

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 7/22/2024

Contact Information

Organization Name: Variety – the Children’s Charity of the Delaware Valley ED/CEO Name: Dominique Bernardo
Address: 2950 Potshop Rd, PO Box 609, Worcester, PA 19490 ED/CEO E-mail: dominique.bernardo@varietyphila.org
Phone: 610-584-4366 x170 Board Chair Name: Maribeth Roman Schmidt
Website: https://varietyphila.org/ Board Chair Approval (check here): x
Year Incorporated: 1951 Primary Contact Name: Katie Bailey
FEIN: 23-1556195 Primary Contact E-mail: grants@varietyphila.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: Our mission is to enrich the lives of children and young adults with disabilities through social, educational, and vocational programs that nurture independence and self-confidence, and prepare them for life.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): The youth served at Variety hail from the entire Delaware Valley region, with the following specific geographic service areas: PA: Chester, Berks, Bucks, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia; NJ: Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Ocean & Salem; DE: Kent, New Castle and Sussex Counties. In Chester County, we have participants in Downingtown, Malvern, Spring City, West Chester, Berwyn, East Fallowfield, Exton, and Pennsbury.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: Variety serves approximately 600 unique participants with a multitude of disabilities across all of our intensive, direct services and 10,000 through our outreach and light touch services annually. Specifically, our current participants present with Autism (58%), Intellectual Disability (16%), ADHD (9%), Cerebral Palsy (4%), Down Syndrome (6%), and Other (7%). Variety’s target population is children and young adults with disabilities ages 5-24, although we will serve individuals older than 24 in specific services.

Annual Budget \$2,895,600 21 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
64% of budget for program expenses 17 # of Board Volunteers
30% of budget for administrative expenses 1,230 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
6% of budget for fundraising expenses 7,097 # of Volunteer Hours
100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources: Widener Memorial Foundation, Wawa Foundation, Comcast NBCUniversal Foundation

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: \$7,500

Proposal Summary: Many young adults with disabilities face challenges entering the workplace, including balancing a work schedule with essential therapies and services, lack of opportunities to explore career paths and professional interests, and fewer opportunities to acquire professional references as teenagers compared to neurotypical peers. Thus, many of them are unsure what their next steps should be when they graduate high school, or what jobs they might wish to pursue. VarietyWorks addresses three unmet workforce development needs for our highly vulnerable population of youth with disabilities: 1) providing individualized training to build work readiness skills for in-school adolescents before they turn 22; 2) bridging the transition age of 21 to 21+ when youth with disabilities must learn to navigate adult systems post education; and 3) providing individualized support to 22+ individuals who are not yet ready for community employment. With additional funding, Variety seeks to hire more hourly Job Coaches and/or expand the hours of those working hourly. We currently have a waiting list of individuals seeking job coaching services. Funding will also support enhanced training of Job Coaches in areas of digital badging and adaptive equipment.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

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

Founded in 1935, Variety operated solely as a fundraising organization, providing financial assistance to children in need. Our flagship day and overnight camp programs began in 1949, when the Posel family generously donated their expansive "country estate" in Worcester Township, Montgomery County, allowing Variety to begin onsite programming and become the region's first summer camp for child survivors of polio. When polio was no longer prevalent, Variety shifted to serve those in the community with the greatest need and fewest resources—children and young adults with a range of physical and intellectual disabilities. Today, Variety's 77-acre property serves as the headquarters for a wide range of educational, vocational and recreational services to children and young adults with disabilities residing in the entire Delaware Valley. Variety has successfully adapted to the changing needs of the disabilities community by creating a comprehensive portfolio of programs offered throughout the year both on our Montgomery County campus and at Philadelphia partner sites, as well as at employer partner sites throughout the region. Presently, Variety offers After-School programs, Saturday camp, weekend retreats, summer overnight and day camps, Extended School Year, and an innovative workforce development model, VarietyWorks. In Chester County, we collaborate with the Downingtown, Great Valley, Phoenixville, Spring-Ford, and Treddyffrin-Easttown school districts who provide referrals to our programs.

Programmatically, we have evolved our portfolio of workforce development services from one mobile café in 2018 to a comprehensive continuum of services that starts with in-school youth at age 14 through job placement in adulthood. Variety has leveraged multiple partners and funding streams to evolve the model which engages over 60 community business partners annually and places adults with disabilities into community employment. We have partnerships with companies in Chester County such as Phoenixville Area Community Services (PACS), Target Phoenixville, and A. Duie Pyle. In the VarietyWorks model, students plant, harvest, and sell organic produce to the community at our farmstand, operate pop-up shops at local businesses in the summer and offer excess to local food pantries. Another significant programming collaboration is our long-standing partnership with Temple University. Interns from the School of Public Health add value to our programs including VarietyWorks, particularly students studying Recreational Therapy and Occupational Therapy. Temple also regularly sends students to our campus to obtain experience with our youth through internships and various other educational projects. Dozens of Interns in occupational therapy and educational programs from universities such as West Chester support Variety in curriculum development and program enhancement. For example, OT fieldwork students have helped to develop guides to train staff on accessible technology, identify areas where new technology is needed, reorganize the environment to be more accessible, support program participants in utilizing the equipment present in the lab and establish a plan for future additions and improvements to the lab. Students are essential to ensuring equipment is well utilized and staff can be quickly oriented to it. They also help develop upgrades and downgrades to activities, so participants of all capabilities take part in activities at their own level.

Over the past 5 years, Variety has transformed the organization from a financially struggling nonprofit known primarily for its 8-week summer camp programs to a thriving Top Workplace (2024 Philadelphia Inquirer) recognized for its innovative, year-round vocational training programs. Variety was also named the 2024 Non-Profit of the Year by the Main Line Chamber of Commerce, and Variety's CEO was one of Philadelphia Business Journal's Most Admired CEOs. VarietyWorks staff have been recognized for awards by the City of Philadelphia/Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities Services. Variety is a member of the Main Line Chamber of Commerce. Variety is also an active member of the Max Association, which is a cooperative organization among the community service providers for people with behavioral health disorders, developmental disabilities, and drug and alcohol involvement and their families in order to promote continuing quality improvement of supports and needs-based allocation of resources. We also rebuilt the financial infrastructure to launch an unprecedented \$18M capital campaign to revitalize 77-acre campus comprised of 38 aging structures, increased programming revenue by 19%, and established first endowment in 89-year history of organization.

Our participants present with multiple disabilities and limitations that make finding job placement for them very challenging. In our failure to find timely employment for these participants, we look within our own organization to find positions that suit a participant's skills. Currently, every department has at least one former participant on staff including facilities and development, for example. Recently, we had a participant experience hardship at his former job, making him not want to go back. Therefore, we hired him in a similar custodial position to the one he was working in before, and he has done an amazing job at keeping things cleaner than ever. Additionally, our four summer programs employed seven alumni participants as direct service staff this year. Our organization was reminded throughout this process that unique problems require creative solutions and that in many instances, the solutions are closer to home than we may realize. We also created an Ambassador network that sees paid Variety Ambassadors who are former participants attend

networking events such as resource fairs, community days, job fairs and reverse job fairs and more. Participants gain valuable resume experience, increase self-confidence, better preparedness for life, and ultimately see an increase in their independence. For example, our one Ambassador wants to become a motivational speaker to inspire others in the disabilities community, and being an Ambassador has helped her gain experience. After speaking at one of our board meetings, she asked for honest feedback from our director of programming in order to improve. The two of them worked together to build up her skills, and since then, she was the keynote speaker at a PECO event, where she received a standing ovation for her speech. She has also been featured as a voice of the Philadelphia Parking Authority's initiative in their PSA to enforce fines for illegal parking in handicap places.

In the long-term, Variety implemented a campus master plan in 2019 that is a vision for site improvements and new buildings over the next 20 years to accommodate the organization's renewed emphasis on expanded vocational training for clients. This plan re-imagines the campus as a more beautiful, inviting, and sustainable environment. Progress is already underway, as we completed construction on the first new structure in over 40 years: a new multi-purpose cabin that will be used across many programs. Work has also begun on our 19,200-square-foot gym, and we have broken ground for the installation of a turf field. In 2021, we created a five-year plan to grow VarietyWorks. Our goal over the next five years is to expand the services; small group employment, community participation support, and summer vocational programming. We also hope to add a pre-apprenticeship program serving those in high school. While this is still in the works, we have revamped our after-school program to include targeting vocational training in generalized skill areas that are applicable to many different career paths. This is another effort to better prepare children for the services that they will have available to them at the ages of 14+. This thoughtful approach to youth programming helps ease the transition into programs that are entirely vocationally oriented.

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**

While Variety has significant achievements over the past 5 years in establishing financial stability for the agency as a whole, and our workforce development model VarietyWorks is financially sustainable in and of itself, the only way that we can grow and enhance the program is through funding such as that requested in this grant. VarietyWorks began operation in 2018 based on parent feedback and data about individuals with disabilities in the workplace. For years, parents reported that their child would age out of educational entitlement services at 22 and end up sitting "on the couch." Our educational and recreational programs serve as a pipeline into our vocational programs, allowing us to offer comprehensive services to individuals with disabilities across time. Many young adults with disabilities face challenges entering the workplace, including balancing a work schedule with essential therapies and services, lack of opportunities to explore career paths and professional interests, and fewer opportunities to acquire professional references as teenagers (when neurotypical individuals have begun to work at fast food restaurants or mowing lawns). Thus, many of them are unsure what their next steps should be when they graduate high school, or what jobs they might wish to pursue.

VarietyWorks addresses three unmet workforce development needs for our highly vulnerable population of youth with disabilities: 1) providing individualized training to build work readiness skills for in-school adolescents before they turn 22; 2) bridging the transition age of 21 to 21+ when youth with disabilities must learn to navigate adult systems post education; and 3) providing individualized support to 22+ individuals who are not yet ready for community employment. In-school youth with disabilities can participate in VarietyWorks' Summer Vocational Program, paid internships, or assessments. In 2023, the Bureau of Labor Statistics stated the employment-population ratio—meaning the employed proportion of the population—as 22.5% among individuals with disabilities. In contrast, the employment-population ratio for individuals without disabilities was 65.8%. While this is the highest percentage of individuals with disabilities employed since data collection began in 2008, it is still significantly lower than the employment rate for those without disabilities. We are one of the only programs in the area that offer tailored workforce training to this underserved population. An Oxford study found that successful completion of education and transition from education to the labor market positively affects the mental health and well-being of young adults. In contrast, job loss and unemployment expose young adults to impaired mental health which in turn reduces the likelihood of getting (back) into employment. Adults with disabilities who reported adverse health-related characteristics (e.g., insufficient sleep, obesity, or depressive disorders) or an unmet health care need because of cost also reported experiencing more mental distress than did those with disabilities who did not have these characteristics.

With additional funding, Variety seeks provide enhanced training of Job Coaches in areas of digital badging and adaptive equipment. Our services are provided in a 1:1 or 1:3 staff: participant ratio, and thus human capital is our greatest expense (and our greatest asset). We do not compromise on this ratio because we ensure that each participant's individual needs,

challenges, and long-term goals receive the attention they deserve. The number of children and young adults with disabilities we serve is comparable to serving two or three times that of a group of neurotypical youth. Support could additionally help fund updated technology for the staff and participants, ensuring efficient use of staff time and better training tools for participants. \$2,500 would go towards this with the other \$5,000 going towards training community business partners in Chester county on the best approaches for supporting an employee with disabilities.

VarietyWorks addresses the need for employment services for young adults with disabilities through its flexible model that allows individuals to move towards independence at their own pace, seamlessly transitioning after educational entitlement services end and helping them obtain and retain a job. Out of school youth not ready to work in the community participate in our supported vocational programs. In Farm-to-Table, participants spend half of their days training on Variety's campus in simulated workplace settings and half of the day applying the same skills in simulated settings at community partner sites. They focus on training in six areas: bakery, custodial, greenhouse, clerical, maintenance, and kitchen. In the Mobile Café, participants earn minimum wage. Variety's staff instructs and assesses participants in basic retail, customer service, and additional soft skills through a Department of Health-licensed café. When ready for independent community employment, participants are guided 1:1 by a Variety Job Coach, who works with each person to find where they need more support and when they are ready to accept more responsibility. Participants acquire a multitude of digital skills that will assist them in the employment process as well, including résumé building, digital document storage, navigating job boards, completing online applications, and email etiquette skills. We stay with participants as long as needed, gradually fading out as they become more able to work independently.

For vocational programs, Variety is measuring short-term improvement in self-confidence (defined as a person's perceived capability) using a self-efficacy assessment utilized in an autism research study by Shattuck. Variety is measuring the outcome of preparedness for life (defined as understanding and applying life skills effectively to maintain employment) using a modified version of Muller's Job Readiness Assessment Tool for each industry track in which participants receive training and pursue micro-credentials, such as digital literacy, food production, food handling, and baking. Variety will track obtainment of micro-credentials and job placement and retention as medium to long-term measures of success.

Quantitatively, impact is measured in job coaching by job placement (48 adults placed into permanent employment). For our mobile café and summer vocational services, as well as job coaching, the impact is measured incrementally by our evidence-based indicators. In our mobile café, we track each participant's individual progress on their individualized employment outcome. Currently 100% of mobile café participants are showing progress towards their outcomes daily with the need for verbal prompting/reminders as the most common level of intervention. In our summer vocational program, 100% of participants successfully completed the intensive 7-week program in summer 2023, and 78% showed an improvement in self-confidence utilizing the evidence-based assessment. For job coaching, of our current 33 participants, from recent pre- and post- assessments, 76% improved or maintained self-confidence, 89% showed an improvement in preparation for life, and 100% showed an improvement in independence. Variety will track obtainment of digital badges, job placement and retention as medium to long-term measures of success.

Examples of quantifiable measurable results over a 12-month period will include:

- 20 young adults with disabilities will be placed in community employment.
- 75% of young adults demonstrate increase in self-confidence as measured by self-efficacy, which is a mental health wellness indicator.
- 75% will demonstrate an increase in preparedness for life as measured by Muller's job-readiness assessment.
- 36 high school aged youth with disabilities successfully complete intensive summer vocational program
- Participants will sell low-cost fresh vegetables and healthy baked goods to the community through at least 6 community pop-up shops.
- We will recruit 3 new community business partners every quarter.
- Variety will launch a third mobile café in the community employing 6-10 individuals with disabilities.
- 55 young adults will participate in pre-apprenticeship programs to obtain digital badges.

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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