

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

Date **05/09/25**

Contact Information

Organization Name: Westside Community Center

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Website: thewestsidecc.org

Year Incorporated: 2012

FEIN: 46-0764528

Primary Contact E-mail: Lindsay@thewestsidecc.org

ED/CEO Name: Ryan Enns

ED/CEO E-mail: Ryan@thewestsidecc.org

Board Chair Name: Jeremy Vanderslice

Board Chair Approval (check here): ☒

Primary Contact Name: Lindsay Hall

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

☐ Arts, Culture & Humanities

☐ Environment/Animal Welfare

☒ Education

☒ Health

☒ Human Services

☒ Religion

Mission:

Our mission at the Westside is to empower families and youth academically, socially and spiritually, inspiring them to take on leadership roles in their community.

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

West Chester, PA (West Chester Area School District)

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

The Westside Community Center (The Westside) serves over 115 middle and high school youth in our After School Program, Skate Spot Program, Summer Camps, and Mentorship Programs. All of the students we serve are enrolled in the West Chester Area School District. Many students live in poverty or come from single-parent households. Many students have experienced transient housing conditions, homelessness, abuse, food-insecurity, parents addicted to drugs/alcohol, are first or second generation immigrants and are struggling academically. Additionally, our Community Garden made up of 28 garden beds serves local families of all ages as we disperse fresh produce to those in need. Additionally, the Westside Community Center serves the local immigrant population through our WILS program, making low-cost immigration services accessible to immigrants in Chester County. Since opening in 2023, we have served over 75 local immigrants. Overall, the Westside serves about 500 people annually.

Annual Budget \$	\$514,306.82	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	# of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> 80	% of budget for program expenses	<input type="checkbox"/> 9		# of Board Volunteers
<input type="checkbox"/> 8	% of budget for administrative expenses	<input type="checkbox"/> 35		# of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<input type="checkbox"/> 12	% of budget for fundraising expenses	<input type="checkbox"/> 1,800		# of Volunteer Hours
100	% total			

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Vanguard Charitable (David and Rebecca Campbell), The Pilgrim Foundation, Schwab Charitable (Peter Watkins), The Gordon Charter Foundation, The Justamere Foundation

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building ___ or General Operating __X__?

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:

The Westside Community Center respectfully requests \$7,500 to support our General Operating Budget.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

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

In 2012, the Westside Community Center was founded with the mission of empowering families and youth in the West Chester area by helping them to develop academically, socially and spiritually. Ultimately, as individuals experience growth in these areas, our goal is that they will be inspired to become positive role models and leaders in the community.

In order to accomplish our mission, The Westside initially ran three distinct programs to serve community needs—The After School Program, The Community Garden and The Skate Spot. The Community Garden and Skate Spot were, and are still, open to all and the After School Program continues to serve middle and high school students in the West Chester Area School District. Over the past few years, we expanded our programming by adding a number of programs targeting the interests and needs of youth, like athletics, art, science, career paths, and spiritual development. Furthermore, in the past couple years, the Westside Community Center launched two new crucial programs: Westside Immigration Legal Services and the Westside Coffee Collective.

One recent key achievement is that we have 115 students registered for the After School Program for the 2024-2025 school year, more students than any year past. Of these 115 students, 98% report feeling safe and supported at the Westside, 98% have avoided skipping/dropping out of school since attending the Westside, 98% have increased academic motivation since attending the Westside, and 94% believe their lives have purpose. Furthermore, we have now assisted 75 immigrants with affordable legal services since the opening of Westside Immigration Legal Services in 2023. Lastly, we are proud of our unique approach to STEM learning through coffee roasting with the Westside Coffee Collective. By combining academic rigor with hands-on experiences in the world of coffee, students will be better equipped for future challenges.

Our distinctiveness is primarily in how our staff and volunteers make an impact through relationships. We build relationships by being present with and living among our community. We are intentional about knowing our neighbors, going to where students hang out, and even learning the language of those we desire to reach. We train our staff and volunteers to be caring and supportive, remaining consistent and faithful as they show up in the lives of students and their families. A primary example of this is how our staff and volunteers are invited to and attend important life events of the people we serve, like graduation parties, quinceañeras, sports games, and music performances. One of our staff members was even asked to be one of the chambelanes in a student's quinceañera recently. Moreover, our programs are drop-in programs, and new students come as the word about the Westside spreads. Students can come as they please free of charge. We have even provided assistance to a few of our students' mothers in getting cleaning business started, and we are now providing immigration legal services to the parents of our students. The youth and families we serve stick around primarily because of trusted relationships they have with staff and volunteers, secondary to the services they receive.

Some of our important goals at the Westside include:

- 1) Offer educational opportunities for community youth: Whether through the After School Program, STEM Programs, miscellaneous electives, summer camps, or our career/college prep program (R.A.D.), one of our primary goals remains the educational success of West Chester youth. We hope to provide academic tutoring, help individuals develop new skills, and assist students on personal development.
- 2) Facilitate access to resources for community members: Our goal is to be a center that provides essential resources to our community through immigration legal services, The Community Garden, which provides accessible, fresh produce, and by serving meals to students daily at our After School Program, addressing the issue of food insecurity.
- 3) Provide social and emotional support to youth and families: One of our top values at the Westside is relationships. In an age when people are isolated and lonely, our goal is to provide a safe space where any type of person can come to gather, meet new friends, and feel less alone. We want to build a sense of community that people can belong to and make an impact through relationships.

2. Funding request

Description of key initiatives:

The Westside Community Center provides services to our community with many, various programs, but below are descriptions of our key initiatives at the Westside:

After-School Program: The after-school programs and electives at Westside Community Center are at the heart of its mission to reach at-risk youth. These programs provide a structured environment where youth can engage in productive activities away from potential negative influences. The Center offers mentorship and tutoring, giving students access to academic support and positive role models, and ensures every student has access to a meal during out-of-school hours. The programs create an atmosphere where young people can build confidence, develop social skills, and improve their academic

performance.

Reimagining Academic Dreams (R.A.D.): R.A.D. aims to provide an outlet for students (Juniors and Seniors) of the West Chester Community to be exposed to and prepared for college, apprenticeship, or the workforce through relational connections. We want to challenge students to make long-term goals for their future professions. We provide students with assistance on things like resumes, interviews, and FAFSA.

Skate Spot: One of the most unique aspects of the Center's outreach is its skate spot—a dedicated space for skateboarding that serves as both a recreational area and a community-building tool. Skateboarding offers a fun, active outlet for self-expression, promoting physical fitness while teaching perseverance, balance, and resilience. The Skate Spot attracts youth and young adults who might not engage in traditional sports or educational programs, creating a community space where they can connect with peers in a supportive environment, enjoy a grilled meal, and share in the sport they love.

STEM Programming: Bike Build & Coffee Roasting: The Westside Community Center goes beyond the standard curriculum with its hands-on STEM programming, which includes innovative activities like bike building and coffee roasting. The Bike Build program teaches students mechanical and engineering skills, as they work to construct and repair bicycles. This experience not only offers a tangible connection to STEM ideas but also instills practical life skills such as problem solving and teamwork. Students who participate in this program often gain a sense of pride and accomplishment when they complete their builds. Similarly, the coffee roasting component introduces students to the science and business of coffee production. By learning about the chemistry of roasting beans, as well as the economics of coffee as a global commodity, youth are exposed to a unique blend of STEM and entrepreneurial thinking. Both programs offer a hands-on, experiential approach to learning that makes STEM accessible and exciting for students who might not excel in traditional academic settings.

Westside Immigration Legal Services (WILS): WILS was created to assist local immigrants in Chester County with affordable immigration legal services. Westside's immigration program is legally recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice and is staffed by a fully accredited representative. We assist immigrants with various applications, educate immigrants on their rights and what benefits may be available to them. We mainly focus on cases related to Family-Based Immigration, Humanitarian Protections, such as U and T Visas, and Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS).

• Specific needs & issues to be addressed

One main issue the Westside will use grant funding to address is unaffordable and inaccessible legal services for local immigrants. According to the Migration Policy Institute (2024), Chester County has the 6th highest immigrant population across Pennsylvania, forming a group of people who are underrepresented in the community but overrepresented in Westside programs. Regardless of overrepresentation, Chester County is one of the wealthiest counties in Pennsylvania. The poverty rate in Chester County is 6.1% (Commission, 2023). Although the rate may seem low compared to the national average, people who already cannot afford food and rent, struggle to allocate resources to the pursuit of citizenship. The aforementioned immigrant community is disproportionately low-income, and the high price of legal services deters families from pursuing a path to residential status. While having an attorney present is not a requirement, “existing scholarship finds having an attorney in immigration legal proceedings increases the chances of a favorable outcome” (Yu, 2023). Westside provides low-cost, confidential, and quality immigration services to immigrants in Chester County. “Noncitizens seeking to make sense of US immigration systems encounter a labyrinth of information and deception” (Pedroza, 2022). The program focuses on building close interpersonal relationships with the community they serve in an often intimidating and impersonal landscape. Because of the personal advantage Westside can offer the immigrant population, the center must be able to supply its own services. However, the current volunteer basis the program operates through limits the ability to continue expanding assistance to the immigrant community of Chester County. Only one charitable legal professional exists in the United States for every 1,413 undocumented immigrants (Kerwin & Millet, 2022). Large disparities result in what are known as legal capacity deserts. Families and people who may require assistance navigating the complex legal system do not have access to immigration resources. According to Salmón and Haas (2024), two immigration attorneys, individuals can expect to pay anywhere between \$1500 to more than \$5000 for legal services. The costs often add to the inaccessibility of the services. The Westside Community Center is committed to providing legal services at an affordable price for immigrants through staff and volunteers that can be trusted.

Furthermore, West Chester, PA is a beautiful town; but as previously mentioned, within it lie pockets of poverty often masked by the fancy town centers, parks and restaurants. The Westside is in its 12th year of serving disadvantaged youth in West Chester. Despite being located in one of the wealthiest counties in the nation, 27% of West Chester residents live below the poverty line (double the national average of 13.1%). The majority of the youth served by The Westside live within walking distance of The Westside building. Within 2 blocks of our buildings are two section 8 housing communities, and four homeless shelters are within a 5-10 block radius. Students served by The Westside are low-income, at-risk youth. The majority of students are minority youth and living in single parent homes. Additionally, many have experienced trauma (transient

housing, homelessness, abuse, domestic violence, food insecurity), are English Language Learners, first and second-generation immigrants, and are struggling academically. Over 36% will be the first in their families to graduate high school and 68% will be the first in their families to go to college. As a result, our students lack the motivation and guidance needed to reach their potential. Rising costs of living in our community requires many of our students' parents to work 2-3 jobs to provide for their family. Consequently, many of our students are left home alone and unsupervised in the out-of-school hours and many will not be fed until late in the evening (if at all). Research confirms that the hours of 3-6PM are, "the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and sex" and that hours spent alone afterschool are, "lost opportunities to help students grow and develop the skills and competencies to make positive life decisions that can lead to their future success" (After School Alliance). The Westside seeks to prevent these outcomes by providing a safe and supportive environment during the critical out-of-school hours and providing a variety of academic supports, leadership development, recreational activities, and a guaranteed meal. The Westside is committed to serving the community in this manner because we know that there is a need for positive educational and recreational opportunities to improve the health and well being of youth and families in West Chester. We want to see the needs of our students met so they stay in school, graduate, and set goals for post-secondary education/employment.

• Why it is important to fund this now

Westside Immigration Legal Services (WILS) was created to fill a need in our community - the provision of affordable immigration legal services. This need has only grown, especially as administrations and immigration laws change. People who may not have been as concerned about their immigration status now want to know their options and what they need to do to keep themselves and their families safe. We have been doing our best to meet the demand for our services, but it is getting more difficult to manage the growing number of requests for assistance with only one full-time staff member. Having additional financial support would help us to bring on a part-time staff member and could provide access to translation and interpretation services, all of which would help reduce the burden on our sole staff member. It would also allow us to provide assistance, advice, and/or complete immigration applications for additional community members.

Additionally, the current economic state of our country has put a huge financial burden on many local families. As parents are working more jobs and longer hours to make ends meet, they are often not present to provide their children with the academic support they need. Westside's staff and volunteers step in the gap for parents to support youth academically and emotionally. Adolescents today are also dealing with astronomical levels of stress, loneliness, and a lack of connection due to high technology use. Organizations like the Westside Community Center are crucial to help today's youth, especially at-risk demographics that are underserved, to have a sense of belonging and security.

• How impact & results will be demonstrated

We largely measure impact through the depth and width of relationships we have with people in the community, whether that person is a student, a community member, a parent, a donor, a staff person, or a volunteer. Westside's impact is demonstrated through the growth and life transformation we observe in the people we serve. Recent quotes from Westside students include:

- "It has helped me recover from depression."
- "Westside makes me have more confidence."
- "My grades are improving a lot."
- "I turn my work in on time."
- "Westside helped me understand what really matters."
- "The volunteers make me feel secure and comfortable."
- "It helps me believe more in God."
- "It helps me to know when to avoid bad decisions."
- "I now have more friends."

Additionally, The Westside administers post program surveys to students served by our organization to assess different categories of progress such as social, behavior, academic, and leadership. In terms of helping our youth to thrive in education, we also work with the schools to track student's academic performance and graduation rates. Our staff meets on a regular basis to identify program challenges and successes as well as individual students' needs and accomplishments so we can continuously revise and adapt our program as needed to best serve the community.

Westside Immigration Legal Services measures its effectiveness by the number of clients who report satisfaction, the number of applications positively adjudicated, and an overall increase in the number of individuals served.