

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

*One page only. This page will be shared electronically with Grant Panel Members & Fund Advisors.
Note: If Philanthropy Network's Common Grant Application is used, CCCF's **Summary Sheet MUST accompany application.***

Date
July 16, 2024

Contact Information

Organization Name: Baker Industries, Inc.	ED/CEO Name: Nicholas Watson
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Phone: 610-296-9795	Board Chair Name: Richard C. III
Website: www.bakerindustries.org	Board Chair Approval (check here): <input type="checkbox"/>
Year Incorporated: 1980	Primary Contact Name: Turk Thacher
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Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest: X Human Services

Mission: **EMPLOY** those who have the most difficulty in getting and holding jobs, **TEACH** the work ethic through real work experience, **PROVIDE** job readiness training in a trauma-informed environment, **ACT** as a transition step toward gaining and maintaining outside employment, and **HELP** those who are both able and unable to move on to reach their highest level of achievement.

Geographic Area Served: The Philadelphia Metropolitan Area, including all of Chester County.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: We employ a mix of low/no-income, vulnerable adults, specifically people with disabilities, those with substance use disorder, ex-offenders, and the homeless. Typically, we touch the lives of 200+ individuals, of which an average of 49 workers successfully transition into becoming independent and productive members of their communities.

Annual Budget <u>\$2,495,700</u>	<u> 7 </u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u> 84 </u> % of budget for program expenses	<u> 22 </u> # of Board Volunteers
<u> 8 </u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u> 150+ </u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u> 8 </u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u> 1,500 </u> # of Volunteer Hours
<small>100 % total</small>	

Top 3-5 funding sources: The sale of our services, Edwin Hall 2nd Charitable Trust, Two Fundraisers, Individual Donations, and PPP Loan/Grant.

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

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$10,000 – Very Grateful for Anything

Proposal Summary: Baker Industries is a diverse and inclusive 44-year old nonprofit workforce development program that provides hope and opportunity for low/no income vulnerable adults as described above. Our purpose is to integrate these individuals into the workforce through regular work at one of our two industrial facilities in an accepting and trauma-informed environment. Program participants are paid a real wage while learning fundamental work and collaboration skills and participate (**while still getting paid**) in workshops, counseling, and coaching designed to foster self-esteem and job readiness. On average we engage about 200 individuals each year from the Philadelphia Metropolitan region in our program. Over our history an average of 49 participants progress to better work in the regular economy, becoming independent and productive members of our community. For those who are unable to be mainstreamed, we provide long-term employment at our Malvern Facility. We typically do this without reliance on any government support. Baker truly changes lives.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

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

History

The founding of Baker Industries was a direct result of the energy and ingenuity of two individuals who had searched for years in vain for an appropriate working environment for their epileptic, learning disabled son. Charles and Louise Baker had learned from bitter experience that there were many programs available for the mentally challenged, the blind, the deaf, and many other disabled groups. However, there were no working situations available for high functioning men and women who, despite the appearance of normality, were not quite able to succeed in the competitive marketplace. In effect, the Bakers had discovered a gap in the vocational system which had resulted in the neglect of potentially very productive people. In 1980, with two employees, they opened a small mail order business in their garage to begin to fill this void. In 1988, a second Baker work site was established in Philadelphia to employ ex-offenders, those suffering from substance use disorder, and the homeless who also typically have difficulty getting jobs. Our mission, and the need for our mission, is still very much the same: we offer hope. For those who have very few options in today's job market, we provide the opportunity to be included in, rather than excluded from, the regular workforce.

Mission Statement

- **EMPLOY** those who have the most difficulty in getting and holding jobs,
- **TEACH** the work ethic through real work experience,
- **PROVIDE** job readiness training in a trauma-informed environment,
- **ACT** as a transition step toward gaining and maintaining outside employment, and
- **HELP** those who are both able and unable to move on to reach their highest level of achievement.

Purpose

Baker Industries is a diverse and inclusive 44-year-old nonprofit workforce development program that provides hope and opportunity for low/no income vulnerable adults – individuals challenged with disability, parole/probation, substance use disorder, and homelessness. Our purpose is to integrate these individuals into the workforce through regular work at one of our two industrial facilities in an accepting and trauma-informed environment. Program participants are paid a real wage while learning fundamental work and collaboration skills and participate (while still getting paid) in workshops, counseling, and coaching designed to foster self-esteem and job readiness. On average we engage approximately 200 individuals each year from the Philadelphia region in our program. Over our history an average of 49 participants progress to better work in the regular economy, becoming independent and productive members of our community.

About one-third of our participants are challenged with disabilities that limit their capability to move on to other work. For these individuals, Baker provides longer term employment and a community of caring. We believe we are unique in blending individuals with diverse challenges in a single workforce development program. We are proud to serve individuals who can transition from Baker as well as those for whom Baker is an ongoing place of meaningful work and community.

A core tenet of our program is to pay a real wage to our program participants. Participants are paid even when they are engaged in training and counseling activities that are provided in our trauma-informed program. This is highly unusual among workforce development programs and removes the financial hurdle individuals might face if asked to choose between paid work and unpaid development training activity.

Our decades long impact in the community is clear. Over 12,000 low/no income vulnerable adults have benefitted by participating in our program and found new hope and opportunity. Over 2,500 individuals have progressed to better

employment and an opportunity to break the cycle of poverty and dependence that has defined so many of their lives. Families and communities have been strengthened. Baker Industries truly changes lives.

Goals for 2024: Our goals for 2024 are consistent with our mission and reflect consistency of focus and improvement of execution.

For 2024, our goals are as follows:

- Serve over 200 participants. In 2023, we served 196.
- Support 50+ adults in achieving better employment at a living wage level. In 2023, we had 55 participants achieve better employment.
- Increase fundraising over prior year and develop new grant sources. In 2023, we raised \$1.2 Million from foundations, individuals and events.
- Raise \$300,000 for the Justin Baker Endowment Fund.
- Restore customer revenue to 100% of pre-COVID-19 levels.
- Overall revenue of \$2.5 Million – generating a modest surplus from our operations and investments. Without margin – there is no mission!
- Update our Strategic Plan.
- Effect a smooth transition of Executive Leadership.

We will measure our impact based on achievement of the above goals, with a focus on serving as many participants as possible and supporting as many job placements as possible.

2. Funding request

• Description of key initiatives

Our workforce development program is unique in three important ways. First, we blend four distinct populations of hard to employ adults into one high performing team. Individuals challenged by disability, parole/probation, homelessness and substance use disorder work side by side in a trauma-informed environment that emphasizes respect and empathy. Working side by side with individuals who have different backgrounds and challenges encourages flexibility and broadens perspectives. Second, we provide real work experience on behalf of real customers for a real hourly wage. We believe fundamentals like accountability, teamwork, quality and leadership are better learned through meeting actual customer expectations than through training or simulations alone. We are proud that our team of ever-changing participants competes effectively and achieves "for-profit" standards of quality and productivity. Third, we deliver job readiness training and coaching that provides relevant content geared to success in the workplace. We address subjects like goal setting, decision making, giving and receiving feedback and managing change as well as basics like resume and interview prep, job search strategies, etc. Our participants are paid while in training, so they never have to choose between earning and learning. Our goal is to provide each participant with the tools and confidence to gain and sustain living wage employment. Each year, 25-50 participants reach this goal.

To achieve our mission, we work with a wide range of partners across the region. Customer partners provide job orders that directly drive daily work for our participants. Over the past few years, we have worked with over 80 customers. Employer partners provide job opportunities for our graduates. Dozens of local employers have hired Baker graduates based on their reliability and job readiness. Community partners help us recruit eligible participants, improve their job readiness and assist in areas beyond our scope such as housing, finances and healthcare. We work in the communities we serve and have well-established relationships with local non-profits, social services, correctional services, government agencies, schools and churches. And, of course, hundreds of individuals and dozens of donor partners help support our mission through generous gifts, grants and volunteering.

Social scientists and economists agree that a good job is fundamental to addressing chronic community problems like recidivism, addiction and generational poverty. We estimate that each individual that progresses from Baker to living wage employment generates significant economic value in the community

through productivity, wage taxes, reduction in recidivism and less reliance on social services. A conservative estimate of the incremental value of this progress is \$25K per graduate. As important as economics is the social value of helping individuals come off the sidelines into the regular workforce, achieving confidence and satisfaction in their contributions. Baker Industries changes lives!

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

Baker Industries provides a work training/rehabilitation program, addressing the needs of hundreds of low/no income individuals who have the most difficulty in getting and holding jobs. Specifically, Baker focuses on four groups of low-income “vulnerable adults”: (1) people with disabilities (2) those with substance use disorder (3) ex-offenders and (4) homeless individuals. The need for our program is evident in the chronic poverty rate of over 24% that holds back our city from greater growth and prosperity. The root causes of this poverty are many and include the 35,000 returning citizens transitioning from prison to our region each year. The scale of the opioid crisis plays a role. So does the underemployment of adults with disabilities. Additionally, the underemployment of adults with disabilities contributes to this issue, with only 22.5% of them employed in 2023, according to a 2024 study from the U.S. Department of Labor. We believe a good job is foundational to addressing these challenges. Social scientists agree that reliable, regular work has a significant impact in lowering recidivism, supporting recovery, and increasing housing and financial stability. Our unique workforce development program provides direct, measurable value in supporting the growth and health of our community. By helping individuals’ transition to the regular workforce, we are improving individual, social, and financial health for families and communities and helping reduce the burden on strained civic and government resources.

The majority of our disabled population tends to remain in our program as there are so few employment opportunities for them. Because we do not accept any government operating support, there are no limitations on how long they can remain in our program; and as a result, Baker tends to become their social world as well as their work world. Helping these four groups of people will enable them to begin to liberate themselves and those around them from the cycles of poverty, violence, crime, and dependence that had previously trapped them. The benefits of such a transformation both to the individual and to the community are priceless.

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

The Baker program is in its 45 year – the sustainability of that program is a key focus of our management team. Our annual revenue comes from the work that we do as part of our workforce training, grants from private organizations, and donations from generous individuals – as mentioned above we do not normally accept any government support. Our need is somewhat constant, and while we are very fortunate to have many loyal donors, each year we find that we must find new avenues of support in order to continue to grow our very special program.

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

We measure our impact by achieving a number of outcomes each year. First, we measure the total number of participants served. This metric is shaped year to year based on the amount of commercial work we earn from customers as well as the broader labor market. The pandemic has had an impact on both over the past two years. In 2023, we served 196 participants - slightly more than in 2022 (157) and 2021 (153). We anticipate serving 200 participants in 2024.

About one-third of our participants will come to Baker in transition from prison or drug addiction. They will rely on Baker as a short-term transition step to stabilize and organize as they move to home locations and seek next opportunities. About one-third of our participants report disabilities (physical and cognitive) and seek an extended, part-time employment opportunity at Baker where they can establish vocational and social skills in a supportive work environment. The final third of our participants are ready to challenge themselves to achieve regular employment. They join Baker to improve their job-readiness and leverage real work

experience into a living wage job in the regional economy. All of our participants will earn a regular hourly wage and perform real work for real customers as part of a fully integrated, high performing team.

Second, we measure placements. In 2023, 55 individuals progressed from Baker to regular employment. This was an increase over 44 in 2022 and 35 in 2021. For 2024, we are on track to place in excess of 50 participants. Our graduates find employment in a wide range of industries including manufacturing, distribution, maintenance, retail, healthcare, hospitality and more. We work hard to stay connected to graduates through their first year of employment post-Baker - providing guidance and encouragement. Each job placement has a powerful economic impact. Recidivism decreases, use of social services moderates, wage taxes are paid, and local businesses fill vacancies with productive workers. We estimate - conservatively - that each individual who graduates from Baker to a better job generates \$25K in incremental economic value to the community during their first year.

Third, we measure the percentage of placements into "living wage" jobs (currently \$15.00/hr.). Over the past two years, between 75% of graduates are earning \$15.00/hr. or better with eligibility for health benefits. This opportunity can be life-changing for individuals who have not earned a regular income for many years.

An outcome that is not quantifiable, but very real, is the satisfaction and self-confidence individuals develop while working at Baker Industries. For many, Baker is the first regular work experience they have had for many years...or ever! Our disabled adults, in particular, have faced a lifetime of limited work opportunities and isolation. Providing a secure and supportive environment that supports individuals challenged by disability and trauma is more important than income to many of our participants. At Baker, everyone is accepted and given the room to grow. We cannot put a number on this impact, but we know it makes a difference.