

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date: 10/31/2025

Contact Information

Light House Rehabilitation Center d/b/a Lighthouse Vocational Services
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Year Incorporated: 1975
FEIN: 23-1973053

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Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

___ Arts, Culture & Humanities ___ Environment/Animal Welfare ___ Education
___ Health X Human Services ___ Religion

Mission: The mission of Lighthouse Vocational Services (Lighthouse) is to promote growth, opportunity, and hope for persons with disabilities based on Christian values and principles. Lighthouse accomplishes its mission by providing high-quality, person-centered programming including vocational services, educational enrichment, and community integration experiences. The driving force of the organization is the belief that God created each individual with value and a purpose for life.

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

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: Lighthouse provides transportation, training, and career-based programming for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Autism through seven specialized programs. Lighthouse serves more than 220 participants annually and partners with over 200 businesses across Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Annual Budget \$	<u>5,623,675</u>	<u>50</u>	# of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>80</u>	% of budget for program expenses	<u>11</u>	# of Board Volunteers
<u>12</u>	% of budget for administrative expenses	<u>21</u>	# of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>8</u>	% of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>820</u>	# of Volunteer Hours
<u>100</u>	% total		

Top 3-5 funding sources: Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust, Vanguard Charitable- The Stabler Fund, High Foundation, Hahn Family Foundation, CRELS Foundation

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building ___ or General Operating X ?

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 5,000

Proposal Summary:

Lighthouse is requesting \$5,000 for general operating support to extend employment services to more individuals with disabilities in Chester County. As of 12/31/24, 390 individuals with disabilities in Chester County do not have access to services, and 218 of those individuals are in the emergency category, which indicates critical need for services.

NONPROFIT OVERVIEW

History:

Founded in 1975, the mission of Lighthouse Vocational Services (Lighthouse) is to promote growth, opportunity, and hope for persons with disabilities based on Christian values and principles. Lighthouse accomplishes its mission by providing high-quality, person-centered programming including vocational services, educational enrichment, and community integration experiences. The driving force of the organization is the belief that God created each individual with value and a purpose for life.

Lighthouse focuses on the needs of people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) and Autism, from students aged 14 to older adults. When initially referred to Lighthouse's services, most individuals are not employed in competitive businesses due to the nature of their disability. Lighthouse stands as a beacon of hope for individuals with disabilities, who have been historically marginalized by society, as the Lighthouse staff advocate for their inclusion as valuable members of the workforce and of society at large. Through diverse services including onsite and community-based employment, volunteerism, and life skills training, individuals are celebrated for their uniqueness and receive customized services based on their needs and goals.

Lighthouse has nearly 80 staff serving approximately 230 individuals with disabilities per year, demonstrating significant growth beyond pre-pandemic numbers (160 participants per year average in early 2020). While mainly serving Lancaster County, PA, Lighthouse extends services to individuals in three additional PA counties: Chester, Lebanon, and Berks.

Goals:

Lighthouse's programs focus on developing each participant vocationally, educationally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually, according to their individualized needs while focusing on their unique abilities and talents. Care for participants is highly personalized, as one staff person provides support to no more than six individuals at a time.

Lighthouse provides individuals with disabilities with access to customized training and vocational experiences geared to help them meet measurable goals, increase their independence, and improve their quality of life. Lighthouse's goals and programs derive from the overall mission to equip, support, empower, and integrate people with disabilities into the community, so they can earn higher paychecks, increase their self-confidence, enhance their social skills, and become better citizens.

Key Achievements/Distinctiveness:

Lighthouse has been recognized by the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) as a leading organization in the region and industry. Amid the pandemic, ODP recognized Lighthouse as a regional trailblazer in making virtual learning available quickly and spanning different interests and skills. In 2025, Lighthouse was recognized by the Pennsylvania Senate and The House of Representatives and received official citations celebrating 50 years of excellent service. The documents recognized Lighthouse for its leadership in the community, its expansion of programs over the years, and its significant contributions in improving the quality of life for individuals.

Below are some of Lighthouse's practices that showcase its uniqueness:



1. The wide range of programming offered is unique for the region Lighthouse serves. It is rare for similar organizations to offer programs such as Strengthening Pathways Adult Training, Without Walls Virtual Learning, STEPS, and the Student Transition Program, which has a low government reimbursement rate. While Lighthouse primarily serves individuals with IDD and Autism, Lighthouse also serves a growing number of individuals with mental health conditions. This is most evident in the Supported Employment program.
2. Lighthouse offers a subsidized rate of less than 30% of the program rates to approximately 20 individuals without government funding and is one of the only providers in the region to even extend access to these individuals, many of whom are from the Amish and Mennonite communities.
3. Lighthouse has a fleet of over 30 vehicles to transport 90 individuals to its location each week and to transport over 65 individuals to and from Community Participation Support and Small Group Employment opportunities.
4. Lighthouse partners with approximately 200 businesses across Southeastern PA and accepts a high percentage of client referrals from government entities. In Supported Employment, 98% of referrals are accepted.

FUNDING REQUEST

Description:

In Chester County, Lighthouse serves individuals with disabilities and mental health conditions through its Supported Employment program. Supported Employment helps individuals with job placement and then provides one-on-one coaching at the site of the job to help individuals have strong beginnings in their careers. Employment Specialists help individuals gain and maintain natural supports with work supervisors and other employees until they no longer need coaching support from Lighthouse staff. Uniquely, Lighthouse's Supported Employment takes a person-centered, customized approach and assists individuals in identifying jobs and careers that interest and fulfill them.

Two Employment Specialists currently serve 25 individuals in Chester County. Many individuals have excelled at their placements and no longer need Lighthouse support. Other individuals still receive support, and staff work closely with them to find jobs that align their needs with those of employers. Lighthouse partners with many local businesses to provide paid work opportunities for individuals. In Chester County, these businesses include Westtown School, Wegmans, Giant Stores, Handi-Crafters, Longwood Gardens, Oxford Library, YMCA of Greater Brandywine, Project C.U.R.E., and many more. Lighthouse staff utilize rented office space in Chester County for documentation and planning purposes.

Lighthouse is requesting \$5,000 for its Supported Employment program in Chester County. Funds will help Lighthouse extend access to more individuals in need of services. Lighthouse seeks to hire additional staff who can focus their time and energy on offering services to more Chester County clients, and grant funds will help partially cover the salary costs.

Need/Importance of Funding Now:

People with IDD and Autism have limited access to services in general and especially employment-based services. People with IDD continue to be underserved each year due to an ongoing Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce crisis. Prolonged underinvestment and low government reimbursement rates have contributed to low DSP wages that have not kept pace with the cost of



living. This has caused an exodus of qualified workers from the field. In PA, as of December 2024, 7,663 individuals with IDD are on a wait list for services, and an additional 1,915 individuals are waiting for Autism programs (PA Waiting List Campaign). As of 12/31/24, 390 individuals with disabilities in Chester County do not have access to services, and 218 of those individuals are in the emergency category, which indicates critical need for services.

Employment statistics for individuals with disabilities demonstrate the significance of the need for services. Nationally, during 2024, only 22.7% of individuals with a disability were employed, much lower than 65.5% of individuals without a disability who were employed (Bureau of Labor Statistics). Factors that contribute to unemployment are the limitations of a person's disability, social stigma and employer discrimination, and lack of access to vocational training, one-on-one support, and transportation. 100% of Lighthouse's program participants are considered low-income individuals even if they live with their families or in residential homes.

Impact:

The goal of the Employment Services program is to improve economic freedom and quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities, by helping them obtain jobs in the community. Access to employment gives individuals the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to their communities and to become more self-sufficient.

Individuals in Chester County have been positively impacted by the Supported Employment program.

An individual from Parkesburg had a traumatic experience in late 2024 and reached out to Lighthouse staff for support in finding employment in 2025. She was initially hired by a grocery store in their floral department, but the job did not end up being the right fit. Lighthouse staff advocated for her by speaking to the store manager and HR, and they were able to find another job in the store that aligned better with her skills. The individual loves her job and is gaining independence and confidence through her employment.

An individual from West Chester recently obtained employment. In high school, she completed the Technical College High School's (TCHS) Early Childhood Education program. She met all the requirements except for getting her Childhood Development Associate (CDA) Credential. She was recently hired at an early learning center as a Preschool Assistant and is working with 3- and 4-year-olds. The owner is paying for her to get her CDA Credential. The individual is happy and loves working at what she calls her "dream job"!

In Fiscal Year 2026 (through June 30, 2026), the expected outcome for Supported Employment in Chester County is to serve 50 individuals and to partner with at least 14 job sites.

Lighthouse's success is also measured on the individual level, through goal setting, implementation, and documentation completed by staff for every program participant. Individuals served by Lighthouse attend quarterly/annual meetings which include their family members, Lighthouse staff, Support Coordinators from their respective county, staff from the individual's residential home (if applicable), and other support team members. The goals, needs, and progress of each client are assessed during these meetings, and adjustments are made to support their continued optimal growth. Skill development is tracked and documented in participants' Individualized Support Plans (ISPs).