


GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES as of 10.1.25


Direct Service Programs & General Operations

No deadline for DAF proposals.
Deadlines announced thru the year
for Directed Funds.

- ◇ Grants **focus on Chester County** causes & issues; but are not limited to Chester County.
 - ◇ Charitable nonprofits working in **all fields of interest** are considered, such as:
 - Arts, Culture, Heritage
 - Education, Libraries
 - Environment, Animals
 - Health
 - Human Services
 - Social Justice, Civic Engagement
 - ◇ **General operating** grants are encouraged. Clear, succinct, compelling descriptions are appreciated: mission, aims, results & impact.
 - ◇ Nonprofits with **higher GuideStar ratings** receive stronger consideration. Update yours for free at <https://www.guidestar.org/>
- 
- ◇ Proposals can be submitted **anytime all year**.
 - ◇ Grant decisions are made **intermittently** all year, as Fund Advisors desire.
 - ◇ Grant **awards** typically range from **\$2,500-\$10,000**.

Capacity Building: Coping with Cutbacks

No deadline.
Proposals accepted anytime.
Reviewed 15th bi-monthly.

- ◇ Nonprofits must be **located in & primarily serve Chester County**.
 - ◇ Nonprofit annual **budget** must be **\$1M or less**.
 - ◇ The goal of capacity building grants is to **strengthen organizational ability to effectively achieve mission and become more sustainable** over time. Priority will be given to proposals that help nonprofits shift their paradigms to cope with challenges and changes. Areas of focus include:
 - **Scenario & Contingency Planning**
 - **Financial Modeling**
 - **Partnerships, Collaborations**
 - **Merger**
 - **Closure**
 - **Resource Development, Revenue Diversification**
 - Mission, Vision, Strategy
 - Board Engagement, Leadership
 - Marketing & Communication
 - Operations
 - Technology
 - ◇ Proposals can be submitted **anytime all year**.
 - ◇ Proposals are reviewed the 15th bi-monthly.
 - ◇ Grant **awards** typically range from **\$2,500-\$10,000**.
- 

As you are aware, there is ongoing uncertainty around federal and state funding that significantly impacts nonprofit organizations. The Community Foundation is committed to supporting a strong and resilient sector, and we encourage all organizations to be proactive in their planning.

We strongly encourage every nonprofit to engage in scenario planning, examine cash flow projections and assess funding risks. We have seen nonprofits explore a variety of pathways forward, such as adapting program design, reducing or merging operations and significantly diversifying revenue streams.

Please contact Kevin Baffa, Grant Administrator or Stephenie Stevens, Grant Officer at **(610) 696-8211** or grants@chescocf.org with questions.

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

HOW ARE GRANT DECISIONS MADE AT THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION?

The Chester County Community Foundation **connects people who care with causes that matter**, so philanthropy makes a difference **now & forever**. With **400+ charitable funds** housed under one umbrella, a single proposal provides multiple pathways for nonprofits to be considered for funding. Nonprofits are encouraged to submit proposals **throughout the year**. Grant funds are awarded from multiple funding pools:

1. GRANTS FROM CCCF DONOR ADVISED FUNDS (DAFS)

- **Families and individuals** establish Donor Advised Funds—endowed charitable funds invested to provide a perpetual stream of earnings to fund nonprofit grants.
- Most DAF grants support **direct service programs and general operations**.
- DAF grant decisions are made independently by donors, sometimes with guidance from Community Foundation staff, and are awarded on a **rolling basis throughout the year**.

2. GRANTS FROM CCCF DESIGNATED ENTRUSTED FUNDS

- CCCF Designated Entrusted Funds are stewarded by volunteer grant panels and Community Foundation staff.
- We accept **Operating & Program Grants proposals year-round**; and from time-to-time issue special, focused Calls for Proposals as new funding becomes available.
- We accept **Capacity Building Grant Proposals year-round**; and from time-to-time issue Calls for Capacity Building Proposals as new funding becomes available. Capacity building grants are intended to strengthen the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of nonprofits serving Chester County.
- Grant panels review proposals and deliberate **monthly**.

DUE DILIGENCE

The Community Foundation is committed to making thoughtful, informed grantmaking decisions. To do so, our staff, donors, and grant panel volunteers:

- Review organizational and financial data via **GuideStar** (<https://www.guidestar.org>) and IRS Form 990.
- Review all submitted proposals, which are **publicly available** at <https://chescofcf.org/receive/find-active-grants/>.
- Conduct site visits, community research, and online research to better understand mission and impact.

Please note: In compliance with IRS regulations, applicants must be charitable, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations; funding cannot be awarded to individuals.

TO APPLY

- To learn more, visit www.chescofcf.org
- Proposals are only accepted electronically. The format is online at <https://chescofcf.org/receive/apply-for-grants/>
- **E-mail proposals to grants@chescofcf.org**
- Proposals are considered “complete” when CCCF has **confirmed** receipt of the **Grant Proposal Summary Sheet, Narrative & Attachments**. Budgets and financials are important. Please include them.
- Proposals are shared electronically and on-line with Fund Advisors, Donors & Grant Panels.

Please contact Kevin Baffa, Grants Administrator or Stephenie Stevens, Grants Officer at **(610) 696-8211** or grants@chescofcf.org with questions.

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



I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit www.chescocf.org

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

Date 3/10

Contact Information

Organization Name: Formula Theory and Automotive Design ED/CEO Name: William Dong
 Address: 701 Cobalt Lane ED/CEO E-mail: ftad2024@gmail.com
 Phone: 9178226656 Board Chair Name: William Dong
 Website: <https://www.ftad.org/> Board Chair Approval (check here):
 Year Incorporated: 2025 Primary Contact Name: William Dong
 FEIN: 39-4466739 Primary Contact E-mail: Williamdong550@gmail.com

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Arts, Culture, Heritage | <input checked="" 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:

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

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

Annual Budget \$ 20,000 0 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
95 % of budget for program expenses 5 # of Board Volunteers
0 % of budget for administrative expenses 7 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
5 % of budget for fundraising expenses 500 # of Volunteer Hours
100% = total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

This grant proposal is for: Direct Service Programs & General Operating &/or **X** **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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Mission, Vision, Strategy | <input type="checkbox"/> | Board Engagement & Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> | Marketing, Communication |
| <input checked="" 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)*

Formula Theory and Automotive Design (FTAD) is a student-led nonprofit building a Formula-style STEM engineering competition where high school teams design, build, and race RC vehicles while operating like professional racing organizations. Funding will support the research, development, and manufacturing of standardized competition equipment needed to launch our first official season. This initiative will provide students with hands-on experience in engineering, data analysis, entrepreneurship, and teamwork.

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

Overall Aims:

Formula Theory and Automotive Design (FTAD) is a student-led nonprofit founded in 2025 with the aim of redefining traditional high school STEM competitions. Our mission is to create the first prominent automotive-oriented robotics competition that integrates engineering, entrepreneurship, and motorsport realism into one unified platform. We believe current robotics programs emphasize technical construction but often lack exposure to real-world innovation ecosystems. FTAD exists to create not engineers, but technical entrepreneurs.

Key Initiatives:

FTAD is developing a motorsport-inspired competition modeled after the structure and complexity of Formula 1. Our competition requires interdisciplinary collaboration across mechanical design, aerodynamics, embedded systems, programming, and materials experimentation such as tire compound development. In addition to technical divisions, teams also build marketing departments responsible for sponsorship acquisition, brand development, and financial sustainability. By structuring teams as fully functioning "micro motorsport organizations," FTAD integrates engineering with leadership, business strategy, and public presence — reflecting how modern automotive and technology ventures operate.

Key Achievements:

Since beginning as a two-student initiative in late 2024, FTAD has expanded to over 30 active members within 1 school, to now having 5 schools in Pennsylvania and 1 in New Jersey. We have incorporated as a nonprofit organization and established a multi-school Board of Directors to streamline governance and strategic growth. Our digital presence has grown to generate approximately 60,000 monthly social media views, demonstrating both student engagement and market interest. By July 2026, we anticipate launching a fully developed competitive season that formalizes our ruleset, event structure, and interschool league operations.

Distinctiveness:

What distinguishes FTAD from existing robotics competitions is our holistic ecosystem approach. Rather than focusing solely on robot construction and match performance, FTAD requires teams to operate as complete automotive brands — tying together the engineering with the brand building. Through this model, FTAD uniquely positions students to graduate not just with technical skills, but with entrepreneurial mindset, leadership experience, and systems-level thinking rarely cultivated in traditional STEM competitions. In addition, FTAD will serve as the most accessible interdisciplinary extracurricular for high school students, with such a high school ceiling for design.

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?**

FTAD addresses a critical gap in traditional high school extracurricular programs: the lack of practical integration between engineering and business. Many robotics competitions focus solely on mechanical performance, while most business competitions remain theoretical exercises. FTAD bridges this divide by creating a competition environment where engineering, branding, electronics, marketing, and operational strategy must function together. In addition, The program's structure creates meaningful opportunities for students with diverse talents — including mechanical engineering, aerospace concepts, materials science, electronics, chemistry, and marketing — to apply their skills in measurable and competitive ways.

To successfully launch our first standardized season in 2026–2027, we must secure funding for the following:

Kits Development

- Manufacturing machinery (CNC router and high-capacity 3D printing)
- Manufacturing materials (carbon fiber, ball bearings, and fabrication tools)
- Research and development for electronics (fully custom and customizable driving setup mimicking a racing simulator)
- Material cost of electronics (bulk purchase of microcontrollers and PCBs)
-

Marketing

- Grants (creating application-based grants for chapters and promoting expansion)
- Set-up (camera and microphone to produce high-quality media and outreach content)

This funding is critical at this moment because FTAD is in a delicate but high-potential growth phase. With chapters currently being piloted in five additional schools, interest is expanding quickly. However, if the first official season fails to deliver a polished and structured experience, chapters may dissolve and future schools may hesitate to adopt the program. A weak inaugural year during 2026–2027 could damage our credibility and delay our progress by years potentially. Conversely, with the appropriate funding and infrastructure, we can solidify our presence in current partner schools and generate strong word-of-mouth expansion that accurately reflects the quality and ambition of the program.

Results and impact will be demonstrated through sustainability and measurable chapter growth.

Sustainability is central to our long-term model; while FTAD operates as a nonprofit, it is designed to support itself through recurring revenue from kit cars, electronics packages, and team registration fees. Based on projected expenditures, a \$400 registration fee per team is reasonable and will include the essential competition equipment. With an anticipated six chapters in our first season and two to three teams per chapter, we project a minimum of \$4,800 in revenue, with a target of exceeding \$5,000. These funds will be reinvested directly into competition refinement, chapter support, and program expansion to ensure long-term viability.

Chapter growth serves as our second measurable indicator of impact. By December 2026, we aim to establish FTAD as a recognized and expanding program throughout Pennsylvania. Our objective is to grow to 25 active chapters statewide, including expansion into the Philadelphia region and surrounding

districts. Success will be measured by chapter retention, team participation rates, revenue sustainability, and as well as our brand social media presence through our UGC(user generated content) growth model.

- **Additionally, for capacity building grant proposals:**
 - **How will this capacity building initiative impact your nonprofit?**
 - **How will this impact be demonstrated?**
 - **Include a description of the expected activities; timeline & costs to implement the initiative. If external consulting services are required, include the anticipated costs & expertise of the consultants to be hired. Include external consultant proposal/s if applicable.**

Capacity Building

FTAD follows a bottom-up growth strategy: first demonstrating success within a small number of chapters, then expanding based on those results. This capacity building initiative will provide the resources needed to launch and sustain our first full season while establishing a scalable operational model.

Success in our inaugural season will strengthen current chapters as long-term supporters and create a foundation for expansion to additional schools.

Impact will be demonstrated through:

- \$5,000 in revenue generated by the start of the season
- 25 active chapters by December 2026

Activities, Timeline, and Implementation

Phase 1 – Preparation (Present – June)

- Plan competition logistics and program structure
- Conduct R&D for MVP kit components
- Secure \$25,000 in funding for grants and manufacturing
- Launch higher-quality targeted marketing

Phase 2 – Production (July – August)

- Finalize kit designs
- Begin on-demand kit manufacturing and distribution

Phase 3 – Outreach (Fall – Early 2027)

- Host workshops and demonstrations at local schools
- Focus on marketing, networking, and chapter recruitment
- Official racing season begins March

Phase 4 – Expansion (By December 2026)

- Continue social media outreach and word-of-mouth growth
- Target ~2 chapter inquiries per month
- Achieve statewide recognition

Phase 5 – Expansion cont. (Next 12 months)

- Attend start-up conventions/workshops interstate
- B2b marketing to schools and host workshops
- Achieve recognition in the tri-state region

Budget Overview

- \$5,000 – Manufacturing machinery
- \$2,000 – Mechanical Materials
- \$2,000 – Electronic Materials

- \$5,000 – Chapter grants
- \$1,000 – Marketing tools
- \$1,000 – Electronic R&D
- \$1,000 – Mechanical R&D
- \$3,000 – Buffer / potential consultants

We are also seeking volunteer consultants from FIRST and VEX communities through our existing networks.

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
 2. List of **Board** of Directors, with their affiliations **URL:**
 3. Most recent **annual report URL:**
 4. Audited or reviewed recent **financial statement URL:**
 5. Itemized **organizational operating budget** with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date
 6. If capacity building initiative, **itemized budget** (including external consultant’s proposal, if applicable)
 7. Current **strategic plan**. If your nonprofit does **not** have a current strategic plan, **explain why**.
- 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.*



CAPACITY BUILDING FOR NONPROFITS:
Coping with Cutbacks



Capacity building is about empowering nonprofits to do **more good, more effectively, and for the long term**. It strengthens an organization’s ability to fulfill its mission, enhance sustainability, and better serve its community.

At its core, capacity building focuses on improving a nonprofit’s internal systems, leadership, and resources so that impact can grow and endure.

Traditionally, capacity building has included efforts such as **board and staff leadership development, strategic planning, fundraising, and technology investments** to improve operations and organizational effectiveness.

Today, however, nonprofits face a rapidly changing environment. Shifts in federal policies have resulted in rapid changes at all levels and in new directions. Nonprofits must **“meet the moment” and cope with cutbacks— think differently,**

shift paradigms and transform how we understand and interact with the world around us...adapt how we plan, lead, fund, and collaborate.

Capacity building can play a critical role in helping nonprofits adapt and innovate. This may include **funding scenario planning, exploring new revenue models, expanding partnerships, pursuing mergers or strategic alliances**, and other adaptive strategies that strengthen long-term resilience.

Capacity building support can take many forms, tailored to each organization's unique needs. Examples of projects that may be funded include:

- **CONTINGENCY & SCENARIO PLANNING**
Scenario Planning – Financial Modeling & Forecasting
- **PARTNERSHIPS, COLLABORATIONS**
Coalition Building – Collaboration - Mergers & Acquisitions
- **MERGER, CLOSURE**
These unprecedented times may present the need for a merger or closure of your organization.
Contact chaya@chescof.org to confidentially discuss funding to assist in the planning or initial steps.
- **MISSION, VISION, STRATEGY**
Organizational Assessment - Strategic Planning – Strategic Restructuring – Coping With Cutbacks
- **BOARD ENGAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP**
Board Recruitment – Board Engagement – Increasing Networks & Community Support - Leadership Development – Executive Transition & Succession Planning
- **MARKETING, COMMUNICATION**
Nonprofit Business Messaging & Storytelling – Re-branding – Marketing Planning & Re-Positioning – Crisis Communications Planning
- **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**
Major Gift Donor Identification, Cultivation, Development & Stewardship - Development Campaigns (Annual, Capital, Planned Giving) - Earned Income Development - Social Enterprise Feasibility & Development
- **TECHNOLOGY, OPERATIONS**
Business Continuity Planning - Financial Management - Human Resources - Volunteer Management - Industry Certification - Risk Management - Technology Improvements

###

