



I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

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Date: 4/16/26

Contact Information

Organization Name: ACT Players	ED/CEO Name: NA
Address: P. O. Box 173, New London, PA 19360	ED/CEO E-mail: NA
Phone: 844-692-4334	Board Chair Name: Geddes Marcano
Website: www.actplayers.org	Board Chair Approval (check here): <input type="checkbox"/>
Year Incorporated: 2017	Primary Contact Name: Nigel Caplan
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Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Arts, Culture, Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Library	<input type="checkbox"/>	Environment, Animals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Justice, Civic Engagement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion	<input type="checkbox"/> If other, please describe:			

Mission:

Established in 2004, ACT Players is a nonprofit charitable organization home to a diverse group of individuals who share a common passion for the performing arts, both on the stage and in the wings. We are not simply actors, but directors, pit musicians, producers, costumers, choreographers, light and sound technicians, and most importantly, we are volunteers who support an organization built on core family values, inclusiveness, pride, fellowship, talent, mutual respect, and love for the theater. Towards that end, ACT Players endeavors to:

1. Provide challenging workshops and drama courses to interested students and adults as an enrichment and extension of the community theater program.
2. Create quality, educational and cultural experiences for anyone wishing to participate in any area of the theater/performing arts.
3. Give young people an appreciation of the performing arts, imparting to them the necessary skills for producing, directing and participating in community theater and other related projects.
4. Continue to seek opportunities for future growth within our community and to partner effectively with other dramatic organizations.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served):

Primarily Southern Chester County (New London, Avon Grove), but patrons and volunteers come from other areas of Chester County, Delaware County, and Philadelphia County, as well as neighboring states of Delaware and Maryland.

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

In 2025, the total number of performers in ACT productions, including youth programs, was 177, and the total audience was 2840. All performances took place in Chester County. Data are not available on the number of actors, crew, and patrons who live in Chester County. However, around 2/3 of patrons whose addresses were recorded in 2025 lived in Pennsylvania, and we expect the vast majority of those live in Chester County.

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

Established in 2004, ACT Players is a nonprofit community theater company that is home to a diverse group of local volunteers who share a common passion for the performing arts in Chester County, PA. ACT produces at least four mainstage plays and musicals annually and runs youth drama programs during the school year and summer. ACT also sponsors an improvisational theater troupe and stages regular cabaret evenings, one-act plays, and other live entertainment in the West Grove-New London-Avondale area

We are actors, directors, pit musicians, producers, costumers, choreographers, light and sound technicians, and most importantly, volunteers who support an organization built on shared values, inclusiveness, pride, talent, mutual respect, and love for the theater. ACT is a welcoming group that is committed to building community through theater while sharing high-quality, affordable productions with the people of southern Chester County. Additionally, ACT provides challenging and enriching drama courses and summer camps for children and teenagers, developing an appreciation of the performing arts and inspiring a new generation of actors, directors, and technical crew.

In 2025, ACT produced four mainstage shows, three youth productions, and three one-off performances. Together, they involved more than 175 performers of all ages and were seen by almost 3,000 people. The youth drama programs reached 69 participants and a total audience of 630. A large team of volunteers and crew donate their time as set builders, stage crew, artists, and front-of-house staff. Productions are selected by the Board from applications submitted by experienced and first-time directors, and all shows are cast through open auditions. The 2026 season features two musicals, outdoor Shakespeare, and an original play written by an ACT member as well as two full-scale youth productions, a 24-hour one-act festival, cabarets, and a day-long vendor fair and improv showcase. All performances are open to the public, and many are free of charge: in 2026, *The Tempest*, four cabarets, and youth plays will be presented as "pay what you will" to make the arts accessible to a broader audience.

ACT Players is the only community theater that provides year-round opportunities for amateur thespians and audiences in southern Chester County. For over 20 years, ACT has built a reputation for staging entertaining, thought-provoking, high-quality productions at venues in New London, Lincoln University, and throughout the Avon Grove School District. In 2025, we expanded to northern Chester County with an open-air performance at St. Peter's in the Great Valley. Led by a passionate Board of Directors, ACT is a growing theater troupe with potential to reach larger and more diverse audiences, while providing a vital creative outlet for ever more members of the communities of Chester County.

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?

ACT Players draws performers, technical crew, and audiences from communities in southern Chester County that are underserved in the performing arts. Access to high-quality, affordable theater enriches the local community, strengthening it through the power of shared experiences and opening spaces for meaningful dialog. Youth programming offers a safe, healthy environment for personal growth and artistic development,

and a love of theater can spark creativity, literacy, and curiosity for literature, music, and dance. ACT Players is an integral part of the performing arts community in the region and is poised to expand its reach and impact.

While ACT has built a strong base of individual donors and local sponsors, who accounted for about 15% of the organization's revenue in 2025, the majority of our annual income (82%) is derived from ticket sales and youth program tuition. ACT has been fiscally responsible, building a small reserve through conservative budgeting. However, this entails relatively high ticket prices (an average of \$18.50 for a play, \$23.50 for a musical) and limits long-term investment in lighting, sound, and sets. Pay-what-you-will performances are vital for attracting new audiences but represent a financial risk for the company. General operating support from the CCCF would support ACT's efforts to make performances more affordable and accessible to more diverse audiences, upgrade aging technical equipment, and stage more exciting and complex productions.

We have identified the following priorities for 2026:

- **Free admission to Shakespeare in the Parks, Cabaret, and Youth Program Performances.** ACT is the only community theater in the county that is committed to producing an annual Shakespeare play. In 2026, we will stage *The Tempest* outdoors at the Penn Township Community Park and other locations. Admission will be free in order to engage the broadest audience, but funding is needed to prevent a shortfall. ACT's new Cabarets open up greater opportunities to perform and are also offered on a "pay what you will" basis. Additionally, CCCF funding will end the need to charge families, friends, and community members admission to see youth program performances. Summer camps stage full productions of plays and musicals, and by making the performances free and open to the public, ACT will not only showcase the talents of the young performers but also encourage new actors to register for the academic-year drama courses.
- **Subsidized Tuition for Youth Programs:** By offering needs-based tuition scholarships, ACT could open its fall and winter drama clubs and summer theater camps to the many low-income families in southern Chester County for whom the cost of participation (approximately \$500-725 per camper) is currently prohibitive.
- **Technical Upgrades:** All mainstage and youth performances use radio microphones for clarity and accessibility. However, the expensive headsets are beginning to fail and urgently require replacement. Microphones are more than a convenience: they make performances accessible to older patrons and those with impaired hearing. They are also essential for outdoor productions and the summer musical. Additionally, ACT would like to invest in more LED stage lights to reduce the need to rent lighting equipment for major productions. Finally, terminals for the box office and concessions stall are available that can integrate with the client management software ACT has recently adopted (Ludus).

While the impact of watching and performing live theater is difficult to quantify, ACT will collect and share these metrics for funded initiatives:

- Audience measures
 - Attendance numbers at each performance
 - Zip codes of attendees
 - Demographics of attendees (adult / senior / child or student)
 - Testimonials
- Participant measures (actors, directors, creative team, stage crew)
 - Number of people and number of shows
 - Demographics (e.g., zip code, age, race, ethnicity, gender identity)
 - Previous experience with ACT or first-time member
- Volunteer measures (board members, front-of-house volunteers, parent volunteers)
 - Number of people volunteering

- Number of hours' service provided
- Demographics (e.g., zip code, age, race, ethnicity, gender identity)
- Previous experience with ACT or first-time volunteer

Data will be collected from ACT's online platform (Ludus). Additional testimonials will be collected from social media and emailed comments.

Every member of ACT Players, from the directors and actors to stage designers and crew, donates their time, and all Board members contribute to the annual campaign. However, art is not cheap. ACT does not own a rehearsal or performance space, and rented venues add substantially to show budgets, often accounting for more than 25% of total production expenses. Inflation is affecting the price of building materials for sets, and the costs of staging high-quality productions also include royalties, costumes, props, and publicity. Ticket sales alone cannot cover these expenses while still remaining affordable to broad audiences in Chester County, especially in challenging economic times.

The predominantly rural areas that ACT serves are socioeconomically mixed. Many have higher levels of poverty and lower per-capita income than the rest of the county - Penn Township has amongst the highest poverty rates in Chester County, and in three census tracts (Avondale, Penn Township, and Oxford), over 12% of households reported income under \$25,000. There is a substantial senior population in the area: over 20% of the population in Penn Township and London Britain, for instance. Meanwhile, the population is increasing: the county's planning commission predicts 18.6% growth county-wide by 2050, but 42% in Penn Township and 31% in New London. Together, the demographics point to potential for growth in ACT's membership and audiences but only if participation is made more affordable, especially to patrons with fixed or low incomes.

Meanwhile, the impacts of the human connections forged through community theater have never been more vital, for youth and adults alike. Theater uniquely connects actors, volunteers, and audiences from all walks of life, strengthening the local community and spreading the joy of the arts.

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 - *attached*
2. List of **Board** of Directors, with their affiliations - *attached*
3. Most recent **annual report**: *attached*
4. Audited or reviewed recent **financial statement** - *attached*
5. Itemized **organizational operating budget** with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date - *attached*
6. If capacity building initiative, **itemized budget** (including external consultant's proposal, if applicable) N/A
7. Current **strategic plan**. If your nonprofit does **not** have a current strategic plan, **explain why**.

ACT does not have a written strategic plan. However, the Board has established the funding priorities for 2026 that are listed in this proposal. Work on a formal strategic plan was slated to begin in 2020, but the onset of the Covid pandemic diverted the Board's attention to ensuring the organization's survival, in which it has succeeded. As a volunteer-run performing arts organization, ACT's first priority is always the upcoming season, which can leave less time for long-term planning.