



## I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

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**Date: 5/11/26**

### Contact Information

Organization Name: FLY:FWD by Operation Warm  
 Address: P.O. Box 822431, Philadelphia, PA 19182-2431  
 Phone: 610-388-2500  
 Website: [www.flyfwd.org](http://www.flyfwd.org)  
 Year Incorporated: 2002  
 FEIN: 38-3663310

ED/CEO Name: Grace Sica  
 ED/CEO E-mail: [contracts@operationwarm.org](mailto:contracts@operationwarm.org)  
 Board Chair Name: Dick Sanford  
 Board Chair Approval (check here):   
 Primary Contact Name: Heather Connolly  
 Primary Contact E-mail: [hconnolly@operationwarm.org](mailto:hconnolly@operationwarm.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:** FLY:FWD is an initiative launched by Operation Warm aimed at addressing disparities and equipping young girls from diverse backgrounds with the essential equipment they need to stay active. Our mission is to empower these girls with comfort and confidence as they pursue their dreams.

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

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

FLY:FWD gifts brand-new sports bras to under-resourced girls age 11-18 at Title I middle and high schools where over 75% of students receive Free And Reduced Meals. Across Chester County, 108 girls received new sports bras last year. We also gifted 1,080 coats and 432 pairs of shoes to children in the County.

**Annual Budget** \$21,230,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \_53\_\_\_\_\_ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 95 % of budget for program expenses \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_ # of Board Volunteers  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 1 % of budget for administrative expenses 41,000\_ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 % of budget for fundraising expenses 164,000\_ # of Volunteer Hours

100% = total

**Top 3-5 funding sources:** Top FLY:FWD Funders: Philadelphia Eagles \$320,000; Arthur M. Blank Foundation \$270,000; Los Angeles Dodgers \$128,000; Dick's Sporting Goods \$25,000; Windstar on Naples Bay \$25,000

**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)*

Low-income girls are less likely to participate in sports because of the expense of necessary equipment, including sports bras. A \$10,000 grant will gift new sports bras to 350 Chester County middle or high school students, increasing their access to the benefits of sports, including improved mental and physical health, self-esteem and body image, and educational outcomes. Our program supported 56,000 girls in its first three years, and is expanding after a positive response from recipients and athletic directors.

## 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

Founded in 1998, Operation Warm gifts new clothing to over 1 million under-resourced children per year. In 2023 we launched the FLY:FWD initiative to distribute brand-new, high-quality sports bras to help level the playing field for girls in middle and high school sports in low-income communities. Our program supported 56,000 girls and distributed over 112,000 sports bras in its first three years. This included 768 Chester County girls at three middle and high schools. After an overwhelmingly positive response from recipients, coaches, and athletic directors, we are working on expanding this program. Our gifting events unite caring volunteers and organizations to alleviate poverty's effects on youth and families. Your support can help increase our impact in Chester County, and help every girl feel confident in her body and empowered to reach her potential by staying active.

Unlike a clothing drive, Operation Warm manufactures our own line of brand-new, high-quality sports bras for girls age 11-18 with inclusive sizing options from XS - XXL. We offer all-new inventory, thoughtfully designed each year, purchasing large volumes at lower-than-wholesale rates. This sports bra is a pullover style polyester/spandex blend with minimal seams, that has been tested and highly recommended by thousands of girls in our first three years of FLY:FWD.

### 2. Funding request

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

Low-income girls are less likely to participate in physical activities, including required gym classes, because of the expense of essential equipment, including sports bras. 7% of Chester County children live below the poverty line. About 2,600 girls between the ages of 10-19 live below poverty across the County. Girls are twice as likely as boys to drop out of sports, and six times more likely in low-income communities. However, girls who participate in sports gain confidence, leadership skills, and academic benefits. Physically active girls have higher confidence and better academic performance and are more likely to graduate from high school. 75% of working women believe sports involvement improved their self-perception, underscoring the impact of early athletic engagement.

A new sports bra provides comfort and confidence, empowering girls to thrive and succeed by increasing their access to the many benefits of physical activity, including improved mental and physical health, enhanced self-esteem and body image, educational outcomes, and skill building. It alleviates a financial burden for low-income families by providing the gift of clothing they may otherwise struggle to afford. And it equips school and community athletic programs to better serve, retain, and support their female athletes.

FLY:FWD maintains a Wish List of schools and organizations in need of new sports bras for the young women they serve. Athletic directors or other staff can request sports bras through our website and share the demographics and needs of their population. We then identify funders and help facilitate gifting events that are fun and uplifting for athletes, volunteers, and the entire community. As of May 2026, our Wish List has unmet requests for sports bras for 152 girls in Chester County.

“The more we can provide for the girls, we are hoping the more girls will participate in sports,” said Harold Smith of Renaissance Academy in Phoenixville. “If we get them to come out it will help in character development and self-esteem.”

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

Women's sports are experiencing unprecedented growth and surging interest among girls, highlighting opportunity and urgency. Girls need equitable access to school athletics, recreation leagues, or club sports and cultivating their strengths within a supportive ecosystem. FLY:FWD provides essential athletic gear that ensures girls have the confidence and pathways to stay engaged and thrive.

Operation Warm believes the gift of essential apparel extends far beyond meeting a material necessity. It equips girls to move comfortably and confidently — from the playground to the playing field. Recognizing the value of movement as a path to strength and empowerment for young women, we aim to inspire every girl to live a more active, playful life.

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

FLY:FWD targets girls age 11-18 at Title I middle and high schools where over 75% of students receive Free And Reduced Meals. Operation Warm has over 25 years of experience orchestrating large-scale distribution of clothing essentials as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible, leveraging our nationwide network of distribution partners, community organizations, and volunteers to maximize our program impact and the number of beneficiaries we serve. Our program is powered by our extensive network of beneficiary partners, ensuring collaborations with schools in funders' local area. These intentional partnerships support children and youth in under-resourced communities and help weave a more secure safety net. Our beneficiary partners' staff, who intimately understand the community, identify girls in need and assist with distributing sports bras. Operation Warm utilized 164,000 volunteer hours last year, the equivalent of an additional 79 full-time staff members.

FLY:FWD sports bras can be shipped from our warehouses to schools in time for the beginning of any sports season for use throughout the school year. Upon notification of a funding commitment, sports bra orders will be fulfilled within one month. Shipping, tracking, and delivery are provided free of charge through our partnership with FedEx, within 7-10 business days. FLY:FWD provides communications and tips for staff and coaches to distribute sports bras to the girls during meetings or practices with respect for the girls' privacy and sensitivity.

Operation Warm's ownership of manufacturing ensures quality control, flexibility, and cost efficiency. Our robust program management experience ensures efficient on-site implementation and dependable delivery anywhere in North America. We also offer a program that extends our impact by pairing the gift of sports bras with volunteer-run events that teach teamwork skills and inspire movement.

**Goal 1.** A \$10,000 grant from the Chester County Community Foundation will gift 350 under-resourced middle or high school girls in Chester County with two brand-new, proper-fitting sports bras each, so they can stay active with unwavering comfort and confidence. Girls will be able to access health and social benefits and build critical life skills by staying active. Local beneficiary schools or organizations will be selected from our

FLY:FWD Wish List or based on need. Our team will work with beneficiary schools and assist staff throughout the process of ordering and delivery including appropriate communications for distribution.

**Goal 2.** At least 90% of participating girls will agree on their post-program surveys that their new sports bras make them feel more comfortable playing sports and being active.

**Goal 3.** At least 90% of athletic directors will agree on their post-program surveys that receiving brand-new sports bras increased girls' interest and participation in sports and activities.

We measure outcomes through post-program surveys of our beneficiary recipients about the personal impact on girls, and their comfort and participation in playing sports. Surveys are sent to the school contact and girls 14 days after the distribution. Our most recent survey of 68 partners who gifted sports bras in the past year reflects the following successes:

- 94% of athletic directors said that receiving sports bras made it easier to discuss the need for proper sports equipment with their female athletes.
- 91% said a sports bra will eliminate barriers that prevent the girls in their school from being active.
- 87% said a sports bra will help the girls in their school participate in organized sports.

FLY:FWD's impact on students from challenging environments is immeasurable. A new sports bra means access to the many advantages of sports: improved mental, physical, and emotional well-being; and creating a foundation for future professional achievement. A grant from the Chester County Community Foundation will empower Chester County girls with comfort and confidence as they pursue their dreams.

### 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](#):
3. Most recent **annual report** [URL](#):
4. Audited or reviewed recent **financial statement** [URL](#):
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**.