

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date: March 1, 2024

Contact Information

Organization Name: Cradle of Hope INC.
Address: 1675 The Fairway #140 Jenkintown, PA 19046
Phone: 215-572-5937
Website: www.cradleofhope.net
Year Incorporated: 1997
FEIN: 23-2893700

ED/CEO Name: Alissa Messina
ED/CEO E-mail: cradleofhope@gmail.com
Board Chair Name: Teresa Supka
Board Chair Approval (check here):
Primary Contact Name: Alissa Messina
Primary Contact E-mail: CradleDirector@gmail.com

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: Cradle of Hope's mission is to minister to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of pregnant women, single mothers, and children through transitional housing and support services.

Geographic Area Served: Cradle of Hope (COH) receives over 400 inquiries per year from single mothers in crisis. 100% of COH services are provided in Montgomery County (Glenside, PA), but we welcome mothers from Montgomery, Chester, Bucks, Delaware, and Philadelphia counties.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: Cradle of Hope's (COH) programs are free and serve young, homeless, pregnant, and single mothers ages 18+ (majority are 18-22) and their children ages 0-2. Approximately 80% of mothers served are African American.

In 2024, COH anticipates providing 17 mothers and their infant(s) with transitional housing & case management services, 20 mothers with follow-up support, and 400 mothers and children with basic needs, referrals and crisis support via our Cradle Pregnancy Resource Center.

Annual Budget \$385,750

80% of budget for program expenses
9 % of budget for administrative expenses
2 % of budget for fundraising expenses
100 % total

3FT/4PT # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
9 # of Board Volunteers
115 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
1,316 # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources: Union Benevolent Association, Genuardi Family Foundation, W.W. Smith Charitable Trust.

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building or General Operating

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is: N/A

Mission, Vision & Strategy Governance & Leadership Partnerships & Collaborations
 Fundraising, Development & Marketing Technology Other: _____

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

Proposal Summary: Cradle of Hope (COH) respectfully requests a general operating grant of \$5,000 to help fund transitional housing and support services for young, single, and homeless or low-income mothers facing a crisis pregnancy. Due to factors of unplanned pregnancy, homelessness and limited education and job skills, the mothers are unable to provide adequate care for their children and must forfeit opportunities to complete their education or job training. At COH, they can enroll in school and job training programs, not having to worry about housing and rent.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

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

In 1996, Michelle Nejman, a counselor at a local college learned that one of her students became pregnant and homeless, dropping out in the middle of the semester and another student failed two of her classes because she had a baby, but no childcare. Michelle felt compelled to help these students as they struggled to stay in school. She recognized the urgent need for transitional housing for young mothers and children in crisis and with the help of friends and her community, a home was purchased, and the Cradle of Hope (COH) was founded in 1997.

The original COH home provided housing for 3 mothers and their children at a time. In 2014, COH purchased the adjacent property, doubling our housing capacity to 6 mothers and their children. In February 2019, COH expanded again with the opening of the Cradle Pregnancy Resource Center (CPRC) - enabling COH to serve an additional 300+ mothers annually via baby supplies, food, counseling, and referrals for pregnant women in crisis who we are unable to provide housing for. In May 2022, COH expanded again with the purchase of another adjacent home (funded fully by a generous donor) to provide housing for an additional 4 mothers and children annually. The new home just completed renovations and will increase our housing capacity by 66% in 2024.

Due to factors of unplanned pregnancies, homelessness and limited education or job training, many young mothers are forced to abandon their education or jobs to provide care for their child - resulting in homelessness and unstable living conditions for the child. COH seeks to create a healthy, stable, and more equitable future for the mother and child. COH identifies success as the ability to transition each mother to employment, her own residence, and independent living within twelve months. We also observe subtle changes in motivation, confidence, and hope. As the mother's lives become stable and productive, the children's lives are also richly blessed. COH's long-term goal is to break generational cycles of poverty and ensure the long-term health and stability for each mother and child.

We are pleased to share that 81% of Cradle of Hope's transitional housing graduates from the past 3 years are employed and living in permanent housing. In 2023, COH provided transitional housing, healthy meals, mentoring, and 26 life-skills classes to 13 single mothers and their 13 children. Additionally, 22 former residents benefited from follow-up support and 394 mothers and children were served via our Cradle Pregnancy Resource Center.

2. Funding request

- **Description of key initiatives**

COH's goal is to transition each mother to employment, her own residence, and independent living within 12 months. We achieve this goal by providing the following to each mother and infant that joins the program:

1) Transitional Housing: COH owns 3 adjacent homes that provide each mother with access to a private room and shared common spaces such as bathrooms, kitchen, laundry, dining room, and living room. Household supplies along with all home furnishings and baby equipment are provided. 2 homes house a maximum of 3 mothers and their infants, and the newest home houses a maximum of 4 mothers and their infants, as well as a Resident Supervisor. In 2024, COH will provide approximately 17 mothers and their children with transitional housing and case management.

2) Case Management: Case management services and 24-hour support are coordinated by our Case Manager and two Resident Supervisors. Our small scale enables us to provide personal, one-to-one support for each mother. Mothers benefit from weekly case management while in residence and then follow-up services for three years. Mothers set goals relating to education, employment, and permanent housing. Case management services include:

Basic Needs: Upon arrival, mothers receive groceries including baby formula and diapers as well as clothing such as seasonal outerwear and professional apparel. The staff then assists mothers with securing food, healthcare, and childcare subsidies. The proximity to grocery stores, 24-hour kitchen access, and life skills training at COH enables residents to maintain food access and food security for themselves and their children.

Education: Mothers pursue education depending on their ages, skills, and interests, for example: completing senior year of high school, GED classes, Certified Nurses Aid training, Home Health Aid training, or attending Community College.

Employment: Staff help mothers pursue education depending on their ages, skills, and interests, for example: completing senior year of high school, GED classes, Certified Nurses Aid training, Home Health Aid training, or attending Community College. Each resident is assisted with job search skills, resume writing, completing job applications, and interviewing skills. They have access to a computer and the Internet for job searching.

Life Skills: Mothers attend weekly educational programs sponsored by volunteers on parenting, nutrition, food preparation, job search skills, and financial management. The mothers also develop a sense of community and responsibility. Each mother has assigned weekly chores and curfews and is financially responsible for groceries and savings once established in the program.

Discharge and Follow-up Service: Each mother receives assistance in securing and transitioning into their new home. Prior to transitioning, they complete an exit interview establishing new goals. Mothers can continue to receive case management support for up to three years after discharge. Approximately 20 mothers and their children will receive follow-up services annually.

3) Cradle Pregnancy Resource Center (CPRC): CPRC provides counseling services and practical help such as pregnancy testing, housing assistance, parenting classes, parenting classes, pantry of baby essentials (formula, diapers, and other necessities) and linkages to medical care, birth support groups, adoption services, doulas, and other supports. In 2024, approximately 400 mothers and children will be served.

- **Specific needs & issues to be addressed**

There is a severe shortage of affordable housing in the Greater Philadelphia area and due to factors of an unplanned pregnancy, homelessness and limited education and job skills, young mothers are often unable to provide adequate care for their children and must forfeit opportunities to complete their education or job training - trapping them in cycles of homelessness and poverty. With COH's help, they can enroll in school and job training programs, receive life skills education and case managements while not having to worry about housing and rent - ultimately empowering and equipping them to break generational cycles of poverty.

COH's programs are free and serve young, homeless, pregnant, and single mothers ages 18+ (majority are 18-22) and their children ages 0-2. COH receives over 250 inquiries each year and since our inception in 1997, has served 123 mothers and 128 children via this program. Approximately 80% of the mothers are African American. COH's services are facilitated in Glenside, PA (Montgomery County), but mothers travel from Delaware, Chester, Philadelphia, and Bucks County for services.

At COH, we serve mothers from diverse backgrounds, each with her own unique challenges and obstacles. One of our most motivated mothers was Mary. 19-year-old Mary came to COH when she was 7 months pregnant with a baby girl. Earlier on in her pregnancy, she took the abortion pill, but within 24 hours of that decision, she went to the hospital to have the process reversed. She was then kicked out of her mother's house and in search of a safe place to stay as her baby's father was emotionally and physically abusive.

Mary eventually found COH through a co-worker and quickly moved in to become part of the COH family. Despite her young age, Mary had an "old soul" and easily connected with the staff and residents. She could often be found holding her housemate's babies so that they could have a break or clean up. She connected with our doula who encouraged, educated, and coached her through the remainder of her pregnancy. When it was time to give birth, her baby's father left her alone at the hospital in the middle of her contractions. A COH housemate immediately filled the void and spent the following 36 hours by her side as she labored and eventually had an emergency C-section and gave birth to a healthy baby girl.

Mary was able to return to a CNA job that she had been working at during her pregnancy and after a hard battle, obtained full custody of her daughter. In the summer of 2022, COH sponsored Mary to complete education and training to become a State Certified Phlebotomist so she could earn a higher income. Mary rose to the occasion and quickly obtained a job in the field. With the help of COH, she was able to secure daycare for her daughter and worked two jobs until she was ready to move into her own apartment. We are so proud of Mary and blessed to see her and her daughter living independently and thriving.

- **Why it is important to fund this now**

COH is experiencing a pivotal season of growth with the recent purchase and renovation of a 3rd home that increases our transitional housing capacity by 66%! As our housing services increase, the CPRC has organically expanded year to year as the surge for demand following the pandemic continues to rise. In 2022, the CPRC served 272 mothers and their children and in 2023, served 394 mothers with baby supplies and essentials, food, doulas, parenting classes, housing/medical referrals, and more. COH is meeting critical needs in our community for young mothers facing a crisis pregnancy and/or homelessness.

As we grow our programs and services, we must also expand our staff and resources. COH has planned for significant budget increases in 2024 to accommodate restructuring and expanding our team so we can more effectively respond to the demand for service. Increased financial support is critical as we seek to expand our team, serve more clients, and secure long-term sustainability for the organization. Cradle of Hope's Executive Director recently transitioned to a PT Development Role, and we hired a new FT Executive Director to help manage the organization's expansion and increased funding needs. We are also in the process of hiring a FT Case Manager to help manage the increased caseload for our Transitional Housing Program. In 2024, we will also have increased operating expenses with the new home - increased utility expenses, increased maintenance, and insurance. We greatly appreciate the consideration for funding and are confident that it would play a pivotal role in transitioning more homeless mothers and children to a healthier, stable, and more equitable future.

- **How impact & results will be demonstrated**

COH's goal is to transition each mother to employment, her own residence, and independent living in 12 months. We assist our mothers with securing and transitioning into their new accommodations. When mothers transition from the COH homes, we compare their entry goals with their accomplishments during an exit interview. New goals are established, and case management services are provided through a follow-up program for up to 3 years. This allows us to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of the program.

We evaluate the success of the program by comparing the number of women who enter the program homeless and unemployed to the number who successfully complete the program and are employed and living in permanent housing.

The following outcomes are expected for mothers served by our programs:

Mothers will feel safe and supported, achieve academic & professional goals, reduce hunger, improve health and well-being, obtain permanent housing, obtain full-time employment, obtain affordable childcare, demonstrate understanding of basic life skills (nutrition, financial management, parenting etc.), and increase self-confidence, self-esteem, and emotional stability

The following outcomes are expected for children in our programs:

Children will feel safe and secure, reduce hunger, and improve their health & well-being.

III. ATTACHMENTS

E-mail or mail this support information

1. Copy of 501 (c) (3) federal tax-exempt letter
 2. List of Board of Directors, with their affiliations
 3. Most recent annual report & financial statement, audited if available
 4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date
 5. If capacity building initiative, itemized budget (including external consultant's proposal, if applicable)
 6. Current strategic plan. If your nonprofit does not have a current strategic plan, explain why.
- Use this form @ www.chescof.org to apply online for grants from all Community Foundation Funds.
 - **Email proposals to grants@chescof.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) 696-8211 grants@chescof.org with questions.



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