

## 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: 9/19/25**

### Contact Information

**Organization Name:** Friends Association for the Care and Protection of Children

**Address:** 113 W. Chestnut Street, West Chester, PA 19380

**Phone:** 610-431-3598

**Website:** <https://friendsassoc.org/>

**Year Incorporated:** 1822

**FEIN:** 23-1381006

**ED/CEO:** Joyce Chester, [j.chester@friendsassoc.org](mailto:j.chester@friendsassoc.org)

**Board Chair Name:** William T. McGrath

**Board Chair Approval:** yes

**Primary Contact:** Lauren Swift, [l.swift@friendsassoc.org](mailto:l.swift@friendsassoc.org)

### Organization Information:

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

☐ Arts, Culture & Humanities

☐ Environment/Animal Welfare

☐ Education

☐ Health

☒ Human Services

☐ Religion

**Mission:** Friends Association prevents homelessness by transforming lives, empowering families, and strengthening our community. We believe everyone deserves a home.

**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:** Friends Association serves families facing significant barriers to housing security and/or are experiencing homelessness. The majority of families are living at or below the federal poverty level. Friends staff works with families to address the issues that lead to their housing crises. This can include mental health challenges, financial hardship, and limited access to resources like education, health care, and employment. The goal of all programs is to stabilize housing and break the cycle of homelessness. In Fiscal Year 2025, Friends just under 400 families throughout Chester County. Broken down by program, 301 households were served in Eviction Prevention Case Resolution (EPCR), 21 in the Family Center (emergency shelter), and 70 in Housing Stability Case Management (HSCM). Across all programs, 1292 individuals were served. Approximately 66% were people of color, 59% were female, and 58% were children under the age of 18.

**Annual Budget** \$3,092,261

65 % of budget for program expenses

25 % budget for administrative expenses

10 % of budget for fundraising expenses

100 % total

21 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

15 # of Board Volunteers

110 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

191 # of Volunteer Hours

**Top 3-5 funding sources:** ARPA: \$695,776; Pennsylvania Housing Affordability Fund (PHARE): \$450,000  
CC Dept of Community Development: \$335,588 Foxwynd: \$60,000 John Gailey: \$55,000

**Is this grant proposal for:** Capacity Building \_\_\_\_ or General Operating \_\_\_\_x\_\_?

**Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation:** \$5000

### **Proposal Summary:**

Friends Association is requesting general operating funds to provide support across all programs. Using the Housing First National model, combined with a trauma-informed, multi-generation approach, Friends Association focuses on keeping families together during times of housing crisis. Friends is unique in that all families are accepted and supported, no matter the makeup. This includes single parent, two parent, or multi-generational households. Eviction Prevention Case Resolution (EPCR) provides free legal services to individuals and families facing eviction, keeping them stably housed. The Family Center (Emergency Shelter) is temporary, emergency housing for families who have lost their homes. Families are housed in private apartments to minimize trauma and promote healing. Finally, Friends offers Housing Stability Case Management (HSCM). Case managers work with families to prevent homelessness, support them in finding permanent housing, and stabilize them in their communities. Long-term relationships with clients create an environment of trust and allow families the support they need in a safe environment so that they can thrive long term. General operating funds would give Friends the ability to apply resources to the biggest need, allowing families to move through programming as their needs change. This innovative approach of a continuum of care is crucial to meeting the housing needs of families with children in the community and breaking the cycle of homelessness.

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

**History:** Friends Association is one of the very few nonprofit organizations in the United States that has been continuously serving the community with effective housing solutions for over 200 years. Friends has a proven track record of supporting individuals and families with affordable housing, prevention, and homelessness interventions. Beginning as an abolitionist Quaker movement in the early 1800s, Friends has grown from a home for orphaned children in Philadelphia, to providing schooling and support for boys and girls on the campus of what is now Cheyney University and ultimately moving to the borough of West Chester in 1984 where it opened its first Emergency Shelter. By 2010, the mission became focused firmly on family homelessness and housing instability, aligning with the Housing First National Model. This model is based on evidence that a family experiencing homelessness is more responsive to interventions and social service support if they are housed safely first.

### **Goals:**

- 1) Friends Association will prevent homelessness through the EPCR program. The EPCR team will resolve eviction filings through legal support, advocacy, and resource navigation.
- 2) Through the Family Center, Friends will ensure families experiencing homelessness have immediate access to safe housing and supportive services while they work towards permanent housing stability. Families will achieve housing stability.

- 3) HSCM will support families in achieving long-term housing stability through individualized goal planning, education, and ongoing case management. 100% of families will create a budget and be connected to community resources.

**Key achievements:** Friends is one of the longest running non-profits in the United States. The organization has survived and thrived through challenging times, from the Civil War, World War II and the Great Depression to the Great Recession of 2008 and the COVID-19 pandemic. Each era brought changes that affected housing and Friends evolved programming to meet the community need.

- The early 1980's brought major federal funding budget cuts for housing and social services. The Family Center opened in 1984, in response to the country wide rise in homelessness
- EPCR was launched in 2020 in response to the pandemic and the increase in evictions. EPCR offers free legal representation, financial assistance, and housing resource navigation services to individuals and families facing eviction
- Most recently, Friends has acquired a property to open a second emergency shelter. The new building will have 10 units, more than doubling the capacity to serve families experiencing homelessness

**Distinctiveness:** Using the Housing First National model, combined with a trauma-informed, two generation approach, Friends focuses on keeping families together during times of crisis. As mentioned above, Friends is unique in that families are accepted however they come, be that single parent, two parent, or multi-generational households. The emergency shelter (Family Center) is the only low barrier, non-congregate shelter in Chester County that houses families of any makeup together and provides ADA accessible family housing solutions. At the shelter recently, there has been a single father with two boys, a mother and father with a newborn baby girl, a single mother with two teenage sons, and a three-generation household in need of a handicapped accessible unit. If any of these four families went to another shelter in Chester County, they would be turned away or separated. Friends provides the only family shelter in the county where these families could remain together.

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

**Eviction Prevention Case Resolution (EPCR)** - In response to the challenges of the pandemic, Friends launched the Eviction Prevention Case Resolution (EPCR) program in 2020. No other program like it exists in the area. EPCR program offers free legal representation, financial assistance, and social services (including housing resource navigation services) to individuals and families facing eviction. The EPCR team currently operates in four district courts with jurisdiction over Coatesville, Downingtown, West Chester, and Exton. They attend court hearings weekly to represent individuals and families in landlord tenant eviction court. The team provides services to best suit the needs of each client. This could mean providing financial assistance to cover rental arrears. In these instances, the eviction prevention coordinators collaborate with the landlords, often to work on budgeting and payment plans. In other cases, if the client needs or wants to move, they work with the housing stability case managers on finding a suitable home, coordinating a move, and finding referrals to supportive services to remain stably housed.

Prior to EPCR, most eviction cases were ruled in favor of landlords, particularly in cases where tenants could not afford representation. EPCR was originally launched in the Coatesville and Downingtown district courts, which had the highest numbers of eviction cases. The proportion of

cases withdrawn by the landlord increased from 12% in 2019 to 31% in 2021. Cases reaching settlements favorable to the tenant increased by 10% in the same period. This meant Friends was able to keep more families intact and sustainably housed. A recent fact sheet created by the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania documented a 40% increase in tenant-favorable outcomes in Chester County courts served by the EPCR Program in comparison to other courts. In 2024, Friends expanded into West Chester and in 2025 expanded into Exton. EPCR has also established a partnership with Legal Aid of Southeastern PA, creating a flow of referrals between programs for legal and social service needs. Friends Association's work in eviction prevention has been transformational and is serving as a model for similar work throughout the Commonwealth of PA.

**Emergency Shelter (Family Center)** - For families that have become homeless in Chester County, Friends Association offers emergency housing. Unlike other shelters in the area, where families may have to share rooms or spaces to eat, shower, and sleep, we house families in private apartments. This minimizes trauma and promotes healing.

During their stay in the Family Center, families work collaboratively with the Family Center Manager and Operations Coordinator to address the barriers that led to their homelessness. The Family Center Manager helps the families secure permanent housing, create a housing stability case plan, increase income, and access mainstream benefits. Additionally, families may receive training on life skills, financial management, resume preparation, tenant rights and responsibilities, as well as assistance in accessing community benefits for which they qualify. These presentations reinforce and build upon the life skills training given by the Family Center staff. Life skills training is a crucial component of the case management program and includes essential skills such as cooking, grocery shopping, cleaning, budgeting, and laundry. Staff also assists families in navigating the process of filling out entitlement applications and accessing community resources, ensuring they have the tools necessary for successful independent living.

When a family relocates to permanent housing, they are referred to one of the Housing Stability Case Managers. The case managers will coach and support them for an additional year with the goal of ensuring their long-term housing stability and self-sufficiency in the community.

**Housing Stability Case Management (HSCM)** - HSCM is long-term case management for families who are experiencing or are at-risk of homelessness. Many have been impacted by the justice system in some way. The goal of the program is to prevent homelessness, support families in finding permanent housing, and stabilize them in their communities. Case managers work directly with families, their support systems, community providers, and adult probation and parole officers. The goal is to create a plan that promotes recovery and self-sufficiency.

Friends Association developed the S.T.E.P.S. Model, a five-phase, trauma-informed, two-generational case management approach that helps families move from crisis to long-term housing stability. Step 1 begins with a thorough assessment of each household's immediate needs, housing barriers, and income. Step 2 focuses on taking action through individualized service plans, direct referrals, and education, while providing support with housing searches, applications, and financial assistance. Step 3 emphasizes empowerment, as families build confidence, strengthen financial literacy, and develop the skills needed to prevent future crises.

Step 4 is the achievement of permanent stable housing, with families maintaining stability for at least 90 days while case management shifts to biweekly check-ins to monitor progress. During this stage, case managers help families set up utilities, understand leases, stay current on rent and

bills, and continue working toward long-term stability goals. Step 5 prepares families for lasting independence by scaling back services for another 90 days, while confirming stable income, consistent budgeting, and reliable community support.

The S.T.E.P.S. Model is a structured approach designed to address urgent housing needs while confronting the root causes of instability. By integrating trauma-informed practices with a two-generation approach, it empowers both parents and children with the tools, skills, and support needed to achieve and maintain safe, self-sufficient housing. This model not only helps families break the cycle of homelessness but also fosters stronger, more resilient communities across generations.

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

**Why it is important to fund this now:** The primary cause of homelessness in Chester County is the lack of affordable housing options coupled with a high cost of living. The United Way's Alice Report for PA indicates that in the county, 23% of households qualify as ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). In the borough of West Chester, however, that statistic jumps to 52% of the population and in the city of Coatesville, 65%. Although the overall number of households below the poverty line in Chester County is lower than that of the Commonwealth, 6% as compared to 12%, over twelve thousand individuals in our community are facing devastating financial hardship. ALICE households, as well as those living in poverty, cannot afford the basics of life. Housing is one of the most expensive monthly costs in the community along with childcare and the rising cost of food.

According to the Chester County Partnership to End Homelessness' point in time count, 313 individuals in the county are experiencing homelessness at any given time. Of those 313 individuals, 31% of them are children under the age of 18. The effects of homelessness can be particularly devastating to children, especially in terms of their education. In the school districts served (Coatesville, Downingtown, and West Chester), there were 505 students K-12 experiencing homelessness during the 2022-2023 school year, accounting for over a quarter of the total students in the county (Schoolhouse Connection). In addition, 33% of children who were chronically absent were those experiencing homelessness, causing them to fall behind their peers in school. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network reports that children experiencing homelessness are twice as likely to repeat a grade than housed children, which can lead to lower high school graduation rates. In the 2022-2023 school year, less than 50% of students experiencing homelessness in both the West Chester and Coatesville Area school districts graduated from high school, in comparison to the 95% overall rate for West Chester and 84% rate for Coatesville (SchoolHouse Connection). Not earning a high school degree makes employment more difficult and can lead to a lifetime of negative economic outcomes. The impact that homelessness has on children also affects their mental and physical health, resulting in higher rates of chronic illness, behavioral health challenges, and generational homelessness. Having a safe place to call home is one of the key tenets of tackling challenging societal problems, because without a home, it is impossible to break the cycle of poverty and reach self-sufficiency.

**How impact & results will be demonstrated:** Friends Association participates in Chester County's Client Track data management system, which tracks demographic and participant outcomes. Staff in all programs utilize both qualitative and quantitative data to review program progress and plan improvements. Observation and participant interviews provide qualitative

data. Data is entered into the Client Track system for case managers to review and utilize during their time with each family.

In August 2025, Friends hired a Database Assistant to help enhance the design of intake and exit forms with the implementation of the new S.T.E.P.S model. This will help improve capturing data and tracking of outcomes across programs. Examples of data collected during intake will include number of families assessed in a week, the percentage of families connected to emergency supports (such as mental health providers), and the percentage connected to benefits. As families progress through the S.T.E.P.S program, the goal is to increase independence as they move towards housing stability. The exit form will capture data such as the number of families who report stable income, stable education for their children, and the number of families who remained stably housed for 90 and 180 days.

### 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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