

## 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](http://www.chescocf.org) to apply online for grants from all Community Foundation Funds.
- **Email proposals to [grants@chescocf.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.chescocf.org)

**Date** October 24, 2024

## **Contact Information**

Organization Name: Founding Forward

Address: 1601 Valley Forge Rd. Valley Forge, PA 19481

Phone: 610-933-8825

Website: [www.foundingforward.org](http://www.foundingforward.org)

Year Incorporated: 1947

FEIN: 26-1894379

ED/CEO Name: John J. Meko, Jr.

ED/CEO E-mail: [mekoj@foundingforward.org](mailto:mekoj@foundingforward.org)

Board Chair Name: Jim Dunigan

Board Chair Approval (check here):

Primary Contact Name: Lara Kennedy

Primary Contact E-mail: [kennedyL@foundingforward.org](mailto:kennedyL@foundingforward.org)

## **Organization Information:**

### **Field/s of Interest:**

Arts, Culture & Humanities

Environment/Animal Welfare

Education

Health

Human Services

Religion

### **Mission:**

Founding Forward informs and engages citizens through transformational educational experiences grounded in American history. These experiences enable students, teachers, and citizens to understand, appreciate, and practice the principles, rights, and responsibilities of American citizenship.

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

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

Founding Forward scholarships and civic education programs serve K-12 students and teachers, as well as the broader community. Over 14,000 educators from around the world have participated in our teacher graduate programs, impacting the education of over 14 million young citizens.

In FY2024:

Graduate-level teacher programs provided over 12,000 hours of content-rich education to 314 teachers.

K-12 programs served over 1,200 students.

Speaker programs and exhibits served over 4,000 community attendees.

**Annual Budget \$7,403,974.00**      **19** # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

**70 %** of budget for program expenses      **32** # of Board Volunteers

**20 %** of budget for administrative expenses      **91** # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

**10 %** of budget for fundraising expenses      **1500** # of Volunteer Hours

100 % total

### **Top 3-5 funding sources:**

Charter members (Gifts of \$500,000 or more)

Joan & Wilbert Abele, Philip & Suzanne Fisher, Harry & Louise Hill, The Holt Family Foundation, Aurora & Timothy Hughes, The PhamSquad Foundation/Stefanie & Christopher Thompson, Raynier Institute & Foundation/Michael Valucci, Christopher Topolewski

**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 - \$25,000**

**Proposal Summary: (attached)**

## II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

*Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.*

### **Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements & distinctiveness**

Founding Forward's mission is to inform and engage citizens through transformational educational experiences grounded in American history. These experiences enable students, teachers, and citizens to understand, appreciate, and practice the principles, rights and responsibilities of American citizenship.

Resulting from the merger of Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge and The Union League Legacy Foundation, Founding Forward draws upon a deep archive of resources, programmatic content, and a private 75-acre campus bordering Valley Forge National Historical Park, crucible of the American Revolution. The mission of Founding Forward is more than just teaching history; it is about equipping the current and next generation with the knowledge and tools to ensure our government remains responsive and evolves to meet the people's needs. By fostering a deep understanding of our founding and integrating comprehensive civic education, we are committed to shaping well-informed, actively engaged leaders who are ready to contribute to a more perfect union.

Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge was established by future president Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1949. The Valley Forge property houses dormitories, program and classroom buildings, and a stunning Medal of Honor Grove that honors all 3,500+ Medal of Honor recipients. Originally intended to preserve a sense of patriotism after World War II by means of a national award program for civic leadership, the organization expanded its mission in 1965 to provide high-quality history and civic education opportunities for students and educators to emphasize the freedoms enjoyed by citizens of the United States through our constitutional form of government.

The Union League of Philadelphia was founded in 1862 as a patriotic society to support the Union and the policies of President Abraham Lincoln. The Union League Legacy Foundation was established to care for the historic collections, preserve the Union League House, provide civic education programs, curate interpretive and informative exhibits, grant scholarships for post-secondary education, present the Good Citizenship Award, and host multiple lecture series. Through historic preservation, education, and scholarship, the Legacy Foundation cultivates a more educated, engaged, and responsible citizenry.

Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge and The Union League Legacy Foundation merged effective January 1, 2024. This historic merger was developed through a decades-long partnership between the two organizations. Together as Founding Forward, the organization continues to educate Americans about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and honor acts of civic virtue. As a non-partisan organization, Founding Forward is dedicated to encouraging young people and adults to become a more informed and engaged electorate.

**Overall Goals and Objectives** - Founding Forward will leverage the deep connections of nationwide partnerships to attract a large and diverse group of teachers and students to its programs. The expansion of these programs and the marketing of them to underserved populations is a priority. As Founding Forward continues to broaden its reach, all the programs will grow, including student and teacher residential programs, Good Citizen Day, scholarship programs, lecture programs, care and use of the historic collections, and more.

Founding Forward aims to become a national leader in transformational civic education, establish Philadelphia and Valley Forge as a center for civic education and engagement, and implement a national strategy that promotes unifying and shared experiences in civic education.

### **Funding request- Description of key initiatives**

**Target Audience** - Founding Forward scholarships and residential civic education programs primarily serve K-12 students and teachers nation-wide. We utilize our historic collections, speaker series and awards to facilitate outreach to the broader public outside of the traditional academic environment.

**Programs & Impact**

- ***Graduate/Professional Development Programs for Educators***
  - Over 14,000 educators from around the world have participated in Founding Forward programs.
    - In 2024, graduate-level teacher programs provided over 12,000 hours of content-rich education. Beyond the pedagogical “how” that many professional development courses focus on, we emphasize the “what”-recognizing that a deeper understanding of the founding ideals begins with rich scholarly content.
  - Results of teacher participants surveyed indicate:
    - 98.6% of participants agree that student learning in their classroom was positively affected by their participation in summer graduate programs.
    - 74.83% of participants said that their participation in summer graduate programs renewed their passion for teaching.
    - Over 90% of participating teachers acknowledge the value of these programs by personally donating their registration deposits to seed scholarships for the next year. In 2024, this fund raised over \$44,000 for teacher professional development scholarships.
- ***Civic Education Programs for Students***
  - ***Spirit of America:*** A transformative four-day residential program that engages high school students in grades 9-12 from across the country with the first principles of freedom.
  - ***Service Learning in Public Policy:*** An advanced leadership workshop for high school students eager to become catalysts for change.
  - ***History Encounters:*** A multi-day curriculum enhancing journey beyond the classroom for elementary and middle school students.
  - ***Good Citizen Day:*** A day-long program for high school students who demonstrate the qualities of a responsible American citizen.
  - ***Liberty Weekend:*** An immersive program for Good Citizenship awardees, where students delve into ideas about freedom and free enterprise.
- ***Scholarships:*** College scholarships and additional educational opportunities given to students from the Greater Philadelphia region.
- ***Civic Engagement Initiatives for the broader public***
  - ***Public Affairs Lectures:*** Programs focus on current policy and politics. Programs have a broad breadth and depth and can include domestic and international topics.
  - ***Jack M. Templeton Liberty Series:*** Lecture programs about the ideas of philosophy and liberty. These include topics focused on history, philosophy, economics, and the rule of law.
  - ***Civil War Round Table:*** Lecture programs about the United States Civil War. This includes the political, social and military aspects of the war.
  - ***Library Hour:*** Humanities-based lectures on a variety of topics including history, art, architecture, science and travel. These programs often have a related book.
- ***Historic Collections and Exhibits***
  - Collections include archives, art, books, manuscripts and objects, and are available for research to staff, members, scholars, and for use to other institutions.
  - Exhibitions focus on history and topics related to the mission and values of Founding Forward.

### **Specific needs & issues to be addressed**

Teacher programs have been permanently relocated from the Valley Forge campus to the Union League's nearby Liberty Hill property. This transition takes advantage of the amenities available for adult participants and allows for the Valley Forge campus to be used in the summer months for additional student programs.

Founding Forward's residential student programs will continue to be held on the Valley Forge campus. Built in the 1960s, the Valley Forge campus buildings need significant investment. Preliminary estimates show at least \$25 million will be needed for capital improvements in the next 5-10 years. In the first half of 2024 we have replaced roofs on six of seven buildings on campus, as well as windows in the residential buildings. Interior renovations to offices, classrooms, and dorms have also begun.

Over the next five years, major initiatives will take place to create and implement summer student programming, as well as expand existing teacher and student programming. These new initiatives require a great deal of strategic planning and will demand increased administrative staff capacity.

### **Why it is important to fund this now**

Only 24% of American 8th graders performed at or above "proficient" on the nation's civic education test in 2018, and fewer than 6% of American adults could name all five fundamental freedoms protected by the First Amendment in the 2022 Annenberg Constitution Day Civics Survey.

We believe that part of the cause of the decline in civic discourse is the disconnect that occurs when we don't engage with each other directly, face to face. Founding Forward is committed to immersive, in-person programming that brings a wide diversity of participants from all over the country together in the places where history happened. There is no learning experience more powerful than walking in the footsteps of the very people you are studying.

Just as the nation holds a debt of gratitude to those who forged it, Founding Forward believes there is also a profound moral obligation to those who will one day take in their hands the torch of liberty. Young Americans who are taught to cherish the principles of the nation's founding will be more determined and prepared to defend and advance freedom.

### **How impact & results will be demonstrated**

Success of capital expenditures will be evaluated based on timely completion of various projects, and the increased capacity they will provide for campus occupancy during programs.

Student programs served 1,400 students last year and are on track to serve 1,800 this coming year. Founding Forward's strategic plan outlines a path for growth that charts a course to serving 7,200 students annually (the current full capacity of campus) by 2027.

Teacher programs are already poised to expand; from 6 programs in summer 2023, to 7 programs in summer 2024, and plans in place to offer 9 programs in summer 2025. As the number of teacher attendees increases, the number of students impacted multiplies exponentially. The average educator teaches 100 students per year, or 3,000 students over the course of their entire career. With a 20% increase in the capacity of teacher programs each year over the next five years, Founding Forward will impact the lives of over 500,000 students annually by 2030.