



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.)

Date: March 6, 2026

Contact Information:

Organization Name: Phoenixville Public Library
Address: 183 Second Ave Phoenixville, PA 19460

Phone: 610-933-3013

Web Address: www.phoenixvillelibrary.org

Contact Name: Chloe Tolman
Contact Title: Director of Development
Contact E-mail: ctolman@ccls.org

Fax:

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: *East Pikeland, Charlestown, Phoenixville Borough, and Schuylkill Township*

Annual # of Clients & Description of Population Served: 37,700 individuals

Mission Statement: To provide access to information and services that address the educational, cultural, and recreational needs of the community the Library serves

Organization Description:

Annual Budget \$1,273,801 _____ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff 7
15 % of budget for program expenses 8 # of Board Volunteers
80 % of budget for administrative expenses 25 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
5 % of budget for fundraising expenses 1171 # of Volunteer Hours
100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Proposal Information:

Grant Amount Requested: \$ 75,000

Summary Description of Grant Purpose: The Phoenixville Public Library requests funding to expand our highly successful Library of Things, which allows Chester County residents to borrow hands-on learning tools, technology, and creative equipment at no cost. The expansion will increase inventory of high-demand items, introduce additional literacy and skill-building tools, and provide guided workshops to enhance educational outcomes. Funding will allow access for adult learners, youth, families, and low-income residents, promoting equitable educational opportunities, workforce readiness, and lifelong learning. This project directly advances our mission to provide accessible, practical educational resources to all members of our community.



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II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Grant Proposal Narrative

1. Organization History, Goals & Distinctiveness

Founded in 1896, the Phoenixville Public Library is the only Carnegie library in Chester County and the third-largest circulating library within the Chester County Library System. For over 125 years, the Library has served as a free, welcoming center for literacy, lifelong learning, and community connection for more than 39,000 residents.

Our mission is to provide opportunities to read, learn, create, connect, and support individual well-being. We are more than a repository of books; we are an active educational institution that removes barriers to information, technology, and skill-building.

In 2023, support from the Erb Charitable Fund enabled us to launch our Library of Things, giving community members access to equipment like VR headsets, sewing machines, projectors, recording bundles, and craft tools. Circulation data shows immediate, high demand for these items, confirming the community's need for experiential, hands-on learning opportunities.

2. Funding Request: Expansion of the Library of Things

A. Community Needs

Many Chester County families cannot afford high-cost tools that support education, workforce development, and skill-building, including:

Technology for digital literacy (VR, scanners, microphones)

Career-focused equipment (projectors, document scanners, label makers)

Creative and STEM learning tools (Cricut machines, sewing machines, craft kits)

The Library of Things addresses this equity gap by providing free access, empowering adult learners, students, and families to build real-world skills and enhance educational outcomes.

B. Project Impact

The expansion will:

Increase quantity of high-demand items

Introduce additional educational and literacy-focused tools

Pair equipment with guided learning kits and instructional materials

Offer workshops for youth, adults, and families

Strengthen partnerships with local educators and workforce programs

Expected benefits include improved digital literacy, STEM and creative skill development, career readiness, and intergenerational learning opportunities.

C. Strategy

We will:

Expand inventory based on circulation trends and patron feedback

Develop supporting instructional and workshop materials

Promote the program through outreach to local schools and community partners

Track usage, repeat borrowing, and participation to measure impact

This strategy ensures that resources are used effectively and maximize learning opportunities for the community.

D. Why Fund This Now

Demand has outpaced supply, and financial barriers continue to limit access to educational tools. Funding now ensures that Chester County residents can continue to learn, create, and develop skills essential for personal, academic, and workforce success.

3. Timetable & Anticipated Outcomes

Fall 2026: Purchase and catalog new items; develop instructional materials

Winter 2026–Spring 2027: Launch expanded offerings; offer workshops; promote program

Anticipated Outcomes:



25–40% increase in Library of Things circulation

Growth in adult learner participation and youth engagement

Increased access for low-income residents

Enhanced participation in guided workshops and skill-building programs

4. Measuring Impact

We will track and evaluate success through:

Monthly circulation statistics and waitlist trends

Program and workshop attendance

Patron surveys and feedback

Repeat borrowing rates

Qualitative testimonials

These metrics provide a clear, measurable indication of the project's educational impact and alignment with the Erb Charitable Fund's mission.