



## I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

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**Date 11/24/25**

### Contact Information

Organization Name: **West Chester Dance Works**  
 Address: **315 Westtown Road #9 West Chester, PA 19382**  
 Phone: **610-692-3398**  
 Website: **www.westchesterdanceworks.org**  
 Year Incorporated: **1983**  
 FEIN: **30-0080438**

ED/CEO Name: **Diane Matthews**  
 ED/CEO E-mail: **Director@wcdw.org**  
 Board Chair Name: **Donna Hymes**  
 Board Chair Approval (check here):   
 Primary Contact Name: **Diane Matthews**  
 Primary Contact E-mail: **Director@wcdw.org**

### Organization Information:

#### Field/s of Interest:

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

**Mission:** The mission of West Chester Dance Works (WCDW) is to uplift, nurture, and transform dancers and community through an accessible, inclusive dance experience.

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

WCDW serves Chester County, Delaware County, Montgomery County and the greater Delaware Valley.

#### **Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served.** *(Include Chester County # &/or % served.)*

It has been our mission to not limit the exposure of dance to just the youth or one population, but to give opportunity to those in a variety of demographics, including age, national origin, background, ability to pay, body size and more. We serve a diverse community with dancers and audiences including Black, White, Asian and Latinx people. As an organization with diverse leadership, it is important for us to be an inclusive place where all feel safe to grow and thrive. We are actively seeking to expose individuals who may not know about organized dance classes, and all that can be gained. We have always tried to find those who may not be able to afford dance classes to offer a scholarship. Membership in our performing groups is open to anyone nine years of age and older, amateur or professional, interested in participating after acceptance through the completion of an audition process meeting all commitment criteria set forth by the artistic director. Students ages 2.5 and up in our resident school, the Diane Matthews School of Dance Arts, have the opportunity for exposure to various genres of dance instruction. WCDW had 34 performing members and 170 school students this past season, and it is estimated that approximately 5,000 individuals were reached from the variety of engagements the company partook in. Over the past year, engagements included neighborhood parks, community events, dance festivals, senior citizens' facilities, fundraisers for autism and breast cancer awareness, Juneteenth celebrations, and more.

**Annual Budget** \$ 374,500 1 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff  
50 % of budget for program expenses 7 # of Board Volunteers  
38 % of budget for administrative expenses 25 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers  
1 % of budget for fundraising expenses 150 # of Volunteer Hours

100% = total

**Top 3-5 funding sources:**

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

**If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Contingency Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partnerships, Collaborations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Merger, Closure
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mission, Vision, Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Board Engagement & Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marketing, Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	Operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology
<input type="checkbox"/>	If other, please describe:				

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

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

At West Chester Dance Works (WCDW), we are proud to be a 43-year-old, minority-run and woman-owned nonprofit committed to inclusive dance education, performance, and community engagement. Following our merger with the Diane Matthews School of Dance Arts, we now serve more than 175 dancers through five performing companies, along with outreach in schools, hospitals, senior centers, and community venues. To sustain and grow our mission, including meaningful works like *Rachel Harris: One Woman Over the Line*, we are seeking general operating support to strengthen our marketing, branding, website, and administrative infrastructure. A \$10,000 investment will help us improve our digital systems, unify our communications, increase enrollment and audience reach, enhance donor engagement, and streamline operations. This will allow us to continue building a strong, visible, and sustainable organization that brings inclusive, community-building arts experiences to Chester County.



## General Operating Support Proposal

Chester County Community Foundation,

West Chester Dance Works (WCDW) is a nonprofit arts organization with a 43-year history of uplifting, nurturing, and transforming dancers and communities through accessible, inclusive dance experiences. Founded and continuously operated as a minority-run, woman-owned organization, WCDW's mission is to use dance to improve outlook, foster dialogue, promote reconciliation, and cultivate unity across backgrounds, ethnicities, and identities.

Our leadership and programming reflect these core values of diversity and inclusion, offering opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to engage with dance as students, performers, and audiences. In 2022, WCDW completed a merger with the Diane Matthews School of Dance Arts, bringing all educational and performing activities under one nonprofit umbrella. This unification created a seamless pipeline from training to community engagement, strengthening both our reach and infrastructure.

Today, WCDW operates five performing companies and a school serving over 175 dancers, reaching audiences in schools, hospitals, senior centers, festivals, and community venues throughout Chester County and beyond. Our work promotes healthy lifestyles, artistic advocacy, leadership skills, and community connection, especially for underserved youth who may not otherwise access all the benefits of quality dance education and performances.

### Programmatic Highlights and Community Impact

A centerpiece of our work is the revival of *Rachel Harris: One Woman Over the Line*, a multimedia production telling the true story of an enslaved woman who escaped to freedom in 1830s West Chester, only to be recaptured. Through dance, narration, music, and historical imagery, this production brings regional history to life and sparks dialogue about freedom, resilience, and community.

As contributor Melissa Strong wrote for the Broad Street Review after our June concerts at Philadelphia's Performance Garage, "*Rachel Harris* is a unique work of dance theater with powerful themes relating to the past and the present... an important and moving work that deserves a wider audience." The choreography emphasizes courage and liberation rather than violence, honoring the human spirit and those who risked everything to pursue liberty.

Originally premiering in 2008 and adapted for multiple formats—including full-length productions, workshops, and residencies—*Rachel Harris* exemplifies our mission of engaging diverse audiences in reflection on social justice through the arts.

Beyond this production, WCDW reaches hundreds annually through inclusive classes, performance opportunities, and outreach events that build self-esteem, wellness, and creative expression.



## **Operational Needs for Sustained Excellence**

While WCDW continues to expand its reach, sustaining this growth requires investment in operational infrastructure. Managing multiple ensembles, school programs, and outreach efforts demands strong marketing, communication, and digital systems.

Currently, our public identity and outreach face challenges such as inconsistent branding, fragmented digital platforms, and limited audience tracking. The former dual structure of school and company created confusion and diluted our presence. Over the past two years, we have refined our mission, clarified roles, and strengthened internal systems. Now, we seek to solidify this progress through professional branding, website modernization, and marketing tools to unify communications, expand reach, and ensure sustainability.

## **Key Operational Priorities**

To maximize community impact, WCDW seeks general operating funds to:

- Enhance marketing and communications through a consultant-led visual identity and messaging strategy reflecting our values of diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Modernize digital infrastructure by redesigning and consolidating websites into a single mobile-friendly, accessible platform integrating enrollment, ticketing, and donor management
- Invest in marketing technology by upgrading social media, email, and digital advertising platforms with analytics for data-driven recruitment and outreach
- Support administrative capacity to maintain skilled staff and efficient systems that uphold the quality and reach of all WCDW programs

## **Budget Overview and Funding Request**

Funds will support core operational components that underpin all programming:

- Marketing & Branding Consultant: \$6,000
  - Website Redesign & Development: \$4,500
  - Marketing Platform Subscriptions: \$1,500
- Total Cost: \$12,000

Requested Funding: \$10,000 (the maximum funding amount available from your organization)

This investment will directly sustain programs like *Rachel Harris* by strengthening audience engagement and ensuring the professional presentation that reflects our mission.



## Outcomes and Impact

General operating support will enable WCDW to:

- Increase student enrollment toward and beyond pre-pandemic levels.
- Strengthen public identity and brand clarity to attract donors, students, and partners.
- Expand audience reach for performances and outreach events.
- Improve operational efficiency, allowing staff to focus on artistry and relationships.
- Deepen our capacity to deliver inclusive programming that promotes healing, dialogue, and unity.

The anticipated outcomes of this initiative include increased clarity in the organization's public identity, leading to a more recognizable and consistent presence. We expect higher engagement across digital platforms and social media, fostering stronger connections with our audiences. Additionally, the organization anticipates growth in student enrollment returning to pre-pandemic levels, increased donor support, and overall improvement in audience attendance. Finally, the initiative aims to create stronger alignment between internal operations and external communications, ensuring that messaging and organizational activities reinforce one another effectively.

Impact will be measured through a combination of internal, external, and digital indicators. Internally, staff and board surveys will track confidence in using new brand language, while adoption rates will reflect how consistently programs and events apply the updated brand guidelines. Externally, surveys and focus groups will assess improved awareness of the mission and perceptions of inclusion. On the digital front, website analytics will monitor bounce rate reduction, longer session duration, increased traffic, and conversions such as ticket sales, donations, and enrollments. Student recruitment will be evaluated through enrollment growth, with progress measured towards the target of 230 students. Finally, efficiency gains will be tracked through hours saved by staff due to streamlined systems, stronger email open and click rates, and marketing return on investment measured by cost per acquisition and overall ad performance.

This investment will not only improve visibility now, but will also create the foundation for sustainable growth for years to come. We appreciate your continued support of West Chester Dance Works. If you require any further information, please call us at (610) 692-3398.

Thank you,  
Diane Matthews  
Founder & Executive Director  
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West Chester, PA 19382