



Join or Die Screenings and Adult Club Fair

West Chester Public Library

A250 Let Freedom Ring Proposal

About the West Chester Public Library

The West Chester Public Library was, from its inception, a true community library and remains so. Founded in 1872, the West Chester Public Library has served as a pillar of the community, welcoming residents of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. The library provides access to essential services, including early literacy initiatives, job search assistance, technology access, lifelong learning programs, and community meeting space. Our historic space, dedicated in 1888, has served our community continuously for more than 150 years, now receiving 110,000 visits annually and housing a collection of more than 50,000 items.

Project summary

As part of WCPL's America 250 programming schedule and in service of our continued work to foster community throughout our region, we are seeking \$1,100 to support our Adult Club Fair and two coordinated screenings of the 2023 documentary film *Join or Die*.

Named in reference to Benjamin Franklin's 1754 political cartoon that espoused the dire consequences of disunity among countrymen, *Join or Die* considers the impact of the unraveling of civic spaces on the health of democracies big and small across America. Just as "Join, or Die" became a rallying cry of patriots during the Revolutionary War, the *Join or Die* film asks Americans today to do the patriotic work of rebuilding civic, social spaces like community clubs and neighborhood groups in order to revitalize our democracy. WCPL is planning two screenings of the film within our community, in May 2026 at two of our service area township buildings. These film screenings will rally viewers to join clubs and civic engagement, to prompt the long-term health of our democracy.

To turn this rallying cry into action for the West Chester community, WCPL will host a coordinated Adult Club Fair on May 30, 2026. In line with the urgent message of the film, patrons will be invited to explore the many organizations and groups already serving our region and try making wishlist for clubs of their own. This fair will be open to the public and held in our ADA accessible space as we aim to bring together as many community members as possible. In opening our doors to the diverse and thriving ecosystem of civic groups in Chester County, WCPL aims to play its part in driving community participation in these spaces and strengthening (and saving) our democracy.

Proposed project budget

Category	Amount
Film screening fee (2)	\$1,000
Snacks/incidentals	\$100
Total Requested Funding	\$1,100