


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.
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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.

Please contact Kevin Baffa, Grants Administrator or Stephenie Stevens, Grants Officer at **(610) 696-8211** or grants@chescof.org with questions.

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This grant proposal is for: Direct Service Programs

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is: N/A

<input type="checkbox"/>	Contingency Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partnerships, Collaborations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Merger, Closure
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mission, Vision, Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Board Engagement & Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marketing, Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	Operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology
<input type="checkbox"/>	If other, please describe:				

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$6,000

Proposal Summary: The Malvern Public Library is a bustling hub of the community with growing needs. We have technology for children and books that talk, both of which are in high demand but have a higher cost per material than our other collections and are a strain on our budget. We've been growing our Maker Space offerings to better align with our mission, which in turn requires more materials and an increasing cost. We offer a Mobile Hot Spot to the community to help with internet access in more remote locations and would like to offer a second to meet demand. With a \$6,000 grant we could grow our special collections for children to meet demand as well as cover the costs of more materials for our Maker Space and the costs associated with two mobile hot spots for the year.

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 Malvern Public Library serves all residents in Malvern Borough, East Whiteland Township, East Goshen Township, and Willistown Township. We work diligently to provide both materials and services for all residents from young children to older adults and everyone in between.

Overall Aims:

- Provide a community space for residents of all ages to come together and grow
- Promote reading and lifelong learning for all ages
- Offer resources and services to patrons that are not easily accessible elsewhere

Key Initiatives:

- Expand learning tools and technology equipment available for young children, kids, and teens.
- Engage adults of all ages in new technologies
- Improve our free wireless internet access for residents in need

Key Achievements:

- In 2023, Malvern Public Library celebrated its 150th anniversary.
- In 2024, completed a renovation of the library, fully funded by private donations.
- In 2025, created a 3-year strategic plan to be reviewed and updated annually.

Distinctiveness:

Malvern Public Library is unique in terms of accessibility. Nearly every resident in Malvern Borough and some residents in nearby sections of Willistown can easily walk to the library. When library patrons from outside of the Borough visit the library, they can walk to nearby parks and businesses in the Borough enhancing their overall experience. Our Library of Things collection is unique and includes a kid's reading tent, telescopes, birding kits, and many more "things". We are the only library in the county with a Vinyl Record collection available to borrow.

2. Funding request

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

Need 1: Purchase additional Kids Tech & Books that Talk

In recent years we have created two new collections in our youth department:

1. Kids Tech

- a. Launchpads are tables specifically designed for libraries. They do not connect to the internet but are preloaded with educational games on a specific theme such as adventures in space or learning a new language. Parents feel they are a safer alternative to an iPad or other internet-based tablet for their young children.
- b. Tonies are little character figurines that work with Tonie Boxes. When a Tonie is placed on the Tonie Box player, it tells a story from that character's world. There is

a huge assortment of characters including Disney characters, Dr. Seuss Characters, Roald Dahl characters, and so many more.

- c. WhaZoodles are our newest addition and provide an audio-based adventure for children without the need for the internet. The range of audio experiences include podcasts, music, games, meditation, exercises, jokes, and short stories. Our

2. Books that Talk

- a. Vox and Wonder Books are traditional, printed books with an audio speaker included and attached to the front cover. The speaker will read the story to you with cues to turn the page. It will also ask questions to test your reading comprehension. Not only are these books great for children, but they are also a wonderful tool for anyone learning English. We also have some in Spanish for bilingual families.

Need 2: Funding to support adult learning and engagement

Our Maker Space is comprised of two 3D printers and a Cricut machine. We have offered programs for children and teens to learn how to use these machines and create their own projects. Starting in 2026 we are offering one-on-one appointments for adults, so they don't have to miss out on the fun! With an increase in use, we are facing an increase in expense and are seeking funding for materials for this expanded program.

Need 3: Expanded Mobile Hot-Spot Service

Life in 2026 is very difficult to navigate without access to stable internet. By providing a Mobile Hot Spot, we can help our community stay connected no matter where they are. We have many families who borrow the Hot Spot so kids can work on schoolwork while traveling and numerous adults who use the Hot Spot to stay connected to work. It's also a great emergency preparedness tool for the library in case our internet goes down, providing stability for many of our services in the building. We currently have one Mobile Hot Spot available for borrowing and would like to have two.

Why is it important to fund this now?

Need 1: Kids Tech & Books that Talk

These collections are in high demand by our families. These electronic resources are some of the most expensive items in the library, but also some of the most used. Continuing to grow these high demand collections ensures patrons continue using the collections and visiting the library.

Need 2: Adult Learning & Engagement

Being able to offer Maker Space opportunities to adults is key to our mission of serving ALL residents of our service areas.

Need 3: Mobile Hot Spots

Offering Mobile Hot Spots is instrumental in our community's ability to access school, work, and entertainment no matter where they are. Offering a second Hot Spot will help more patrons in the summer when they are in high demand.

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

Need 1: Kids Tech & Books that Talk

- Within 6 months of receiving funding, we will add 10 new Launchpads, 15 new Books that Talk, 5 new WhaZoodles, and 20 new Tonies to our circulating collection.
- Within 1 year, we expect a 10% increase in circulation of these collections.

Need 2: Adult Learning & Engagement

- Within 3 months of receiving funding, we will have 6-8 one-on-one Maker Space appointments monthly.

Need 3: Mobile Hot Spots

- Within 2 months of receiving funding, we will add one additional Hot Spot to circulation.
- Within 6 months, we expect a 50% increase in circulation of Hot Spots.

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

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

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
3. Most recent **annual report** *URL: [2024 pa public library data.xlsx](#)*
4. Audited or reviewed recent **financial statement**
5. Itemized **organizational operating budget** with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date
6. If capacity building initiative, **itemized budget:** N/A
7. Current **strategic plan**. If your nonprofit does **not** have a current strategic plan, **explain why**.

- Visit our website to learn more at www.chescocf.org
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- Per IRS Regulations, applicants must be charitable, tax-exempt organizations with 501(c)(3) certification & cannot be individuals.

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CHESTER COUNTY
community
FOUNDATION

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR NONPROFITS: Coping with Cutbacks



Capacity building is about empowering nonprofits to do **more good, more effectively, and for the long term**. It strengthens an organization's ability to fulfill its mission, enhance sustainability, and better serve its community.

At its core, capacity building focuses on improving a nonprofit's internal systems, leadership, and resources so that impact can grow and endure.

Traditionally, capacity building has included efforts such as **board and staff leadership development, strategic planning, fundraising, and technology investments** to improve operations and organizational effectiveness.

Today, however, nonprofits face a rapidly changing environment. Shifts in federal policies have resulted in rapid changes at all levels and in new directions. Nonprofits must **"meet the moment" and cope with cutbacks— think differently, shift paradigms and transform how we understand and interact with the world around us...adapt how we plan, lead, fund, and collaborate.**

Capacity building can play a critical role in helping nonprofits adapt and innovate. This may include **funding scenario planning, exploring new revenue models, expanding partnerships, pursuing mergers or strategic alliances**, and other adaptive strategies that strengthen long-term resilience.

Capacity building support can take many forms, tailored to each organization's unique needs. Examples of projects that may be funded include:

- **CONTINGENCY & SCENARIO PLANNING**

Scenario Planning – Financial Modeling & Forecasting

- **PARTNERSHIPS, COLLABORATIONS**

Coalition Building – Collaboration - Mergers & Acquisitions

- **MERGER, CLOSURE**

These unprecedented times may present the need for a merger or closure of your organization.

Contact chaya@chescof.org to confidentially discuss funding to assist in the planning or initial steps.

- **MISSION, VISION, STRATEGY**

Organizational Assessment - Strategic Planning – Strategic Restructuring – Coping With Cutbacks

- **BOARD ENGAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP**

Board Recruitment – Board Engagement – Increasing Networks & Community Support - Leadership Development – Executive Transition & Succession Planning

- **MARKETING, COMMUNICATION**

Nonprofit Business Messaging & Storytelling – Re-branding – Marketing Planning & Re-Positioning – Crisis Communications Planning

- **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

Major Gift Donor Identification, Cultivation, Development & Stewardship - Development Campaigns (Annual, Capital, Planned Giving) - Earned Income Development - Social Enterprise Feasibility & Development

- **TECHNOLOGY, OPERATIONS**

Business Continuity Planning - Financial Management - Human Resources - Volunteer Management - Industry Certification - Risk Management - Technology Improvements

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