

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 09/10/2024

Contact Information

Organization Name: **West Chester Dance Works**

ED/CEO Name: **Diane Matthews**

Address: **315 Westtown Road #9 West Chester, PA 19382**

ED/CEO E-mail: **Director@wcdw.org**

Phone: **610-692-3398**

Board Chair Name: **Donna Hymes**

Website: **www.westchesterdanceworks.org**

Board Chair Approval (check here): ☒

Year Incorporated: **1983**

Primary Contact Name: **Diane Matthews**

FEIN: **30-0080438**

Primary Contact E-mail: **Director@wcdw.org**

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

☒ Arts, Culture & Humanities

☐ Environment/Animal Welfare

☒ Education

☐ Health

☐ Human Services

☐ Religion

Mission: The mission of West Chester Dance Works (WCDW) is to uplift, nurture and transform dancers and community through an accessible, inclusive dance experience.

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

WCDW serves Chester County, Delaware County, Montgomery County and the greater Delaware Valley.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

It has been our mission to not limit the exposure of dance to just the youth or one population, but to give opportunity to those in a variety of demographics, including age, national origin, background, ability to pay, body size and more. We serve a diverse community with dancers and audiences including Black, White, Asian and Latinx people. As an organization with diverse leadership, it is important for us to be an inclusive place where all feel safe to grow and thrive. We are actively seeking to expose individuals who may not know about organized dance classes, and all that can be gained. We have always tried to find those who may not be able to afford dance classes to offer a scholarship. Membership in our performing groups is open to anyone nine years of age and older, amateur or professional, interested in participating after acceptance through the completion of an audition process meeting all commitment criteria set forth by the artistic director. Students ages 2.5 and up in our resident school, the Diane Matthews School of Dance Arts, have the opportunity for exposure to various genres of dance instruction. WCDW had 34 performing members and 170 school students this past season, and it is estimated that approximately 5,000 individuals were reached from the variety of engagements the company partook in. Over the past year, engagements included neighborhood parks, community events, dance festivals, senior citizens' facilities, fundraisers for autism and breast cancer awareness, Juneteenth celebrations, and more.

Annual Budget \$ 304,594 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff 1

50 % of budget for program expenses 7 # of Board Volunteers

38 % of budget for administrative expenses 25 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

1 % of budget for fundraising expenses 150 # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources: Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, Pincus Family Foundation, JD2 Environmental, Vanguard

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: \$ _____ **10,000** _____

Proposal Summary: West Chester Dance Works (WCDW) recently unified our nonprofit dance company and school into one organization, strengthening our mission to celebrate diversity, promote inclusivity, and expand community engagement. We solidified internal operations but still face challenges in external presentation, community reach, and student enrollment (currently 130, down from a pre-COVID high of 230). Now entering our 43rd season, WCDW seeks \$10,000 in capacity building support to strengthen branding, marketing, and digital infrastructure. Funding will support professional marketing consultation, website redesign, and upgraded digital tools to unify our brand, improve outreach, and implement a measurable student recruitment strategy. Anticipated outcomes include a clearer public identity, growth in student enrollment, increased donor engagement, and a sustainable, repeatable system for digital marketing and communications—ensuring WCDW’s mission of uplifting and transforming the community through dance continues for years to come.



Capacity Building Proposal: Branding, Marketing, and Digital Infrastructure

Chester County Community Foundation,

West Chester Dance Works (WCDW) is reaching out to you with hope and continued gratitude for your ongoing contributions to nonprofits in the Chester County area. Please consider us as a candidate to receive \$10,000 in funding through a Capacity Building Grant as we enter our 43rd year with a continued commitment to fulfilling our mission: to uplift, nurture, and transform dancers and community through an accessible, inclusive dance experience.

WCDW is a 501(c)3 nonprofit arts organization operating to provide informed dance instruction, thoughtful community outreach programming, and inspirational performances to audiences of all ages. Our vision is for dance to become a vehicle for improved outlook, conversation, reconciliation, awareness, and unity between all people regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic background, religion, race or gender. Since the company's inception in 1983, WCDW has been a minority-run, woman-owned business operating with a diverse leadership team that has provided opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to receive exposure to the many benefits of dance.

WCDW works to: increase healthy lifestyles through physical activity and education, create a link between artistic expression and advocacy (particularly for underserved youth), help improve self-esteem and peer-to-peer support, and hone leadership skills with a focus on team-building. Our five performing companies bring artistic enrichment to schools, hospitals, senior facilities/nursing homes, festivals, and a variety of other venues where people may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience dance. Each of our different performance groups has a specific focus, inviting dancers with a variety of interests and talents. The Diane Matthews School of Dance Arts is the resident studio of WCDW, the educational outreach arm providing opportunities for dancers and the public to receive exposure to quality dance instruction.

For over twenty years, the Diane Matthews School of Dance Arts and West Chester Dance Works (WCDW) operated as two distinct entities — a limited liability company and a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. While the heart of the original vision was never lost, the dual structure doubled efforts in administration, marketing, and community outreach. Over time, we found that our community often struggled to distinguish between the two, sometimes referring to us as “Diane Matthews Dance Works.” This confusion diluted our public identity and hindered our ability to convey our mission with clarity.

Three years ago, we embarked on a significant organizational merger, bringing all operations under one nonprofit umbrella. The dance school now operates as the official school of WCDW, creating a seamless pipeline from training to performance and community engagement. Today, our mission reaches a growing student body of dancers, many aspiring to join our performing companies and participate in our outreach programming.

This unification has allowed us to expand our reach, restructure internal systems, and strengthen policies. See below how our capacity building initiative has unfolded over the last two seasons, and then the plans for Phase Three which is where we are seeking funding.



1. Phase One (Spring 2024): Streamlined mission, vision, and strategy, informed by a community focus group of parents, students, staff, and partners. The group affirmed our commitment to celebrating diversity and prioritizing inclusivity, noting that our marketing materials could reflect these values more explicitly.
2. Phase Two (2024–2025 Season): Implement operational improvements identified by an operations consultant, including better workload allocation, redefined staff roles, and optimized use of AI and software applications for efficiency.
3. **3. Phase Three (2025–2026 Season): We seek funding to invest in professional branding, marketing expertise, and updated digital infrastructure to present WCDW effectively to our community and supporters while also driving measurable student growth.**

While we have strengthened our internal structure, our external presentation and outreach lag behind. Specific challenges include:

- Two separate websites with inconsistent content and management, creating confusion and doubling administrative work.
- Lack of coordinated marketing strategy to reach potential students, donors, and community partners.
- Limited tracking of paid digital ads and their effectiveness.
- Under-enrolled classes (2–3 students in some cases, versus an ideal 8+).
- Enrollment of 130 students, well below our pre-COVID level of 230 students.

Key Activities

1. Hire a Marketing & Branding Consultant

- Develop a unified visual identity and brand guidelines.
- Refine key messaging to reflect our updated mission and values.
- Create a cohesive marketing strategy for both in-person and digital outreach.
- Build a repeatable student recruitment system using digital ads, video storytelling, testimonials, and targeted offers.

2. Website Redesign & Optimization

- Merge the two separate websites into a single, modernized site.
- Ensure mobile-friendly, accessible design.
- Integrate event calendars, ticketing, program enrollment tools, and donor management.
- Highlight diversity, inclusion, and community impact in visual and written content.

3. Marketing Platform Investment & Tracking

- Streamline social media strategy with upgraded scheduling, email marketing, and analytics tools.



- Implement tracking systems to monitor digital ad performance, conversions, and ROI.
- Use integrated software to align donor management with marketing efforts.

Budget Overview

- Marketing & Branding Consultant: \$6,000
 - Website Redesign & Development: \$4,500
 - Marketing Platform Subscriptions (12 months): \$1,500
- Total: \$12,000

The anticipated outcomes of this initiative include increased clarity in the organization's public identity, leading to a more recognizable and consistent presence. We expect higher engagement across digital platforms and social media, fostering stronger connections with our audiences. Additionally, the organization anticipates growth in student enrollment returning to pre-pandemic levels, increased donor support, and overall improvement in audience attendance. Finally, the initiative aims to create stronger alignment between internal operations and external communications, ensuring that messaging and organizational activities reinforce one another effectively.

Impact will be measured through a combination of internal, external, and digital indicators. Internally, staff and board surveys will track confidence in using new brand language, while adoption rates will reflect how consistently programs and events apply the updated brand guidelines. Externally, surveys and focus groups will assess improved awareness of the mission and perceptions of inclusion. On the digital front, website analytics will monitor bounce rate reduction, longer session duration, increased traffic, and conversions such as ticket sales, donations, and enrollments. Student recruitment will be evaluated through enrollment growth, with progress measured towards the target of 230 students. Finally, efficiency gains will be tracked through hours saved by staff due to streamlined systems, stronger email open and click rates, and marketing return on investment measured by cost per acquisition and overall ad performance.

This investment will not only improve visibility now, but will also create the foundation for sustainable growth for years to come. We appreciate your continued support of West Chester Dance Works. If you require any further information, please call us at (610) 692-3398.

Thank you,
Diane Matthews
Founder & Executive Director
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