



REQUEST FOR GRANT PROPOSALS ZELINDA LEBOUTILLIER CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

The Chester County Community Foundation accepts applications from selected nonprofit charitable causes for the **Zelinda LeBoutillier Charitable Foundation**, a fund of the Chester County Community Foundation.

Proposals are due by Monday, March 30th. Upon review of the initial proposals, a site visit may be conducted of the finalists. Grants are typically awarded in May-June.

Please use the attached Grant Proposal Format to apply for a grant.

Grant applications should be submitted electronically by March 30th to grants@chescofc.org. The e-mail heading should read: Grant Proposal Submission- Zelinda LeBoutillier Charitable Foundation

Please note that all grant applications will be available electronically on the Chester County Community Foundation's website for additional consideration for grant funding by the Community Foundation's Donor Advised Fund Advisors.

Questions? Please contact:
Stephenie Stevens, Grant Program Officer & Philanthropy Planning Officer
Chester County Community Foundation
28 West Market Street, West Chester, PA 19382
grants@chescofc.org | www.chescofc.org | (610) 696-8211



CHESTER COUNTY
community
FOUNDATION



ZELINDA LEBOUTILLIER CHARITABLE FOUNDATION REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

I. SUMMARY SHEET

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

Date:

Contact Information:

Organization Name: SpeakUp!
Address: 80 W Lancaster Ave, Suite 220
Devon, PA 19333

Contact Name: Martie Bernicker
Contact Title: Executive Director
Contact E-mail: mbernicker@speakup.org

Phone: 610-519-9600
Web Address: <https://speakup.org>

Fax: 610-553-5064
Year Incorporated: 1997

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

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):*

Our Chester County participation is strongest along the Main Line and West Chester corridor, with limited penetration into the western parts of the county (Coatesville, Oxford and Kennett Square).

Annual # of Clients & Description of Population Served:

SpeakUp! partners with middle and high schools across the Greater Philadelphia region to promote students' emotional well-being. In the 2025–2026 school year, SpeakUp! is working with 29 partner schools. The project provides youth, school adults and parents the skills, opportunities and support to improve youth mental health. In 2024–2025, SpeakUp! trained 760 student leaders and 326 adult facilitators and engaged 2,722 participants, with 581 of these participants from Chester County zip codes.

Mission Statement:

SpeakUp! provides youth, school adults, and parenting adults the skills, opportunity and support to speak up and be heard on the critical topics of today stress, anxiety, depression, suicide, substance use, relationships, social media, and others.

SpeakUp! enables youth to make positive life choices – and parenting adults and school adults to support them – as they navigate the journey to become healthy, confident adults.

Organization Description:

SpeakUp! expands youth mental health support by equipping parents, caregivers, and school adults (educators, administrators, and staff) with the knowledge and skills to understand and respond to young people's emotional needs. Through structured, facilitated dialogue and youth-led programming, SpeakUp! empowers young people to express their feelings and experiences while helping adults

learn to listen without judgment and respond with empathy. Our work is strength-based and grounded in the belief that strong, trusting relationships between youth and caring adults can support long-term well-being.

Annual Budget \$1,528,500

73 % of budget for program expenses

10 % of budget for administrative expenses

17 % of budget for fundraising expenses

100 % total

11 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

12 # of Board Volunteers

n/a # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

n/a # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Spring Point Partners

PA Department of Education

Educational Opportunities 74 LLC (EITC)

Helen's Hope Foundation

Proposal Information:

Grant Amount Requested: \$5,000

Summary Description of Grant Purpose:

SpeakUp! is requesting \$5,000 in general operating funding to support outreach and partnership development in Chester County, with the goal of expanding into at least one school district and laying the groundwork for partnership across all three target districts: Coatesville, Downingtown, and Kennett Square Area School Districts. Funding will underwrite staff time dedicated to outreach, relationship-building, and program implementation, as well as targeted marketing efforts to build awareness and engagement among schools and community stakeholders. This investment will enable SpeakUp! to extend its impact to students and families in Chester County, increasing access to programs that promote youth voice, confidence, and communication skills.

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II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

*Please provide the following information clearly and concisely.
Proposals of 1 or 2 pages are strongly encouraged.*

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

SpeakUp! was founded by Martie Gillin in 2000 to create a safe, non-judgmental environment where teens and parenting adults can be open and honest about tough topics such as stress, drugs, alcohol, mental health, relationships, social media, and more. What began with one brave young man and his family is now a proven program that has partnered with many different schools in the Greater Philadelphia area, and have engaged over 35,000 teens and families.

SpeakUp! is celebrating 25 years of empowering young people to find their voice, strengthen relationships, and navigate life with confidence. A recently published White Paper from the Center for Parent and Teen Communication at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia affirms what we've always known: "SpeakUp! presents a promising and innovative approach to addressing the communication barriers between teenagers and adults in their lives. Youth drive it, and it removes button-pushing by allowing parenting and school adults to hear different perspectives from young people."

Over the last 25 years, SpeakUp! has continually advanced its work—expanding its reach, adapting to emerging challenges facing youth, and deepening its impact in school communities. Through our program, participants realize they are not alone, gain the courage to ask for help, and have the guidance to find it.

SpeakUp!'s long-term Goals (over the next 5 years) include:

- Double our reach across the Greater Philadelphia area to engage over 5,500 students, parenting adults, and school adults each year in our school-based and Continue the Conversation programs.
- Grow and diversify our network from 30 to 40 active partner schools. Expand equity and access by ensuring at least 50% of our new schools are in under-resourced communities. All our schools are under-resourced from a mental health perspective.
- Develop digital tools to broaden our reach and amplify what we've learned by listening to over 35,000 youth and families.

Together, these goals position SpeakUp! to meet the growing mental health and relationship-support needs of today's teens and families.

2. Funding request:

SpeakUp! is requesting \$5,000 in general operating funding to support the expansion of its programming in Chester County, with initial outreach to the Coatesville, Downingtown, and/or Kennett Square Area School Districts.

A. Specific Chester County needs and issues addressed

SpeakUp! is focusing our growth efforts on increasing the number of partner schools who primarily serve students from low income families and is looking to grow in Chester County. However, we believe that all schools are under-resourced from a mental health perspective, and yet schools are our most promising access point. A U.S. Department of Education report (5/9/24) stated, “Our nation’s schools serve as a critical access point to mental health services that could otherwise be out of reach for students. Students are six times more likely to receive mental health services when they are delivered at school. That is because schools are often best positioned to provide access and reach large numbers of students through education, prevention, services, and early intervention efforts, and can help to reduce stigmatization that might be associated with seeking services.”

SpeakUp! has been highly successful at building lasting partnerships with schools. Each year, we are invited back to the same schools to deliver our programming, reflecting the strong demand and positive outcomes of our work. This consistency strengthens school culture, offers students ongoing opportunities to engage in honest conversations, and provides adult facilitators with the continuity they need to deepen their skills and relationships. By remaining embedded year after year, SpeakUp! helps create a sustained, positive impact across entire school communities.

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

SpeakUp!’s impact is demonstrated through strong, consistent outcomes across both youth and adult participants. According to 2024–2025 post-event survey data (64% response rate), participants report meaningful gains in communication, connection, and confidence:

- 96% gained a better understanding of others’ perspectives
- 91% realized they are not alone in their feelings and experiences
- 84% reported an increased willingness to ask for help
- 91% plan to use what they learned to build stronger relationships
- 92% of parents and school adults feel better equipped to talk with youth about difficult topics

These results reflect SpeakUp!’s effectiveness in strengthening the relationships that are critical to youth mental health. By helping young people feel seen and understood—and equipping adults to respond with empathy—the program creates lasting shifts in how school communities communicate and support one another.

Through this proposed expansion, SpeakUp! aims to extend these outcomes to additional students and families in Chester County. Establishing new school partnerships will allow more youth and adults to benefit from improved communication, stronger relationships, and increased willingness to seek help when needed.

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

SpeakUp! will implement this expansion through a targeted, relationship-driven approach to school partnership development. Initial efforts will focus on outreach to school and district leaders in Coatesville, Downingtown, and Kennett Square, prioritizing schools serving a high percentage of students from low-income families.

Once partnerships are established, SpeakUp! will provide comprehensive program implementation, including training for student leaders and adult facilitators, structured dialogue sessions, and ongoing support to ensure program quality and sustainability. Marketing and outreach efforts will build awareness among school communities, while staff will work closely with school partners to tailor programming to each community’s needs.

This approach ensures that new partnerships are not one-time engagements, but rather the beginning of sustained relationships that build capacity within schools and create long-term impact for students and families.

D. Why it is important to fund this now

SpeakUp! is celebrating its 25th Anniversary year at a moment of profound urgency and opportunity. For over two decades, we have seen the life-changing power of honest conversation between teens and the adults in their lives. Recent external validation, such as the 2025 White Paper from the Center for Parent and Teen Communication at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, confirms what our students, parenting adults, and school partners have long known: the SpeakUp! model works.

Today, we stand at a pivotal inflection point. After three years of implementing our supported-delivery model (SpeakUp! 2.0) across a more diverse portfolio of schools, we have amassed a deep well of insight about what strengthens trust, increases engagement, and makes SpeakUp! effective across different communities, including under-resourced districts. This learning has made one thing clear: our model is ready to evolve so we can serve more schools more effectively, without compromising program quality.

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

Spring–Summer 2026:

Conduct outreach to target school districts.

Fall 2026:

Continue outreach to target school districts. Secure initial partnership commitment and begin planning with school leadership.

Winter–Spring 2027:

Launch programming in new partner school(s), including training student leaders and adult facilitators and facilitating initial dialogue sessions. Collect participant feedback and outcome data.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- Establish 1 new school partnerships in Chester County and lay the foundation with others
- Engage students, parents/caregivers, and school staff in facilitated dialogue
- Increase participants' sense of connection, willingness to seek help, and ability to communicate effectively
- Strengthen adult capacity to respond to youth with empathy and understanding

These outcomes directly support SpeakUp!'s mission by building stronger, more supportive relationships that contribute to youth well-being.

4. How impact and results will be demonstrated

SpeakUp! uses both quantitative and qualitative measures to assess program effectiveness. Post-program surveys are administered to students, parents/caregivers, and school staff to evaluate changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to communication and mental health.

Key indicators include increased understanding of others' perspectives, greater willingness among youth to seek help, and improved confidence among adults in supporting young people. As demonstrated in recent survey data, 84% of participants report meaningful gains in these areas.

In addition, SpeakUp! gathers qualitative feedback from participants and school partners to capture changes in school climate, relationship-building, and overall program experience. Repeat partnerships and ongoing engagement with schools also serve as a strong indicator of program value and impact.

Data collected from new Chester County partnerships will be used to refine programming, demonstrate outcomes to stakeholders, and support continued expansion.

III. ATTACHMENTS

Please attach the following support information:

1. Copy of 501 (c) (3) federal tax-exempt letter
2. List of Board of Directors, with their affiliations
3. Most recent annual report and financial statement, 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 (if applying for project-specific grant)

Note: The Philanthropy Network's Grant Application may be submitted with CCCF Summary Sheet. Please visit our website at www.chescocf.org to obtain an electronic version of this application. E-mail applications are strongly encouraged.

Please e-mail completed applications to:
Stephenie Stevens, Grant Program Officer & Philanthropy Planning Officer
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THANK YOU!



ZELINDA LEBOUTILLIER CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Mission...

The Zelinda LeBoutillier Charitable Foundation makes grants to charities that were near and dear to Linda's heart.

About Zelinda...

Zelinda LeBoutillier, CEO of Waterloo Gardens, was the only daughter of James and Anna Paolini of Devon, who founded Waterloo Gardens in 1942. Zelinda married Robert (Bo) LeBoutillier, former President and CEO of Waterloo Gardens, in 1951. They had shared 49 years of marriage at the time of his passing in October of 2001.

Though Zelinda served on many boards and contributed to the community in many ways, what she was really known for was her generous heart. She was called "Mama Linda" affectionately by many because she was truly a mother to all. At Waterloo Gardens, she founded The Cooking School, which operated from 1980-1985. She also wrote a cookbook,

Cooking with Fresh Herbs.

Zelinda was very involved in the management of Waterloo Gardens including purchasing, hiring, and marketing. She was the first woman chosen to serve on the Retailer Magazine panel. Zelinda traveled the country speaking to Nursery and Garden Center Associations on marketing in the industry. She also served on the Board of the Pennsylvania Nursery Association and was a very active member of the Marketing Committee.

The Wall Street Journal quoted Zelinda on the first page with regard to industry market trends. Zelinda LeBoutillier is listed in the 1990 edition of **Who's Who in American Executives**.

Zelinda was an active philanthropist. She received the Harold Martin Leadership Award from the Exton Chamber of Commerce in 2007. She also received the 2005 Citizen of the Year Award from the Berwyn-Devon Business and Professional Association. Boards Zelinda served on include: ALS Hope Foundation, Cabrini College, Bishop Shanahan High School, and Williamson School. She was the State Chairperson for The American Family Institute: Gift of Time and the West Whiteland Chairperson for the American Heart Foundation.

Community was very important to Zelinda. She was a Girl Scout Leader for 10 years and served on the Board of Freedom Valley Girl Scouts. She was also Treasurer of Daylesford Abbey Woman's Guild and President of Sts. Philip and James Mothers' Club. Zelinda was very active in the Calvary Fellowship Church. She joined the Ventures Group and supported many mission trips and local community events to help children.