to all elementary schools and doubles as a Mobile Book Club in the summer is an example. This handicapped accessible school bus was transformed into a mobile learning lab. It is an example of a true collaboration - DASD, who provides the teacher, DCEF who raised funds for the construction and equipment and local community business leaders and families who supported the project with donations.

DCEF's current project is a Learning Trail and Amphitheater/Outdoor Classroom at the Marsh Creek 6th Grade Center. The learning trail includes hands-on, discovery based learning stations in all subject areas. The amphitheater will host classes, musical and theater performances, lectures and gatherings. The "Narwhal Learning Center" at Marsh Creek 6th Grade school is a project that will benefit all children in the school district and our community. During non-school hours it will be open and available for the community to use. The estimated cost of this project is \$630,000. The trail construction was completed Fall 2022 and the amphitheater is scheduled to begin construction later this Fall.

#### **GRANT REQUEST: CAPACITY BUILDING – FUNDRAISING, DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING**

##### Key Initiatives:

As outlined above DCEF provides after school and summer enrichment programs, grants for students and teachers as well as creating educational resources for the district and community. All of these initiatives need funding to make them possible.

##### Needs & Issues:

All of our key initiatives have different constituents, different messages and different marketing/communication needs. DCEF began the process of updating our Strategic Plan in August 2023. The SWOT analysis identified a weakness in marketing – specifically social media presence, as well as in brand/awareness. The board has identified improvements to our Marketing efforts as a means to achieve some of our other goals around building relationships with other community organizations, increasing our volunteer base, fundraising and participation in our programs.

Current staffing is 1.45 FTE. The full-time Associate Executive Director manages all after school and summer enrichment programs and Job Fair. This encompasses approximately 3,000 participants and part time teachers. The PT (18 hrs/wk) Executive Director handles all fundraising (special events & donations), financial reporting & accounting, board development, donor management, community relations, marketing (website, program promotion materials, special events collateral materials, annual report) and special project construction coordination. Neither staff have the capacity or specific skill set to launch a successful, on-going social media presence.

We would like to hire a PT person (3 hours a week) to focus on social media in addition to providing any additional support to other marketing efforts as time/resources permit. We believe we can hire an experienced, knowledgeable PT person for \$30/hour for approximately 3 hours per week for 50 weeks/yr. Once the grant funding is used, we would then like to be able to expand our staffing pattern to include this PT person.

Why Fund Now:

Both DCEF and DASD are in the process of updating strategic plans. As synergistic organizations we need to be in concert with our focus and efforts. As we identify new initiatives we need to be ready and able to communicate with students, teachers, parents, community members and business leaders in the various methods and platforms that best meet their needs in order for our message to be heard and acted on.

Impact Demonstrated:

Efforts in social media are relatively easy to demonstrate impact. We can track the number of social media posts and their click through rates as well as subscription and participation data. With focused effort by a new PT marketing person we should be able to measure their efforts. We should be able to see increased participation in programs, sponsorships and other fundraising efforts.