



I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

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This page will be shared electronically with Grant Panel Members & Fund Advisors + posted online.

Date: 2/2/2026

Contact Information

Organization Name: The Association for the Colonial Theatre (ACT) ED/CEO Name: Jennifer L. Carlson
 Address: 227 Bridge Street Phoenixville, PA 19460 ED/CEO E-mail: jennifer@thecolonialtheatre.com
 Phone: 610-917-1228 Board Chair Name: Meghan E. Sutherland
 Website: thecolonialtheatre.com Board Chair Approval (check here): X
 Year Incorporated: 1996 Primary Contact Name: Kristine Connolly
 Primary Contact E-mail: kristine@thecolonialtheatre.com
 FEIN: 23-2846336

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Arts, Culture, Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Library	<input type="checkbox"/>	Environment, Animals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Justice, Civic Engagement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion	<input type="checkbox"/> If other, please describe:			

Mission: Showcase the transformative power of the arts to enrich lives, connect people, and enhance the cultural and economic vitality of Phoenixville and surrounding communities.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): The Colonial Theatre primarily serves the population of Chester County, but also presents arts programming to individuals from Montgomery, Bucks, Lancaster, Berks, and Delaware County, as well as the City of Philadelphia and New Jersey’s Philadelphia-area suburbs.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served. (Include Chester County # &/or % served.) The Colonial Theatre presents live and film arts programming to 60,000 individuals per year. Within this population, approximately 65% reside in Chester County. During our 2024-2025 fiscal year, The Colonial distributed 300 complimentary tickets to fellow nonprofits and charitable causes and donated \$20,000 in event rental fees to nonprofit groups hosting events within our spaces.

Annual Budget (current fiscal year budget, September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026) \$ 1,867,893 _____
9 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
63.2 % of budget for program expenses 13 # of Board Volunteers
34.6 % of budget for administrative expenses 90 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
2.2 % of budget for fundraising expenses 2,217 # of Volunteer Hours
 =100%

Top 3-5 funding sources:

- The Archie W. and Grace Berry Foundation
- Kenneth and Moira Mumma
- The Community Coalition (dissolved as of 2025)

This grant proposal is for: \$10,000 Direct Service Programs & General Operating &/or _____ Capacity Building

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

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

The Association of the Colonial Theatre (ACT), also known as The Colonial Theatre, requests \$10,000 in urgent general operating funding as our nonprofit continues to provide arts programming to 60,000 individuals each year, while generating a \$2.1 million economic impact across our region*.

**Number generated by the Americans for the Arts, Arts & Economic Prosperity IV Calculator*



II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information in 1-3 pages. Please be brief.

1. Nonprofit's overall aims, key initiatives, key achievements & distinctiveness

2. Funding request

- What specific needs & issues are being addressed, via what programs and services?
- Why is it important to fund this now?
- How will results & impact be demonstrated?

III. ATTACHMENTS

Email this support information. If it is on your website, please provide the URL.

1. Copy of **501 (c) (3)** federal tax-exempt letter: **attached**
 2. List of **Board** of Directors, with their affiliations: **attached**
 3. Most recent **annual report** **URL:** https://thecolonialtheatre.com/wp-content/uploads/IMPACT-REPORTS_FY24_25.pdf
 4. Audited or reviewed recent **financial statement:** **attached, most recently completed**
 5. Itemized **organizational operating budget** with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date: **attached**
 - ~~6. If capacity building initiative, **itemized budget** (including external consultant's proposal, if applicable)~~
 7. Current **strategic plan:** https://thecolonialtheatre.com/wp-content/uploads/Colonial-Strategic-Plan_2024_2026.pdf
- Visit our website to learn more at www.chescocf.org
 - Proposals are only accepted electronically: <https://chescocf.org/receive/apply-for-grants/>
 - **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 Kevin Baffa, Grants Administrator or Stephenie Stevens, Grants Officer at **(610) 696-8211** or grants@chescocf.org with any questions.

*Connecting people who care with causes that matter,
so their philanthropy makes a difference, now & forever.*

CCCF Grant Narrative – THE COLONIAL THEATRE

1. Nonprofit’s overall aims, key initiatives, key achievements & distinctiveness

Key Aims

The Colonial Theatre’s four primary aims are identified as “Four Pillars of Focus” in our most recent three-year strategic plan (2024 – 2026) and include: **financial sustainability, programming, a pre-restoration plan, and community citizen and engagement.**

To support the financial sustainability pillar, The Colonial hired a full-time advancement officer in 2023 and expanded all contributed income functions within the organization. Alongside the advancement officer, the organization’s executive director spends an increased amount of time bolstering individual giving, major gift, and grant activities. Within the programming space, The Colonial is allocating more calendar space and staff resources in service of live events (live music, staged readings, author events) attracting new, eager audiences across those art forms. Due to audience and industry trends, greater attention is being given to nostalgic, repertory film programs as opposed to new release titles. The pre-restoration pillar refers to urgent capital projects. Colonial leadership identify these building projects based on safety and functional concerns for programming and secure the appropriate funding for those projects. Within the past two years, The Colonial:

- Replaced the 1902 Theatre’s asphalt roof with metal and replaced the gutters
- Restored the 1902 Theatre’s central ceiling medallion feature
- Repaired a major roof leak in the Bank Wing lobby and repaired a damaged fire escape
- Repointed the 1902 Theatre’s entire exterior west wall after several water infiltration events
- Purchased two new laser projectors to keep pace with prevailing technology

The final pillar, community citizen and engagement, references The Colonial’s role as the region’s cultural hub and artistic gathering place for Chester County and surrounding communities. Within this role, The Colonial is finetuning programming to accurately represent the diversity within our service area. Additionally, the organization continues to nurture relationships with fellow nonprofit organizations through programming partnerships, ticket donations, and event rental discounts.

Key Initiatives

The Colonial Theatre is open year-round and during our 2024-2025 fiscal year, we presented 360 arts programs including 90 live events and 270 unique film titles. Key initiatives:

- Film genre series including Sunday classics, family-friendly films, horror and cult programs, experiential crowd-pleaser movies, and new release titles
- Film festivals (*Noir City* film festival, Phoenixville Film Festival)
- Staged readings of well-known plays featuring a cast of local performers
- Experiential decades-themed events (1920s speakeasy, COLONIAL 54)
- Live music including jazz, folk, bluegrass, and rock and roll artists
- Blobfest™ an annual festival celebrating mid-century science fiction films and culture
- Author events with book signings, in partnership with Reads & Co. bookstore
- New Year’s Eve fundraising gala hosted by Borough of Phoenixville Mayor, Peter Urscheler

Key Achievements

- Increased number of patrons by 20% between fiscal years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025
- Awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission for the repointing of the 1902 Theatre's west wall
- Raised an additional \$140,000 from foundation and individual giving funding sources, successfully funding the repointing project which will be completed in winter 2025
- Raised \$130,000 in private donations to fund the purchase of two new laser projects for the 1902 Theatre and White Rabbit Theatre during fiscal year 2024-2025
- Increased contributed income by 48% between fiscal years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025
- Welcomed four new board members over the past two calendar years.

Distinctiveness

With two combined, historic spaces, including an iconic mid-century style marquee and a neo-classical bank building, The Colonial is one of the most distinct, recognizable cultural images in Chester County. The Colonial is the area's primary identifying image, so much so that a 2025 *Travel + Leisure* article naming Phoenixville as the "#1 Small Town in America" published a picture of The Colonial Theatre alongside the piece. The Colonial allows the region to have a sense of place and tells Phoenixville's story. From its earliest years as a vaudeville house featuring performers including Houdini, to its appearance in the 1958 science fiction cult classic film *The Blob*, to its most recent life as a beloved nonprofit arts venue, The Colonial's buildings and unique programmatic offerings have no comparison.

2. Funding request

- a. What specific needs & issues are being addressed, via what programs and services?

The Colonial's published values speak to the issues our arts nonprofit prioritizes. **We believe:**

- **Everyone should be able to enjoy the arts and participate in the cultural life of our community.** The Colonial Theatre is one of the few 501c3, nonprofit performing arts venues in Chester County and the largest presenting house venue in Chester County. With the support of public and private donations, The Colonial is able to keep ticket and concession prices competitive, enabling all members of our community, regardless of socioeconomic status, to enjoy arts experiences.
- **Stories conjured by the arts enrich our lives and equip us to navigate a complex world.** The Colonial's rich, varied schedule of arts activities allows for multiple perspectives, identities, narratives, and cultures to be represented on stage or screen. By attending events in our unique three spaces, audiences are exposed to a broader world view and join their fellow patrons in celebrating the shared human experience through artistic expression.
- **A healthy dose of the off-beat stirs the soul.** From the beginning of its history as a nonprofit, The Colonial has offered a home for the carefree, whimsical side in all of us. The annual festival Blobfest™, well-known and beloved in Chester County, embodies this value the best, joining over 10,000 people every year to have a laugh, wear a silly costume, and bring a bygone era back to life.
- **A shared theatre-going experience transforms us and the way we see each other.** In a world of increasing division, the arts offer a place of common ground for people to cry, laugh, and wonder

together. The over 350 arts programs, featured at The Colonial each year, give the region's residents ample opportunities to unite under a shared interest or art form.

- **Artful collaborations build a resilient future for all.** The Colonial is committed to strengthening Phoenixville and the greater region through strategic artistic content partnerships and collaboration. Based on its inherent qualities as a presenting house venue, The Colonial keeps a hand on the community's cultural pulse through recurring collaborations with local arts organizations and fellow nonprofits including Earth Song Creative, Reads & Co., Forever Changes, People's Light, and others.
- **By animating historic spaces, we enliven a touchstone for community identity.** The Colonial Theatre's primary venue was built in 1902 and has endured through various ownership structures, economic hardships, and shifting cultural trends. This longevity has had a tremendous impact on the local and regional culture. Countless apartment buildings, restaurants, and businesses display artwork depicting The Colonial's iconic façade, and real estate developers and employers market the theatre to prospective homebuyers and employees. Between the 1902 Theatre and the modernized Bank Wing, The Colonial Theatre offers the public over 30,000 square feet of performing arts space in the heart of vibrant, thriving downtown Phoenixville.

b. Why is it important to fund this now?

The Colonial Theatre is committed to being a uniting force for good, bringing a diverse population together to experience the restorative power of the arts. As our modern world experiences increasingly complicated political, social, and socioeconomic issues, it is more important than ever to support institutions that bring people together under a positive, constructive message. In addition to its commitment to fostering harmonious, collaborative communities, The Colonial is a key economic driver for Chester County and the Phoenixville region. As local and out-of-town guests pack our three venues, downtown Phoenixville's restaurants and retail establishments enjoy increased traffic and sales while the region's hotels and attractions see heightened activity during the theatre's busy seasons. By supporting The Colonial Theatre, the Chester County Community Foundation is directly supporting the continued success of the Phoenixville's downtown business community and enhancing the cultural and economic quality of life of its residents.

c. How will results & impact be demonstrated?

The Colonial's leadership team and board of directors, under the direction of executive director Jennifer L. Carlson, officially deployed the strategic plan in March of 2024 with the authoring of an accompanying implementation grid. The implementation grid outlines specific goals and objectives underneath each identified pillar, and specifies the goal's staff manager, metrics, and deadline. Leadership staff regularly met throughout the past year to check in on the implementation grid's accuracy and the progress of identified goals. Additionally, The Colonial's advancement officer publishes an updated Impact Report each January, tracking broader metrics including total audience size, economic impact, and the monetary value contributed to Phoenixville's nonprofit ecosystem.