

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date 9/11/2024

Contact Information

Organization Name: Community Warehouse Project of Chester County

Address: P.O. Box 218, West Chester, PA 19380

Phone: 484-473-4360

Website: www.communitywarehouseproject.com

Year Incorporated: 2017

FEIN: 61-1658782

ED/CEO Name: Glenda Brion

ED/CEO E-mail:

gbrion@communitywarehouseproject.com

Board Chair Name: Paul LeBuffe

Board Chair Approval (check here): X

Primary Contact Name: Glenda Brion

Primary Contact E-mail:

gbrion@communitywarehouseproject.com

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities

Environment/Animal Welfare

Education

Health

Human Services

Religion

Mission: The mission of Community Warehouse Project (CWP) is to provide household goods and furniture to Chester County families and individuals in need – at no charge.

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

Chester County

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

CWP serves Chester County individuals, veterans, and families who have graduated from a housing program and are transitioning into permanent housing. Annually we serve over 1,000 individuals from over 450 households, including 500 children and 100 veterans.

Annual Budget \$ <u>430,489</u>	<u>2</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>85</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>7</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>12</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>156</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>3</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>2,000</u> # of Volunteer Hours
<small>100 % total</small>	

Top 3-5 funding sources: Chester County Commissioners Fund (\$50,000), Open Hearth (\$33,000), West Pharmaceuticals (\$25,000), Justamere Foundation (\$20,000).

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: CWP is eager to partner with the Chester County Community Foundation. Your investment will support our purchase and installation of Donor Perfect software that will strengthen our fundraising efforts.



Community Warehouse Project of CHESTER COUNTY

Proposal to Chester County Community Foundation, September 2024

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW Over the last 7 years, median rent in Chester County has increased by 35% (US Census). According to Chester County Department of Community Development, 40% of county renters are cost burdened, spending 30% or more of their income on rent. In fact, eviction filings in Chester County are now higher than they were prior to the pandemic. At 6.5, Chester County's eviction filing rate is among the top 20 counties in the state. In FY2023, the county had 3,239 evictions (Housing Alliance of PA). Once housing is lost, it's nearly impossible to break back into the housing market.

Launched in 2017 to address homelessness and housing insecurity, Community Warehouse Project of Chester County (CWP) provides a cost-effective service that reduces the likelihood that individuals and families will experience a repeat episode of homelessness. Through a vast network of over 100 community partners, and by utilizing the support of over 150 volunteers, CWP redistributes unwanted, yet high-quality, furniture and household goods to pre-screened individuals and families in need. Statistics show individuals moving from homelessness to housing are 70% more likely to maintain their housing if the home is furnished. We are the only furniture bank in Chester County, and as the affordable housing crisis worsens, need and demand for our innovative program is growing – we typically complete 8-14 deliveries per week, up from 6-10 deliveries previously. In FY2025, we will support long-term housing stability for over 1,000 individuals.

Our exceptional work in the community is gaining recognition – we received the Community Service Award from Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce in 2021 and the AAUW Gateway to Equity Award in 2023, which is presented annually to a group, organization or individual that has shown by action and philosophy the promotion of the AAUW mission to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research. We are grateful for your past support that has helped us achieve these important milestones.

FUNDING REQUEST CWP is eager to continue our partnership with the Chester County Community Foundation. Your \$5,000 investment will support our purchase, installation, and utilization of DonorPerfect software that will improve our fundraising outcomes.

Needs and Issues to be Addressed: CWP raises funds from a diverse pool. Our deep community roots helped us secure funding throughout the pandemic, including through the American Rescue Plan (ARPA). Today, philanthropic giving is trending down across the nation, and ARPA and county funds are dwindling. In response, we are ambitiously pursuing new fundraising opportunities and strengthening our infrastructure to support development activities. In addition to retaining the services of a professional grant writer, we also upgraded our website, with your generous support, so we can more easily capture online donations. We are fortunate to have well-connected and committed volunteers who are eager to support our efforts. As such, we are building fundraising activities through small, volunteer-driven events that provide high return for little investment, and by growing our individual giving program and launching unique social media driven campaigns. These opportunities require a high level of information tracking, organization, and reporting that is beyond our current level of technology tools. Further, our volunteer

base is growing rapidly, and we have little infrastructure to support volunteer communications, retention, and potential crossover from volunteer to donor.

Project Description, Timeline, and Costs: With your support, we will purchase and install DonorPerfect software, expanded help desk hours for the initial two months, and short-term contractual support to complete initial set up and efficient integration into our operations. DonorPerfect will provide integrated donor and volunteer management and will support outreach and stewardship efforts of both donors and volunteers. We will gain critical reporting tools to help us make informed decisions about our fundraising activities and giving campaigns, we'll streamline outreach and gift acknowledgement, set and track goals, and improve our email marketing.

DonorPerfect is a well-known CRM that has been serving the non-profit community for 30 years. It's a highly regarded company and software package that consistently receives excellent reviews. An exciting feature for us is its growth potential – as we continue to build our development program and our donor and volunteer pool, we'll be able to utilize additional features of the software package.

We expect to complete initial set-up by the end of Quarter 1, 2025.

The annual subscription fee is \$2,388. We have selected to include extended help desk hours for the first two months, at a one-time cost of \$380. Given our limited staffing capacity, we will retain a contracted database specialist to support implementation and use of the software to ensure we are using this new tool as efficiently as possible. The specialist will set up operational processes for data entry, establish reports and reporting process, integrate the database with QuickBooks, and establish a communications framework and process with Constant Contact. Once this initial work is complete, we will be better prepared to determine the need for a permanent communications and database management staff position. We estimate the initial cost of contracted support is \$2,500.

Please see the attached invoice for a full description of DonorPerfect costs.

Impact and Measurement: CWP will capitalize on the reporting functionality built in to DonorPerfect to measure the impact of the software on our fundraising goals. We are particularly interested in measuring individual giving datapoints: in particular, number of new individual donors, number and percent of returning donors, total revenue raised through individual gifts, average and median gift amount, number and percent of donors who increased their giving. We are also interested in measuring number of donors and volunteers captured through small events. We will create a baseline during the first year and track change over time in subsequent years.

As a critical component of our operations, we expect that introducing DonorPerfect will improve our overall staffing capacity, ability to recruit and retain volunteers, and will increase our revenue – all steps that will contribute to our overall goal of mitigating the risks of homelessness by improving the likelihood that a newly housed family maintains housing. Your support will help us reach the following indicators of program success:

- Serve at least 1,000 individuals, including as many as 500 children and 100 veterans.
- Provide all requested furnishings and household goods for each referred client, within 1-2 days.
- Provide at least 600 beds, with all needed bedding, fulfilling every bed request.
- Divert approximately 19 tons of furniture from landfills every month.

- Each apartment/home is made fully functional, and clients report satisfaction with their furnishings.
- Clients report being treated with dignity and respect by CWP staff and delivery staff.
- Program partners report satisfaction with the service.

CONCLUSION Chester County, PA, residents are burdened by an affordable housing crisis that is leading to an increase in homelessness and housing insecurity. Low-income households are literally being squeezed out of the market. This crisis is reflected in the uptick in demand we have experienced for our services. While the county has a network of support services, the lack of affordable housing keeps too many households from being able to maintain their stability. A 2022 article in Journal of Community Psychology supports previous studies on furnishings, reporting that furnished homes for families transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing contribute to improvements in mental, physical, and social health, as well as their ability to pursue and achieve goals that will lead to long-term economic self-sufficiency, including employment and academic pursuits. CWP fills an unmet, but necessary need. Our program mitigates risk and improves the chances that individuals, families, and veterans will maintain stable housing and progress towards independent living and long-term self-sufficiency.

Since our launch, CWP has successfully raised funds from a diverse pool of philanthropic partners, including individuals, foundations, and county sources. We are grateful for your past support and eager to continue our partnership, along with other committed partners who support our mission, including W.W. Smith Charitable Trust, Chester County Commissioners, West Pharmaceuticals, and Justamere Foundation, among others. Given our successful fundraising track-record, and an expected uptick in revenue with the help of the CRM, we are confident we can easily absorb ongoing annual cost after your initial investment.

ATTACHMENTS

- 501c3 Letter
- Board of Directors
- Annual Report
- Financial Review
- Organizational Budget
- DonorPerfect Invoice
- Strategic Plan