

## 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 9/13)

- ◇ 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 grants is to **strengthen the effectiveness of NPO's serving the region**, see page 4 for more details on the areas including:
  - Mission, Vision & Strategy
  - Governance & Leadership
  - Partnerships & Collaborations
  - Operations & Technology
  - Fundraising, Development & Marketing
- ◇ Proposals submitted between **July 1 - Sept. 13** are eligible for consideration.
- ◇ Grant **awards** typically range from **\$500-\$5,000**,

- **Email proposals to [grants@chescocf.org](mailto: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](mailto:grants@chescocf.org)** with any questions.

### I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

One page only.

Date

**Contact Information**

Organization Name: The Bridge Academy and Community Center ED/CEO Name: Mrs. Jordan Crans  
 Address: 578 Olive Street, Coatesville, PA 19320 ED/CEO E-mail: jordan@thebridgeacademy.org  
 Phone: 610-466-9505 Board Chair Name: Ben Horning  
 Website: www.thebridgeacademy.org Board Chair Approval (check here): X  
 Year Incorporated: 2003 Primary Contact Name: Mrs. Jordan Crans  
 FEIN: 20-0881049 Primary Contact E-mail: above

**Organization Information:**

**Field/s of Interest:**

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

**Mission:** The Bridge Academy and Community Center’s mission is to equip youth and families with the tools necessary for academic achievement, life skills, creative expression, spiritual growth and leadership.

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

**Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:** The Bridge serves elementary, middle and high school students in Coatesville PA. Our population is primarily low income and many are from single-parent families.

**Annual Budget** \$ 798,747 4 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff  
73 % of budget for program expenses 7 # of Board Volunteers  
18 % of budget for administrative expenses 85 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers  
9 % of budget for fundraising expenses 1800 # of Volunteer Hours  
100 % total

**Top 3-5 funding sources:** Connelly Foundation, Pilgrim Foundation, W.W. Smith Charitable Trust

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

**Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation:** \$ 5,000

**Proposal Summary:** The Bridge seeks support for its rigorous programming for Coatesville’s youth and families. In a time when students and families are bombarded with overwhelming academic, economic and social challenges, the Bridge seeks to serve as a “bridge” to help community members to overcome obstacles that threaten to undermine a reasonable quality of life. High quality programming, along with critical relationship building help to sustain students and families as they re-adjust and develop into independent, well educated, contributing leaders in their community.

## II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

*Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.*

### **Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements & distinctiveness.**

**Organization's history:** The idea for the Bridge was planted in 2001, resulting in a building search and recruitment of board members. The Bridge Academy was officially established in early 2003, and since then, The Bridge has evolved into a successful organization that has had a positive influence on the city of Coatesville. Jordan Crans, the Executive Director of The Bridge, has been a part of the organization since 2003, taking on various roles before assuming her leadership position in 2008.

**Goals:** The Bridge aims to create a safe and loving environment that demonstrates God's love in a relational way, supporting families holistically through academic assistance and encouragement, youth development activities, and meeting basic needs. Our goal is to prepare students for educational success, fostering resiliency and responsibility, thereby empowering them to grow into contributing and independent citizens. The Bridge ultimately aims to increase graduation rates, improve economic outcomes, support mental health in students, and reduce teen pregnancies.

**Key Achievements:** The Bridge provides robust programming for out-of-school hours including after school and evening programs along with a comprehensive summer schedule of recreational and leadership development activities. Throughout the school year, we hosted afternoon academic and evening large group programming, along with field trips and special opportunities. In the summer, the Bridge hosted one week of overnight camp and seven weeks of day programming, including activities at the Bridge and our scenic partner Camp at Old Mill site. The camp allowed students to leave their busy neighborhoods to enjoy healthy exercise and competition, along with leadership development activities in an idyllic, calm and beautiful, natural hideaway. The summer ended with us hosting the Back-to-School Book Bag Drive and Block Party, distributing over 600 new back packs loaded with generous school supplies. This year over 7,080 meals were served during regular programs and events. 70 academic students were enrolled in academic support. 175 families representing 682 individuals were served through Family Relief, crisis support and distributions. 2,000 gifts were distributed during Christmas to families in need- serving 452 children. 66 women participated in mom's club programming. The Bridge just rebranded with a new logo representing our mission and identity. In total, we served 411 unique students and partnered with 85 volunteers.

**Distinctiveness:** The Bridge is a community-driven initiative in which its founders and many of its staff and volunteers are from the local neighborhood. Activities are shaped by participant input, and many students later return to serve as volunteers or staff.

**Funding request:** \$1,000 towards General Operating Expenses which funds our Summer Programs, School-Year Programs, and Year-Long Initiatives. Specific program details are outlined in the strategy portion of this proposal.

**Specific Chester County needs and issues addressed:** The Bridge assists K-12 underserved youth and families in the Coatesville Area School District facing multiple challenges including a difficult urban environment, strained economic resources and inadequate school support. Many of our students and families regularly face threats of violence in and out of school and are affected by the consequences of substance abuse. While struggling to make ends meet, many families and youth struggle with basic needs of food, safety, security, and connection. Based on a recent Coatesville PA Youth Survey, many students lack commitment to school and do not see themselves as positive role models. Over half do not see what they were learning in school as valuable for their future. Almost 40% did not feel safe in school, and many did not feel they had opportunities to talk to a teacher one-on-one. 1/5 of students experienced bullying based on how they look, and over half said that teachers did not praise them when they worked hard in school. 1/5 have a diagnosable mental disorder, and 1/3 show signs of depression. In a generation with drastically decreasing focus, self-esteem, and connection due to social media, the need for healthy peer-to-peer and mentor/mentee relationships is more dire than ever. Sociologist Ray Oldenburg refers to the need for "third places" outside of the home and work/school, especially for youth, where people can build relationships, exchange ideas, and have a good time. The Bridge provides this safe space, for our students to be kids, our moms to receive support, and our families to have a community hub in a city where many individuals feel alone and isolated.

**Organizational impact (for general operating proposals) or project impact (for project proposals):** See Logic Model as attachment

**Overall strategies to implement the organization’s mission (or project):** The Bridge offers free student and family support with dedicated staff and volunteers to build lasting relationships and foster genuine connection. The following programs run throughout the year: *Summer Program* The Bridge’s Summer Program serves youth ages K-12 in the Coatesville Area School District. The program runs for six weeks and provides breakfast items and lunch daily, academic support, and a variety of enrichment, leadership and recreational outings, lessons, and mentorship opportunities. Each of these helps to keep students safe and positively engaged throughout the summer. Some of our special opportunities include a missions trip to Mexico, local camp partnerships with Locust Lane Riding Center, The Camp at Old Mill, and Young Life Camp. We end the summer with a Back-to-School Block Party and Bookbag Drive, where we distribute over 600 book bags. *School-Year Program:* Academic Programs run after school Monday-Thursday providing one-one-one and small group academic support for K-12th grade students. The Bridge separates ages to ensure quality instructional time for students. This also empowers older students to serve as tutors for their younger peers. Each night, there is also a larger program, where students are fed a family style dinner, receive inspirational teaching, and have an opportunity to play games and do arts/crafts. *Specialized Programs:* The Bridge provides small group settings where students can learn unique skills, foster creativity and develop leadership skills. Ways of Women and Ways of Gentlemen, cooking classes, wood burning, t-shirt making, art programs, and STEM are a few of the things we facilitate. The Bridge offers Mom's Club on Wednesdays during the school year to support our families holistically. The majority of women served are low-income single mothers, and the sessions provide a relaxed environment for fellowship, learning life skills, and connecting through faith. Free childcare is available to enable attendance for mothers with young children. *Year Long Services:* The Bridge provides bi-monthly Family Distributions - boxes of food, household items, diapers, wipes, and other items to families at a first come first serve basis. These distributions give us an opportunity to check in with families, hear more about different needs that have arisen, and connect them to our regular programs or other helpful community resources. *Family Resources:* The Bridge also connects with individuals and families holistically. On a case-by-case basis, we will help families with utilities, bills, food, housing, financial literacy training, employment, or counseling services. We will also assist families who need help navigating the correctional system, government entities, and the school district. During holidays, we will provide Easter outfits, Christmas gifts, summer camp bags, and more.

**Why it is important to fund this now:** We are seeing an increase in mental health issues across the board, but especially in our middle school and secondary groups. These ultimately affect their ability to succeed academically and otherwise. As the need for connection and support increases, we feel compelled to continue to expound on the mission of The Bridge to better support the needs of our community. We are so grateful to our many partners, donors, and volunteers who allow us to continue to provide free resources and support to our families, as we work together as a larger community to address these pressing needs. Our goal is to provide empowerment strategies to support long-term development and independence for students and families.

**Timetable, with anticipated outcomes and their relevance to the nonprofit’s mission**

August: Back to School Event

September through June: School year year activities commence and occur weekly through June with bi-monthly food distributions. Academic, Evening Programs, Mom’s Club Programs, Specialized programs.

December: Holiday Event

April: Annual Formal Fundraiser

June- July-Summer Camp and Day time Activities. Missions Trip and Summer Field Trip opportunities.

The Bridge’s timeline revolves around students’ academic year schedule and is designed to coordinate with out of school hours.

**Outcomes:**

<b>Short Term</b>	
Better school attendance rates	Reduced antisocial behaviors
Confidence in academic skills	Improved engagement rates in home, school, and community

Students seeking to stretch prospects	Gained relationships with concerned adults
Higher motivation to succeed	Regular exercise and lower stress levels
Improved retention and graduation	Improved sense of belonging
Improved socio-economic skills	Improved mental health in students and families
Improved decision making skills	Lower teen pregnancy rates
Improved resiliency & responsibility	Healthy competition skills
Higher volunteering in youth	Participants view Bridge as a “safe space.”
Increased food security	Exposure to a variety of careers and pathways
<b>Long Term</b>	
Higher HS graduation rates	Higher enrollment in post-secondary programs
Better mental health in twenties	Students secure meaningful and financially secure jobs

### How impact & results will be demonstrated

All our activities and efforts are purpose-driven and based on researched best practices. Research tells us that students who are engaged in school and community activities are more likely to achieve academic and social success. They are also less likely to be involved in drug and problem behaviors. To measure our effectiveness, we measure attendance rates, numbers of contacts with students and families, numbers of referrals to other supporting agencies, feedback from participant surveys, focus groups, partners and informal feedback.

We also maintain a strategic plan and regularly review our activities against our objectives during monthly evaluation meetings. We share our findings with our board of directors and invite their recommendations. We use the findings to help us determine next steps for overall programming. We also create an annual report which we distribute to constituents and interested community members.

The Bridge impacts students like Mike, who is seven years old. When he began attending The Bridge, Mike was shy and struggled to interact with peers or eat at The Bridge. He would often have meltdowns and want to go home, and he had a hard time interacting in large group settings. Throughout the summer and school year, we have seen Mike grow expressive and confident amongst his peers and The Bridge staff. He is able to articulate his needs and is eager to complete schoolwork and other academic assignments. His mom recently came to programs and said that Mike’s behavior has improved so much in school. In a Christmas thank you card he recently asked one of our staff members to write for him, he said “This was the best day of my life. I wish it was already summer, so I can go to camp. Love Mike.”