

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**.

- 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

Date: 4/06/2025

Contact Information

Organization Name: Tick Tock Early Learning Center
Address: 1694 Baltimore Pike
Phone: 610-268-8134
Website: ticktockelc.org
Year Incorporated: 1964
FEIN: 23-1646698

ED/CEO Name: Susan Czerwin
ED/CEO E-mail: susan@ticktockelc.org
Board Chair Name: Patrick Manahan
Board Chair Approval (check here): ☒
Primary Contact Name: Susan Czerwin
Primary Contact E-mail: susan@ticktockelc.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission:

Tick Tock Early Learning Center prepares children from working families for school and life in a loving environment at affordable rates.

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

Tick Tock ELC serves families living and/or working in Southern Chester County, primarily in the Kennett, Avon Grove, Oxford, and Unionville-Chadds Ford School Districts.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

Tick Tock ELC enrolls children ages 12-months through fifth grade. Last year, 133 children of 162 working parents were served, making up 98 families (82% Hispanic, 3% Black, and 15% Caucasian). Of families enrolled, 94% earned less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, with 55% earning less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG).

Annual Budget \$1,416,000

<u>83</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>23</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>15</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>11</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>2%</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>25</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>100</u> % total	<u>2500</u> # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources:

1. Child Care Works (CCW) – Federal and state-funded child care subsidy program (47% of income).
2. Client Tuition – Service fees for children enrolled in our program (21% of income).
3. Grants & Fundraisers – Annual grants and fundraisers (20% of income).
4. Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) – Government-funded program (5% of income).

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: \$7,500

Proposal Summary: Tick Tock ELC requests funding to support working families and their young children. Funds raised are essential to Tick Tock's income-based tuition model, making child care affordable and accessible for those who need it most.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

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

Tick Tock Early Learning Center was founded as a nonprofit organization in 1964 by a group of women who recognized a need in their community – a need for a safe, reliable, and affordable child care and preschool for the children of working parents in Southern Chester County. Over the past 61 years, the agency has remained in the same building with the same mission, growing from one classroom serving seven children to six full-time classrooms and a school-age program with a total capacity to serve up to 95 children on any given school day.

Operating from 7 am to 6 pm, Monday through Friday, Tick Tock serves students aged 12 months through 5 years in our full-time toddler and preschool program. Our Kindergarten through fifth-grade students attend part-time during the school year in our before-and-after school program and full-time during our 11-week summer camp. Tick Tock has a decades-long reputation as an exceptional child care center because of both our affordable rates and the quality of our program. Our coveted STAR-4 rating is more than simply policies and curriculum – it is an honor made possible by our incredible teaching professionals who provide a top-notch educational experience for our children.

Using a state-approved curriculum to guide daily lesson plans delivered in a nurturing, stimulating, and hands-on learning environment, we meet our primary goal of empowering each student to learn and grow. Daily activities include literacy, math, science, art, music, movement, and imaginative play. Our program enthusiastically celebrates diversity, promotes mutual respect, and is designed to foster growth across all the domains of child development, including cognitive, physical, social-emotional, linguistic, and gross and fine motor skills. To measure student growth, we use a variety of assessment tools throughout the year, such as the widely accepted Ages and Stages Questionnaires and Teaching Strategies Gold.

Understanding the critical role that proper nutrition plays in a child's ability to learn and grow, Tick Tock provides a freshly prepared breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack to all students in our care at no additional cost. By complying with the requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program, we ensure all elements of a healthy diet are served with each meal. We are committed to providing our young learners with fresh ingredients, as opposed to pre-packaged meals, and intentionally exposing them to a wide variety of foods. While the cost of our food program exceeds the government reimbursement each year, we feel it's a critical component to our program due to the number of families experiencing food insecurity.

Tick Tock believes in the whole-child approach to early childhood education and care. A child's stability at home directly impacts their likelihood of success in school. Tick Tock employs a full-

time Family Services Director who assists our families in navigating complicated enrollment processes for services like Early Intervention, Child Care Works, SNAP, and public school enrollment. During times of crisis, families are referred to area support services such as emergency housing, healthcare, mental health resources, food cupboards, and more.

2. Funding request

Description of key initiatives

Tick Tock is committed to keeping our program affordable. Our tuition rates are determined on a sliding scale based on family size and annual household income, making high-quality, educational child care within reach of hard-working families in Southern Chester County. Dubbed as the “workforce behind the workforce,” child care is critical to a parent’s ability to maintain employment while simultaneously providing their children with the tools needed for a healthy and successful future. Often, the lack of affordable, safe, and reliable child care is the only thing preventing a parent from obtaining, keeping, or excelling at a job.

The rising cost of child care nationwide has led to a systemic inequality in education and economic opportunity. Tick Tock aims to remove the financial barrier to quality child care by offering discounted tuition to working families whose income qualifies for as much as 70% off our cost of care. Our services aim to reduce the opportunity gap by allowing parents to maintain their position in the workforce, promoting financial stability in the family, and equity in education for our young learners.

Specific needs & issues to be addressed

It is expensive to live in Chester County and even more so to raise children in Chester County. MIT’s 2025 Living Wage Calculator shows a family of four living in Chester County needs an annual income of \$156,000 to meet their family’s basic needs and cites the average cost of child care in Chester County as \$22,000 per year. A family of four must have an income of less than \$62,400 to qualify for the Child Care Works – a government-funded program that limits child care costs to 7% of a family’s income and reimburses the remaining amount to the program. Currently, 51% of families enrolled at Tick Tock qualify for Child Care Works, making child care affordable for families earning less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The remaining 49% of our families rely on our income-based tuition model to afford quality child care for their young children.

Tick Tock’s sliding scale supports families who earn too much to qualify for Child Care Works yet too little to afford the true cost of high-quality child care and overall cost of living in our community. Every year, Tick Tock must raise approximately \$275,000 to offset tuition discounts provided to our families. Funds raised through grants and annual fundraising events help us make up the difference.

Why it is important to fund this now

Simply put, quality child care equals quality early childhood education. During the first five years, a child's brain is at its most flexible, making that a critical period for learning and growth. More than 1 million new neural connections are formed every second in the first few years of life (source: Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University). Access to early learning lays the foundation for school readiness by building the cognitive and social skills children need to do well in school and life, including language, attentiveness, persistence, kindness, and self-regulation. When a child enters kindergarten ready for school, there is a 92% chance they will master basic skills by age 11, compared with a 45% chance for children who are not in school (source: First Five Years Fund). Children who receive high-quality early childhood education are more likely to earn higher wages, live healthier lives, avoid incarceration, raise strong families, and contribute to society. The benefits of high-quality programs from birth through age five do not end with one child but instead extend to their entire family, now and in the years to come. Research by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman shows that every \$1 invested in a quality early childhood program can yield returns of up to \$16.

Ensuring families have access to affordable, reliable care and early learning will result in a more efficient and productive workforce. A 2024 study showed 27 million Americans (16% of the U.S. workforce) rely on child care to go to work, but the steep rise in cost of quality care has created insurmountable challenges for many workers (source: First Five Years Fund). Here in Southern Chester County, Tick Tock ELC aims to take that obstacle away.

How impact & results will be demonstrated

Success is specific to each individual child and family in our care. To ensure our children are learning and growing across all the domains of child development, all toddler and preschool students enrolled at Tick Tock are observed after their initial 45 days in our program, using the Ages and Stages assessment, and every six months thereafter. Results are reviewed at each collection point, specifically looking for indicators of regression, plateaus, and spikes. Parents whose children have been identified with certain developmental lags are provided with assistance in pursuing further services for their child.

Our income-based tuition scale is designed to make quality child care affordable to families who earn less than what is required to pay for basic needs in Chester County. To ensure our services support working families, all parents are required to have proof of employment (or full-time enrollment in school) every six months.

Tick Tock provides the children and families enrolled with education, food, health, and financial independence. Research has proven that by investing in our community's basic human needs, we are investing in the overall health of our local economy.

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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WHAT IS CAPACITY BUILDING?

Capacity building helps bring a nonprofit to the next level of operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational maturity, in order to more effectively & efficiently fulfill its mission.

Capacity building may include (but is not limited to) projects which address:

- **MISSION, VISION & STRATEGY**
Organizational Assessment - Strategic Planning - Financial Planning
- **GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP**
Board Development - Executive Transition/Succession Planning - Leadership Development - Staff Training & Professional Development
- **PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS**
Coalition Building – Collaboration - Mergers & Acquisitions - Strategic Restructuring
- **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING**
Major Gift Donor Identification, Cultivation, Development & Stewardship - Development Campaigns (Annual, Capital, Planned Giving) - Earned Income Development - Social Enterprise Feasibility & Development - Marketing, Branding & Communications
- **TECHNOLOGY & OPERATIONS**
Business Continuity Planning - Financial Management - Human Resources - Volunteer Management - Industry Certification - Risk Management - Technology Improvements