

## GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

- We **connect people who care with causes that matter, so their philanthropy makes a difference now & forever.**
- We are **a collection of Field of Interest & Donor Advised Funds** with **@\$3.5M 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 9/15)

- ◇ For eligibility in this grant program, nonprofits must be **located in & serve Chester County.** NPO's with budgets of \$500,000 or less are given preference.
- ◇ The goal of capacity building grantmaking is to **strengthen the effectiveness of NPO's serving the Chester County region,** in areas including:
  - Mission, Vision & Strategy
  - Governance & Leadership
  - Partnerships & Collaborations
  - Operations & Technology
  - Fundraising, Development & Marketing
- ◇ Proposals must be submitted by **September 15** to be 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)-698-8211** 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 07/01/2025**

### **Contact Information**

Organization Name: Chester County Night School (DBA Chester County Lifelong Learning)

Address:

101 East Gay St.

West Chester, PA 19380

Phone: 610-692-1964

Website: [chestercountynightschool.org](http://chestercountynightschool.org)

Year Founded: 1955

FEIN: 23-6278321

ED/CEO Leslie Heisman

ED/CEO E-mail: [Leslie@chestercountynightschool.org](mailto:Leslie@chestercountynightschool.org)

Board Chair Name: Jolene Borgese

Board Chair Approval (check here): x

☐

Primary Contact Name: Jolene Borgese

Primary Contact E-mail: [Borgese527@gmail.com](mailto:Borgese527@gmail.com)

### **Organization Information:**

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

☐ Arts, Culture & Humanities

☐ Environment/Animal Welfare

☒ Education

☐ Health

☐ Human Services

☐ Religion

**Mission:** Chester County Night School (CCNS) is dedicated to building a strong community by offering lifelong learning experiences and social interaction through education, cultural and recreational opportunities to people of all ages and backgrounds

**Geographic Area Served :** CCNS serves all of Chester County – our catalog is distributed to 150,,000 Chester County residents twice a year.

**Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:** CCNS serves all ages, genders, races, and economic diversities. Our core program is geared towards adults 18+, and demographic studies have shown that our largest number of students are in the 45 and older range group. Our children's Summer orchestra camp serves upper elementary and middle school students. We offer 250 classes each fall and spring semester, and 50 classes each winter and summer semester.

Approximately 5,000 adults and children attend CCLL classes annually,

**Annual Budget** \$367,000

55% of budget for program expenses

40% of budget for administrative expenses

5% of budget for fundraising expenses

1 Full-Time Paid Staff

4 Part-Time Paid Staff

9 Board Volunteers

3 Active Non-Board Volunteers

30 Volunteer Hours per week

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

- Tuition from students who take our classes
- Donations
- Beacham Trust distributed quarterly (\$13,000/ year)
- Fundraising

**Is this grant proposal for:** Capacity Building \_\_\_\_ or General Operating x

**Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation:** \$75,000.00 or at donor discretion

### **Proposal Summary:**

Chester County Night School (DBA Chester County Lifelong Learning CCLL) will celebrate 70 years of service to the community in September, 2025. The brainstorm of the late Mr. and Mrs. Mitman and several friends, chatting around their kitchen table, the first 17 classes offered included Typing, Ceramics, Sewing, and Spanish, to name a few. Today, Chester County Lifelong Learning offers over 500 classes during spring and fall semesters plus winter and summer sessions of approximately 50 classes. The classes CCLL offer now reflect the changing world and include computer skills, many languages, and enrichment classes for aspiring artists, and writers. With the growth of the organization, CCLL has encountered financial burdens which far exceed those in 1955. The organization has weathered the ebb and flow of the economy over the years, most notably, the effects of the Covid Pandemic. Thankfully, CCLL was able to resume operation after the pandemic, but recovering from the two year shut down has brought a new set of challenges. CCLL battles sustainability due to the increase in our operating costs.

### **SPECIFIC NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED**

Chester County Lifelong Learning operates solely on tuition revenue. In this economy, it is imperative that CCLL continues to function without impacting higher costs to our students. The increase costs of creating, printing, and mailing catalogs and the increase in credit card processing fees threaten the sustainability of CCLL. We constantly review ways to reduce spending: for the first time in 25 years we no longer have an office, we have reduced the number of courses which reduces the size and cost of our catalog, and we now rely on volunteers for jobs that were once paid positions.

Our students identify CCLL by our bi-yearly catalog of courses and events. The cost of the catalog continues to rise each semester for its creation, printing, and mailing. The creation and design of two catalogs costs \$40,000 yearly. We print 225,000 catalogs each year at a cost of \$30,000. In order to be fiscally responsible, we have reduced the physical size of the catalog, used less expensive paper, and reduced the number of courses advertised. The outlay for mailing depends upon the number of catalogs and the zip codes we mail to, as well as the postage increases by the postal department. In the last five years, the yearly expense to mail the catalog has increased from approximately \$18,000 to \$25,000. We fear the cost for paper to print our catalog, which comes from Canada, as well as the cost of postage will continue to rise. The catalog, a staple of CCNS, continues to excite, motivate, and persuade students to register for and attend our classes and events.

We have been accepting credit cards for payment since 1999 in order to make registration more convenient for our students. 96% of our students register for classes and events using their credit cards. The processing fees have increased from 1% to 3.5%. CCLL pays \$10,000+ in merchant processing fees annually. We use ACEware as our on-line registration platform at a cost of \$8,000 annually. This platform insures safe and reliable registration for our students.

The funding we are requesting would help CCNS to continue to reconnect people through the common goal of learning together regardless of a person's age, gender, or economic standing. Learning is social, and interaction with other people is vital to re-energizing oneself- something that is desperately needed

during these challenging times. CCNS builds habits of continued learning for all people. Whether we are in the workforce, or not, we must continue to learn in order to grow.

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

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

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

#### **HISTORY:**

Chester County Night School (DBA Chester County Lifelong Learning CCLL) is a 501c (3) non-profit community education organization established in 1955. Currently we offer classes in the West Chester and Downingtown School Districts, as well as over 70 off-site locations. The organization has NEVER received financial support from any school districts we serve. We have one full time staff member, four part time staff members, and nine volunteer Board members. We are members of two national organizations: LERN (Learning Resource Network) which provides information and resources to providers of life-long learning programs, and ACEWARE, a student/instructor data base and registration system for continuing education programs.

#### **KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:**

CCLL was honored to receive the Community Achievement Award from the Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce in 2018 in recognition of exemplary service to the West Chester community. In addition, we were recognized by 100 Women Who Care and Benchmark Federal Credit Union to show their community support.

CCLL was the FIRST community education organization in the nation to reach out to LERN recommending they develop a Covid plan of action. LERN incorporated many of our strategies into their overall national plan for community education, recreation and college adult education programs. Quoted on their website: "We are grateful to Chester County Lifelong Learning who was the first to recognize the urgency of this problem. Their initial concerns were instrumental in LERN forming a strategic plan to help our members with this crisis."

#### **GOALS**

- Create new and exciting courses which will enable our students to be more successful
- Increase social media presence and brand recognition
- Initiate concise plans and objectives for fundraising projects

### **2. Funding request:**

#### **Description of Key Initiatives:**

- To support and address the needs of life-long learners in Chester County through courses and experiences
- To establish financial sustainability

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

Sustainability is the key to any non-profit organization. CCLL is supported by student tuition, small donations, and a small Beacham Trust. Operational costs threaten our sustainability after 70 years in operation. This grant would help to support financial sustainability by :

- Helping to defray the cost of creating, printing, and mailing catalogs of courses and events to 225,000 residents in Chester County

- Marketing Chester County Lifelong Learning to the community via social media and print

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

- To insure the financial sustainability of CCLL
- To insure the continuation of CCLL

**How impact & results will be demonstrated**

- The number of students who register for the Fall 2025 classes
- The number of classes CCNS is able to offer in the Fall of 2025
- The ability for CCLL to meet all financial obligations

### 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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*Connecting people who care with causes that matter,  
so their legacies make a difference.*



## 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