



# ZELINDA LEBOUTILLIER CHARITABLE FOUNDATION REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## I. SUMMARY SHEET

Date: March 20, 2026

### Contact Information:

Organization Name: The Bridge Academy & Community Center (The Bridge) Contact Name: Jordan Crans  
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 Contact E-mail: Jordan.crans@thebridgeacademy.org  
 Phone: 610-466-9505 Fax: N/A  
 Web Address: www.thebridgeacademy.org Year Incorporated: 2003

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:** The Bridge serves youth and their families residing in the Greater Coatesville Community.

**Annual # of Clients & Description of Population Served:** The Bridge serves approximately 500 individuals annually in direct programs and an additional 1100+ individuals through basic need distributions and community events. All the individuals served reside in Chester County, specifically in Coatesville.

**Mission Statement:** The Bridge's mission is to equip youth and families with the resources needed for academic success, skill development, creative expression, spiritual growth, and leadership.

**Organization Description:** The Bridge is a nonprofit organization working in downtown Coatesville, providing services and support to youth and their families. The organization has been a part of the community for over two decades and builds trust first, developing long-term, durable, relationships. Staff walk alongside community members through life's challenges, focusing on building healthy, sustainable households so that youth thrive.

Annual Budget \$ <u>843,452</u> (FY26)	<u>9</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>78</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>8</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>13</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>300</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>9</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>5000</u> # of Volunteer Hours
<u>100</u> % total	

**Top 3-5 funding sources:** Annual Night of Hope Fundraiser; Foundations; Individual Contributions & Communities of Faith

### Proposal Information:

**Grant Amount Requested:** \$ \$5,000

**Summary Description of Grant Purpose:** The Bridge requests a general operating grant of \$5,000 to support its K-12 Academic Enrichment Programs for youth in the Coatesville Area School District. These programs provide academic year and summer enrichment to under-served youth while encouraging them and their families through trusted relationships, supportive services, and spiritual support.

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### II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE – THE BRIDGE ACADEMY & COMMUNITY CENTER

**1. Organization's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness:** The Bridge Academy and Community Center (The Bridge) has been an important resource for youth and their families in Coatesville since 2003. The organization developed to impact and uplift youth, realizing that the community's young people did not have equitable access to educational support systems. Statistics showed poorer academic outcomes overall, and poverty levels in Coatesville were disproportionately high. Throughout the last 22+ years, the organization has consistently supported hundreds of youths and families annually and is currently serving many 2nd generation students. Our theory of change is rooted in the belief that when youth are surrounded by caring adults and given equitable resources, they build hope, resilience, and a vision for their future, breaking cycles of poverty and trauma. The organization provides residents of Coatesville with free programming, supporting families holistically through academic assistance, skill building, youth development, and meeting basic needs.

One of the most distinct features of The Bridge is that it is a hyper local initiative that is deeply connected to the City of Coatesville. Its founders were from the community, and a majority of the staff, board members, and volunteers reside in close proximity to the organization. Many individuals see The Bridge as a second home and rely on The Bridge to connect them with other resources to address unexpected needs. The activities are shaped directly by feedback from program participants and in conjunction with those who have lived experience. The Bridge also is home to a high number of long-term volunteers, many who were former program participants.

**2. Funding request:** *The Bridge requests a program grant of \$5,000 for its K-12 Academic Enrichment Programs.*

**Specific Chester County needs and issues addressed:** The Bridge will serve an estimated 350 low-income, at-risk youth living within the greater Coatesville community this year and as well as 150 local adults via our monthly Mom's Club and other adult program opportunities. An additional 1,100+ youth will be served via community outreach events (Back to School Book Bag Event, Holiday Donations, Winter Coat distribution, etc.). Approximately 95% of students served come from low-income, single-parent households and most reside in the blocks immediately surrounding our building and are minority youth; 91% are African American, 2% Latino, and 7% Caucasian. Many of our youth come from homes that are impacted by poverty, transient housing, abuse, neglect, food insecurity, addiction, mental health issues, a lack of connectedness or other challenges.

The Bridge offers after-school and summer programs, internships, and additional resources to enhance public school education, develop leadership skills, and foster healthy relationships. These programs cater to K-12 students in the Coatesville Area School District (CASD) and the wider Coatesville community and encourage school engagement and success, promote stability within families, and offer opportunities to reduce the adoption of harmful habits and behaviors. Our students and families endure strained economic resources, a challenging urban environment, and less than ideal school support. They face threats of violence in and out of school and are surrounded by individuals with substance abuse issues. Many households struggle with basic needs - food, safety, security, and connectedness. Our goal at The Bridge is to come alongside the school district to support our students and families in a holistic and relational way.

#### **Project impact – K-12 Academic Enrichment Programming:**

Our **K-12 After School Program** begins in August with a Back-to-School Block Party. At this community-wide event, we pass out approximately 600 filled bookbags, meet and connect with families in the community and gear up for the school year. We actively begin registering families in our after-school tutoring programs and evening programs. Our school-year programs start in September and include after-school and evening programs four to five days a week for at least 30 weeks.

The After School Program includes healthy snacks, homework help, connection with schools/teachers, life skills, creative arts and other special experiential learning opportunities. The Bridge separates ages to ensure quality instructional time for students. Older students have the opportunity to serve as volunteers with younger peers when

appropriate. Our desire is to create a positive atmosphere where students can focus and get the support they need to achieve academic success. The quiet learning space allows students to receive one-on-one tutoring from staff and volunteers in subjects they are struggling with. We also provide access to Chromebooks for students who have assignments to complete online or practice skills with Lexia reading software or IXL math software. This access to Chromebooks and one-on-one assistance is especially helpful for our cyber students, many of whom lack a quiet space with strong Wi-Fi at home and an adult who can sit and help them through classes. Recently, our academic specialist has been incorporating mindset practices and stress-reducing strategies with our younger students to instill positive approaches to conflict, overwhelm, and frustration. Through parental permission, we are allowed to speak directly with teachers to better understand each student's situation and personalize their tutoring time. Staff often participate in IEP and other parent- teacher meetings for the students.

The Bridge's **Summer Program** serves youth ages K-12 in the Coatesville Area School District. The program runs for 9 weeks and provides breakfast and lunch daily, academic support and a variety of enrichment, leadership, and recreational activities to help keep students safe and positively engaged throughout the summer. Two weeks consist of youth leadership and internship training and development. Three weeks are located at The Camp at Old Mill – where specific age groups attend for a week during the daytime (receiving 3 meals); and evenings are filled with additional youth leader trainings and team building for counselors that stay at the camp. One week is for 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> graders (and select Kindergarten students); one week for 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> graders; and one for 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> graders. The remaining four weeks consist of daytime programs at The Bridge and various field trips and excursions- including an opportunity to go to Mexico for a missions trip. Day time summer programming consists of academic enrichment, physical activities, lessons, specialized programs, leadership development, mentorships, and STEAM opportunities.

### **3. Timetable, with anticipated outcomes:**

Summer Programming at The Bridge (June through August) impacts approximately 150 unique youth.

School Year Programming at The Bridge (September through May) impacts approximately 200 unique youth.

Goal 1: 80% of participants report they learned a new skill (i.e. science, math, art, technology, career exploration)

Goal 2: 80% of participants report improved sense of confidence in their academic skills and motivation to succeed.

Goal 3: 80% of participants will feel a meaningful connection with a trusted adult.

Goal 4: 85% of Students will report an improved sense of belonging and connection to their community.

**Why it is important to fund this now:** According to the most recent Coatesville PA Youth Survey, a significant number of students demonstrate a lack of commitment to school and are more likely to cease viewing themselves as positive role models. These students have a higher risk for a variety of problem behaviors.

- 37.4% did not possess a feeling of safety in school.
- One fifth reported experiencing bullying in school (based on “the way I look”, clothing, hairstyle), my size (height or weight) or other reasons.
- One fifth had a diagnosable mental disorder.
- One third demonstrated signs of depression.

The Bridge provides several out-of-school time programs because when students are home alone and unsupervised, they are at-risk for, “Experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and sex...it is also a time of lost opportunities to help students grow and develop the skills and competencies to make positive life decisions that can lead to their future success” (After School Alliance).

**How impact & results will be demonstrated:** Supporting The Bridge enables us to continue providing our programs and services for free - creating a safer and healthier community in the city of Coatesville. Without a safe, free and supportive environment like The Bridge, youth are at-risk for school drop-out, juvenile delinquency, experimentation with drugs/alcohol and other harmful behaviors. Bridge staff and volunteers work to empower students to achieve success in school, impacting them not only academically, but socially, behaviorally, emotionally and spiritually. The Bridge evaluates impact by administering post-program surveys and tracking student attendance, retention rates, academic achievement, and graduation rates. The Bridge is committed to ongoing reflection and review and regularly monitors participants and activities to ensure that services are of high quality, and that student and family needs are met.