

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 to apply online for grants from all Community Foundation Funds.
- **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.

Please contact Grants Administrator **Kevin Baffa** at **(610) 696-8211** or **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

Date

Contact Information

Organization Name: The Oxford Theatre
Address: PO Box 143 Oxford Pa 19363
Phone: 484.354.8780
Website: theoxfordtheatre.com
Year Incorporated: 2025
FEIN: 33-3027195

ED/CEO Name: Liz Megill
ED E-mail: lmegill@theoxfordtheatre.com
Board Chair Name: Leslie Sleesman
Board Chair Approval (check here): ☒
Primary Contact Name: Liz Megill
Primary Contact E-mail: lmegill@theoxfordtheatre.com

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: The Oxford Theatre's mission is to rebuild and restore a cultural landmark in downtown Oxford, transforming it into a community hub for arts, education, and economic revitalization. As a 501(c)(3), the Theatre is committed to providing accessible arts programming, supporting local artists, and driving downtown economic growth while honoring the town's historic character.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): All of Chester County, primarily Oxford Borough and Southern Chester County

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: We anticipate serving **40,000 visitors annually**, including families, students, seniors, and local organizations.

Annual Budget \$ 374,736

1 – In process of hiring a 2nd # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

77.9% % of budget for program expenses 8 # of Board Volunteers

4.8\$ % of budget for administrative expenses 2 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

17.3 % of budget for fundraising expenses 720 # of Volunteer Hours

100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

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: \$ _____\$7,500_____

Proposal Summary:

The Oxford Theatre – Revitalizing Downtown through Arts & Culture

The Oxford Theatre, a newly established 501(c)(3), is leading the effort to rebuild a cherished community landmark lost in the 2023 fire. Our vision is to create a **state-of-the-art performing arts center in the heart of downtown Oxford** a space that will bring back what has long been missing: consistent, high-quality arts, culture, and educational opportunities for our region.

This project has galvanized remarkable support. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has invested \$2.1 million through the RACP program, and local philanthropic leaders the James S. Herr Family Foundation, Oxford Area Foundation, and the King Family have pledged an additional \$1.2 million in matching commitments. This level of backing demonstrates not only the community's passion but also recognition of the theatre's potential to transform downtown Oxford.

The Oxford Theatre will **draw more than 40,000 visitors annually**, driving foot traffic to local restaurants, shops, and businesses, and positioning downtown Oxford as a cultural destination for Southern Chester County, northern Maryland, and Lancaster County. The facility will feature a 275-seat mainstage, a black box performance space, classrooms for arts education, and flexible gathering spaces creating opportunities for live theatre, film, music, youth programming, and community events that are currently unavailable in our town.

Support from the Chester County Community Foundation will strengthen both our **organizational capacity** and **early operations**. Funding will allow us to build strong governance and leadership systems, expand fundraising capacity to secure long-term sustainability, and engage the community through early-stage programming and outreach.

By investing in this project, CCCF will help restore an economic and cultural anchor to downtown Oxford, ensuring that the arts are not just revived but made central to the town's growth, identity, and vitality for generations to come.

I. Nonprofit History, Goals, Achievements, and Distinctiveness

The Oxford Theatre, incorporated as a 501(c)(3) in 2025, was founded to restore a beloved historical landmark and create a community anchor in downtown Oxford. The original theatre, located on South 3rd Street, was tragically lost in the 2023 fire that devastated the downtown BID. Rather than allowing this loss to define the community, local leaders, residents, and funders rallied to reimagine the theatre as a modern performing arts center that will serve Southern Chester County and beyond.

Our goal is to rebuild the Oxford Theatre as a **multi-use cultural hub** featuring a 275-seat mainstage, 70 seat a black box theatre, arts education classrooms, and flexible gathering spaces. By providing year-round performances, film, educational programming, and community events, the Oxford Theatre will fill a long-missing need in our downtown: **consistent, accessible arts and culture.**

Key achievements in just the past year demonstrate our distinctiveness and momentum:

- **Secured \$2.1 million in state funding** through the Pennsylvania Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP).
- **Received \$1.2 in matching commitments** from local foundations and families, including the James S. Herr Family Foundation, Oxford Area Foundation, and the King Family land donation.
- **Established strong partnerships** with Oxford Mainstreet, Inc. (OMI) and Oxford Borough, ensuring broad-based governance and alignment with community revitalization goals.
- **Launched silent phase of the capital campaign**, with early success engaging donors and raising awareness of the project's economic and cultural impact.

What makes the Oxford Theatre distinct is its dual role: it is both a cultural project and an economic development engine. The theatre is projected to attract more than **40,000 visitors annually**, driving foot traffic to downtown businesses, boosting local commerce, and positioning Oxford as a cultural destination for Southern Chester County, northern Maryland, and Lancaster County.

II. Funding Request

We are requesting **\$7,500 from the Chester County Community Foundation** to support both

capacity building and early-stage operating needs.

Description of Key Initiatives:

Funding from CCCF will allow us to:

- **Strengthen governance and leadership:** formalize policies, expand board training, and develop succession and leadership planning.
- **Build fundraising capacity:** support the transition to a full-time Development Director role and invest in donor cultivation strategies to ensure sustainable growth.
- **Expand community engagement and outreach:** pilot early-stage arts education and community events to build audiences and prove demand before the theatre opens.

Specific Needs and Issues Addressed:

As a newly incorporated nonprofit with a large-scale capital project underway, our greatest need is building the organizational infrastructure to sustain long-term success. Without capacity investments, there is risk of overextension. With this grant, we can align leadership, staff, and systems to deliver effectively.

Why It Is Important to Fund This Now:

The Oxford Theatre has already secured significant public and private funding, but to leverage these investments we must demonstrate strong organizational capacity. The coming year is pivotal: architectural design, feasibility studies, and campaign milestones are underway. CCCF support will ensure we have the governance, fundraising, and operational foundation in place to meet this moment.

How Impact and Results Will Be Demonstrated:

- Adoption of governance and policy framework by Board of Directors.
- Hiring and onboarding of Development Director by mid-2026.
- Measurable donor growth (X new donors by year-end).
- Pilot community programs launched in 2026, with participant numbers tracked.
- Progress toward \$7M capital campaign goal.

III. Capacity Building Impact

How Will This Initiative Impact the Nonprofit?

This investment will elevate the Oxford Theatre from a start-up nonprofit branching from a 20+ year operating non-profit Oxford Mainstreet, to a fully functioning organization capable

of managing a multi-million-dollar capital campaign and operating a community theatre.

How Will the Impact Be Measured?

- Increased fundraising totals and donor base.
- Documented governance improvements
- Staff hired and retained.
- Community engagement metrics (attendance, feedback from pilot programs).

Expected Activities, Timeline & Costs:

- **Q1–Q2 2026:** Hire Development Director (\$85,000 salary).
- **Q3 2026:** .Community engagement pilot programs (\$10,000 for facilitators, space, materials).
- **Q4 2026:** Implementation of donor CRM/technology system (\$7,500).

Consulting Services:

Potentially, should we not find and hire a Development Director by the end of this year, we will look into bringing on a consultant to support fundraising, strategy, and campaign management. If not MW Strategies, then a similar firm would be engaged (see attached proposal)

Conclusion

The Oxford Theatre represents both a cultural revival and an economic development opportunity for Southern Chester County. With substantial state and private investment already secured, CCCF support will help us strengthen our foundation and ensure we deliver on the promise of this once-in-a-generation project. By funding this request, the Community Foundation will be directly investing in the revitalization of downtown Oxford, the return of the arts to our community, and the creation of a sustainable institution that will serve residents and visitors for generations.

Grant Amount Requested: \$7,500