

JONAS C., MARIAN D., & ROBERT H. ERB CHARITABLE FUND
Chester County Community Foundation: Request for Grant Proposals
Applicant: Lansdale Public Library (Lansdale Library Association)

I. SUMMARY SHEET

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

Date: March 14, 2025

Contact Information:

Organization Name: Lansdale Library Association

Address: 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA 19446

Phone: (215) 855-3228

Fax: N/A

Year Incorporated: 1917

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

Contact Name: Executive Director Mindy Lipsky

Contact Title: Executive Director

Contact E-mail:
director@lansdalelibrary.org

Web Address: www.lansdalelibrary.org

Field/s of Interest:

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

Organizational Information:

Geographic Area Served: Borough of Lansdale and North Penn region, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

Annual # of Clients & Description of Population Served:

The Lansdale Public Library serves approximately 55,000 residents annually across the North Penn region, including children, students, adults, seniors, job-seekers, English Language Learners, and individuals with limited literacy skills. The library actively supports lifelong learning across all age groups with particular focus on school-age youth, early childhood literacy, and adult education.

Mission Statement:

The Lansdale Public Library connects people with information, ideas, and each other, fostering a community where every person has the resources to read, learn, grow, and participate fully in civic life.

Organization Description:

Founded in 1917, the Lansdale Public Library is a cornerstone of the North Penn community. Operated by the Lansdale Library Association, the library provides free access to books, digital resources, early literacy programs, adult education workshops, workforce development services, and community programming. The library holds a diverse collection and serves over 450 residents daily. As a hub for literacy and lifelong learning, the library partners with local schools, Montgomery County Community College, and social service agencies to address educational gaps across the lifespan.

Annual Budget: \$896,000 **# of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff:** 6.5 FTE (5 full-time, 3 part-time)

% of budget for program expenses: 70% **# of Board Volunteers:** 4
% of budget for administrative expenses: 14% **# of Active Non-Board Volunteers:** 0
% of budget for fundraising expenses: 5% **# of Volunteer Hours:** 10/month

Top 3–5 Funding Sources:

1. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania / State Aid to Public Libraries
2. Borough of Lansdale and municipal appropriations
3. Montgomery County Library System
4. Individual donors and library fundraising events
5. Foundation grants and community giving programs

Proposal Information:

Grant Amount Requested: \$75,000

Summary Description of Grant Purpose:

The Lansdale Public Library requests \$75,000 from the Erb Charitable Fund to launch the Literacy Pathways Initiative, a comprehensive program to expand adult literacy services, early childhood reading programming, and digital skills instruction for residents of the North Penn region of Montgomery County. Funds will support dedicated programming staff, instructional materials, and expanded access to literacy resources that align directly with the Fund's mission of making a significant impact on learning enhancement and learning skills.

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II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

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

For more than a century, the Lansdale Public Library has served as Montgomery County's intellectual heart. Founded in 1917, the library has grown from a small reading room into a dynamic community learning center, now occupying the Lansdale Civic Center facility in the heart of the borough. The library operates under the stewardship of the Lansdale Library Association, a nonprofit governed by a community board committed to ensuring free and equitable access to knowledge for all.

The library's distinctiveness lies in its role as a bridge institution, connecting residents who face educational and economic barriers to the tools they need to advance. Each year, the library serves tens of thousands of people through circulating collections, digital resources, computer access, programming, and one-on-one assistance. Key achievements include: a robust early literacy program serving children from birth through kindergarten; a workforce development hub providing resume support and digital skills training; and partnerships with Montgomery County Community College and the North Penn School District to support students at every stage of learning. The library is recognized as a trusted community anchor and a leader in accessible adult education across the region.

2. Funding Request

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

Montgomery County, while one of Pennsylvania's more affluent counties, contains significant pockets of educational need. In Lansdale and the broader North Penn corridor, an estimated 1 in 6 adults reads at or below a sixth-grade level, limiting their employment options, health literacy, and civic participation. Among children, kindergarten readiness gaps persist, particularly among low-income households, children of color, and families where English is not the primary language. Meanwhile, the growing demand for digital fluency means that adults who lack basic technology skills are increasingly locked out of job opportunities, government services, and healthcare navigation.

The Lansdale Public Library is uniquely positioned to address these needs. Unlike school-based programs, the library serves community members regardless of age, immigration status, income, or educational background. It is often the only institution a family or adult learner trusts to help them move forward without judgment. The Literacy Pathways Initiative directly targets three interrelated gaps: (1) adult basic literacy and English language acquisition; (2) early childhood reading readiness; and (3) digital skills for employment and daily life.

B. Organizational impact (general operating) or project impact (project-specific)

The requested \$75,000 will fund the Literacy Pathways Initiative over 12 months, with the following projected impact:

- 150+ adult learners engaged in literacy, ESL, or digital skills programming
- 200+ children enrolled in early literacy programming (Storytime, 1000 Books Before Kindergarten, summer reading)
- 50+ job-seekers receiving technology and workforce readiness support

Broadly, the initiative reinforces the library's role as a frontline institution of opportunity that reduces the educational gap between residents who have access to resources and those who do not.

C. Overall strategies to implement the organization's mission

The Literacy Pathways Initiative is organized around three pillars:

Pillar 1: Adult Literacy & Language Access: The library will expand its adult programming to offer structured one-on-one and small-group adult literacy instruction. Other adult programming including ESL may be offered with this support.

Pillar 2: Early Childhood Reading Readiness: Our part-time Children's and Early Literacy Coordinator can expand her hours to daily Storytime, the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program, and parent workshops on reading aloud and building home literacy routines. The library will partner with Head Start providers and early childcare centers to bring programming into the community.

Pillar 3: Digital Skills for Daily Life: The library will launch a six-week Digital Essentials course covering email, online job applications, telehealth navigation, and basic internet safety. Cohorts of 12–15 participants will be offered monthly, with free device lending available for participants without home access.

D. Why it is important to fund this now

Post-pandemic, Montgomery County's most vulnerable learners are further behind than ever. Schools are stretched. ESL waiting lists at community-based organizations are months long. And the rapid digitization of employment and services has created a widening gap between residents with digital fluency and those without. The library stands ready to respond, but must build capacity to do so.

The Erb Charitable Fund's founding vision of education, reading, writing, speech, and learning enhancement for the residents of Montgomery County, maps precisely onto this moment and this initiative. Mr. Erb's decades of service as a librarian at Montgomery County Community College reflects the same belief that drives our work: that access to knowledge, guided by a trusted educator, changes lives. We are proud to honor that legacy.

3. Timetable, with anticipated outcomes and relevance to mission

Months 1–2 (April–May 2025): Hire Early Literacy Coordinator; establish partnerships with MCCC, Head Start, and ProLiteracy network; procure materials and technology resources.

Months 3–6 (June–September 2025): Launch all three programming pillars. Begin Digital Essentials monthly cohorts. Expand ESL circles. Launch summer early literacy campaign and 1000 Books program.

Months 7–10 (October 2025–January 2026): Full operations underway. Conduct mid-point assessment. Formalize MCCC referral pathway. Evaluate cohort outcomes.

Months 11–12 (February–March 2026): Final data collection, participant surveys, and program evaluation. Prepare sustainability plan and final grant report.

These activities are directly aligned with the library's mission to connect people with information and ideas, in alignment with the Erb Fund's mandate to make a significant impact on learning enhancement and learning skills for Montgomery County residents.

4. How impact and results will be demonstrated

The library will track and report:

- Program enrollment and attendance by pillar (adult literacy, early childhood, digital skills)
- Participant progress via pre/post assessments (adult literacy: TABE or similar standardized tool; digital skills: competency checklist)
- Child literacy metrics: number of children completing the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten milestone; kindergarten readiness surveys in partnership with North Penn School District
- MCCC referral pipeline: number of adult library participants referred to and enrolled in MCCC continuing education or credit programs
- Participant satisfaction surveys administered at program completion

The library will provide the Chester County Community Foundation with a six-month progress report and a final grant report with full outcome data, narrative summary, and financial accounting. We are committed to transparency, continuous improvement, and honoring the Fund's investment with measurable results.

III. ATTACHMENTS

Please include the following with submission:

1. Copy of 501(c)(3) federal tax-exempt determination letter
2. List of Board of Directors with organizational affiliations
3. Most recent annual report and financial statements (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 for the Literacy Pathways Initiative

Project Budget: Literacy Pathways Initiative

Line Item	Amount	Notes
Expansion of Child and Literacy Staffing	\$28,000	Salary + benefits
Adult Literacy & ESL Instructor Stipends	\$12,000	ProLiteracy partner tutors
Digital Skills Instructor / Facilitators	\$8,000	Contracted 12 cohorts × \$667
Instructional Materials & Curriculum	\$6,000	All three pillars
Technology (laptops for lending, hotspots)	\$8,000	Device lending library
Marketing, Outreach & Translation	\$4,000	Multilingual community outreach
Program Evaluation / Assessment Tools	\$3,000	TABE + surveys
Indirect/Administrative (8%)	\$6,000	
TOTAL	\$75,000	

Submit completed application electronically to: grants@chescocf.org by the posted deadline. Email subject: Grant Proposal Submission- Erb Charitable Fund

Contact: Stephenie Stevens, Grants Director, Chester County Community Foundation, 28 West Market Street, West Chester, PA 19382 | (610) 696-8211