

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 August 29, 2025

Contact Information

Organization Name: Oxford Library Company
Address: 48 S. Second St
Phone: (610)932-9618
Website: oxfordpubliclibrary.org
Year Incorporated: 1917
FEIN: 23-6297499

ED/CEO Name: Jonathan Dunkle
ED/CEO E-mail: jdunkle@ccls.org
Board Chair Name: Ira Bender
Board Chair Approval (check here): ☒
Primary Contact Name: Jonathan Dunkle
Primary Contact E-mail: jdunkle@ccls.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

☒ Arts, Culture & Humanities ☐ Environment/Animal Welfare ☒ Education
☒ Health ☒ Human Services ☐ Religion

Mission: The Oxford Library builds and strengthens our vibrant community through creating connections, sharing ideas, providing resources and information, and enriching lives through education and exploration.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): Oxford Borough, Upper and Lower Oxford Townships, East and West Nottingham Townships, Elk Township

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: We serve a population of 27,160 people from all ethnicities, ages, and backgrounds. We had 56,919 visits last year.

Annual Budget \$ _____ 393,583 _____ 9 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
____ 13.1 % of budget for program expenses ____ 11 # of Board Volunteers
____ 86.2 % of budget for administrative expenses ____ 24 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
____ 0.7 % of budget for fundraising expenses ____ 1,035 # of Volunteer Hours
100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources: State of Pennsylvania, Chester County, Interest Income, East Nottingham Township, Annual appeal

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: \$ 4,000 _____

Proposal Summary: Developing brand story and messaging to guide the library's future endeavors.

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

The Oxford Library Company is the oldest library in Chester County and the third oldest in Pennsylvania. It was established on August 3, 1784, by 28 members and an equal number of books, to “promise Knowledge and Literature in the Township of Oxford”.

Since then, the library has grown to provide an ever-increasing spectrum of materials and services – GED and ESL classes, free access to computers and wireless connections, programs for families and lifelong learners, partnerships with numerous other non-profits that has strengthened the community even further, and so much more – to a diverse population that formally includes five townships plus the Borough of Oxford but extends into Lancaster and York counties as well as Cecil and Harford counties in Maryland. The library is truly a regional resource for those living in or near the southwestern part of Chester County.

In 2024, the library's director left after twelve years of service to the community. After a lengthy search, a new director was hired in April of 2025. The library is using this opportunity of new leadership to foster new and renew existing connections with other non-profits in the area and to bridge divides to populations that the library currently underserves.

2. Funding request

Description of key initiatives:

The Oxford Library Company is requesting \$4,000 for a capacity building initiative. The initiative will consist of two parts. The first (\$3,000) will entail working with Peter Davis of Hero's Quest Consulting to help us with an organizational assessment. Mr. Davis will conduct interviews and focus groups then work with a small team consisting of the library director, board members, and staff, to understand the perception of the library, build consensus as to how the library needs to position itself in the community, and develop clear, consistent messaging around the future direction of the library. Mr. Davis is an Oxford resident with decades of experience and has helped several local non-profits in this manner.

The second part of the initiative (\$1,000) will be to take the results of working with Mr. Davis and work with a to be determined communications expert to develop branding, communications, and messaging that conveys the direction the library will take. This will include the development of promotional materials, an update of our website and social media, and other marketing product as needed.

Specific needs & issues to be addressed:

Despite the wealth of varied resources the library provides, too many people in the community still view the library as a “place to get books” and if they are not a reader, they think there is nothing at the library that will benefit their lives.

This misconception extends to the leadership of the townships we serve and the Oxford borough. We rely on local governmental funding and there has long been a disconnect between the value we provide their residents and the level of their financial support.

This initiative will help us focus our resources so that we may optimize how we serve the community. It will enable us to communicate the importance of the library to the community and allow us to better reach people who live in the area and make them aware of the resources we provide.

Why is it important to fund this now?

It is important to fund this initiative now for several reasons. First, with new leadership of the library, it provides us an opportunity to immediately assess the library's current position in the community and identify the direction that will best serve the community in the future. Second, our current strategic plan concludes at the end of 2025. We are in the midst of developing our new plan and this work will be the guiding force behind the upcoming plan. Lastly, we are approaching the end of the year which is our peak time for fundraising and is also when the localities we serve are formulating their budgets for next year. Having strong messaging surrounding our mission and future objectives will benefit our efforts in securing funding for next year.

How impact & results will be demonstrated:

This capacity building initiative will impact the library and the community by increasing awareness and understanding of the resources available to the people living in this area, thereby enabling the library to better serve the community. It will also provide staff, board, and volunteers a consistent, unified message as to the importance of the library which will be useful when engaging funders and helping the community.

The library already tracks several measures to determine how many people use the library and in what manner they do so - door count, program attendance, circulation of materials, computer usage, online materials usage, and new library card applications. We track trends and year over year usage to help us gauge the impact we are having on the community. With the capacity building initiative, we hope to increase our online and social media presences and will also begin analyzing utilization of these tools and online engagement. We are also making more of an effort to collect stories of those who have benefitted from their usage of the library and will gather qualitative data about the impact of the project through collecting stories and other feedback.

Timeline:

We will begin working with Mr. Davis in the beginning of September. While we go through the process of developing our strategy, we will also identify who we will work with for the second part of the initiative. It is expected that we will complete our work with Mr. Davis before the end of September and can then begin the second part of the initiative in October. We expect that portion of the project to be ongoing. Further details of the timeline and costs are provided in the attached itemized budget of Mr. Davis's proposal.