

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date 9/10/2025

Contact Information

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Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: The mission of CTK's social services program, DeafCAN! is to provide a range of community supports to Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and late-deafened people in need, especially the most vulnerable, who are often reluctant to go to others for help because of communication barriers.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): We are based in West Chester and serve all of Chester County and Phil, Mont, Delaware, Bucks, and Lancaster counties. In 2024, 53% of all those we served were residents of Chester County.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: We serve Deaf individuals most isolated/vulnerable (justice impacted, DeafBlind, refugees/immigrants) with **ADDITIONAL** challenges/obstacles i.e. mental/physical health, housing, employment, financial, family/social issues... providing case management support due to communication barriers with other providers.

Annual Budget \$ <u>372,350</u>	<u>5</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>90</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>7</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>5</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>40</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>5</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>500</u> # of Volunteer Hours
100 % total	

Top 3-5 funding sources: Individuals 99,724, County Case Management contracts (ChesCo 45,000, DelCo 24,500), Foundations 23,000.

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: n/a

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 7,500

Proposal Summary: We are requesting \$7,500 to supplement our Chester County Contract (only 60% of 2024 costs covered) for Deaf individuals/families needing support due to communication barriers across many 'silos', including housing, health, financial/employment, legal, MH/IDD/Aging/Family, immigration, other challenges.

II. CHESTER County Community Foundation **Grant Proposal Narrative**

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

2025 DeafCAN! Proposal to Chester County Community Foundation

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

In 1991, members of a Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH) congregation formed Christ the King Deaf Lutheran Church in West Chester, PA. Among multiple support groups started by this congregation over the years, DeafCAN! was established in 2011 to address unmet human service needs.

In 2016 Christ the King Deaf Church merged with St. Philips Lutheran Church of the Deaf in Philadelphia which enabled DeafCAN! to reach more individuals and their families.

*Note: Although DeafCAN!'s human services are programs of Christ the King Deaf Church, religion plays no role in DeafCAN! We serve all and do not discriminate in any way in who/how we serve or hire.

DeafCAN! provides the only dedicated services in the entire state of PA to Deaf immigrants/refugees, and those in our criminal justice system and we were the first to train and provide Sensory Service Providers for those who are Deaf and Blind.

In 2024, we launched our new DeafCAN! website DEAFCANPA.ORG along with a new logo and slogan - CARE COMMUNICATE CONNECT COMMUNITY, representing our focus to move individuals from isolation to community. Our site highlights the stories of the Deaf individuals we serve and, as hoped, has led to an increase in referrals for those seeking support.

In 2025, as those requests for support expand beyond our in-person borders, we just completed our 'hybrid classroom' to reach and serve those in person and those we can only reach remotely, including Deaf inmates, and refugees/immigrants now afraid to leave their homes. Our strategic plan guides us to add staff for essential remote classes and case support.

2. Funding request

Description of key initiatives

Our primary initiative is to utilize our newly established hybrid classroom to increase our outreach and positively influence two isolated Deaf populations and to better equip a range of professionals to work with the Deaf population:

1. Deaf refugees/immigrants/asylees who are unable, *or now are too afraid*, to come to our in-person classes in West Chester and Philadelphia. Our classes used to focus on citizenship, integration, ASL and English, now focus on safety and protecting families from arrest and deportation as we are their only source of critical information. We have assisted Deaf individuals from over 35 different countries, many who struggle to access and comprehend even basic information from their families, neighbors, or employers.
2. Deaf inmates in Federal, State, and County jails who 'can't' participate in programs to help prepare them for reentry or softer services/programs like counseling that are essential to maintain self-esteem and confidence. Why? Because prisons rarely provide accommodations, like interpreters, to allow inmates to understand and participate.
3. We will provide classes/workshops for Professionals in health, human service, education, finance, legal, and other essential fields who encounter but have little to no experience working with Deaf individuals be better prepared.

With the Lions Club of West Chester having funded the \$30,000 project installation, the implementation of remote classes necessitates extensive planning, staffing and funding. After 2 years of discussions, in August, we provided the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the PA Dept of Corrections a demonstration of how our remote classes would work for their Deaf inmates, why they are so important, and how they will help them with compliance. We await their response and the next steps toward our pilot classes proposal.

Specific needs and issues to be addressed

Fifty two years after the Rehab Act of 1973, and 35 years after the passage of ADA, Deaf individuals continue to encounter substantial communication obstacles in all aspects of life. Many cope with being excluded from discussions at work, school, religious gatherings, and personal events like family dinners, funerals, and weddings. This adaptation often means they reluctantly accept a diminished role.

Their 'acceptance' of being minimally involved, not knowing what is happening, not getting the promotion (again) etc. 'works' until something more urgent arises: being fired or laid off, a divorce or family illness or death, their child having trouble in the neighborhood or school, losing their housing... At that point, the need for improved communication becomes critical and that is when we become involved. **Not as just interpreters** (there are lots of interpreters) but as **case workers** who advocate, explain, clarify results, think through next steps, sit with, listen, witness for them and their families. For most of us, these are all taken for granted because they are based on effective communication, exactly what Deaf individuals need.

Our new slogan, CARE COMMUNICATE CONNECT COMMUNITY, encapsulates our longstanding working model and enhances our mission clarity. We genuinely CARE about reaching out to those who are isolated, confused, and desperate, as we understand the pain of feeling arrested, shunned, and unheard. We prioritize 'hearing and listening' with our eyes, fulfilling the essential need for COMMUNICATION. This communication serves as the cornerstone for understanding and the foundation for building trust, fostering collaboration, and CONNECTING individuals with others who can provide assistance. For many, this journey transforms isolation into COMMUNITY, whether through our classes, social events, or ongoing support from volunteers and staff. We embody the 'DeafCAN!' spirit, demonstrating that they CAN secure employment, find housing, recover, reconnect, and reclaim what they may have lost or never had.



Activities/Objectives

By Dec 2025:

1. Launch our first remote class for Deaf refugees and immigrants, along with a full schedule and curriculum for 2025.
2. Hold our first fee-based remote training for professionals and hire a part-time case manager to handle increasing referrals. Transition this case manager to full time.
3. Start two pilot classes with prisons, one with the Pennsylvania Dept of Corrections and one with the Federal Bureau of Prisons.
4. Fully implement new outcomes-based services, with 14 social health determinants, developed with Chester and Delaware Counties.
5. Carry out a major gifts campaign Fall 2025, to raise an additional \$150,000 to support our expanding services.

By 2026:

1. Add two staff to teach and to support our hybrid classroom and reaching...
2. 100+ new Deaf inmates
3. 100+ new Deaf refugees/immigrants
4. 200+ professionals in health, human services, education and criminal justice who want to serve Deaf individuals more effectively.

Throughout the year, we actively organize a diverse range of social and educational events aimed at providing support and fostering a sense of community for Deaf individuals and families. These include ASL classes, the Deaf Expo featuring over 30 vendors and 300+ attendees, Family Nights on the second Friday of each month, a DeafBlind picnic, a Holiday Social, and this year a special celebration for the 15th anniversary of DeafCAN! in the Fall.

Why it is important to fund this now

For 2024/25, Chester County Dept of Human Services increased our case management contract from \$ 30,000 to \$ 45,000, but our expenses for 2024 were 71,000. We worked hard to supplement our contract with grants and individual support but took a loss in 2024. Now, with our hybrid classroom surely to uncover more Chester County individuals in need, we are guided to add additional staff for essential remote class and case support.

In the current environment, non-profit organizations must adopt innovative strategies due to several challenges: a decline in federal funding through grants and contracts, and increased competition for support from foundations and corporations. Even more alarming are the rising anti-DEI and anti-immigrant movements, which are already affecting the Deaf Community.

How impact and results will be demonstrated

Starting July 1 we initiated our outcomes based system tailored for Deaf individuals and their families in Chester and Delaware County. We collaborate with our clients to set goals with incremental objectives focused on 14 key 'Social Determinants' that represent the most prevalent challenges: Accommodations (such as interpreters, captions, safety devices), Education, Employment, Family, Finances, Food, Health, Housing, Legal issues, Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities (MHIDD), Refugee and Immigrant support, Safety, Social/Community engagement, and Transportation.

One example of a Deaf Chester County man we serve:

Family - After his stroke we assisted him to reconnect with his daughter and move in with his father. We assisted him and his mother-in-law to cope with his father's decline and death which required many family discussions and interpreting.

Finances - Set up a checking account, started Social Security Disability, Medicare and Medicaid.

Food - Set up food stamps and connected him with the local food bank.

Health - Assisted him obtaining primary care and scheduling appointments with specialists in cardiology, neurology, and eye care.

MHIDD - Helped navigate the complex application for Waiver support through Chester Co. and PA.

Social - Connected him with the Deaf Community by facilitating his participation in various social events.

Transportation - Coordinated with his family transportation to health appts and social activities.

Communication remains a significant barrier, compounded by a long-standing history of misunderstanding, mistakes, misdiagnoses, and mistreatment that leads Deaf individuals to hesitate in seeking assistance from within the mainstream. This reluctance is precisely why we find ourselves working through a broad range of service sectors or silos.