

13 June 2024

Wish Upon a Wedding Grant Application

Address: Paul Costello, c/o Wish Upon a Wedding
15 Nassau Circle, Reading, PA 19607
Website: <https://www.wishuponawedding.org>
Email address: vp@wishuponawedding.org
Phone: 484-319-2157

Contact Information

Organization Name: Wish Upon a Wedding

ED/CEO Name: Lacey Wicksall, Executive Director

Address: 15 Nassau Circle, Reading, PA 19607

ED/CEO E-mail: programs@wishuponawedding.org

Phone: 484-319-2157

Board Chair Name: Danielle McNulty, President

Website: <https://www.wishuponawedding.org>

Board Chair Approval (check here):

Year Incorporated: 2010

Primary Contact Name: Paul Costello, Vice President

FEIN: 27-1370138

Primary Contact E-mail: vp@wishuponawedding.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities

Environment/Animal Welfare

Education

Health

Human Services

Religion

Mission:

[Wish Upon a Wedding](https://www.wishuponawedding.org) is a licensed 501(c)(3) charity which grants dream weddings and vow renewal ceremonies to couples who are suffering from serious or terminal illness, or experiencing a life-altering health circumstance. We are comprised of wedding and event professionals who volunteer their love, time, energy, and expertise for our couples, to give them the ceremony and reception they've only been able to dream about.



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

The United States, with special attention paid to the greater Philadelphia region, including Chester, Montgomery, Philadelphia, Berks, Lancaster, Lehigh, Delaware counties.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

The population served consists of couples where at least one person is suffering from a serious or terminal illness, or a life-altering health circumstance. In 2023 we granted 38 Wishes (serving 76 people plus 50 guests at each Wish); in 2024 we will perform 50 Wishes (serving 100 people plus 50 guests at each Wish).

Annual Budget \$170000	3 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
78 % of budget for program expenses	10 # of Board Volunteers
18 % of budget for administrative expenses	0 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
4 % of budget for fundraising expenses	150 per week # of Volunteer Hours

100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

- Private Donations
- Fundraising Events
- In-kind Donations
- Corporate Sponsorships
- Grants

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

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: \$10000

Proposal Summary:

Wish Upon a Wedding wants to serve **more** clients, **more** couples in need; to provide them event planning services, and ensure they experience ultimate satisfaction in everything they get from us. However, at the moment, we have severe financial constraints, concerning our ability to continue to do so as an organization. Nonetheless, a grant offer will be instrumental in helping us achieve our organizational objectives. The human and material resources required for the organization's success will be provided with the funds. That will be used to prepare the logistics needed for the organization's success, particularly as regards "Urgent Wishes" which are less likely to attract in-kind donations from wedding and events vendors, and more likely to cost Wish Upon a Wedding money to pay for them. "Urgent Wishes" are granted to couples who are very seriously and terminally ill, with a prognosis that includes an expected end. Couples in such situations lack the energy, time, money, and resources required to plan their wedding or vow renewal, and our organization handles all of the details and money, allowing couples to relax and enjoy a very special day filled with joy, while surrounded by the love of their closest family and friends. We provide top-notch personal service to make sure we create a service and reception that is individualized to the beneficiaries, respectful of their needs, and in alignment with their beliefs.

Wish Upon a Wedding seeks a grant of \$10,000 from the Chester County Community Foundation to support our mission of providing weddings to seriously or terminally ill couples. These funds will be used to cover costs related to venues, catering, photography, floral arrangements, and other essential wedding services. By granting these wishes, we provide a day of joy and cherished memories for couples and their families, alleviating some of the emotional and financial burdens they face. This grant will essentially fund three complete Wishes over the next year, ensuring these couples experience a day of love and celebration despite their health challenges. Your support will make a significant impact on the lives of these individuals and their loved ones, fostering hope and creating lasting positive memories during a difficult time.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

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

Wish Upon a Wedding was begun by Liz Guthrie in 2009; while looking for ways to give back to her community, Liz, a party and event planner, organized a Dream Wedding Giveaway in San Francisco for couples who couldn't afford a high-end wedding. Although the giveaway received 350 applications from all over the country, the story of one couple warmed everyone's heart. Enter Vanessa Muza Teskey, a U.S. Air Force officer battling stage IV Hodgkin's Lymphoma, and her fiancé, Capt. Mike Hawkings, also an Air Force officer. After graduating from the Air Force Academy, the couple met and got engaged in 2008. Vanessa received her cancer diagnosis one day before Mike was deployed to Southwest Asia. From 11,000 miles apart, the contest gave the couple hope for a brighter future and enough resilience to face Vanessa's chemotherapy sessions. Vanessa and Mike's love story ended up winning them a \$100,000 high-end wedding package – all of the proceeds were donated by local businesses and wedding industry professionals.

And although the Hawkins' wedding was a huge success, Liz felt a little bummed: she thought that there were loads of people deserving of a wedding. What if there was a way to grant that dream wedding to more couples like the Hawkins?

Couples with a moving love story who were entrenched in life-altering circumstances and lacked the headspace and the financial capacity to plan a wedding.

And this is why, in November of 2009, Wish Upon a Wedding was officially born. Our original wedding industry founders came together with a vision to give couples and their loved ones a day away from terminal illness, helping them create memories to sustain them through the upcoming challenges.

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**
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- **Description of Key Initiatives:** The key initiative for this funding request is to provide three weddings or vow renewals for seriously or terminally ill couples. This includes securing venues, catering, photography, floral arrangements, and other wedding essentials. We budget \$3000-\$3500 for each Wish, to cover costs that voluntary donations from wedding/events vendors don't cover.
 - **Specific Needs & Issues to be Addressed:** Couples facing serious or terminal illnesses often experience financial strain and emotional distress, making it difficult to plan and afford a wedding or vow renewal. This grant will help alleviate these burdens, allowing couples to celebrate their love and create lasting memories with their closest friends and family.
 - **Why It Is Important to Fund This Now:** The emotional and psychological benefits of a wedding during a serious or terminal illness can provide much-needed joy and a sense of normalcy. Funding this initiative now will enable us to serve couples who are currently facing urgent health challenges. We do NOT lack for people asking for our services!
 - **How Impact & Results Will Be Demonstrated:** Success will be measured by the number of weddings and vow renewals fulfilled, and the satisfaction of the couples and their families (we occasionally receive survey responses after Wishes are granted). We will gather feedback through surveys and testimonials, assess the emotional and psychological benefits reported by participants, and monitor community engagement levels.