



JONAS C., MARIAN D., & ROBERT H. ERB CHARITABLE FUND REQUEST FOR GRANT PROPOSALS

The Chester County Community Foundation accepts applications from selected nonprofit charitable causes for the **Jonas C., Marian D., & Robert H. Erb Charitable Fund**, a fund of the Chester County Community Foundation.

Proposals are due by Friday, March 13, 2026. Upon review of the initial proposals, a site visit may be conducted of the finalists. Grants will be awarded in the fall. Grant awards typically range from \$50,000 - \$100,000.

Please use the attached Grant Proposal Format to apply for a grant.

Grant applications should be submitted electronically by Friday, March 13, 2026 to grants@chescofc.org. The e-mail heading should read: Grant Proposal Submission- Erb Charitable Fund

Please note that all grant applications will be available electronically on the Chester County Community Foundation's website for additional consideration for grant funding by the Community Foundation's Donor Advised Fund Advisors.

Questions? Please contact:
Stephenie Stevens, Grants Director & Outreach Officer
Chester County Community Foundation
28 West Market Street
West Chester, PA 19382
www.chesdcocf.org
Steph@chescofc.org
(610) 696-8211



JONAS C., MARIAN D., & ROBERT H. ERB CHARITABLE FUND REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

I. SUMMARY SHEET

(One page only. This page will be shared with Grant Committee Members.)

Contact Information:

Date: May 13, 2026

Organization Name: Kennett Library
Address: 320 East State Street
Kennett Square, PA 19348
Phone: (610) 444-2702
Web Address: KennettLibrary.org

Contact Name: Shannon Morel
Contact Title: Director of Development
Contact E-mail: SMorel@KennettLibrary.org
Fax: n/a
Year Incorporated: 1896

Has your nonprofit previously applied to the Community Foundation: Yes No

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture and Humanities Environment/Animal Welfare Health
 Human Services Education Religion

Organizational Information:

Geographic Area Served:

Kennett Library serves the Borough of Kennett Square and the Townships of East Marlborough, Kennett, New Garden, Newlin, Pennsbury, Pocopson, and West Marlborough.

Annual # of Clients & Description of Population Served:

The library now offers more than 2,147 free community programs attended by more than 16,103 children, 1,135 teens, and 15,996 adults annually in addition to more than 1000 visitors to the library each day.

Mission Statement:

Kennett Library has a mission of igniting imagination, enriching lives, creating community - and a vision to be the catalyst for a community of lifelong learning and discovery.

Organization Description:

Annual Budget \$2,200,000.00 _____	___17___ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
___35___ % of budget for program expenses	___19___ # of Board Volunteers
___55___ % of budget for administrative expenses	___275___ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
___10___ % of budget for fundraising expenses	2,000+___ # of Volunteer Hours
100 % total	

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Kennett Library receives the largest share of income for general operating expenses from individual donations, including contributions from the annual giving campaign and the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program, for which the library was approved by the state of Pennsylvania in 2025. Other major streams of revenue include grant awards and municipal support. Fines, fundraising events, investment income, and private event venue rentals round out the library's financial portfolio.

Proposal Information:

Grant Amount Requested: \$100,000.00

Summary Description of Grant Purpose:

Kennett Library respectfully requests \$100,000 to defray costs for expansion of educational programs in the library that include the Adult Literacy Program, Workforce Development, English as a Second Language, and various STEAM programs in the Adult & Student Maker Spaces.





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II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

*Please provide the following information clearly and concisely.
Proposals of 1 or 2 pages are strongly encouraged.*

1. Organization's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

Kennett Library was founded in 1896 as a local public library open to all and was originally named in honor of the 19th-century poet, diplomat, and local resident, Bayard Taylor. In 1962, a new library was opened on State Street in the Borough, on property that had previously been home to a Quaker Meetinghouse. Over time, the population grew. Kennett Square and the surrounding area developed from a farming community into suburbs of both Philadelphia and Wilmington.

In June of 2023, the highly anticipated new Kennett Library opened its doors to the public. In addition to the traditional stacks and children's library, the new building hosts a 110-seat auditorium, an art gallery, an A/V recording studio, classrooms, private event spaces and meeting rooms, state-of-the-art adult and student makerspaces, a terrace, and the Bayard Taylor quiet reading room - on two floors in 33,425 square feet.

The friendly and helpful staff of the Kennett Library work diligently to engage patrons - cultivating creativity, innovation, and digital literacy in a welcoming third place. They are dedicated to a mission that ignites imagination, sparks curiosity, enriches lives, and creates community - one in which we envision the Kennett Library as the proponent for a lifelong love of learning and discovery. Kennett Library is *the* local community resource that connects people to art, books, languages, literacy, movies, science, technology, and more - in a safe and stimulating environment, where they can discover new passions and expand their horizons. Built upon the free exchange of information and accessible resources, Kennett Library serves the Borough of Kennett Square and the Townships of East Marlborough, Kennett, New Garden, Newlin, Pennsbury, Pocopson, and West Marlborough.

Over the past 2 years, increased staffing and hands-on learning programs in the makerspaces resulted in increased foot traffic, patron participation, and broader community support from collaborative partner organizations and individual donors. Kennett Library has opened its doors even wider, serving as a vibrant hub of empowerment, innovation, and knowledge. At this time, a grant award from the Erb Charitable Fund would serve as a strong foundation over the next 2 & 1/2 years, while the library and community are both experiencing exponential growth, and expansion of free educational programs would elevate Kennett Library in the region and help library staff to adequately meet the current and future needs of the diverse, growing community in inclusive and meaningful ways.

During the last 2 years, the number of full-time staff of the library increased from 7 to 17. The hours of operation were also expanded to more than 60 hours per week. Later this year, the library is planned to open on Sundays as well. Since 2023, Kennett Library has consistently ranked among the most visited and utilized libraries in the region. As an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Kennett Library is the largest non-municipal library by budget, and the only branch of the Chester County Library System (CCLS), that actively engages in fundraising activities. Kennett Square is in the top 5 fastest-growing towns in Pennsylvania, in one of the fastest-growing counties. There is an unquestionable need, an almost urgent command, for even more programs and resources. At this moment, Kennett Library is highly regarded as one of the most valuable local community assets, in a strong position to elevate programs and services to meet current and future needs - expanding local impact to many more people and becoming a regional resource.

Recognizing that astounding potential for growth is quite energizing. It paints a bright picture of the vital impact one organization can have on a community. Unfortunately, Kennett Library is chronically understaffed and supported. The biggest issue is the fact that Kennett Library must fundraise almost 70% of operating funds. No other library fundraises more than 30%. A significant investment is necessary now for implementation of a plan that focuses on the enhancement of four key components of the organization. They are Communications, Development, Financial Accountability, and Programs.

With specific regard to programming, the increased need is driven not only by population growth in Kennett Square and the surrounding areas. It is also based strongly on the high quality of activities and services provided by the new Kennett Library. Library usage and engagement among residents and visitors is driven by their individual interests and needs, and the fact that Kennett Library has so much more to offer than books. There is truly something for everyone in the library. Kennett Library programs and services have a direct, positive impact on the community, and it is important to remain responsive to ever-changing needs and to sustain an evolving, lively, meaningful connection with donors, patrons, and other local organizations. A grant award now would leverage existing assets and procedures to create greater efficiencies and outcomes as the library moves boldly into the next phase of growth and impact to develop expanded educational programs.

To summarize, Kennett Library has exceeded expectations with an accelerated rate of growth since the new building opened in 2023. Serving as a welcoming third place, it is frequently occupied to capacity, with a bustle of activity and bursting at the seams in

each of the library's popular areas. As more free programs are offered and a greater segment of the community is served, the current budget is stressed to maintain the current momentum, additional staffing, continued development of and enhanced processes that are necessary to meet the challenge for steady progress to the next exciting level of outreach and impact in the region.

2. Funding request:

Kennett Library respectfully requests \$100,000 to defray costs for expansion of educational programs in the library that include the Adult Literacy Program, Workforce Development, English as a Second Language, and various STEAM programs in the Adult & Student Maker Spaces.

A. Specific Chester County and/or Montgomery County needs and issues addressed

Almost 50% of the population in the Borough of Kennett Square and almost 10% of the population in Chester County is comprised of persons of Latino descent. Many come to this community without necessary language or job skills to survive and thrive independently in our growing economy, often finding themselves underserved and left behind.

B. Organizational impact (for general operating proposals) or project impact (for project proposals)

The library will work to generate increased support for eligible programs, particularly those for children and underserved communities. Programs offered at Kennett Library are integral to the organization and community's success because they directly involve the patrons. This is where the greatest impact and most invaluable outcomes are realized. Developing partnerships and systems that enable the library to improve and expand programming capabilities to continually meet the needs of the local community and entire region are a vital part of the library's mission. This is why a library matters, and it is important to gather and assess relevant information about the services and programs offered to prioritize limited resources, including space, staff time, budget allocations, and high-impact programming. The measurable goals for each literacy area, identified community needs, and valued community partnerships guide program priorities and use of resources to ensure programming that is relevant, inclusive, well-supported, and cost-effective, with benchmarks met. A grant award from the Erb Charitable Fund this spring would function as capacity building to facilitate meaningful programming in all areas of the library. These include arts & culture, civic & economic development - including workforce development, education - including ALP and ESL, and social services.

C. Overall strategies to implement the organization's mission (or project)

Kennett Library is developing a pilot program in 2026 with The Welcoming Center (TWC) in Philadelphia, whose mission is to welcome immigrants as neighbors and leaders. In partnership, together we will create pathways to economic growth and strengthen the fabric of our communities. Founded in 2003, TWC works to open doors of economic opportunity for immigrants of all education and skill levels and build immigrants' individual and collective agency to address barriers to integration and well-being. TWC collaborates with its participants, a broad spectrum of organizations, and public and private sector institutions to advance learning, shape policy, and grow the economy. In this pilot program, Kennett Library will bring TWC to Kennett Square where program participants will learn English, learn a trade and trade specific skills for job search preparedness, job skills coaching for general workplace development and job security, and position themselves for fair compensation, financial security and independence as contributing members of a thriving community.

D. Why it is important to fund this now

Kennett Square is in the top 5 fastest-growing towns in Pennsylvania, in one of the fastest-growing counties. There is an unquestionable need, an almost urgent demand, for even more programs and resources which are stretching current library resources. These include staff, spaces, and materials. The library is often booked to capacity with multiple events each day, especially on weekends. At this moment, Kennett Library is highly regarded as one of the most valuable local community assets, in a strong position to elevate programs and services to meet current and future needs - expanding local impact to many more people and becoming a regional resource. It is important to fund this now to continue delivering on the free educational programs that enrich the lives of residents and helping to create a thriving community in Kennett Square and the surrounding area.

3. Timetable, with anticipated outcomes and their relevance to the nonprofit's mission

In 2026, this pilot program is on pace for proven success. Once the success of this partnership is demonstrated to the Chester County Commissioners, additional funding can be secured through an agreement with Chester County to fund the initiative fully by 2028.

4. How impact and results will be demonstrated

Impact and results can be measured by outcomes in the following categories:

- Number of new community partnerships formed
- Number of new programs piloted
- Increase in total program offerings
- Increase in attendance
- Increase in EITC income by corporations and individuals



III. ATTACHMENTS

Please attach the following support information:

1. Copy of 501 (c) (3) federal tax-exempt letter
2. List of Board of Directors, with their affiliations
3. Most recent annual report and financial statement, audited if available
4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year and current fiscal year to date
5. Itemized project budget (if applying for project-specific grant)

Note: The Philanthropy Network's Grant Application may be submitted with CCCF Summary Sheet. Please visit our website at www.chescocf.org to obtain an electronic version of this application. E-mail applications are strongly encouraged.

Please e-mail completed applications to:
Stephenie Stevens, Grants Director & Outreach Officer
Chester County Community Foundation
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West Chester, PA 19382
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(610) 696-8211

THANK YOU!



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Mission...

Charitable purpose limited to education, especially those involving reading, writing and speech, with an emphasis on attending Montgomery County Community College, or similar credited institution in Chester, Montgomery, or Delaware Counties in Pennsylvania, through direct scholarships or to provide assistance to such colleges through their programs and activities, which in the discretion of the Founding Fund Advisors, make a significant impact on learning enhancement and learning skills.

About Robert H. Erb...

Robert H. Erb joined the Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) faculty in 1970 as a librarian, just 6 years after the College's founding. He often worked evenings and enjoyed helping adult students, assisting them with their research, listening to their stories, and providing encouragement. His service in the library continued for 45 years until his retirement in 2015. However, Mr. Erb's commitment to MCCC did not end with his tenure. As a passionate learner and an avid steward of his community, Mr. Erb was always looking to improve and learn more each day, and he wanted to help MCCC students do the same. He was passionate about the community college mission and equitable access to education and information for all. Simply put, Mr. Erb "wanted Montco to be a 'reflection of the community.'" That is one of the many reasons he continued his partnership with the College as a philanthropist both during and after his employment.

Unfortunately, in July of 2021, Mr. Erb passed away. Described as a gentle, friendly, and caring person, who always lived by the motto, "Simple beginnings with great endings," Mr. Erb will be missed as a physical presence on campus, but his effect on students, both through his giving as an employee and a donor,

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