


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**.

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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I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit www.chescocf.org

This page will be shared electronically with Grant Panel Members & Fund Advisors + posted online.

Date 4/13/26

Contact Information

Organization Name: United Way of Southern Chester County ED/CEO Name: Darcie Martin
 Address: 712 E Baltimore Pike, Kennett Square, PA 19348 ED/CEO E-mail: ceo@unitedwayscc.org
 Phone: 610-444-4357 Board Chair Name: Craig Blecher
 Website: unitedwayscc.org Board Chair Approval (check here):
 Year Incorporated: 1945 Primary Contact Name: Darcie Martin
 FEIN: 23-1260899 Primary Contact E-mail: ceo@unitedwayscc.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

	Arts, Culture, Heritage		Education, Library		Environment, Animals
	Health	X	Human Services		Social Justice, Civic Engagement
	Religion		If other, please describe:		

Mission: To improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of our community through neighbors helping neighbors.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): United Way of Southern Chester County serves the residents living in 4 school districts in the south of the county: Avon Grove, Kennett, Oxford, and Unionville-Chadds Ford. Southern Chester County is home to 21.3% of Chester County’s population. We have over 113,000 people living in 256 square miles.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served. (Include Chester County # &/or % served.)

We are focused on helping the ALICE and below population in Southern Chester County. ALICE is an **acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed**, these are the individuals who struggle to make ends meet. The cost of living is outpacing what they earn, especially here in Chester County, which has the highest cost of living in all of Pennsylvania. According to United for ALICE, Chester County, 29% of households faced financial insecurity. In our four boroughs (Avondale, Kennett, West Grove, & Oxford), ALICE is much higher at 54%. Working with our partners, we are building healthy communities and providing youth opportunities for all, with an impact of over 26,000 neighbors in FY2025. In FY 2025 we invested \$650,000 towards 24 non-profit partners in 31 programs that addressed critical gaps in education, food access, mental health and wellness.

Annual Budget \$ <u>928,313.54</u>	<u>2.2</u>	# of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>89</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>20</u>	# of Board Volunteers
<u>11</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>50</u>	# of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>0</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>500</u>	# of Volunteer Hours

100% = total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Individual donors, workplace campaigns(Corporations and people), fundraising event (sponsorships, donors, silent auction, ticket sales etc.)

This grant proposal is for: X Direct Service Programs & General Operating &/or Capacity Building

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

<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: \$ 10,000

Proposal Summary: *(a few sentences, please)*

The United Way of Southern Chester County respectfully requests \$10,000 to go towards its pilot ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) Transportation program. We have already secured \$20,000 from the Marshall-Reynolds Foundation. In Southern Chester County, there is a lack of reliable public transportation which impedes individuals' ability to access quality education, employment and healthcare. For our pilot program, we anticipate empowering 6 ALICE or below participants with financial education training with the opportunity to match their savings up to \$1,000; and provide 52 immediate assistance grants of up to \$250 towards car repair services.

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

2. Funding request

- What specific needs & issues are being addressed, via what programs and services?
- Why is it important to fund this now?
- How will results & impact be demonstrated?

- 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 **URL: <https://unitedwayscc.org/meet-our-team>**
 3. Most recent **annual report** **URL: <https://unitedwayscc.org/annual-reports>**
 4. Audited or reviewed recent **financial statement** **URL: <https://unitedwayscc.org/financial-information>**
 5. Itemized **organizational operating budget** with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date
 6. If capacity building initiative, **itemized budget** (including external consultant's proposal, if applicable)
 7. Current **strategic plan**. If your nonprofit does **not** have a current strategic plan, **explain why**. **URL: <https://unitedwayscc.org/financial-information>**
 - 8.
- Visit our website to learn more at www.chescocf.org
 - Proposals are only accepted electronically: <https://chescocf.org/receive/apply-for-grants/>
 - **Email proposals to grants@chescocf.org**
 - Proposals are considered "complete" when CCCF has **confirmed** receipt of the **Grant Proposal Summary Sheet, Narrative & Attachments**.
 - Proposals are shared electronically and online with Fund Advisors, Donors & Grant Panels.
 - Per IRS Regulations, applicants **must be** charitable, tax-exempt organizations with 501(c)(3) certification & **cannot** be individuals.

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

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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



1. Nonprofit Overview: Aims, Initiatives, Achievements & Distinctiveness

For over 80 years United Way of Southern Chester County has partnered with nonprofits, businesses, and community leaders to address our region's most pressing challenges and create lasting, measurable change.

Our mission is to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of our community through neighbors helping neighbors. Our vision is that we strive for an engaged Southern Chester County rooted in compassion and collaboration where everyone in our community can thrive. Our impact areas are: Healthy Community and Youth Opportunity. We define Healthy Community as improving health and well-being for all, which includes affordable housing, mental and physical health & wellness, food access, transportation and social services. We define Youth Opportunity as helping young people, ages 26 and under, realize their full potential with supports for early education and childcare, after-school & summer learning, and college and career development pathways.

Our work is focused on supporting ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households. These are working individuals and families who earn above the federal poverty level but still struggle to afford basic needs. The cost of living is outpacing what they earn, especially here in Chester County, which has the highest cost of living in all of Pennsylvania. According to United for ALICE, Chester County, 29% of households faced financial insecurity. In our four boroughs (Avondale, Kennett, West Grove, & Oxford), ALICE is much higher at 54%.

Our key initiatives include:

- **Community Impact Funding:** supporting local nonprofits in creating healthy communities and youth opportunities
- **ALICE focused Advocacy** grounded in data, compassion and collaboration
- **Volunteer Engagement** to mobilize community resources in creating a better Southern Chester County

In FY2025, United Way invested \$650,000 in 24 nonprofit partners across 31 programs and impacted 26,000 residents.

What distinguishes United Way is our role as a convener and catalyst, aligning funding, data, and partnerships to address root causes, not just immediate needs. Our 2026-2029 Strategic Plan prioritizes measurable, community-driven solutions to stabilize ALICE households. 2026 is our first year to enact our plan and is our pilot year to test programs to learn what can make meaningful change for our ALICE households.

2. Funding Request: ALICE Transportation Pilot Program

United Way of Southern Chester County respectfully requests \$10,000 to launch an ALICE Transportation Pilot Program designed to reduce transportation barriers and improve

financial stability for working families and individuals in Southern Chester County. We have already secured \$20,000 towards this Pilot program.

In Southern Chester County, there is a lack of reliable public transportation which impedes individuals' ability to access quality education, employment and healthcare. For our pilot program, we anticipate empowering 6 ALICE or below participants with financial education training with the opportunity to match their savings up to \$1,000; and provide 52 immediate assistance grants of up to \$250 towards car repair services.

Need & Issues Being Addressed

Reliable transportation is essential for access to employment, healthcare, and education, yet Southern Chester County lacks sufficient public transit. 1 in 8 residents report transportation barriers to healthcare, and 66.9% rely on personal vehicles to commute (Chester County Community Health Assessment, 2025).

Unexpected car repair expenses can quickly become financial crises. Without reliable transportation, individuals risk missed work, lost wages, and reduced access to essential services. ALICE or below households do not have the savings to be able to pay for the unexpected car repair services and therefore are faced with impossible choices.

Therefore, the program and services of the United Way of Southern Chester County's ALICE Transportation program address both of these issues: immediate one time assistance for car repair, aimed to get ALICE or below participants back on the road quickly; and a longer financial education training, aimed at establishing credit and savings for ALICE or below households. We will do this pilot program in conjunction with our long-term partner, Oxford Area Neighborhood Services Center. By partnering with a trusted organization that already serves the ALICE or below community, they will help market and provide participants for our programs. In addition, this is a benefit to Oxford Area Neighborhood Service Center as, they do not have the capacity to run an in-depth financial education program.

Programs & Services

Immediate Assistance:

- 52 grants of up to \$250 for essential car repairs
- Payments made directly to trusted local repair shops

Financial Education:

- Six-week financial education program serving 6 participants
- Includes budgeting, credit building, and vehicle maintenance
- Participants receive up to \$1,000 in matched savings

Why Now

Oxford has some of the highest poverty and ALICE rates in our county, with Oxford Borough at 57% and Lower Oxford being at 35% ALICE and below. Rising costs and limited

transportation infrastructure are placing increasing pressure on working families. This pilot allows United Way to test and scale solutions that directly address barriers to stability. This also directly aligns with the new Strategic Plan of the United Way of Southern Chester County

Results & Impact

This pilot strengthens United Way’s mission and will deliver targeted impact for our most vulnerable community and deepen our partnerships. The program will launch within 3 months and run for 12 months. We will assess throughout the program and adjust accordingly with feedback from the individuals participating in our programs and our partner organizations. We will share our results with our various stakeholders via our website, Annual Report, e-newsletter, community events and social media.

Outputs:

- Number served: 58 (52 through immediate assistance car repair; 6 financial education)
- Program completion rates: 95%. We expect there may be some drop off in our financial education program
- Savings generated: We anticipate \$6,000-\$12,000 to be saved from six individuals. This is a 1:1 match of up to \$1,000, so your donation is matched and amplified.

Outcomes:

- Increased employment stability by quickly getting individuals back on the road
- Improved financial behaviors through the financial education program

Budget

PROGRAM Expense	Total Program Expenses
1. Personnel	
Salaries and Wages, Payroll Taxes, Benefits	\$11,500
2. Operations	
Grocery Gift card + meeting meal to help increase weekly attendance for financial training (\$50/participant over 6 weeks (1,800); meal for 8 \$30/meal (1,440)	\$3,240
Spanish Interpreter for 6 week training & writing of materials	\$1,000
Program Specific Fund of \$13,000 for 52 \$250 car repair	\$13,000
Program Specific Fund for \$5,000 to be used towards match of 6 completion of up to \$1,000. Do not anticipate full \$1,000 per participants savings)	\$5,000
Transportation: Volunteers and CEO to Oxford	\$500
TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSE	\$34,240