



REQUEST FOR GRANT PROPOSALS PAY IT FORWARD FUND IN MEMORY OF RONN FLETCHER

The Chester County Community Foundation seeks grant applications from selected nonprofit charitable causes, to be considered for funding from the **Pay It Forward Fund**.

Focus of CCCF Pay It Forward Fund: To award 2 years of grant funding to a **paradigm shifting initiative** of selected Chester County-based nonprofit charitable causes, as recommended by a Community Foundation grant panel and approved by the Community Foundation Board of Directors.

Grant Award Amounts: Typically range from \$30,000 - \$50,000.
(Example: Split over two years \$30k awarded yr 1 + \$20k awarded yr 2 = \$50k).

Proposal Process:

- Grant applications, using the attached format, should be e-mailed by **May 15 at 11:59 pm** to grants@chescofcf.org
- The e-mail heading should read: Re: **Proposed Grant Requested from CCCF Pay It Forward Fund**
- Upon review of the initial proposal, a site visit may be conducted
- Grant Panel Review Committee will decide grant awards by early summer
- Grant award checks will be sent by late summer

Please note that all grant applications will be posted on the Community Foundation's website for funding consideration by additional Community Foundation Donor Advised Funds.

Questions? Please contact:
Stephenie Stevens, Grants Director & Outreach Officer
Chester County Community Foundation
28 West Market Street
West Chester, PA 19382
www.chescofcf.org
Steph@chescofcf.org
(610) 696-8211

PAY IT FORWARD FUND IN MEMORY OF RONN FLETCHER



I. PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

(One page only. This page will be shared with Grant Committee Members.)

Date: May 15, 2024

Contact Information:

Organization Name: Tick Tock Early Learning Center
Address: 1694 Baltimore Pike, Avondale, PA 19311
Phone: 610-268-8134
Web Address: www.ticktockelc.org
FEIN: 23-1646698

Contact Name: Susan Czerwin
Contact Title: Executive Director
Contact E-mail: susan@ticktockelc.org
Fax: 610-268-8136
Year Incorporated: 1964

Has your nonprofit previously applied to the Community Foundation: Yes No

Field/s of Interest:

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

Organizational Information:

Geographic Area Served: Southern Chester County, PA.

Annual # of Clients & Description of Population Served: Tick Tock Early Learning Center serves approximately 135 students, ages 12-months through 11-years-old, per year. To qualify for our services, all parents/guardians must work full-time or attend school. Our student population is 84% Hispanic, 2% Black, and 14% Caucasian. Currently, 94% of our families earn less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines with 55% earning less than 200%.

Mission Statement: Tick Tock Early Learning Center prepares children from working families for school and life in a loving environment at affordable rates.

Organization Description: Tick Tock Early Learning Center assists working families by providing high quality, reliable, educational child care at affordable rates.

Annual Budget <u>\$1,435,500</u>	<u>24</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>88</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>12</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>10</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>25</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>2</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>200</u> # of Volunteer Hours
<u>100</u>	<u>% total</u>

Top 3-5 funding sources: Pennsylvania's Child Care Works (CCW) government child care subsidy program; Government Relief Grants (temporary funding streams since 2020) such as ARPA Chester County Grant funds Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC); Client tuition fees; Community grants.

Proposal Information:

Grant Amount Requested:

Year 1 \$25,000 + Yr 2 \$25,000 = Total \$50,000 (Maximum \$50,000 Total)

Summary Description of Paradigm-Shifting Grant Purpose:

The child care industry in the United States is undergoing a significant paradigm shift in terms of how child care is valued as a profession and how educators within this field are recognized and compensated.

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II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

*Please provide the following information clearly and concisely.
Proposals of 1 or 2 pages are strongly encouraged.*

1. **Organization's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness**
2. **Paradigm Shifting Funding request:**
 - A. **Specific Chester County needs and issues to be addressed**
 - B. **Paradigm-shifting impact**
 - C. **Overall strategies to implement the initiative**
 - D. **Why it is important to fund this now**
3. **Timetable, with anticipated outcomes and their relevance to the nonprofit's mission**
4. **How impact and results will be demonstrated**

III. ATTACHMENTS

Please attach the following 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 and financial statement, audited if available
4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year and current fiscal year to date
5. Itemized project budget (if applying for project-specific grant)

Note: The Philanthropy Network's Grant Application may be submitted with CCCF Summary Sheet.

Please e-mail completed applications by May 15 midnight
with e-mail heading **Re: Proposed Grant Requested from CCCF Pay It Forward Fund**
to grants@chescocf.org

Stephenie Stevens, Grants Director & Outreach Officer
Chester County Community Foundation
28 West Market Street
West Chester, PA 19382
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THANK YOU!

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Focus

To award 2 years of grant funding to a **paradigm shifting initiative** of selected Chester County-based nonprofit charitable causes, as recommended by a Community Foundation grant panel and approved by the Community Foundation Board of Directors.

About Ronn Fletcher

Growing up in Richmond, Virginia, mechanical engineer Ronn Fletcher earned his B.S. from Virginia Tech and his M.S. from Tennessee Tech. Recruited by the DuPont Company, for over 32 years Ronn worked at a myriad of sites. For the last decade of his career, Ronn served as Research Operations Manager at DuPont's Experimental Station in Wilmington, retiring to Ovations at West Grove in 2001.

Always on the move, Ronn couldn't 'settle down' into retirement. Seeking variety and adventure, he travelled the world. First on a west-to-east round-the-world excursion; and soon after, east-to-west. The Orient Express, Great Wall of China, Inca citadel of Machu Picchu, moai statues of Easter Island, Great Barrier Reef, Taj Mahal, Jaipur home of the maharajas, Serengeti Plain safari, Egyptian pyramids, the medina of Marrakech...always exploring.

On a quest in his own neighborhood, Ronn discovered something that captured his imagination: nonprofit charities. Ronn quickly jumped in and became passionately involved in Chester County charitable causes focusing on health care, homelessness, disadvantaged children with vision issues, and special needs youth.

Always pushing boundaries and pressing for improvement, Ronn focused his considerable energies on **charitable causes which have the courage to re-engineer themselves, remain flexible, and change the paradigm.** Ronn believed in **empowering nonprofits to shift their programming to best meet the moment and support their constituents.** Sometimes this worked; and sometimes it didn't. But Ronn persisted.

Ronn was grateful to be able to serve his community and make a positive impact. With his passing, Ronn generously left the remainder of his seven-figure estate to his legacy funds at the Chester County Community Foundation. We are honored to carry forward Ronn's legacy wishes, now and forever.

TICK TOCK EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Organization's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

Tick Tock Early Learning Center was founded as a nonprofit organization in 1964 by a group of women who recognized a need in their community – a need for a safe, reliable, and affordable child care and preschool for the children of working families in Southern Chester County. Over the past 60 years, the program has grown from one classroom serving seven children, to six full-time classrooms and a before and after school program serving up to 95 children on any given school day.

Tick Tock ELC has a decades-long reputation as an exceptional child care center because of both our affordable rates and the quality of our program. Our coveted STAR-4 rating is more than simply policies and curriculum – it is an honor made possible by our wonderful staff who provide a top-notch educational experience for our children. Using a state-approved curriculum in a nurturing, stimulating, and hands-on learning environment, we're able to live our mission of empowering each student to learn and grow.

Tick Tock ELC relies on funding from government programs like CCW (Child Care Works) and CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program), as well as donations from private foundations, local businesses, and individuals. Rates are determined on a sliding scale based on income and family size. The funds we raise on an annual basis allow us to discount our tuition up to 70%, making quality child care affordable to the families we serve. Thus, they are critically important for covering the gap between our true cost-of-care and what our families can afford to pay.

Additionally, Tick Tock ELC is committed to advocating for working families and child care professionals in our community. In the past year, we've met with United States Representative Chrissy Houlahan, Pennsylvania State Representative Christina Sappey, Chester County Commissioner Marian Moskowitz, and Senator John Kane to discuss the growing need for affordable child care, higher wages for child care professionals, and to urge for their support of the proposed Federal Child Care Stabilization Act. This year, Tick Tock ELC was gifted membership to the Southern Chester County Chamber of Commerce, where we collaborate with area businesses whose employees may rely on child care to go to work. We've also been working closely with Laura Manion, CEO of Chester County Chamber of Business and Industry (CCCBI) and attended the first ever collaborative meeting with the Chester County Economic Development Council and CCCBI to discuss the challenges facing the child care industry. Our ongoing advocacy efforts support our community goal of accessible, affordable, and equitable high-quality early childhood education and care available to all families in Southern Chester County.

Specific Chester County needs and issues to be addressed

The current economic climate is having a massive impact on the financial health of our client base, our program, and our employees. According to MIT's Living Wage Calculator, a family of four living in Chester County (with two working adults and 2 children) must earn \$140,000 to make ends meet. Currently, 95% of our families earn less than 300% of the federal poverty guidelines (less than \$90,000 for a family of four).

Our economy relies on a strong workforce and much of that workforce relies on child care to enable consistent employment, yet, Tick Tock ELC finds itself in the same predicament as many child care programs nationwide. Our annual budget has increased over 30% since 2019. Traditionally, child care programs raise tuition to offset increases in operating and service costs. But an increase in tuition only makes child care less affordable, accessible, and equitable for the working families we

have pledged to serve, so we find ourselves in a knot that is becoming increasingly difficult to untangle.

We must also recognize the impact the past several years have had on the employment pool of educators. We expect our teachers to be educated and experienced so they can provide our young learners with the best possible early childhood education and care and we also expect them to work long hours, assume great responsibility, and to meet lofty expectations – all within a salary scale below that of readily available low-pressure positions. This has led many child care professionals to leave the industry altogether, making it particularly difficult to attract the quality, educated, and experienced child care professionals that we pride ourselves on employing.

Paradigm-shifting impact

Child care is increasingly recognized as an essential economic infrastructure, much like roads and utilities. This shift is partly due to the acknowledgement that child care enables parents, particularly women, to participate in the workforce. The economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the dependency of the workforce on reliable child care services, leading to greater public and political support in this sector.

There is a growing understanding that early childhood education is critical for long-term educational success and social development. This has led to a revaluation of child care beyond mere supervision to a vital educational opportunity. With this revaluation, there is increased attention on the quality of education provided in these early years and its impact on lifelong learning and achievement.

Overall strategies to implement the initiative

Historically, child care workers have been some of the lowest-paid professionals in the U.S. The current shift includes movement towards elevating these roles as a profession requiring significant skill and training, crucial for child development rather than just a service for working parents. This shift involves standardizing and funding child care similarly to primary education with efforts to increase pay to reflect the importance and skill required for child care work and to recognize child care workers as educators rather than just caretakers.

Why it is important to fund this now

The ongoing paradigm shift is not just about improving wages and conditions for those who work in child care but is also about fundamentally rethinking the role of early childhood education in society. The goal is to ensure that child care is accessible, affordable, high quality, and recognized as a critical component of our national infrastructure, supporting the development of future generations and the overall community.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, Tick Tock Early Learning Center applied for and received robust federal and state funding, allowing us to increase wages by 30%. This increase not only allowed us to retain our valued employees but it has helped us attract qualified, educated child care professionals. Unfortunately, federal and state relief funds have come to an abrupt end, while annual operating expenses continue to rise, and the ability for working families to afford quality child care is on the decline.

As the majority of our annual expenses are earmarked towards staffing qualified, educated, and experienced professionals, a reduction in salaries and benefits would have an immediate negative correlation on faculty retention and severely threaten the quality of our educational program.

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

Tick Tock ELC's mission is not just about providing our community with an affordable child care option. Our mission is to provide quality, top-notch, early childhood education and care. By raising salaries, we will attract the quality teaching professionals who have the experience and passion to provide the highest quality of care to young learners in our community.

With the support of this grant, Tick Tock ELC plans to increase all teacher salaries by an average of 3% raising our median hourly rate from \$17.00 to \$17.56. In addition, Tick Tock ELC hopes to retain our current Pre-K Teacher who holds a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education and retain a second Pre-K Teacher with a bachelor's degree in Education for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years. To achieve this in Chester County, Tick Tock ELC must pay a minimum of \$23/hour which is considerably higher than the average annual Pre-K Teaching salary of \$33,120 in Pennsylvania (source: Start Strong PA).

How impact and results will be demonstrated

To track our success with attracting and retaining employees, Tick Tock ELC will document employment applications and teacher retention rates. Annual reviews based on classroom observations will allow us to assess the effectiveness and professionalism of employed teachers. Exit interviews will be conducted with all full-time teachers who leave our program to determine their reason for leaving our program.

To measure student growth, we will use a variety of assessment tools to analyze the cognitive, social-emotional, linguistic, and physical growth of each individual in our care. Our principal goal is for all our students to show growth across all domains of child development.