



ZELINDA LEBOUTILLIER CHARITABLE FOUNDATION REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

I. SUMMARY SHEET

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

Date: 3/30/26

Contact Information:

Organization Name: Chester County Food Bank
Address: 650 Pennsylvania Dr. Exton, PA 19341

Contact Name: Michelle Berger
Contact Title: Impact Manager
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Year Incorporated: 2009

Phone: 610-873-6000

Web Address: chestercountyfoodbank.org

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 *(If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County municipalities served):*
All of Chester County with specialized focus to the areas of greatest need.

Annual # of Clients & Description of Population Served: 40,000

Mission Statement: We mobilize and educate the community to ensure access to nutritious and familiar food.

Organization Description: Each year, CCFB distributes over 6 million pounds of nutritious food while supplementing with education & wellness programs such as the Eat Fresh Cooking Program.

Annual Budget \$11,199,466

86% of budget for program expenses

8% of budget for administrative expenses

6% of budget for fundraising expenses

30 Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

20 Board Volunteers

2,500 Active Non-Board Volunteers

28,000 of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 grants for FY26: Crystal Trust, Albertsons Companies Foundation, Genuardi Family Foundation

Proposal Information:

Grant Amount Requested: \$5,000

Summary Description of Grant Purpose: Support our Eat for Fresh Cooking Program



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II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

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

Founded in 2009, Chester County Food Bank (CCFB) was established as a response to escalating hunger in the county during the recession. Today, we provide food support for immediate nutritional needs in addition to education & wellness opportunities to address the root causes of food insecurity. Despite our existence as a “young” organization, we have evolved to be a leading food bank in the areas of nutrition, locally sourced foods, and education. CCFB provides cooking and gardening programs to hundreds of adults and children each year in addition to supplying the county with over six million pounds of nutritious food through our network of 100+ partners.

2. Funding request: Eat Fresh Cooking Class and Produce Boxes

A. Specific Chester County needs and issues addressed

The families we serve are often forced to make the difficult decision to pay for basic living and housing expenses while foregoing healthy and balanced meals. Rising cost of living and reduced government assistance places an unimaginable strain for food insecure families in our county. Based on MIT's living wage calculator, the living wage for a family of four in Chester County has risen to \$160,000 per year. This is significantly higher than the threshold for government food assistance (SNAP) eligibility leaving more 60% of food insecure families without any government support. When compared to neighboring counties and states, food insecure Chester County residents are much less likely to receive government assistance making our services in the community more prominent and impactful. Programs like Eat Fresh offer an easily accessible and trustworthy way to get connected with local food resources while learning about nutrition and developing life-long skills. Eat Fresh was designed to address food access barriers, providing incredible depth and long-term connection with students.

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

Eat Fresh is an eighteen-week series of cooking classes offered in English and Spanish that emphasize nutrition, whole foods, local produce, and cultural traditions. Eat Fresh participants receive a 20-pound “CSA style” box of fresh produce with each class to put their newly learned skills into action at home. The class promotes peer support and community building to facilitate connection and long-term change. We partner with local outreach organizations to recruit families at risk of food insecurity who would most benefit from this program. The curriculum encompasses several focus areas including: barriers to healthy eating and the foundations of cooking with fresh produce. Students learn about the herbs and produce items that can be grown locally here in PA and are encouraged to share their own recipes and cultural traditions as part of the learning process.

The program addresses food insecurity and nutritional outcomes while also supporting local and sustainable agriculture as a significant portion of the food provided is grown at nearby farm sites managed by the food bank. During PA growing season, our produce shares are all Pennsylvania grown

with 60% grown by on-staff farmers and volunteers at one of our Food Bank farm sites. Our farm and education program staff collaborate to grow culturally relevant foods before the start of each season.

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

This program begins with program recruitment through our partner organizations. The class instruction is then customized based on feedback from the site and interests of students. The class incorporates hands on learning in the kitchen covering all of the basics and encouraging creativity from the students. This program aligns with our mission because not only do students receive access to nutritious food, but they also receive skills-based education and a sense of community.

D. Why it is important to fund this now

Eat Fresh helps to alleviate the burden of the expense of healthy foods while also providing cooking education. Now more than ever we see families unable to afford nutritious foods to help them thrive as disparities widen. Our program helps support these families in a dignified way.

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

The program itself is a series of 18 classes with 18 produce distributions running from June 2026 to March 2027. We work with partner locations throughout our county as host sites and enroll approximately 10-20 households at each site. Our partner locations for the upcoming year include: Spring City Public Library, Jennersville YMCA, Coatesville Salvation Army and West Chester Library.

4. How impact and results will be demonstrated

We have seen significant improvement in health outcomes for those who participate in our program. The program is evaluated with a short pre/post survey as well as focus groups. The survey includes metrics in the area of dietary intake, quality of life, food security status, and facilitator evaluation. Our Eat Fresh team previously received a grant to work with the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition to refine our evaluation methods while prioritizing cultural competencies. Through this process, we developed a high quality surveying method with validated methods and have continued to include qualitative methods for evaluating program impact.

Previous survey results indicate that after taking an EF class:

- 2x as many students ate vegetables 4 or more times per day
- 2x as many students reported rarely or never feeling stressed
- 96% say they tried a new food
- 93% agreed/strongly agreed that they felt a sense of connection to others, felt supported by their peers, and learned about another culture or food tradition