

## 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 **\$1,000-\$7,500**.

### Fund for Chester County Capacity Building Grants (Due 9/10)

- ◇ For eligibility in this grant program, nonprofits must be **located in & serve only 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. 10** are eligible for consideration.
- ◇ Grant **awards** typically range from **\$1,000-\$5,000**.

- 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) 696-8211** 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 8/25/2025**

### **Contact Information**

Organization Name: North Star of Chester County  
Address: 7 N. Five Points Rd. #3 West Chester, PA 19380  
Phone: 610-696-5675  
Website: [www.northstarofcc.org](http://www.northstarofcc.org)  
Year Incorporated: 1993  
FEIN: 23-2713075

ED/CEO Name: Donald Neimetz  
ED/CEO E-mail: [don@nothstarofcc.org](mailto:don@nothstarofcc.org)  
Board Chair Name: Jeremy Mueller  
Board Chair Approval (check here): ☒  
Primary Contact Name: Nick Lohr  
Primary Contact E-mail: [nick@northstarofcc.org](mailto:nick@northstarofcc.org)

### **Organization Information:**

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

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

**Mission:** North Star of Chester County guides single working parents with dependent children, who are at risk of homelessness, toward stability and financial independence. We help our participant families remain in affordable housing as they work to secure their future through a structured program of financial assistance, mentoring, and supportive services. Single parents who stay in our program, for three full years, emerge stable and proudly able to provide for their families.

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

All of Chester County

**Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:** North Star of Chester County serves single working parent families. The United Way designates the population we serve as ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed). ALICE families work but cannot afford life's necessities including housing, transportation, food, childcare, and healthcare. Because they work full time, our ALICE families frequently earn too much to qualify for other assistance programs but not enough to get by on their own. Our current families live throughout Chester County, with approximately 50% living in Coatesville and West Chester. While we serve single mothers and fathers, single mothers lead the majority of families in our program (100% of current participants). In a typical year, we meet with approximately 50 single parents, 20-25 of whom will be eligible to receive ongoing rental assistance and case management services.

**Annual Budget** \$375,000

75 % of budget for program expenses  
13 % of budget for administrative expenses  
12 % of budget for fundraising expenses

100 % total

1 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff  
9 # of Board Volunteers  
60 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers  
500 # of Volunteer Hours

**Top 3-5 funding sources:**

1. PHARE
2. GSK
3. The Justamere Foundation
4. Individual Donors
5. Chester County Dept. of Community Development

**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:** \$1,600

**Proposal Summary:** North Star of Chester County is seeking financial support to update the technology used by our office staff, purchasing two new laptops for our Project Manager and Executive Director. These laptops will allow us to remain secure, with the most up-to-date versions of Windows, and improve productivity. Our current office computers are more than five years old. One of the computers has aged out of Microsoft's security update timeline and is no longer receiving updates.

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

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

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

Since 1993, North Star of Chester County has served vulnerable ALICE families led by working single parents. We provide ongoing rental assistance, paired with monthly case management services to keep families housed while we guide them toward becoming self-sufficient. The length of our program is unique. Because independence takes time to achieve, we provide as much as three years of support. Our model accounts for potential challenges (life happens), as well as the time necessary to establish sustainable life changes like a higher credit score or building savings. Our support has helped hundreds of Chester County families avoid the trauma of homelessness and kept hardworking parents on the path to a better future.

While single parents are the participants in our program, our support benefits the entire family. Over the last five years, we expanded our offering of “additional supportive services,” including our office pantry, gas and grocery gift cards, financial aid for children’s programs, support for continuing adult education, and more. Our pantry includes non-perishable food, frozen food, butter, hygiene products, cleaning supplies, and other non-SNAP items. Every child is eligible to receive up to \$400 a year in financial support for summer camps or other enrichment programs. We also have donor-designated funds for parents continuing their education to receive degrees or additional certifications, providing financial aid for fees, tuition, textbooks, or the purchase of a school laptop.

Our goals are to help families avoid homelessness in the short term (the three years they are enrolled in our program) while providing them the tools to be independent and successful in the long term (after they graduate).

### **2. Funding request**

- **Description of key initiatives**

Our Executive Director and Project Manager currently use two aging laptops, one of which is out of internal storage and has aged out of Windows security updates. The other performs processor-intensive work, such as graphic design, it struggles to do. This second computer will cease receiving security updates in the fall of 2026. We will replace these laptops with new machines, allowing us to work more efficiently and securely in the office or at-home (some members of staff work a hybrid model throughout the week). This will position us to be current for the next few years as we continue to grow our organization.

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

Replace aging and obsolete laptops with new machines. We plan to purchase the computers, tax-free, through MicroCenter (microcenter.com) because they are competitively priced, local (St. Davids), and have an on-site repair service should the need arise. We intend to purchase laptops with 1TB of internal storage, adequate memory (16GB of RAM), modern processors (Core Ultra 7 or higher), and Windows

11. We chose these specs to address each of the issues we face with our current computers. This computer: [LINK](#) or similar.

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

Our current computers are slow to respond, freeze frequently, and require several minutes to boot. Replacing these machines will increase productivity and eliminate wasted time. In an organization like North Star of Chester County, productivity translates to service for the families in our program. If not replaced now, we may face equipment failures, resulting in an interruption to our program. We must remain current with Microsoft security updates for Windows to maintain and protect our data, including the confidential information of the people we serve.

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

The impact of purchasing the new computers will be immediate. Laptops will be faster to start and complete tasks, allowing our staff to work more efficiently. They will provide a base of technology needed to support the growth of our program, fundraising activities, communication, design and production of print materials such as our quarterly newsletter, and more. We will share the results of these capacity-building measures with our board of directors.

- *For capacity building grant proposals:*
  - *How will this capacity building initiative impact your nonprofit?*

Replacing these laptops will reduce our risk of hardware failure and avoid future security risks. Newer, faster computers will increase our office productivity and enhance our ability to communicate with peers, constituents, donors, and staff. Modern processors and enhanced computing power will support the production of print materials and graphic design completed by our Project Manager.

- *How will this impact be measured?*
- Staff will utilize the new computers and report their reliability and speed.
- Staff will update the computers, maintaining security, throughout the life of the machines.
  - *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.*
- EXPECTED ACTIVITIES: We will purchase and use two new laptops from MicroCenter at [www.microcenter.com](http://www.microcenter.com).
- TIMELINE AND COSTS: Within thirty (30) days of receipt of funds we will replace the computers used by our Executive Director and Project Manager. We anticipate each laptop will cost approximately \$800. No consultants are required.

### 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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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