

GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES as of 10.1.25

Direct Service Programs & General Operations

No deadline for DAF proposals.
Deadlines announced thru the year
for Directed Funds.

- ◇ Grants **focus on Chester County** causes & issues; but are not limited to Chester County.
- ◇ Charitable nonprofits working in **all fields of interest** are considered, such as:
 - Arts, Culture, Heritage
 - Education, Libraries
 - Environment, Animals
 - Health
 - Human Services
 - Social Justice, Civic Engagement
- ◇ **General operating** grants are encouraged. Clear, succinct, compelling descriptions are appreciated: mission, aims, results & impact.
- ◇ Nonprofits with **higher GuideStar ratings** receive stronger consideration. Update yours for free at <https://www.guidestar.org/>
- ◇ Proposals can be submitted **anytime all year**.
- ◇ Grant decisions are made **intermittently** all year, as Fund Advisors desire.
- ◇ Grant **awards** typically range from **\$2,500-\$10,000**.



Capacity Building: Coping with Cutbacks

No deadline.
Proposals accepted anytime.
Reviewed 15th bi-monthly.

- ◇ Nonprofits must be **located in & primarily serve Chester County**.
- ◇ Nonprofit annual **budget** must be **\$1M or less**.
- ◇ The goal of capacity building grants is to **strengthen organizational ability to effectively achieve mission and become more sustainable** over time. Priority will be given to proposals that help nonprofits shift their paradigms to cope with challenges and changes. Areas of focus include:
 - **Scenario & Contingency Planning**
 - **Financial Modeling**
 - **Partnerships, Collaborations**
 - **Merger**
 - **Closure**
 - **Resource Development, Revenue Diversification**
 - Mission, Vision, Strategy
 - Board Engagement, Leadership
 - Marketing & Communication
 - Operations
 - Technology
- ◇ Proposals can be submitted **anytime all year**.
- ◇ Proposals are reviewed the 15th bi-monthly.
- ◇ Grant **awards** typically range from **\$2,500-\$10,000**.



As you are aware, there is ongoing uncertainty around federal and state funding that significantly impacts nonprofit organizations. The Community Foundation is committed to supporting a strong and resilient sector, and we encourage all organizations to be proactive in their planning.

We strongly encourage every nonprofit to engage in scenario planning, examine cash flow projections and assess funding risks. We have seen nonprofits explore a variety of pathways forward, such as adapting program design, reducing or merging operations and significantly diversifying revenue streams.

Please contact Kevin Baffa, Grant Administrator or Stephenie Stevens, Grant Officer at (610) 696-8211 or grants@chescocf.org with questions.

*Connecting people who care with causes that matter,
so their philanthropy makes a difference, now & forever.*



HOW ARE GRANT DECISIONS MADE AT THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION?

The Chester County Community Foundation **connects people who care with causes that matter**, so philanthropy makes a difference **now & forever**. With **400+ charitable funds** housed under one umbrella, a single proposal provides multiple pathways for nonprofits to be considered for funding. Nonprofits are encouraged to submit proposals **throughout the year**. Grant funds are awarded from multiple funding pools:

1. GRANTS FROM CCCF DONOR ADVISED FUNDS (DAFS)

- **Families and individuals** establish Donor Advised Funds—endowed charitable funds invested to provide a perpetual stream of earnings to fund nonprofit grants.
- Most DAF grants support **direct service programs and general operations**.
- DAF grant decisions are made independently by donors, sometimes with guidance from Community Foundation staff, and are awarded on a **rolling basis throughout the year**.

2. GRANTS FROM CCCF DESIGNATED ENTRUSTED FUNDS

- CCCF Designated Entrusted Funds are stewarded by volunteer grant panels and Community Foundation staff.
- We accept **Operating & Program Grants proposals year-round**; and from time-to-time issue special, focused Calls for Proposals as new funding becomes available.
- We accept **Capacity Building Grant Proposals year-round**; and from time-to-time issue Calls for Capacity Building Proposals as new funding becomes available. Capacity building grants are intended to strengthen the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of nonprofits serving Chester County.
- Grant panels review proposals and deliberate **monthly**.

DUE DILIGENCE

The Community Foundation is committed to making thoughtful, informed grantmaking decisions. To do so, our staff, donors, and grant panel volunteers:

- Review organizational and financial data via **GuideStar** (<https://www.guidestar.org>) and IRS Form 990.
- Review all submitted proposals, which are **publicly available** at <https://chescof.org/receive/find-active-grants/>.
- Conduct site visits, community research, and online research to better understand mission and impact.

Please note: In compliance with IRS regulations, applicants must be charitable, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations; funding cannot be awarded to individuals.

TO APPLY

- To learn more, visit www.chescof.org
- Proposals are only accepted electronically. The format is online at <https://chescof.org/receive/apply-for-grants/>
- **E-mail proposals to grants@chescof.org**
- Proposals are considered “complete” when CCCF has **confirmed** receipt of the **Grant Proposal Summary Sheet, Narrative & Attachments**. Budgets and financials are important. Please include them.
- Proposals are shared electronically and on-line with Fund Advisors, Donors & Grant Panels.

Please contact Kevin Baffa, Grants Administrator or Stephenie Stevens, Grants Officer at **(610) 696-8211** or grants@chescof.org with questions.

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I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit www.chescocf.org

This page will be shared electronically with Grant Panel Members & Fund Advisors + posted online.

Date

Contact Information

Organization Name: Darby Creek Valley Association
Address:
Phone:
Website: dcva.org
Year Incorporated: 1984
FEIN:

ED/CEO Name: Jaclyn Rhoads
ED/CEO E-mail: president@dcva.org
Board Chair Name:
Board Chair Approval (check here): X
Primary Contact Name: Kyle Gaumann
Primary Contact E-mail: kyledcva@gmail.com

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

☐	Arts, Culture, Heritage	☒	Education, Library	☒	Environment, Animals
☒	Health	☐	Human Services	☒	Social Justice, Civic Engagement
☐	Religion	☐	If other, please describe:		

Mission:

Founded in 1984, DCVA is a nonprofit watershed organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in and around the Darby Creek watershed by restoring and protecting its natural, historical, and cultural resources.

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

CHESTER COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES:

Tredyffrin Twp., Easttown Twp.

DELAWARE COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES:

Radnor Twp., Newtown Twp., Marple Twp., Haverford Twp., Upper Darby Twp., Springfield Twp. Millbourne Borough, Lansdowne Borough, East Lansdowne Borough, Clifton Heights Borough, Morton Borough, Aldan Borough, Darby Borough, Yeadon Borough, Collingdale Borough, Darby Twp., Rutledge Borough, Ridley Twp., Ridley Park Borough, Prospect Park Borough, Glenolden Borough, Sharon Hill Borough, Colwyn Borough, Folcroft Borough, Norwood Borough, Tinicum Twp.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES:

Lower Merion Twp., Narberth Borough

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY:

City of Philadelphia

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served. 500,000

Annual Budget \$ 108841 0 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
23.8 % of budget for program expenses 22 # of Board Volunteers
72.7 % of budget for administrative expenses 500 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
3.4% % of budget for fundraising expenses 1500 # of Volunteer Hours

100% = total

Top 3-5 funding sources: Grants, LMC-WP, EPA, Donations, Membership Dues

This grant proposal is for: ☒ Direct Service Programs & General Operating &/or ☐ Capacity Building

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

☐	Contingency Planning	☐	Partnerships, Collaborations	☐	Merger, Closure
☐	Mission, Vision, Strategy	☐	Board Engagement & Leadership	☐	Marketing, Communication
☐	Resource Development	☐	Operations	☐	Technology
☐	If other, please describe:				

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 10,000

Proposal Summary: *(a few sentences, please)*

The Darby Creek Valley Association (DCVA), now in its 41st year, seeks support to stop pollution at its source through stream cleanups, native tree planting, anti-littering signage, and municipal policy advocacy. Building on recent projects—including an upcoming project where we will help plant 500 trees in Ridley Township, installing anti-littering signs in Prospect Park and Upper Darby, adopting the Darby Creek Trail for monthly volunteer stewardship, and expanding invasive species removal days at Sharp’s Woods Preserve the DCVA is poised to scale its impact. Funding will allow us to plant more trees, host record cleanups, install additional anti-littering signs, and strengthen partnerships with municipalities to reduce pollution before it reaches our waterways.

II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information in 1-3 pages. Please be brief.

I. Nonprofit's Overall Aims, Key Initiatives, Key Achievements & Distinctiveness

For 41 years, DCVA has united residents, municipalities, and schools to protect and restore the Darby Creek watershed, which spans four counties in southeastern Pennsylvania and flows into the Delaware River. What began as a grassroots cleanup in the 1980s has grown into a regional movement, engaging hundreds of volunteers annually.

Key initiatives include:

- **Stream Cleanups** – A 41-year tradition of removing trash from waterways.
- **Tree Planting & Habitat Restoration** – Thousands of trees planted to filter stormwater, prevent flooding, and beautify neighborhoods.
- **Environmental Education** – Programs for children and adults to build lifelong environmental stewardship.
- **Stormwater Management Projects** – Rain gardens, downspout planters, and ongoing water quality monitoring.
- **Policy & Advocacy** – Partnering with municipalities on anti-littering, anti-dumping, and plastic reduction ordinances.

Recent Achievements (2024–2025):

- **Ridley Township Tree Planting** – Upcoming tree planting event where we will plan 500 native trees with community volunteers.
- **Anti-Littering Sign Campaign** – 8 signs installed in Prospect Park, 24 ordered for Upper Darby; expansion planned in 2025.
- **Darby Creek Trail Adoption** – Monthly volunteer events to maintain and improve this community resource.
- **Invasive Species Management** – Launch of volunteer removal days at Sharp's Woods Preserve with Easttown EAC, with more to be scheduled this year.
- **Community Tree Plantings** – Added tree canopy at Waterford Apartments and other high-density areas.

DCVA's strength lies in its longevity, its wide volunteer base, and its ability to connect grassroots stewardship with municipal-level action.

II. Funding Request

Specific Needs & Issues Addressed

Despite significant progress, trash, litter, and dumping continue to degrade waterways, harm wildlife, and contribute to flooding risks. DCVA proposes to:

- Conduct record stream cleanups at 40+ sites across the watershed.
- Plant 100–150 additional native trees and shrubs to build on major plantings in 2025 and strengthen riparian buffers.
- Expand anti-littering signage, building on our recent Prospect Park and Upper Darby projects.
- Promote municipal policies such as plastic bag bans, anti-littering, and anti-dumping ordinances.

Why Fund This Now

With four decades of community leadership behind us, DCVA is entering its 41st year with renewed momentum. Municipal partners are asking for more support, residents are eager to plant trees and care for their neighborhoods, and volunteer interest is at a record high. However, we lack dedicated funding for these efforts. Foundation support will allow us to meet this moment and turn local enthusiasm into measurable action.

How Results & Impact Will Be Demonstrated

- Quantitative: Number of cleanup sites, pounds of trash removed, trees planted, signs installed, and ordinances advanced.
- Qualitative: Cleaner, greener public spaces; visible reductions in litter and dumping; stronger community pride.
- Long-term: A healthier watershed, safer and more resilient communities, and an enduring culture of stewardship across municipalities.

III. ATTACHMENTS

Email this support information. If it is on your website, please provide the URL.

1. Copy of **501 (c) (3)** federal tax-exempt letter
 2. List of **Board** of Directors, with their affiliations **URL:** <https://www.dcva.org/board>
 3. Most recent **annual report** **URL:** <https://www.dcva.org/page-18138>
 4. Audited or reviewed recent **financial statement** **URL:**
 5. Itemized **organizational operating budget** with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date
 6. If capacity building initiative, **itemized budget** (including external consultant's proposal, if applicable)
 7. Current **strategic plan**. If your nonprofit does **not** have a current strategic plan, **explain why**.
- Visit our website to learn more at www.chescocf.org
 - Proposals are only accepted electronically: <https://chescocf.org/receive/apply-for-grants/>
 - **Email proposals to** 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.

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CAPACITY BUILDING FOR NONPROFITS:
Coping with Cutbacks



Capacity building is about empowering nonprofits to do **more good, more effectively, and for the long term**. It strengthens an organization's ability to fulfill its mission, enhance sustainability, and better serve its community.

At its core, capacity building focuses on improving a nonprofit's internal systems, leadership, and resources so that impact can grow and endure.

Traditionally, capacity building has included efforts such as **board and staff leadership development, strategic planning, fundraising, and technology investments** to improve operations and organizational effectiveness.

Today, however, nonprofits face a rapidly changing environment. Shifts in federal policies have resulted in rapid changes at all levels and in new directions. Nonprofits must **"meet the moment" and cope with cutbacks— think differently, shift paradigms and transform how we understand and interact with the world around us...adapt how we plan, lead, fund, and collaborate.**

Capacity building can play a critical role in helping nonprofits adapt and innovate. This may include **funding scenario planning, exploring new revenue models, expanding partnerships, pursuing mergers or strategic alliances**, and other adaptive strategies that strengthen long-term resilience.

Capacity building support can take many forms, tailored to each organization's unique needs. Examples of projects that may be funded include:

- **CONTINGENCY & SCENARIO PLANNING**

Scenario Planning – Financial Modeling & Forecasting

- **PARTNERSHIPS, COLLABORATIONS**

Coalition Building – Collaboration - Mergers & Acquisitions

- **MERGER, CLOSURE**

These unprecedented times may present the need for a merger or closure of your organization.

Contact chaya@chescocf.org to confidentially discuss funding to assist in the planning or initial steps.

- **MISSION, VISION, STRATEGY**

Organizational Assessment - Strategic Planning – Strategic Restructuring – Coping With Cutbacks

- **BOARD ENGAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP**

Board Recruitment – Board Engagement – Increasing Networks & Community Support - Leadership Development – Executive Transition & Succession Planning

- **MARKETING, COMMUNICATION**

Nonprofit Business Messaging & Storytelling – Re-branding – Marketing Planning & Re-Positioning – Crisis Communications Planning

- **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

Major Gift Donor Identification, Cultivation, Development & Stewardship - Development Campaigns (Annual, Capital, Planned Giving) - Earned Income Development - Social Enterprise Feasibility & Development

- **TECHNOLOGY, OPERATIONS**

Business Continuity Planning - Financial Management - Human Resources - Volunteer Management - Industry Certification - Risk Management - Technology Improvements

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