

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 11/7/2023

Contact Information

Organization Name: Prepared to Thrive ED/CEO Name: Megan Wing
Address: 260 Exton Square Mall, Suite 254, Exton, PA 19380 ED/CEO E-mail: info@preparedtothrive.org
Phone: 610-314-7329 Board Chair Name: Becky Birenbaum
Website: <http://www.preparedtothrive.org> Board Chair Approval (check here):
Year Incorporated: 2021 Primary Contact Name: Megan Wing
FEIN: 87-1657159 Primary Contact E-mail: info@preparedtothrive.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: Prepared to Thrive's mission is to ensure every child in Chester County has the essentials they need to thrive.

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

Our target population is low-income families anywhere in Chester County with children aged birth through 14.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

The population we serve reflects both the incidence of poverty (especially among families of color) and the particular challenges faced by many families in need. Last year, 41% of those served by Prepared to Thrive were Hispanic, 29% Black, 22% White, and 8% Multiracial or Other. Nearly half of program participants lived in the County's poorest areas: Coatesville (24%) and southern Chester County (22%). A substantial percentage (22%) were living in homeless shelters or temporary hotels as they sought secure permanent housing. Most (59%) were single mothers; 16% were teen moms; and 8% were experiencing domestic violence. We serve about 600 unduplicated families per year.

Annual Budget \$ <u>110,300</u>	<u>2 PT</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>96</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>7</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>3</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>100</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>1</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>400</u> # of Volunteer Hours
<small>100 % total</small>	

Top 3-5 funding sources:

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: \$ 5,000

Proposal Summary: Prepared to Thrive is requesting support in the amount of \$5,000 to support our Bright Futures Program. Our Bright Futures Program partners with family-serving government agencies and nonprofits across Chester County to ensure that every family has access to the basic items their children need to thrive. By serving as a supplier of these items for more than 20 community partners, we prevent the duplication of effort and lack of access to needed items that Chester County organizations faced prior to our creation in 2021.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

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

Prepared to Thrive was established in 2021 to address the countywide unmet need for children's supplies. Our mission is to ensure that every child in Chester County has the essentials they need to thrive. Initially, our focus was on infant items such as diapers, strollers, and car seats – items that every new parent needs, but which can be difficult to afford in low-income households. Since then, we have expanded to include items for children up to age 14, including clothing, school supplies, personal hygiene items, books and toys.

Our goal is ultimately to ensure that despite family poverty and strife, children can access the items they need to stay healthy, safe and supported. We also aim to reduce family strain by relieving some economic pressure and freeing parents to focus more on their educational and employment goals for the future.

For our first two years, Prepared to Thrive focused on program development, including staffing the organization, implementing a data system and intake/survey processes, developing community partner relationships, and securing adequate space for our operations. In 2022, we developed a Strategic Plan to guide our next few years of growth. This plan outlines several key objectives for the future:

- 1) Raise awareness in the community about our services.
- 2) Deepen relationships with new and existing partner organizations to increase knowledge, effectiveness and capacity for collaboration,
- 3) Evaluate options for expanding services to better serve Southern Chester County.
- 4) Collect feedback and outcomes from partners and clients to evaluate our impact and areas for improvement.
- 5) Grow and diversify our Board to better reflect the clients we serve and our community.

2. Funding request

- **Description of key initiatives**
- **Specific needs & issues to be addressed**
- **Why it is important to fund this now**
- **How impact & results will be demonstrated**

Ample statistics show that the need to secure sufficient diapers during a child's first years is overwhelming for many families. The National Diaper Bank Network reports that:

- 1) Diaper need has increased sharply in recent years, with almost half (47%) of families reporting that they needed help to afford diapers. This is a significant increase from a decade ago, when that percentage was 33%.
- 2) Diaper need forces families to cut back on other essentials, including food (35%) and utilities (19%). More than a quarter of respondents (28%) who reported diaper need said that they skipped meals so that they could afford diapers.

- 3) Diaper need is associated with stress. 70% of survey respondents reporting diaper need said that they were stressed or anxious about their responsibilities as a parent. 53% said they felt judged as a bad parent/caregiver because they could not afford diapers.
- 4) Unmet diaper need results in parents missing work and losing wages. One in four of parents with diaper need reported having to miss work or school because they did not have enough diapers to drop their child off at childcare, and reported missing, on average, 5.1 workdays in the past 30 days. This represents a loss of \$296 per month for a parent earning the minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour.

While these statistics are specific to diaper need, we know that affording clothing and shoes for children as they grow, providing children with books and school supplies, and affording basic safety items such as cribs and car seats are all extremely difficult for families on severely limited budgets. Prepared to Thrive was created to help them meet these basic needs. The speed of our organization's growth testifies to the high need in the community.

Prepared to Thrive operates from a central site in the Exton Square Mall, a large space that offers room to organize and store a huge range of children's items. We rely on a team of about 100 dedicated volunteers to help collect and organize these items and prepare them for program participants.

There are two methods which can be used to request needed items from Prepared to Thrive. We conduct most of our distribution through partnerships with local government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Staff from these organizations fill out an intake form that supplies us with information about the family in need, including their specific needs and demographic information. The Prepared to Thrive team then collects all needed items and has them ready for pickup from the partner agency. We also accept direct requests for items from individuals in need, using a slightly different intake form for these requests.

Whatever the request, we do our best to provide each family with high quality items that will delight them. We collect and distribute only new items in some categories, including car seats, diapers and wipes, nursing and hygiene supplies, and personal care items. For other items, such as books and clothing, we accept new or gently used items in excellent condition. While some families choose to make just one request from Prepared to Thrive, we encourage them to use us as a regular resource as needed. Our objective is to empower every family to access the childcare items they need, with no barriers.

Supplying families with these items makes an impact in several ways. Especially in these inflationary times of very high food and rent costs, lower-income families struggle to make ends meet. Providing them with free diapers and portable cribs offers a significant relief to household budgets. At the same time, parents need not make difficult choices that might leave their child without items to keep them healthy and prepare them for school. We do our best to be responsive to families' anticipated needs, so that whether they are preparing to leave the hospital with a newborn or enroll their child into daycare, they have the necessary items that will enable them to do so without a hitch.

Chester County is without a diaper bank, and, prior to Prepared to Thrive, was without a single source parents could reach out to for assistance with baby and children's items. Much of this burden was falling on nonprofits' caseworkers to try and meet these needs. By meeting these particular needs, we help overburdened nonprofits focus on case management and spare them the extra work and storage space needs.

Partnership is central to Prepared to Thrive's program model; most of the families we serve are identified and supported by our wide range of partner agencies. At the time of this writing, Prepared to Thrive works with 22 partners, including Birthright of West Chester, Birthright of Coatesville, the Chester County Intermediate Unit Early Head Start program, the Chester County Health Department, Family Promise of Southern Chester County, Friends Association for the Care and Protection of Children, Home of the Sparrow, LCH Health and Community Services, Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County, and Chester County Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

Prepared to Thrive is committed to supporting the basic needs of infants and children, encouraging literacy and school readiness for all children, and advocating for the needs of lower-income households as they strive to provide their children with everything they need to succeed.

3. Timetable, with anticipated outcomes and their relevance to the nonprofit's mission

We work year-round to meet the ongoing needs of families. Our goals for the 2024 calendar year are to:

- 1) Serve at least 600 unduplicated families with at least 700 children.
- 2) Distribute 50,000 diapers to families facing economic hardships, supporting them with essential baby care items.
- 3) Provide personal hygiene products to over 300 children, promoting health and well-being in the community.
- 4) Ensure a safe sleep environment for 100 infants by providing portable cribs, prioritizing the safety and comfort of vulnerable families..
- 5) Maintain a client satisfaction of at least 95%.
- 6) Expand our community partnerships by at least five new organizations.

4. How the impact and results will be demonstrated

Prepared to Thrive tracks all requests for items, whether from one of our partner organizations or directly from families in need. Our intake form collects information about each household's demographics (number and ages of children, race/ethnicity), preferred language, specific needs, and the goals of parents and caretakers (such as pursuing education, career training, or employment). Our post-service survey includes questions about the impact of our assistance on the families. For example, we ask whether our services have reduced family stress, helped families save money, or helped parents pursue educational or career goals.

Last year, our surveys showed that:

- 96% of clients are satisfied or very satisfied with our services.
- 88% of clients have been less stressed about affording baby items.
- 78% have been able save money to purchase other essential items (food, gas, rent).
- 58% have been better able to meet educational/employment goals.
- 77% say their child is happier and healthier due to their essential needs being met.

We are proud to receive regular expressions of appreciation from our clients, including the following:

"I'm a single mom who previously lost my job because of my pregnancy I'd really love any and all the help I can...I lost everything I owned in a storage unit and I'm just trying to be the best mom I can be, but with starting all over times can be tough."



CHESTER COUNTY
community
FOUNDATION

*Connecting people who care with causes that matter,
so their legacies make a difference.*