



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 9/11)

- ◇ 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. 11** are eligible for consideration.
- ◇ Grant **awards** typically range from **\$500-\$5,000**, with monies distributed by **February**.

- Use this form @ www.chescocf.org to apply online for grants from all Community Foundation Funds.
- **Email proposals to 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) 696-8211** or grants@chescocf.org with any questions.

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.

To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit www.chescocf.org

Date

Contact Information

Organization Name: Leveling the Playing Field
Address: 404 Elmwood Ave., Sharon Hill, PA 19079
Phone: 202-556-4650
Website: www.levelingtheplayingfield.org
Year Incorporated: 2013
FEIN: 45-2682632

ED/CEO Name: Max Levitt
ED/CEO Email: max@levelingtheplayingfield.org
Board Chair Name: Tracy Scarrow
Board Chair Approval (check here):
Primary Contact Name: Kira Venturini
Primary Contact Email: kira@levelingtheplayingfield.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission:

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

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

Annual Budget \$ _____ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff 2
100 % of budget for program expenses _____ # of Board Volunteers
0 % of budget for administrative expenses 600+ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
0 % of budget for fundraising expenses 1,200+ # of Volunteer Hours
100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

- Philadelphia Foundation Fund for Children: \$20,000
- Patricia Kind Family Foundation: \$15,000
- Wawa Foundation: \$11,000
- Wilbur C. and Betty Lea Henderson Foundation: \$10,000
- Philadelphia Eagles: \$10,000

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

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: \$ 5,000_____

Proposal Summary:

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

History

LPF was founded in 2013 by Max Levitt, the former equipment manager for the Syracuse University football team. Levitt was stunned by the massive amount of sports equipment being thrown away at the end of each season. As a volunteer for youth programs in his hometown of Washington, D.C., Levitt knew how many under-resourced schools and organizations could benefit from these discarded items. Determined to put wasted resources to good use, Levitt started LPF out of his parents' basement, establishing an effective collection and distribution model and building interest and awareness through relationship building and word of mouth.

LPF opened its Greater Washington chapter in 2013, its Baltimore chapter in 2018, its Philadelphia chapter in 2021, and its Columbus, OH, and Buffalo, NY, chapters in 2023.

The 2024 strategic goals for our Greater Philadelphia Chapter include:

- Collect \$1.3M in gear
- Distribute \$1.15M in gear
- Serve at least 300 programs (125 new), receive 150 grant applications

We expect that we could reach as many as 30,000 youth athletes with gear in 2024. This grant will help us meet unmet demand for our program while we continue to spread the word about our offerings.

Key Achievements

Since launching in 2021, LPF Philadelphia has provided over \$2M worth of sports equipment to 400+ schools and youth programs. This tremendous growth is thanks to the diligent work of our program staff, conducting outreach to local school districts, parks and recreation departments, Boys & Girls Clubs, and other youth programs that could benefit from our resources. Last year, of the beneficiary programs who filled out our impact surveys shared that as a result of our donation of sports equipment, 99% were able to increase participation, 98% were able to reallocate funding to other aspects of their program, and 63% even introduced an entirely new sport to their students.

We've also recently been acknowledged by the Philadelphia Public League Coaches Association and received Leadership & Service Award. We additionally were selected as a finalist this year for the Wawa Foundation Hero Award alongside three other inspiring Philadelphia nonprofits.

2. Funding request

LPF Philadelphia is requesting support from the Chester County Community Foundation in order for us to increase our impact in Chester County. In the past two years we've only just started to scratch the surface of reaching programs in need in Chester County, providing over \$14k in total to 4 unique programs. This year we distributed gear to Malvern Prep as they hosted an event to introduce kids in lower-income areas to sports, we provided baseball and softball gear to Turn Two Youth Services, we helped free up the budget for Collegium Charter School where they have to rent out other fields for their athletic teams to play, and we provided gear to a coach at Conestoga Girls Ice Hockey who wanted to ensure one of his players could afford to join the team.

The Need

For decades, sports have broken down barriers of neighborhood and class, even ushering in the earliest instances of racial integration. Today, however, sports are increasingly the mainstay of the wealthy. Pay-to-play leagues, dwindling school PE budgets, and shuttered rec centers have all resulted in a growing opportunity gap.

Research has shown that sports are inextricably linked to improved cognitive and social-emotional development, better grades, improved school attachment and behavior and increased rates of high school graduation and college matriculation. Sports are powerful protective factors, lowering rates of crime, gang involvement and alcohol, tobacco and drug use. Children and youth who play sports not only grow up more physically active, but also gain social and emotional health benefits that follow them into adulthood.

As of 2022, according to United Way of Chester County, nearly a third of households in Chester County face financial hardship. LPF exists to remove the cost barrier of sports equipment so that more kids in under-resourced communities can access all the benefits of sports participation. With \$5,000 in funding from Chester County Community Foundation, LPF would aim to increase our impact to providing \$30,000 worth of sports equipment to 15 schools and youth programs in Chester County. We would accomplish this through targeted outreach to local Title I schools, Boys and Girls Clubs, rec leagues, and other youth programs in the area.

Key Initiatives

To carry out our mission, LPF operates its core programs year-round:

Collection Program

We source our sports equipment regionally, year-round using two primary methods: 1) community drives and strategically placed donation bins that bring in equipment from local families (90% of donations), and 2) donations of discontinued or overstock goods from sporting goods companies. We have placed 21 branded collection bins at high-traffic parks and sports centers throughout the region. Our staff spends most weekends running collection drives at youth sports leagues, tournaments, school events, and neighborhood recycling days to fill our van with donated sports gear. Our collection drives also act as our core marketing strategy, spreading the word about our mission to thousands of families every year.

Community Outreach

Our staff are engaged in community outreach year-round. This includes regular meetings with athletic directors and coaches as well as with out-of-school time intermediaries, public officials, and community-based organizations to generate applications for gear. We also partner with independent schools and professional sports teams to generate donations.

Distribution Program

Schools and community-based organizations or programs apply for an equipment grant online. Then, we schedule either a site visit or interview at our warehouse to assess eligibility. Eligible programs:

- serve economically disadvantaged children, or children or adults with disabilities
- operate (or wish to operate) an organized sport, recreational activity or fitness program that offers consistent and structured opportunities for play to large groups of children
- provide free or low-cost enrichment programs for its participants
- provide a youth development component. We do not support organizations whose sole focus is “on the field performance.”

We visit as many sites as we can to see their facilities, learn about their programs, and share with them the full breadth of what LPF can offer them, which often includes sports and activities they had never considered because

of cost. Approved programs are invited to shop the warehouse as often as they want without reapplying. Some programs come once a year and others come on a monthly basis. Coaches are encouraged to submit wishlists of the exact gear they need.

Measuring Results

LPF tracks every aspect of our program through our Salesforce database, this includes the total value of the goods we collect and redistribute, where (geographically) the distributions go, and the number of programs that submit equipment requests and receive donated equipment from us. We also require each of our beneficiaries to submit impact reports 30 days following the donation of equipment to their program. This allows us to track whether each program was able to increase participation, re-allot funding towards other aspects of the program, or introduce a new sport to their kids.

Our objectives for this project are to distribute at least \$35K in gear to at least 15 programs in 2025. We estimate that 15 programs would reach ~1,000 young people. As a result of their partnership with LPF, we expect that schools and organizations will report the following outcomes:

- At least 95% of beneficiaries will report increased youth sports/activity participation as a result of the donation
- At least 80% will report the ability to reallocate their equipment funds to other services
- At least 60% will report that they introduced a new sport

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

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

 - *For capacity building grant proposals:*
 - *How will this capacity building initiative impact your nonprofit?*
 - *How will this impact be measured?*
 - *Include a description of the expected activities; timeline & costs to implement the initiative. If external consulting services are required, include the anticipated costs & expertise of the consultants to be hired. Include external consultant proposals if applicable.*

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



WHAT IS CAPACITY BUILDING?

Capacity building helps bring a nonprofit to the next level of operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational maturity, in order to more effectively & efficiently fulfill its mission.

Capacity building may include (but is not limited to) projects which address:

- **MISSION, VISION & STRATEGY**
Organizational Assessment - Strategic Planning - Financial Planning
- **GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP**
Board Development - Executive Transition/Succession Planning - Leadership Development - Staff Training & Professional Development
- **PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS**
Coalition Building – Collaboration - Mergers & Acquisitions - Strategic Restructuring
- **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING**
Major Gift Donor Identification, Cultivation, Development & Stewardship - Development Campaigns (Annual, Capital, Planned Giving) - Earned Income Development - Social Enterprise Feasibility & Development - Marketing, Branding & Communications
- **TECHNOLOGY & OPERATIONS**
Business Continuity Planning - Financial Management - Human Resources - Volunteer Management - Industry Certification - Risk Management - Technology Improvements