


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/>
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- ◇ 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**.
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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://chescof.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.chescof.org
- Proposals are only accepted electronically. The format is online at <https://chescof.org/receive/apply-for-grants/>
- **E-mail proposals to grants@chescof.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.

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expertise to evaluate financial modeling and forecasting, partnership and collaboration opportunities, and potential affiliation strategies that can strengthen organizational viability. This work is timely as MCHC continues to provide essential services, including healthcare access, home visiting through Parents as Teachers, doula services, child advocacy supports, interpretation, and resource navigation, while navigating a changing funding environment and internal finance transition needs. The initiative will result in a clearer strategic direction, stronger sustainability planning, and practical recommendations that position MCHC for long-term mission impact and growth.



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

The Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County, MCHC, works to improve the health and well-being of women, children, and families through prevention, education, advocacy, and access to care. Our overall aim is to ensure that families, especially those facing barriers related to income, language, health coverage, transportation, and system complexity, can access the services and supports they need to thrive.

MCHC's core initiatives are centered on two major service areas, the Family Center and Child Advocacy Services. Through the Family Center, MCHC provides evidence-based home visiting using the Parents as Teachers model, healthcare access and benefits enrollment, family support, and resource navigation. We also continue to strengthen maternal health through doula services and related community-based support. Through Child Advocacy Services, MCHC partners with Chester County systems to provide family support, interpretation and language access services, and other child and family-focused interventions that help families navigate complex systems and remain connected to essential resources.

A key strength of MCHC is our ability to meet families where they are and provide culturally responsive, bilingual, and relationship-based services that bridge health care, child-serving systems, and community support. We are distinct in our integration of direct service, systems collaboration, and community trust. Our work includes connecting families to healthcare coverage, prenatal and maternal support, home visiting, interpretation services, food access initiatives, and linkages to additional resources that strengthen long-term family stability.

MCHC has made significant progress in planning for growth and sustainability. We completed a Business Plan for Strategic Growth, developed a business plan scorecard, and conducted an internal organizational capacity assessment. These efforts helped clarify our program strengths, growth opportunities, and infrastructure needs. At this stage, we believe the most important next step is an external assessment to help us evaluate future pathways and make sound strategic decisions for long-term sustainability (Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029).

2. Funding request

- **What specific needs & issues are being addressed, via what programs and services?**

MCHC is seeking support for a capacity-building initiative that will help the organization assess and plan

for long-term sustainability, financial resilience, and strategic growth. Our work currently addresses significant community needs through the Family Center and Child Advocacy Services, including healthcare access, home visiting through Parents as Teachers, doula services, interpretation and language access, benefits enrollment, resource navigation, and family support services. At the same time, our recent business planning process identified urgent organizational needs related to financial sustainability, business development, internal communications, and leadership development. The OPEN MINDS business plan concluded that MCHC must strengthen its financial infrastructure, forecasting, and decision-making capacity, while also evaluating partnerships, revenue opportunities, and alliance strategies to ensure long-term viability.

- **Why is it important to fund this now?**

This is the right time to fund this work because MCHC has already completed important internal planning steps and now needs external support to move from assessment to action. Our business plan notes that MCHC is operating in a time of great uncertainty, including potential Medicaid cuts, shifting federal and state priorities, and continued reliance on grants and contracts. The plan also identifies immediate risks related to financial management gaps, delayed finance transition, and the need for stronger infrastructure to remain viable. In addition, MCHC's quarterly scorecard identified delays in finance transition and training as the greatest obstacle to success in the upcoming quarter. Funding this initiative now will allow MCHC to proactively strengthen its sustainability strategy, rather than reacting later under greater financial pressure.

- **How will results & impact be demonstrated?**

Results and impact will be demonstrated through implementation of the strategic priorities and performance metrics already identified in MCHC's business plan and scorecard. These include stronger budgeting and forecasting processes, clearer financial dashboards, improved board and leadership access to key financial data, feasibility assessments for growth opportunities such as doula expansion, exploration of partnership or alliance strategies, and a more formal process for evaluating grants and revenue opportunities. Progress will also be measured through key indicators such as profitability, cash solvency, time to close financials, earned income growth, fundraising revenue growth, staff engagement, and the number of individuals served. Together, these measures will show whether the capacity building work is improving MCHC's sustainability, decision-making, and readiness for future growth.

- **Additionally, for capacity building grant proposals:**

- **How will this capacity-building initiative impact your nonprofit?**

This initiative will help MCHC clarify its direction, strengthen its ability to make sound business decisions, and position the organization for long-term sustainability. Specifically, it will help us build stronger financial planning and scenario forecasting capacity, assess strategic partnership and affiliation opportunities, evaluate the return on current and future program investments, and align leadership, board, and staff around a practical plan for the future. The business plan specifically recommends focusing first on organizational sustainability, strengthening financial management, and evaluating alliances or partnerships that could enhance revenue and fill infrastructure gaps. This initiative will give MCHC the external guidance needed to determine next steps with confidence and discipline.

- **How will this impact be demonstrated?**

The impact will be demonstrated through clear organizational deliverables and measurable progress against MCHC's strategic priorities. These deliverables may include an external sustainability assessment, scenario planning options, financial modeling tools, recommendations regarding partnerships or affiliations, and a refined implementation roadmap. Demonstrated impact will also

include evidence that MCHC is using the findings to guide strategic decisions, strengthen financial oversight, improve leadership capacity, and monitor performance through its balanced scorecard. Because MCHC already has a business plan and quarterly scorecard in place, this grant will help translate planning into execution and measurable organizational improvement.

- **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.**

The proposed capacity building initiative will include a structured strategic planning process facilitated by an external consultant over an estimated three-to-four-month period. The work is expected to begin with a preliminary planning meeting with a small Steering Committee to confirm goals, refine the process, and establish the project timeline. The consultant will then lead a community feedback phase that includes up to 15 individual interviews, 2 focus groups, and, if desired, the development of an online survey to gather input from key stakeholders, partners, and community members. Findings from this phase will be summarized in a written report to inform you about the planning process. The consultant will then facilitate a strategic planning meeting with board, staff, and other key participants to review mission, vision, values, and a SWOT analysis, followed by work group meetings to develop goals, strategies, and action steps in areas such as finance, programs, fundraising, outreach, human resources, and governance. The process will conclude with a draft strategic plan, a full group review session, final plan edits, a tactical implementation plan with responsibilities and timelines, and an executive summary for external use.

The anticipated cost for this initiative is \$10,000 includes the full strategic planning process, the most robust community input phase, and preparation of the final planning documents. Connie Carter, CFRE, brings expertise in strategic planning, fund development, board development, facilitation, and nonprofit capacity building. Her proposal emphasizes lean and efficient facilitation, stakeholder engagement, tactical planning, and support for organizations seeking stronger alignment, sustainability, and future direction. Her experience includes work with a wide range of nonprofit organizations, including Maternal and Child Health Consortium, and her client testimonials reflect strong capacity in strategic planning, merger related conversations, and organizational development.

This initiative is well aligned with MCHC's current needs. MCHC's Business Plan for Strategic Growth identifies the need for stronger financial sustainability, more formal business development processes, leadership development, and evaluation of alliance and partnership opportunities to support long term viability. The proposed consultant led strategic planning process will help translate those findings into an actionable roadmap with concrete priorities, timelines, and implementation steps.

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](#):