

# 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](http://www.chescocf.org)*

**Date 09/10/2024**

## Contact Information

Organization Name: **West Chester Dance Works**

ED/CEO Name: **Diane Matthews**

Address: **315 Westtown Road #9 West Chester, PA 19382**

ED/CEO E-mail: **Director@wcdw.org**

Phone: **610-692-3398**

Board Chair Name: **Donna Hymes**

Website: **www.westchesterdanceworks.org**

Board Chair Approval (check here):

Year Incorporated: **1983**

Primary Contact Name: **Diane Matthews**

FEIN: **30-0080438**

Primary Contact E-mail: **Director@wcdw.org**

## Organization Information:

### Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities

Environment/Animal Welfare

Education

Health

Human Services

Religion

**Mission:** The mission of West Chester Dance Works (WCDW) is to uplift, nurture and transform dancers and community through an accessible, inclusive dance experience.

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

WCDW serves Chester County and the greater Delaware Valley.

### **Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:**

It has been our mission to not limit the exposure of dance to just the youth or one population, but to give opportunity to those in a variety of demographics, including age, national origin, background, ability to pay, body size and more. We serve a diverse community with dancers and audiences including Black, White, Asian and Latinx people. As an organization with diverse leadership, it is important for us to be an inclusive place where all feel safe to grow and thrive. We are actively seeking to expose individuals who may not know about organized dance classes, and all that can be gained. We have always tried to find those who may not be able to afford dance classes to offer a scholarship. Membership in our performing groups is open to anyone nine years of age and older, amateur or professional, interested in participating after acceptance through the completion of an audition process meeting all commitment criteria set forth by the artistic director. Students ages 2.5 and up in our resident school, the Diane Matthews School of Dance Arts, have the opportunity for exposure to various genres of dance instruction. WCDW had 33 performing members and 150 school students this past season, and it is estimated that approximately 5,000 individuals were reached from the variety of engagements the company partook in. Over the past year, engagements included neighborhood parks, community events, dance festivals, senior citizens' facilities, fundraisers for autism and breast cancer awareness, Juneteenth celebrations, and more.

**Annual Budget** \$ 438,388.69 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff 1

65 % of budget for program expenses # of Board Volunteers 7

34 % of budget for administrative expenses # of Active Non-Board Volunteers 25

1 % of budget for fundraising expenses # of Volunteer Hours 150

**Top 3-5 funding sources: JD2 Environmental, Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, Rachel Owen**

**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:**  **Operations**

**Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation:** \$ 5,000

**Proposal Summary:** Our capacity building initiative spans two dance seasons: phase one having been completed in spring of 2024 where mission, vision and strategy were streamlined and strengthened, and phase two, the operational changes we are implementing for our 2024/2025 season and seeking funding to support. Two years ago, WCDW underwent an organizational merger where our dance school, the Diane Matthews School of Dance Arts (previously a limited liability company), officially operated as the school of WCDW (our 501(c)3 charitable nonprofit). Uniting the two organizations and bringing all operations under one umbrella has allowed us to dramatically increase our scope, as well as called us to restructure some of our systems, jobs, and policies. With the guidance of an operations consultant, we learned that with better allocation of the workload, redefined roles, and improved usage of AI and software applications, WCDW could run more effectively. These changes are to be implemented this coming fall. We are specifically asking for funding to support four administrative positions for the upcoming dance season, one of which is entirely new, and three of which have been re-defined and filled by three different individuals. The positions include: Special Projects Manager, Performance Manager, Office Manager, and Receptionist. In having more clearly defined roles, each with one person solely dedicated to fulfilling its unique responsibilities, WCDW will be better able to: serve more students, pursue more engagements, build additional partnerships, and allow the director to focus more exclusively on executive decision-making duties.



*Diane Matthews, Executive Director*

## **II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**

Chester County Community Foundation,

West Chester Dance Works (WCDW) is reaching out to you with hope and continued gratitude for your ongoing contributions to nonprofits in the Chester County area. Please consider us as a candidate to receive \$5,000 in funding through a Capacity Building Grant as we complete the second phase of an organizational merger, and enter our 43<sup>rd</sup> year with a continued commitment to fulfilling our mission: to uplift, nurture and transform dancers and community through an accessible, inclusive dance experience.

WCDW is a 501(c)3 nonprofit arts organization operating to provide informed dance instruction, thoughtful community outreach programming, and inspirational performances to audiences of all ages. Our vision is for dance to become a vehicle for improved outlook, conversation, reconciliation, awareness, and unity between all people regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic background, religion, race or gender. Since the company's inception in 1983, WCDW has been a minority-run, woman-owned business operating with a diverse leadership team that has provided opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to receive exposure to the many benefits of dance.

WCDW works to: increase healthy lifestyles through physical activity and education, create a link between artistic expression and advocacy (particularly for underserved youth), help improve self-esteem and peer-to-peer support, and hone leadership skills with a focus on team-building. Our five performing companies bring artistic enrichment to schools, hospitals, senior facilities/nursing homes, festivals, and a variety of other venues where people may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience dance. Each of our different performance groups has a specific focus, inviting dancers with a variety of interests and talents. The Diane Matthews School of Dance Arts is the resident studio of WCDW, the educational outreach arm providing opportunities for dancers and the public to receive exposure to quality dance instruction.

For twenty years, the Diane Matthews School of Dance Arts and West Chester Dance Works have operated as two distinct businesses: a limited liability company and a 501(c)3 charitable nonprofit. The heart of the original vision was never lost, but operating as two distinctly unique operations certainly doubled efforts and organizational functions. However, it was when our local community had difficulty distinguishing one operation from the other i.e. "Diane Matthews Dance Works" for example, that we knew it was time for a big change and a clarification of how, organizationally, we could achieve a unified mission. A new chapter began two years ago, where our dance school officially operated as the school of WCDW. The organization's mission is now reaching a growing student body of dancers, 150 students and counting, many of whom have their sights set on joining our performing companies where they can engage in all the outreach we have to offer. Uniting the two organizations and bringing all operations under one umbrella



*Diane Matthews, Executive Director*

has allowed us to dramatically increase our scope, as well as called us to restructure some of our systems, jobs, and policies.

This organizational merger paved the way for our capacity building initiative, which spans two dance seasons: phase one having been completed in spring of 2024 where mission, vision and strategy were streamlined and strengthened, and phase two, the operational changes we are implementing for our 2024/2025 season and seeking funding to support.

This past spring, WCDW formed a focus group of various participants, parents, staff members, and community members to gather in-depth insights about their experiences with and beliefs about our organization. A resounding theme echoed by all, was that we continue to celebrate diversity and prioritize inclusivity, so much so that we could afford to include more of that language in our marketing. With this input, we clarified our vision and strengthened the wording of our mission to reflect the work we have been doing in our community.

WCDW also hired an operations consultant to help improve our newly defined organization by identifying inefficiencies, developing strategies, and implementing solutions. With her guidance, we learned that with better allocation of the workload, redefined roles, and improved usage of AI and software applications, WCDW could run more effectively. These changes are to be implemented this coming fall.

To support the demands of our now larger organization, we need to pay our increasing staff competitively. We are specifically asking for funding to support four administrative positions, one of which is entirely new, and three of which have been re-defined and filled by three different individuals. The positions include: Special Projects Manager, Performance Manager, Office Manager, and Receptionist. In having more clearly defined roles, each with one person solely dedicated to fulfilling its unique responsibilities, WCDW will be better able to: serve more students, pursue more engagements, build additional partnerships, and allow the director to focus more exclusively on executive decision-making duties.

The Special Projects Manager, our newest administrative position for WCDW, is dedicated to managing all aspects of the West Chester Dance Works Spring Concert/ Fundraiser & the studio season ending recital including but not limited to; pre-event planning and preparation, on site execution and closing events to completion. The job also includes assisting with other studio projects as availability and hours permit. This position includes hybrid work expectations, with offsite and in-person attendance as duties require and regular collaboration with the full office/administrative team.

The Performance Manager is responsible for overseeing and coordinating all aspects of performance group activities. This position requires hybrid work expectations, including in-person and on-location attendance as duties require.



*Diane Matthews, Executive Director*

The Office Manager works closely with the Director to oversee the daily operations of the studio, acting as a liaison between the executive team and other staff. This role includes managing administrative tasks, coordinating with program directors and dancers, and preparing for performances and recitals.

The Receptionist supports the Office Manager and Director in the daily operations of the studio, ensuring efficient front desk operations and assisting with seasonal activities.

A major goal has been to improve our internal communication systems, and have staff members be used in more specialized ways, reducing the strain of wearing too many hats, so to speak, and optimizing talent. With a dedicated receptionist and office manager to focus exclusively on the day-day operations, we will be able to offer more timely responses to families and more consistent communication which we anticipate to see reflected in the number of students enrolled in our school classes. This will, in turn, help build our performing company numbers as many school students join our performing groups. With a dedicated performance manager and special events manager, we will see an increase in the number of partnerships built, engagements booked, and perhaps the quality of those performances as well.

An important way we measure progress is by conducting surveys upon the conclusion of each performance/event in an effort to collect both participant and audience feedback. Ratings are given on components such as facility, costumes, music, dancing, story line, length of production, ticket prices, and total production. We review these in our post activity debriefings to gain insight into whether our vision is clear, on target, and truly represents where we are as an organization and where we need to be as a community. The information from our debriefs is used to further inform our vision and artistic decision making. With a Special Projects Manager who can exclusively focus on the details of our biggest performances of the season, we plan to see some higher ratings and larger audiences.

For further details, please see the administrative job descriptions attached, as well as their compensation rates which can be found in the “Admin Updated” tab of the attached budget entitled “WCDW Itemized Budget FY25.”

We appreciate your continued support of West Chester Dance Works. If you require any further information, please call us at (610) 692-3398.

Thank you,

Diane Matthews  
West Chester Dance Works  
315 Westtown Rd, Ste 9  
West Chester, PA 19382