

**I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET**

Date: 7/1/2024

Contact Information

Organization Name: Chester County Food Bank
Address: 650 Pennsylvania Drive, Exton, PA 19341

Phone: 610-873-6000
Website: chestercountyfoodbank.org
Year Incorporated: 2009
FEIN: 27-0887311

ED/CEO Name: Andrea Youndt
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Board Chair Name: Brad Dyer, MD
Board Chair Approval (check here): x
Primary Contact Name: Michelle Berger
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Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: We mobilize and educate the community to ensure equitable access to nutritious and familiar food.

Geographic Area Served: All of Chester County

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

We serve over 40,000 people experiencing food insecurity in Chester County.

Annual Budget \$8,440,898

84% of budget for program expenses
10% of budget for administrative expenses
6% of budget for fundraising expenses

30 Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
19 Board Volunteers
2000 of Active Non-Board Volunteers
12,000 Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Davenport Family Foundation, The RJM Foundation, The Mariposa Wish Foundation, Bentley Systems, Inc., Claneil Foundation, Inc.

Grant proposal for: General Operating

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$10,000

Proposal Summary:

Chester County Food Bank (CCFB) serves over 40,000 people through access to nutritious food and education & wellness with a community-centered approach. With a focus on long-term sustainability, we strive to not only address emergency needs but also the root causes of chronic food insecurity for households facing exceptional challenges. Our approach as a food bank is unique as we offer programming and food distribution services at zero cost to our agency partners. Each year we distribute over 4.5 million pounds of nutritious food to our partners throughout the county. Now more than ever, we see families struggling to make ends meet as a result of increasing cost of living and a lack of government resources. We are committed to addressing this gap and ensuring that we improve the health and wellbeing of the families in Chester County.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION: GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

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

Founded in 2009, Chester County Food Bank (CCFB) was established as a response to escalating hunger in the county during the recession. Over the last few years, we have seen a drastic increase in the number of households who use our food distribution services as well as their frequency of use. Due to this increase, we are committed to providing quality foods that meet nutritional and cultural needs for children and their families as most rely on the food bank as their largest source of groceries. In response to the growing need, we provide food support for immediate nutritional needs in addition to education & wellness opportunities to address the root causes of food insecurity. Despite our existence as a “young” organization, CCFB has evolved to be a leading food bank in the areas of nutrition, locally sourced foods, and education.

2. Funding request

CCFB seeks funding to support the following programs and services:

Description of key initiatives

Chester County Food Bank (CCFB) serves over 40,000 people through access to **nutritious food** and **education & wellness** with a **community**-centered and holistic approach. With a focus on long-term **sustainability**, we strive to not only address emergency needs but also the root causes of chronic food insecurity for households facing exceptional challenges in Chester County such as high cost of living, transportation barriers, and insufficient government resources. Our approach as a food bank is unique as we offer programming and food distribution services at **zero cost to our agency partners**.

Nutritious Food

Each year, we distribute **4.5+ million pounds of food and 100,000 ready-to-eat meals** prepared on-site in our commercial kitchen. We strategically procure foods that are culturally familiar, nutritious, and locally sourced, prioritizing a “food as medicine” approach. Food distribution strategies emphasize choice, accessibility, and a dignified experience every step of the way. We also offer varied food distribution channels to reach target populations such as **children, seniors, and veterans**. Examples include produce pop-up markets, summer meals for kids, backpack food packs, senior grocery boxes, and prenatal grocery boxes.

Of our total distribution, over 50% is fresh fruits and vegetables. During growing season, **80% of produce is PA grown and 20% is grown here in Chester County.** We accomplish this with local farm partnerships, on-staff farmers and volunteers, and by supporting the construction and maintenance of 45 raised bed gardens throughout the county. In addition to strengthening diverse food access points, we also work to connect residents to SNAP (food stamps) benefits and other resources.

Education & Wellness

Our programs improve food access, offer opportunities for skills-based education, and promote social support and community collaboration. These programs include:

Fresh2You Mobile Market travels throughout Chester County providing fresh foods from local farmers paired with education on healthy cooking. Fresh2You offers a variety of financial incentives known as Veggie Bucks so that the market is affordable for all.

Fruit and Vegetable Prescriptions are provided to those who screen positive for food insecurity by their healthcare providers and can be redeemed at Fresh2You or a local CSA farm share.

Eat Fresh is a series of cooking classes available in English and Spanish that emphasize whole foods, local produce, cultural traditions, and community. Each week, students take home a “CSA style” box of local produce with the items they learned about in class.

Seed to Supper is a class provided in English and Spanish that focuses on growing a successful vegetable garden at home on a budget.

Kids Cooking and Gardening programs provide hands on learning opportunities for children to practice growing and cooking delicious fresh vegetables.

Culinary Job Training provides a pathway out of poverty by helping students gain confidence and skills to begin a career in the restaurant industry through a curriculum providing hands-on culinary training, self-empowerment support, and job placements.

Community

We reach as many as possible through our diverse network of over 100 food pantries, hot meal sites, schools and child focused organizations, senior focused organizations, healthcare providers, residential facilities, and other community-based organizations. Food insecure families in Chester County experience many barriers to healthy food access, some that are not easily addressed through the traditional food pantry model making multiple food access channels essential in reaching diverse populations.

Sustainability

CCFB collaborates with our network to strengthen communities with a strategic focus on sustainability. We support our partners through capacity building and culturally adaptive solutions to ensure our county has the infrastructure to improve food security for years to come. We are committed to evolving with changing needs and use data and local research to understand the nuances of food insecurity and geographical distinctions. Additionally, the recently established county-wide **Food Alliance**, led by CCFB, is helping diverse stakeholders collaborate to address the root causes of food insecurity through a food justice approach.

• Specific needs and issues to be addressed

MIT's Living Wage calculator currently estimates that a family of four with two working adults now needs an annual income of \$140,000 to pay for the basic living costs in Chester County. In contrast, the eligibility threshold for food stamps for a family of four is significantly lower, leaving many households with incomes that fall below the living wage but above the threshold for assistance. Many families are forced to make the difficult decision to eat or pay other bills first.

• Why it is important to fund this now

Now more than ever, we see families struggling to make ends meet as a result of increasing cost of living and a lack of government resources. With the termination of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency designation in 2023, poverty relief programs such as SNAP and summer student feeding have been eliminated with the average family losing \$191 per month in benefits. This has required CCFB to fill this gap in government assistance by providing more food to the households who have been hit hardest by these changes.

• How impact and results will be demonstrated

CCFB strives to positively impact food security status, health, and wellness through access to nutritious food and educational opportunities. Collecting data and consistently communicating with our partners allows us to measure the scope of our efforts. Direct feedback with those we serve is an integral part of our planning and evaluation process as well. Our programs incorporate both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure we are providing services that are effective at alleviating hunger and show the improvement of health indicators. Using tracking software, participation counts, surveys, focus groups, testimonials, and observations we provide an in depth look at the effects of our work. Each of our programs has unique indicators to show its efficacy and uses metrics that align with our mission and strategic direction to ensure we are having the greatest impact possible.