



AMERICA250 GRANT APPLICATION FORM
CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Contact Information

FEIN #: 23-731-3407

Organization Field of Interest

X	Arts, Culture, Heritage		Environment, Animals		Education, Library
	Health & Human Services		Social Justice, Civil Rights		Religion
	Municipality/Governmental		If other, please describe:		

A lot	Some	A little	
X			This inspires & engages a wide array of people in commemoration of America’s founding with our Revolutionary Declaration of Independence .
X			This connects Chester County’s stories to the nation’s past, present & future .
			This commemoration is truly by the people, for all people . We invite wide input & welcome all to actively participate.
X			This examines & fosters fundamental rights of Life, Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness for All .
	X		We zoom in to CCCCF250 planning meetings to share information & ideas.

	\$250		\$1,250		\$2,250		\$5,250	X	\$10,250
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What will it cost overall? Who are you partnering & coordinating with?

In the spring of the America250 celebration, People's Light will produce a new play, *The Woman Question* by Suli Holum, to be directed by Melissa Crespo. The production will premiere on our Leonard C. Haas Stage from May 6 – May 24, 2025.

Celebratory, incisive, and daring, *The Woman Question* interweaves true stories of faculty and students at the historic Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania (WMCP) in the late 19th Century with contemporary experiences of women struggling to navigate America's healthcare and medical fields today. Central to the narrative are Chester County, PA native Dr. Anna Broomall and Philadelphian Dr. Rebecca Cole. 150 years ago, these two WMCP faculty members, both WMCP graduates, one white, one African-American, led the charge for women's health and liberation, as they grappled with legal and physical threats to themselves, their patients, and their students. These Victorian heroines were joined by a cohort of young doctors-in-training from across the country and as far away as India, Japan, and Syria. As these women form intimate and resilient bonds, and fight together against rampant misogyny, they also clash over how much to challenge and resist societal norms and laws at the risk of undermining their education, institution, and personal well-being.

Our award-winning creative team, including Philadelphia actor/creator Suli Holum, People's Light Company actor/co-creator Melanye Finister, director Melissa Crespo, seven additional actors and additional designers (all identifying female or non-binary), are engaged in a multi-phase collaboration to develop this time-spanning, highly physical and wildly ambitious portrait of women across time who seek refuge from storms of medical malpractice and legislation designed to control, dismiss and abuse them. With critical seed support from the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, the creative team and core cast members did extensive research at the WMCP Archive housed at Drexel University. From this deep dive into artifacts and first-person accounts, they discovered a community of medical pioneers who would perform subversive skits and sketches, debate vigorously as part of mock trials, and revel in their masquerade balls and other parties. Incidents such as "The Jeering Episode," which was covered by newspapers around the world, and the presence of Nicodemus the birthing doll, also became rich sources of inspiration for Holum and her collaborators as they built this revelatory dissection of the ways women, past and present, have transcended minimization and marginalization in professional medicine.

Our community partners for this production include the Chester County History Center, the Delaware County Historical Society, the Drexel University Archives, the Chester County Fund for Women and Girls, The Chester County LGBT Equality Alliance, and others.

This major production has a total budget of \$746,000. The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage has provided a grant of \$300,000, and we have recently been awarded a grant of \$52,000 from the Edgerton New Plays Award program. Additional support from individual sponsors and ticket sales will help fulfill the entire budget, but we continue to seek support as the artists refine their vision during the workshopping, pre-rehearsal, and upcoming rehearsal process.

A Let Freedom Ring grant from the America 250 program will help the creative team realize their ambitious vision for the piece, and will help us spread the word to the many communities – medical, immigrant, women, those interested in local historical impact, and many more – for whom this time-spanning play will have resonance.

Please e-mail this Mini-Grant request with your 501c3 letter to grants@chescofc.org

Let Freedom Ring Mini-Grant decisions are made on the 25th of each month.

Questions? Contact Grants Officer Stephenie Stevens (610) 696-8211 grants@chescofc.org

For Good. For All. Forever.