

**CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET**

Date 11/27/2023

Contact Information

Organization Name: Cradles to Crayons
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Philadelphia, PA 19144
Phone: 215-853-6043
Website: <https://www.cradlestocrayons.org/philadelphia/>
Year Incorporated: 2002
FEIN: 04-3584367

ED/CEO Name: Michal Smith
ED/CEO E-mail: msmith@cradlestocrayons.org
Board Chair Name: Greg Rigdon
Board Chair Approval (check here):
Primary Contact Name: Bridget DiFebbo
Primary Contact E-mail: bdifebbo@cradlestocrayons.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: Cradles to Crayons' mission is to End Clothing Insecurity for children in the Greater Philadelphia region by providing children from birth through age 12, living in homeless or low-income situations, with the essential items they need to thrive – at home, at school, and at play. These items are supplied free of charge.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): Cradles to Crayons serves children from families living in poverty from Chester County through partnerships with human service agencies: Chester County Intermediate Unit Head Start, Community Volunteers in Medicine, and Home of the Sparrow.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: Cradles to Crayons supports children in families living at or below the federal poverty guidelines and reside in the region's poorest neighborhoods. A full 77% of families served by Cradles to Crayons have annual incomes of \$15,000 or less and 98% live on incomes below \$25,000. This year, Cradles to Crayons anticipates serving 2,000 children in Chester County which is 15% more than last year and that number will continue to grow until childhood poverty is a thing of the past.

Annual Budget \$ <u>3,598,995</u>	<u>19</u>	# of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>83</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>11</u>	# of Board Volunteers
<u>9</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>25,000*</u>	# of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>8</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>35,000</u>	# of Volunteer Hours
<small>100 % total</small>		

Cradles to Crayons hosts families, corporate, school, and community groups in the Giving Factory throughout the year. There are two 2-hour volunteer shifts each Tuesday through Saturday for up to 125 people at a time.

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Cuties First Quality Bank of America
Comcast Kia America, Inc.
Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Fox & Roach Realtors

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

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 7,500



Chester County Community Foundation
Proposal Narrative

Organization History

Cradles to Crayons was founded in 2002 and established in the Philadelphia area in 2007 in response to growing poverty in both cities. The Philadelphia market was launched in a garage in Chestnut Hill and then moved to an 8,000 square foot warehouse in Horsham, PA serving 10,000 kids annually. In 2010, the organization relocated to a larger 16,000 square foot space in Conshohocken to expand its programs. By 2019, demand driven growth led C2C to move into its current home in the East Falls neighborhood of Philadelphia.

Since it was founded, **Cradles to Crayons Philadelphia has served over 1.3 million children and engaged close to 500,000 volunteers.** The organization was awarded a 4-star rating from both GuideStar and Charity Navigator for the 14th consecutive year, a distinction earned by only 1 percent of non-profits in the country.

Key Initiatives

C2C operates on a cost-effective model of connecting communities that “have” with communities that “need” by collecting new and gently used children’s items for families that are



unable to afford them. The organization successfully achieves this through a three-pronged approach: community engagement, volunteer engagement, and strong partnerships with human service agencies.



The organization provides clothing, coats, shoes, books, school supplies, diapers, wipes, and hygiene items free of charge to children ages 0-12 from families living in poverty. These items help children overcome the stigma and outward appearance of poverty; equip them with the tools they need for early academic and social success; and improve their self-esteem. For families receiving children’s items means limited financial resources can be used for rent, child-care, utilities, and food, providing some increased financial stability, and

improving the lives of the entire household.

Cradles to Crayons is the only organization of its kind in the region that supplies children with the basic essentials that cannot be found anywhere else. C2C programs include:

Ready for Learning

Educational materials to prepare children for academic success.



Everyday Essentials

Custom KidPacks containing a week's worth of items.



Gear Up for Winter

Warm clothing and accessories and boots.



Gear Up for Baby

Clothing, diapers, and accessories for new families

C2C partners with up to 174 Human Service Agencies to serve children, acting as an intermediary and multiplier of effort. These partnerships enable the agencies:

- An entry point to encourage in developing relationships with clients to provide additional services.
- A reprieve for the agency to allow them to spend 20% more time on professional services such as coaching and counseling.

From partner agencies:

"Packages from C2C enable us to reach more families and spend more time with them. With more engagement we see better outcomes. Without C2C, our families would be even more under resourced."

"Many of our families are struggling to keep up. Having Hygiene supplies and nice clothing takes the pressure off. Being able to provide these concrete resources helps our Nurse Home Visitors focus on health education during their visits."



Need to Be Addressed

As poverty continues to grow, the number of children that are in urgent need of the essential items that Cradles to Crayons provides has increased significantly. There are over 300,000 children living in poverty-stricken households in the region. With the end of Child Tax Credit, reductions in SNAP, and rising inflation, child poverty in the past year has more than doubled. Just a year ago, the poverty rate hit a historic low of 5.2%. It is now 12.4% and families are challenged to provide essential items for their children while also trying to pay for food, utilities, and housing.

Cradles to Crayons' response to this urgent and growing need has been to serve **substantially more children and families each year** and will continue to do so until childhood poverty and clothing insecurity is a thing of the past.

Impact and Results

The Cradles to Crayons Partner Relations Team records every item that leaves the Giving Factory to ensure inventory and quality control. The team maintains a close relationship with the agencies that we serve to ensure best practices by:

- Regular communications about inventory availability, distribution, and deliveries, and special events such as large diaper giveaways.
- Collecting client stories and photos throughout the year to share with the community, staff, and supporters.
- Partner Site Visits with agency staff to tour locations and learn best practices for serving each agency and its clients.
- Survey partner agencies annually track the demographic data of the population served to validate that 100% of children live below the federal poverty level and represent some of the neediest families in the region.



Partner feedback is also used to improve C2C's practice, most recently changing the product mix to increase focus on diapers and hygiene items; provide hair products and brush options for textured hair; gender neutral clothing packs; and significantly increase the number of books featuring kids that look like the children we serve.

This year, the Partner Relations Team reached out to agencies to collect feedback about clients who received items from Cradles to Crayons. Representatives from the agencies reported that:

- 33% of caregivers can seek employment and miss less days of work because they can supply the diapers required from childcare centers.
- Children miss 29% fewer days of school by having access to age, gender, and seasonally appropriate clothing.
- 57% of caregivers can more easily budget for food, utilities, and housing.
- 43% of children report being bullied less frequently because they have the "right" clothing, sneakers, and supplies.
- 73% of caregivers feel less stress to provide these items for their families.
- 13% of caregivers were able to move into transitional housing because of receiving items from Cradles to Crayons.

From a Partner Agency:

"The children/families are coming from shelters or living on the street. They do not have clothing & resources needed for school. Cradles to Crayons will make a huge difference in their lives by providing clothing hygiene kits, etc. to meet the needs of the families we serve. Children can attend school not having to worry about socks, underwear, and basic clothing needs."