

## **CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET**

**Date:** September 10, 2025

**Contact Information:**

Organization Name: Educational Equity Alliance  
Address: 6 North Fourth Avenue, Coatesville PA 19320  
Phone: 484-354-6088  
Website: Educationalequityalliance.org  
Year Incorporated: 2009  
FEIN: #27-0399912

ED/CEO Name: Steven Wilson  
ED/CEO E-mail: [steve@educationalequityalliance.org](mailto:steve@educationalequityalliance.org)  
Board Chair Name: C.J. Witherspoon  
Board Chair Approval (check here): X  
Primary Contact Name: Steven Wilson  
Primary Contact E-mail: [steve@educationalequityalliance.org](mailto:steve@educationalequityalliance.org)

**Organization Information:**

**Field/s of Interest:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Arts, Culture & Humanities	<input type="checkbox"/> Environment/Animal Welfare	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion

**Mission: Educational Equity Alliance**

Our mission is to provide academic, emotional, and spiritual empowerment from PreK to college for the children and youth of Coatesville.

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

Our target population is Chester County with an emphasis on children and youth living in Coatesville below the federal poverty level.

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

The annual number of children and youth served is 110 children and youth, and their families through full-day preschool, after-school academic and enrichment programs, entrepreneurial programming, and summer camps. An additional 75-100 youth are served through workshops.

Coatesville has a 40% poverty rate and approximately 60% of the children in the school district qualify for free and reduced lunch. Standardized testing in the school district repeatedly shows that those students who are living below the economic poverty line perform compared to other students. On average, at the local elementary schools only 30-40% of students living below the economic poverty line are at grade level in reading by third grade, while the average for their peers above the poverty line is between 85 - 90% at grade level. The students living below the academic poverty line need additional support and resources to be at grade level and ultimately be successful in school, and the school district is currently unable to provide this support.

In addition to academic needs, Coatesville has a lack of opportunities for children and youth. A study called the Child Opportunity Index was done in 100 of America's major cities to assess the

opportunities available for children in each community. The study measured resources available for health and environment, education, and social / economic development opportunities. As part of the study, Philadelphia and the surrounding communities were researched, and the city of Coatesville, which is part of the Philadelphia region, scored in the lowest category for opportunities for children and youth. Coatesville currently does not have an operating community center or recreation department, and the public pool has been closed for years. Children and youth and their families who are living in economic poverty are in desperate need of affordable and accessible programming that will provide the academic and developmental growth that is necessary for them to be successful in school and ultimately break the cycle of poverty. Of the families living below the economic poverty line in Coatesville, more than 80% are single parent families, so there is also a significant need for safe and nurturing child-care and supplemental programming so that single parents can work and pursue their own academic goals. Ensuring that foundational skills (both academic and social) are obtained at a young age greatly increases the likelihood that our students will progress in their education with the skills needed to succeed. To ensure students continue to progress, the programs we launch provide a continuous service, guiding and supporting students along their educational path from preschool through twelfth grade.

**Annual Budget** \$453,795.

88 % of budget for program expenses

08 % of budget for administrative expenses

04 % of budget for fundraising expenses

*100 % total*

11.21 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

7 # of Board Volunteers

28 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

2,500 # of Volunteer Hours

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

Alliance for Health Equity, Justamere Foundation, Bentley Systems, Inc., Stewart Huston Charitable Foundation, Hopewell United Methodist Church

**Grant proposal for:** Capacity Building

**If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:** Partnerships and Collaboration

**Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation:** \$5,000

### **Proposal Summary:**

The Coatesville Kid to College (CKC) program will use CCCF capacity building funds to expand our partnerships for greater student impact. Adding to our homework and tutoring time, we will provide Coatesville children and youth with life and skill building enrichment opportunities including:

- Soap For Hope Youth Entrepreneurship
- Chester County Food Bank
- BELONG (a new program from Center for Educational Equity)
- Namaste Lynne Yoga and Art

Through our community partnerships, CKC provides opportunity, enrichment, support, and growth for up to 30 youth, K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. In CKC's after-school program, students are supported with their academics through dedicated homework time and tutoring. Through these community

partnerships, CKC provides opportunity, enrichment, support, and growth for up to 30 youth, K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Middle school and high school students participate in the 20-week Soap For Hope Youth Entrepreneurs program that is run in conjunction with the co-located Soap For Hope small business. In the Soap For Hope program, participants learn different types of soapmaking technologies and learn through the associated Youth Entrepreneurs curriculum. Topics such as healthy nutrition and cooking and support of Coatesville's Community Garden are offered in conjunction with Chester County Food Bank. BELONG is a new youth-centered curriculum developed out of Center for Educational Equity by recognized local organizational and DEIB expert, Lula Abera. Through this new curriculum, CKC youth will learn about personal, interpersonal, group, and community dynamics that foster a sense of belonging for all. Lynne' Filion, of Namaste Lynne' Wellness and Yoga has been a multi-year partner with CKC and our after-school youth. Lynne' teaches and conducts yoga and engaging art activities with the elementary aged cohort.

Standing out from CKC's other partnerships, these four collaborations bring dynamic and unique offerings to school-aged youth in the urban center of Coatesville. Youth enjoy and thrive in a safe, supportive, caring environment that gives their families confidence and comfort knowing that their children are in a safe, nurturing, and academically rigorous environment during after-school hours.

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

3 pages maximum.

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

Educational Equity Alliance (EEA) was incorporated in 2009 as Hope Beyond Borders by Steven Wilson and Crispen Masuka, with the mission to help children and youth reach their full academic and social-emotional potential. In 2023, after 14 years of impact, we rebranded to EEA to better reflect our vision and work.

The EEA Center for Educational Equity, launched in 2010, equips leaders to design programs that guide students from preschool through college or trade school. Cornerstone initiatives include:

- Soap for Hope (2013): A youth entrepreneurship program where students learn business and leadership skills through hands-on soapmaking, marketing, and sales.
- Coatesville Kids to College (CKC, 2013): An educational pipeline for children living below the poverty level, providing continuous support from early childhood through postsecondary education. CKC operates Bright Beginnings Preschool (serving 28 children ages 2–5 at very low cost), robust afterschool programs with tutoring and enrichment, and two 4-week full-day summer camps.

Together, these programs offer Coatesville children academic support, enrichment opportunities, and leadership development—ensuring that low-income youth keep pace academically and build confidence and skills that extend well beyond the classroom.

## **2. Funding request**

### ***Description of key initiatives***

For over a decade, CKC has delivered a multi-pronged educational pipeline that promotes school success and higher education. Programs include preschool, afterschool tutoring and enrichment, summer camps, and entrepreneurial training through Soap for Hope. More than 100 children and youth are served annually, all at little or no cost to families.

With CCCF's support, we seek to expand four cornerstone partnerships that strengthen our afterschool program for 30+ K–12 students in the coming year:

- Soap for Hope Youth Entrepreneurs: A 20-week program where middle and high school students learn product design, soapmaking, cost analysis, and sales.
- Chester County Food Bank: Hands-on nutrition and cooking workshops that teach healthy habits and support Coatesville's community garden.
- BELONG Curriculum: A new emotional wellness and belonging program led by local expert Lula Abera, fostering personal and interpersonal growth.
- Namaste Lynne' Yoga & Art: Yoga, mindfulness, and art activities that build balance, focus, and creative expression.

These partnerships bring distinctive, high-quality opportunities that Coatesville youth would not otherwise have access to, while giving families the assurance of safe, supportive, and nurturing afterschool care.

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

Students living below the federal poverty line face profound academic, social, and emotional challenges that can hinder both school performance and future workforce readiness. In Coatesville, 40% of residents live in poverty, and more than 60% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Standardized testing consistently shows that only 30–40% of students in poverty are reading at grade level by third grade, compared to 85–90% of their peers.

Compounding these challenges, Coatesville lacks community centers, recreation programs, and other accessible youth opportunities. Families—over 80% of whom are single-parent households—need safe, affordable programs that provide both academic support and enrichment. CKC fills this critical gap, ensuring that children and youth gain the academic and life skills needed to thrive and ultimately break cycles of poverty.

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

Following recent organizational transitions, CKC is rebuilding stronger partnerships to ensure continuity of our afterschool enrichment and to stabilize programming that families rely on. Without renewed support, Coatesville children risk falling further behind at pivotal developmental stages. With it, they gain consistent care, robust learning, and opportunities to grow into confident leaders.

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

When children gain access to quality preschool and afterschool enrichment, benefits ripple outward. Students build academic foundations, youth develop leadership, and families gain stability. A revitalized CKC strengthens schools, neighborhoods, and the wider community.

- 30+ students will participate in daily afterschool enrichment during the 2025–26 program year.
- 90% of elementary students will demonstrate growth in reading and math confidence.
- 75% of middle/high school students will report stronger study habits, time management, and leadership skills.
- 90% of all students will engage in at least one leadership, service, or family-engagement activity.
- Each student will receive 200+ hours of safe, structured enrichment annually.
- 25 families will participate in workshops, family nights, or volunteer roles.
- 80% of students will maintain or improve grades; 90% will avoid chronic absenteeism.
- 80% of students will show measurable growth in resilience, confidence, or teamwork.

***How will this capacity building initiative impact your nonprofit?***

This initiative strengthens CKC's capacity to deliver consistent, partner-driven programs that expand children's horizons while relieving families' burdens. Partnerships with Namaste Lynne', BELONG, Soap for Hope, and Chester County Food Bank bring expertise that CKC alone could not provide. Together, these efforts enrich the lives of children, empower families, and contribute to the revitalization of Coatesville.

***How will this impact be measured?***

Impact will be measured through attendance tracking, pre/post surveys, skill demonstrations, portfolios, and facilitator observations. Benchmarks include:

- Entrepreneurship: 75% of participants complete full product cycles and demonstrate business knowledge.
- Nutrition & Cooking: 80% identify three healthy meal options; 70% report greater cooking confidence.
- Art Classes: 90% complete at least two projects; 75% report increased creative confidence.
- Emotional Wellness (BELONG): 80% demonstrate improved resilience, self-confidence, or peer relationships.

Family feedback and facilitator narratives will complement the data, ensuring funders see both numbers and human stories.

***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 proposals if applicable.***

- Fall 2025: Launch BELONG curriculum and Soap for Hope Course
- Winter 2025–26: Begin yoga/art sessions through Namaste Lynne' Yoga & Art and nutrition & cooking classes in partnership with Food Bank.
- Spring 2026: Operate all four enrichment programs. Family engagement events; mid-year program review.
- Summer 2026: Nutrition and wellness programming integrated into full-day camps.

Budget: CCCF grant of \$5,000 will underwrite partner stipends, curriculum supplies, and family engagement events. These funds leverage additional community support and ensure program sustainability.