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**GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES as of 10.1.25**

Direct Service Programs & General Operations

No deadline for DAF proposals.

Deadlines announced thru the year   
for Directed Funds.

Capacity Building:

Coping with Cutbacks  
No deadline.   
Proposals accepted anytime.

Reviewed 15th bi-monthly.

* Grants **focus on Chester County** causes & issues; but are not limited to Chester County.
* Charitable nonprofits working in **all fields of interest** are considered, such as:
* Arts, Culture, Heritage
* Education, Libraries
* Environment, Animals
* Health
* Human Services
* Social Justice, Civic Engagement
* **General operating** grants are encouraged.  
  Clear, succinct, compelling descriptions are appreciated: mission, aims, results & impact.
* Nonprofits with **higher GuideStar ratings**receive stronger consideration.   
  Update yours for free at [**https://www.guidestar.org/**](https://www.guidestar.org/)
* Proposalscan be submitted **anytime all year**.
* Grant decisions are made **intermittently** all year, as Fund Advisors desire.
* Grant **awards** typically range from **$2,500-$10,000.**
* Nonprofits must be **located in & primarily serve Chester County**.
* Nonprofit annual **budget** must be **$1M or less.**
* The goal of capacity building grants is to **strengthen organizational ability to effectively achieve mission and become more sustainable** over time. Priority will be given to proposals that help nonprofits shift their paradigms to cope with challenges and changes. Areas of focus include:
  + **Scenario & Contingency Planning**
  + **Financial Modeling**
  + **Partnerships, Collaborations**
  + **Merger**
  + **Closure**
  + **Resource Development, Revenue Diversification**
  + Mission, Vision, Strategy
  + Board Engagement, Leadership
  + Marketing & Communication
  + Operations
  + Technology
* Proposalscan be submitted **anytime all year**.
* Proposals are reviewed the 15th bi-monthly.
* Grant **awards** typically range from **$2,500-$10,000.**



**As you are aware, there is ongoing uncertainty around federal and state funding that significantly impacts nonprofit organizations. The Community Foundation is committed to supporting a strong and resilient sector, and we encourage all organizations to be proactive in their planning.**

**We strongly encourage every nonprofit to engage in scenario planning, examine cash flow projections and assess funding risks. We have seen nonprofits explore a variety of pathways forward, such as adapting program design, reducing or merging operations and significantly diversifying revenue streams.**

Please contact Kevin Baffa, Grant Administrator or Stephenie Stevens, Grant Officer  
at (610) 696-8211 or [grants@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org) with questions.

***Connecting people who care with causes that matter,  
 so their philanthropy makes a difference,* now & forever**.

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AI-generated content may be incorrect.***

**HOW ARE GRANT DECISIONS MADE AT THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION?**

The Chester County Community Foundation **connects people who care with causes that matter**, so philanthropy makes a difference **now & forever**.With **400+ charitable funds** housed under one umbrella, a single proposal provides multiple pathways for nonprofits to be considered for funding. Nonprofits are encouraged to submit proposals **throughout the year**. Grant funds are awarded from multiple funding pools:

**1. Grants from CCCF Donor Advised Funds (DAFs)**

* **Families and individuals** establish Donor Advised Funds—endowed charitable funds invested to provide a perpetual stream of earnings to fund nonprofit grants.
* Most DAF grants support **direct service programs and general operations.**
* DAF grant decisions are made independently by donors, sometimes with guidance from Community Foundation staff, and are awarded on a **rolling basis throughout the year.**

**2. Grants from CCCF Designated Entrusted Funds**

* CCCF Designated Entrusted Funds are stewarded by volunteer grant panels and Community Foundation staff.
* We accept **Operating & Program Grants proposals year-round**; and from time-to-time issue special, focused Calls for Proposals as new funding becomes available.
* We accept **Capacity Building Grant Proposals year-round**; and from time-to-time issue Calls for Capacity Building Proposals as new funding becomes available. Capacity building grants are intended to strengthen the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of nonprofits serving Chester County.
* Grant panels review proposals and deliberate **monthly**.

**DUE DILIGIENCE**

The Community Foundation is committed to making thoughtful, informed grantmaking decisions. To do so, our staff, donors, and grant panel volunteers:

* Review organizational and financial data via **GuideStar** ([https://www.guidestar.org](https://www.guidestar.org/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) and IRS Form 990.
* Review all submitted proposals, which are **publicly available** at [https://chescocf.org/receive/find-active-grants/](https://chescocf.org/receive/find-active-grants/?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* Conduct site visits, community research, and online research to better understand mission and impact.

Please note: In compliance with IRS regulations, applicants must be charitable, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations; funding cannot be awarded to individuals.

**TO APPLY**

* To learn more, visit [www.chescocf.org](http://www.chescocf.org)
* Proposals are only accepted electronically. The format is online at<https://chescocf.org/receive/apply-for-grants/>
* E-mail 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. Budgets and financials are important. Please include them.
* Proposals are shared electronically and on-line with Fund Advisors, Donors & Grant Panels.

Please contact Kevin Baffa, Grants Administrator or Stephenie Stevens, Grants Officer  
at (610) 696-8211 or [grants@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org) with questions.

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1. **Grant Proposal Summary Sheet**

*To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit* [*www.chescocf.org*](http://www.chescocf.org)

*This page will be shared electronically with Grant Panel Members & Fund Advisors + posted online.*

**Date**

**Contact Information**

Organization Name: ED/CEO Name:

Address: ED/CEO E-mail:

Phone: Board Chair Name:

Website: Board Chair Approval (check here):

Year Incorporated: Primary Contact Name:

FEIN: Primary Contact E-mail:

**Organization Information:**

**Field/s of Interest:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Arts, Culture, Heritage |  | Education, Library |  |  | Environment, Animals |
|  | Health |  | Human Services |  |  | Social Justice, Civic Engagement |
|  | Religion |  | If other, please describe: | | | |

**Mission:**

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

**Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served.** *(Include Chester County # &/or % served.)*

**Annual Budget** $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ % of budget for program expenses \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ # of Board Volunteers

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ % of budget for administrative expenses \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ % of budget for fundraising expenses \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ # of Volunteer Hours

*100% = total*

**Top 3-5 funding sources:**

**This grant proposal is for:** \_\_\_\_Direct Service Programs & General Operating &/or \_\_\_\_Capacity Building

**If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Contingency Planning |  | Partnerships, Collaborations |  |  | Merger, Closure |
|  | Mission, Vision, Strategy |  | Board Engagement & Leadership | |  | Marketing, Communication |
|  | Resource Development |  | Operations |  |  | Technology |
|  | If other, please describe: | | | | | |

**Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation**: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Proposal Summary:** *(a few sentences, please)*

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**II. Grant Proposal Narrative**

Provide clear, concise information in 1-3 pages. Please be brief.

**1. Nonprofit’s overall aims, key initiatives, key achievements & distinctiveness**

**2. Funding request**

* + - **What specific needs & issues are being addressed, via what programs and services?**
    - **Why is it important to fund this now?**
    - **How will results & impact be demonstrated?**
    - **Additionally, for capacity building grant proposals:**
      * **How will this capacity building initiative impact your nonprofit?**
      * **How will this impact be demonstrated?**
      * **Include a description of the expected activities; timeline & costs to implement the initiative. If external consulting services are required, include the anticipated costs & expertise of the consultants to be hired. Include external consultant proposal/s if applicable.**

**III. Attachments**

***Email this support information. If it is on your website, please provide the*** ***URL.***

1. Copy of **501 (c) (3)** federal tax-exempt letter
2. List of **Board** of Directors, with their affiliations ***URL:***
3. Most recent **annual report** ***URL:***
4. Audited or reviewed recent **financial statement** ***URL:***
5. Itemized **organizational operating budget** with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date
6. If capacity building initiative, **itemized budget** (including external consultant’s proposal, if applicable)
7. Current **strategic plan.** If your nonprofit does **not** have a current strategic plan, **explain why**.

* Visit our website to learn more at [www.chescocf.org](http://www.chescocf.org)
* Proposals are only accepted electronically**:** <https://chescocf.org/receive/apply-for-grants/>
* Email proposals to [grants@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org)
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AI-generated content may be incorrect.*CAPACITY BUILDING for NONPROFITS:** y Building:

Coping with Cutbacks

Capacity building is about empowering nonprofits to do **more good, more effectively, and for the long term.** It strengthens an organization’s ability to fulfill its mission, enhance sustainability, and better serve its community.

At its core, capacity building focuses on improving a nonprofit’s internal systems, leadership, and resources so that impact can grow and endure.

Traditionally, capacity building has included efforts such as **board and staff leadership development, strategic planning, fundraising, and technology investments** to improve operations and organizational effectiveness.

Today, however, nonprofits face a rapidly changing environment. Shifts in federal policies have resulted in rapid changes at all levels and in new directions. Nonprofits must **“meet the moment” and cope with cutbacks**— **think differently, shift paradigms and transform how we understand and interact with the world around us…adapt how we** plan, lead, fund, and collaborate.

Capacity building can play a critical role in helping nonprofits adapt and innovate. This may include **funding scenario planning, exploring new revenue models, expanding partnerships, pursuing mergers or strategic alliances,** and other adaptive strategies that strengthen long-term resilience.

Capacity building support can take many forms, tailored to each organization’s unique needs. Examples of projects that may be funded include:

* **CONTINGENCY & SCENARIO PLANNING**

Scenario Planning – Financial Modeling & Forecasting

* **Partnerships, Collaborations**

Coalition Building – Collaboration - Mergers & Acquisitions

* **MERGER, CLOSURE**

These unprecedented times may present the need for a merger or closure of your organization.   
***Contact chaya@chescocf.org to confidentially discuss*** *funding to assist in the planning or initial steps.*

* **Mission, Vision, Strategy**

Organizational Assessment - Strategic Planning – Strategic Restructuring – Coping With Cutbacks

* **BOARD ENGAGEMENT, leadership**

Board Recruitment – Board Engagement – Increasing Networks & Community Support - Leadership Development – Executive Transition & Succession Planning

* **MARKETING, COMMUNICATION**

Nonprofit Business Messaging & Storytelling – Re-branding – Marketing Planning & Re-Positioning – Crisis Communications Planning

* **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

Major Gift Donor Identification, Cultivation, Development & Stewardship - Development Campaigns (Annual, Capital, Planned Giving) - Earned Income Development - Social Enterprise Feasibility & Development

* **Technology, Operations**

Business Continuity Planning - Financial Management - Human Resources - Volunteer Management - Industry Certification - Risk Management - Technology Improvements ###