


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
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 - ◇ 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
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://chescofcf.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.chescofcf.org
- Proposals are only accepted electronically. The format is online at <https://chescofcf.org/receive/apply-for-grants/>
- **E-mail proposals to grants@chescofcf.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
at **(610) 696-8211** or grants@chescofcf.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 5.27.26

Contact Information

Organization Name: Citizen Advocacy of Chester
 Address: 239 Church Street, Phoenixville
 Phone: 610 933 1299
 Website: <https://citizenadvocacycc.org/>
 Year Incorporated: 1980
 FEIN: 23-2117795

ED/CEO Name: Alicia DeMont
 ED/CEO E-mail: Alicia@CitizenAdvocacyCC.org
 Board Chair Name: Kerry Wilson
 Board Chair Approval (check here):
 Primary Contact Name: Marnie Melvin
 Primary Contact E-mail:
Marnie@CitizenAdvocacyCC.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission:

The mission of Citizen Advocacy of Chester County is to initiate and support a variety of intentional, long-term relationships that provide advocacy for opportunity, protection from harm, sponsorship into community life, friendship, and justice for isolated people living with a disability.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): Citizen Advocacy of Chester County is primarily rooted in northern and central Chester County, but our network of partners and advocates spans the entire county. We also serve portions of Montgomery County, particularly in the areas bordering Chester County.

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

Partners, the people with disabilities that Citizen Advocacy meets and matches with advocates, are diverse ages, skills, races and living situations. One primary principle is we deliberately recruit partners of very diverse capacities and life experiences. For example, partners may live independently, in group homes, in institutions, with their family, in nursing homes, or in prison. Some partners are unable to speak or communicate, or to walk, or see or hear. Others may have debilitating illnesses. Others might have jobs and live alone with only minimal help. All Citizen Advocacy partners have in common the vulnerability to segregation and isolation.

Advocate roles also vary. For example, advocates have; become legal representative payees and powers of attorney, helped secure more appropriate and mainstream educations, provided lifesaving medical interventions, provided transportation to doctors and to jobs, visited faithfully when there are no family or friends, helped with basic needs like grocery shopping and laundry, and included partners in their family activities.

Since the program was founded, we have initiated 338 matches. Currently, the coordinators support 71 individual matches and are recruiting advocates for 8 new partners. 47 or 66% of these relationships are

happening in Chester County. Three of these matches are over 20 years old, a testament to the long-term commitment made by advocates.

Annual Budget \$ 324,802.00 2 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
72 % of budget for program expenses 11 # of Board Volunteers
8 % of budget for administrative expenses 170 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
20 % of budget for fundraising expenses n.a (we intentionally do not track advocate hours) _____
 # of Volunteer Hours
100% = total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

We are proudly supported by the Phoenixville Community Health Foundation and Robert L & Agnes Cook Bard Trust. Most of our funding comes from our dedicated individual and corporate supporters. We also have fundraising events throughout the year to bolster our support including an annual Theater Event, Phoenixville Run, Bingo, and Spaghetti Dinner.

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

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

Contingency Planning	Partnerships, Collaborations	Merger, Closure
Mission, Vision, Strategy	Board Engagement & Leadership	Marketing, Communication
Resource Development	Operations	Technology
If other, please describe:		

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 10,000

Proposal Summary: *(a few sentences, please)* Citizen Advocacy of Chester County is dedicated to fostering one-to-one, freely given, long-term relationships between independent community members and people with disabilities who are isolated or vulnerable. These relationships are not time-limited or simply service-based; they are built on trust, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to dignity, safety, connection, and opportunity.

People with disabilities who are isolated or vulnerable often face significant barriers to accessing basic needs such as food, housing, safety, and meaningful connection. Navigating systems meant to provide support can be complex and overwhelming, especially without consistent advocacy and continuity.

Funding received would directly support the creation, development, and long-term support of citizen advocacy relationships. These relationships provide stability, increase safety, amplify individual voices, and help ensure people with disabilities are seen, supported, and protected within their communities.

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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

Since Citizen Advocacy was founded, we have initiated 338 matches. Currently, the Citizen Advocacy staff support 71 individual matches and are recruiting advocates for 8 new partners. Three of these matches are over 20 years old, a testament to the long-term commitment made by advocates. The Citizen Advocacy office plans to continue increasing the number of new matches we make this year, as well as to continue supporting the 70-plus matches that are ongoing. In 2022, we expanded our staff in the hopes that we would be able to increase the number of matches we could make and that decision has paid off. In the past 3 years we have consistently made more matches than we were able to make prior to 2022. In 2026 we hosted our 23rd Annual "A Play With a Purpose" and we are planning for our 40th Annual Phoenixville Run. We also host an annual Spaghetti Dinner and recently added a Designer Bag Bingo to our calendar.

The longevity of our program, our events, and the advocacy relationships we initiate and support reflects the extraordinary commitment our community has made to Citizen Advocacy, and the commitment Citizen Advocacy has made in return. We ask advocates to make long-term commitments to those their partners, and as an organization, we strive to model that same enduring dedication. We are honored to be a trusted and steadfast pillar of this community.

To highlight the power of Citizen Advocacy and the impact of your funding, we wanted to share a story of a recent relationship. When Janelle lost her parents, grandparents, and her job all within a short period of time, her world turned upside down. Not only that, but she was also fighting her own health battle, now all on her own. "I needed help" she says. "Then Debbie came into my life at just the right time. Debbie is a blessing to me."

Debbie was new to the area when she was introduced to Janelle through Citizen Advocacy. She saw the relationship as a way to become more invested in her new community. The foundation of their relationship was built by going grocery shopping and running important errands. Debbie was hugely instrumental in providing transportation and making sure Janelle's basic needs were being met during such a difficult time. From that solid foundation and with more time spent together, their trust and relationship deepened. Debbie soon realized that Janelle was being overlooked and struggling to be heard by her doctors. Debbie decided to step forward and work with Janelle to help her navigate the healthcare system. She now accompanies Janelle to medical appointments and makes sure her concerns are taken seriously. "Before we go, I always ask Janelle what she thinks and feels. It's helpful to have someone who knows you to help you be understood. Sometimes her doctors don't take her concerns seriously. Once, a neurologist wasn't following up the way she should have. So together, Janelle and I found her a new and better doctor."

That's the power of Citizen Advocacy. We connect someone who is isolated or vulnerable and living with a disability, to someone who will get to know them, stand beside them, speak up when needed, and make sure their voice is heard. "If I can make Janelle's day-to-day life better, I feel good. It's good for everyone to have someone else who cares about you in your corner. She makes my life better, too."

Through their relationship Janelle is able to maintain her independence and have stability without the concern of having to move to a congregate living facility. Together Janelle and Debbie tackle the big questions and navigate the small details. They still meal plan and grocery shop, they work out together and attend festivals,

they go out to eat and explore the town. They have a relationship that is beautiful and strong and through this relationship, protection, connection, and opportunity grow. “We get along so well. When I think of Debbie, I smile-cry.” This is just one example of what Citizen Advocacy does.

2. Funding request

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

Citizen Advocacy remains focused on finding people who are at the margins of our communities due to how people with disabilities are historically, and currently, treated. People with disabilities who are isolated or vulnerable often face significant barriers to accessing basic needs such as food, housing, adequate healthcare, safety, and meaningful connection. Navigating systems meant to provide support can be complex and overwhelming, especially without consistent advocacy and continuity. We ask people who are on the icy, insecure, edges of isolation in our community to take a chance on the idea that an independent neighbor will step forward and create a relationship that will be the foundation and catalyst for change. We then find local citizens with complementary qualities who will step up and into those people’s lives as citizen advocates. We introduce the new advocate to the philosophy of Citizen Advocacy, and the partner in need of support. We ask advocates to make a long-term, ideally lifetime commitment, to stand for and with their partner. We support advocates to think critically, question the status quo, and transform lives. We encourage citizen advocates to involve their family and friends and to use the contacts and connections they have throughout our communities to create lasting and powerful change. These relationships are not time-limited or service-based, they are built on trust, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to dignity, safety, connection, and opportunity.

The long-term and proactive nature of these relationships causes a paradigm shift in the foundation of a person’s life, often breaking life-time patterns of isolation, poverty, and vulnerability and replacing them with safety, greater well-being, and improved prospects in all aspects of their lives. Through 45 years of this work, Citizen Advocacy has shown that it is a critical and effective means to enrich, safeguard, and even save lives in our communities.

- **Why is it important to fund this now?**

The work of Citizen Advocacy has never been more essential, driven by two primary reasons: 1) the continued isolation, abuse, segregation, and prejudice faced by people with disabilities, and 2) the compelling research and lived experiences that show relationships are the most effective way to improve a person's health, safety, and quality of life.

In the face of these stark realities, Citizen Advocacy provides a vital lifeline. By connecting individuals with disabilities with committed, long-term advocates, we offer a solution that goes beyond traditional care models, fostering relationships that change lives. In contrast to the harmful realities highlighted in recent investigations, our approach offers a long-term, consistent, human connection which is a foundational element missing in many other services available to vulnerable individuals.

The realities faced by people with disabilities today are troubling and, in many cases, catastrophic. According to a 2024 Senate investigation titled "Warehouses of Neglect: How taxpayers are funding systemic abuse in youth residential treatment facilities" residential treatment facilities (RTFs), places where vulnerable children and adults are often placed for care, are riddled with abuse, neglect, and inadequate treatment. The report found that in these facilities, individuals often suffer from sexual, physical, and emotional abuse by staff or peers, unsafe and unsanitary conditions, and lack of proper care and treatment. Despite the growing awareness of these issues, there has been little systemic change. The Senate's investigation uncovered how some facilities prioritize

maximizing profits by filling large facilities to capacity while cutting costs on staff, leading to dereliction of duty and abandonment of vulnerable residents. The lack of oversight and the profit-driven nature of these facilities create an environment where vulnerable individuals are treated as numbers, rather than people with intrinsic worth and dignity.

According to *Financial Inequality: Disability, Race and Poverty in America*, published by the National Disability Institute, "The poverty rate for adults with disabilities is more than twice the rate of adults with no disability."

Research published in the U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community finds that "local community participation may also influence socioeconomic mobility of individuals across their lifespan and also reduce large-scale socioeconomic disparities."

Citizen Advocacy's work offers a critical alternative to the harmful reality of huge, overburdened, and impersonal systems by connecting marginalized individuals with long-term, supportive relationships that break cycles of poverty, vulnerability, and social isolation. Since its inception, we've initiated 338 matches, with 71 active today. Three of these matches are over 20 years old, a testament to the long-term commitment made by advocates. These relationships empower individuals, creating safe, supportive communities that enhance well-being for partners and advocates alike.

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

Many people have tried to articulate the profound, often immeasurable power of human relationships, and the difficulty in capturing that power with data. A few years ago, the Aspen Institute published "Weave: The Relationalist Manifesto", which offered a compelling truth: "Relationships do not scale. They have to be built one person at a time... You can count apples with data. But there is something that is unique and irreplaceable about each person that data cannot see."

Jennifer and Peter Buffett echoed this in their reflections on philanthropy, writing: "Social change is ultimately about human capacity, human relationships, and human happiness- -and progress in these areas is never easy to measure. After all, how do you measure a girl knowing she's safe? How do you measure a worker's dignity?"

At Citizen Advocacy, we know this truth intimately. Our work is rooted in relationships that are powerful precisely because they are human, unpredictable, deeply personal, and unscalable by numbers. Yet, even in this deeply relational model, we've found ways to honor and track the kinds of tangible support, safety, opportunity, and life transformation these matches bring into the lives of partners and advocates alike.

Each year, we monitor and document the kinds of activities that arise organically within these relationships, activities that reflect the depth of commitment and the real-world impact of Citizen Advocacy relationships. These actions may seem small on paper, but in a partner's life, they often mean the difference between isolation and belonging, neglect and safety, despair and hope.

To ensure we are continuously learning and improving, each of our coordinators sets annual performance goals tied to specific measurable outcomes across these key activities. Progress is reported every other month to the board through detailed written reports and is reviewed at year-end as part of each coordinator's performance evaluation. A dedicated Coordinator Support Committee also works closely with our staff to help them stay inspired, centered, and aligned with both personal and organizational goals. In addition, we are honored that our office was selected as a designated training location, where coordinators from other states had the opportunity to observe our operations, learn from our established best practices, and gain insights to enhance their own programs.

- **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: **Separate Attachment**
 2. List of **Board** of Directors, with their affiliations **URL: Separate Attachment**
 3. Most recent **annual report** **URL: <https://citizenadvocacycc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Citizen-Advocacy-Annual-Report-2024.pdf>**
 4. Audited or reviewed recent **financial statement** **URL: <https://citizenadvocacycc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Citizen-Advocacy-of-Chester-County-FS-9.30.25-Final.pdf>**
 5. Itemized **organizational operating budget** with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date : **Separate Attachment**
 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. Our Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 is attached. We are currently working with Jenna Armato to develop a new three-year Strategic Plan. We have already had one in-person session with our staff and board and will have another 2 sessions over the Summer. Our plan will be complete by September 2026.**
- 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**.
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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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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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