

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date 6/15/2026

Contact Information

Organization Name: DeafCAN!

Address: 730 S. New St., West Chester, PA 19382

Phone: 484-477-6489

Website: www.deafcanpa.org

Year Incorporated: 2002

FEIN: 23-2732797

ED/CEO Name: Beth D. Lockard

ED/CEO E-mail: Beth Lockard@deafcanpa.org

Board Chair Name: Beth D. Lockard

Board Chair Approval (check here):

Primary Contact Name: William H. Lockard

Primary E-mail: BillLockard@deafcanpa.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities

Environment/Animal Welfare

Education

Health

Human Services

Religion

Mission: The mission of DeafCAN! is to provide access to a range of critically needed services to Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and late-deafened people in need, especially the most vulnerable, who are reluctant to go to others for help because of communication barriers.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): We are based in West Chester and serve all of Chester County as well as Philadelphia, Montgomery, Delaware, Bucks, and Lancaster counties. In 2025, 54% of all those we served were residents of Chester County.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: DeafCAN! serves over 200 Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) individuals and their families each year. D/HH people are some of the most isolated and vulnerable people in the world due to a gap in communication. Many cope with not being able to participate at home, work, and school, and from personal events like family dinners, weddings, and funerals. They reluctantly accept a diminished role as members of their family and community.

Agencies and organizations dedicated to helping those in need, for all their good intentions, are ill equipped and struggle to meet the complex needs of Deaf individuals. Without these resources that are available to others, the Deaf struggle to find someone who cares enough to help – and *knows how* to help. With the generous support of our donors, DeafCAN! is there to help.

Annual Budget \$ <u>345,550</u>	<u>5</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>90</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>7</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>5</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>40</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>5</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>500</u> # of Volunteer Hours
<small>100 % total</small>	

Top 3-5 funding sources: Individuals 125,530, County Contracts 70,000, Foundations 81,500.

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building or General Operating ?

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

Mission, Vision & Strategy Governance & Leadership Partnerships & Collaborations

Fundraising, Development & Marketing Technology Other: n/a

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 7,500.00

Proposal Summary: II.

CHESTER County Community Foundation

Grant Proposal Narrative

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

2026-27 DeafCAN! Proposal to Chester County Community Foundation

Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

In 1991, members of a Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH) congregation formed Christ the King Deaf Lutheran Church in West Chester, PA. DeafCAN! was established in 2010 as the church's social services outreach program.

In 2024, we launched our new DeafCAN! website *DeafCANPA.org* along with a new logo and slogan, CARE COMMUNICATE CONNECT COMMUNITY, representing our focus to move individuals from isolation to community. In 2025, as requests for support expand beyond our in-person reach, we built our online classroom to reach and serve those in person *and* those we can only reach remotely.

Our work is broad-based and adapted to specific needs.

- **For the Deaf in need:** Help with housing, employment, school, and medical, social, and community services.
- **For Deaf immigrants:** All of the above plus English and American Sign Language classes; help attaining citizenship; integration into the community.
- **For Deaf inmates:** Personal support; help getting accommodations for prison programs. After release: Help with parole programs; help reintegrating into the community by finding housing, employment, and community and social services.
- **For the Deaf-Blind:** The state's first and only continuous Sensory Support Providers program since 2013; help with housing, school, and physical and mental health issues; help finding and using community and social services.

“DeafCAN! does not shy away from difficult situations or people or families. Like first responders, they run towards the difficult situation. They find a way to make a difference in every human life they touch with the resources they have.”

*Louise Montoya
Child Family Therapist/
Coordinator, Children's
Hospital of Philadelphia*

We also contract with two Pennsylvania counties to serve their Deaf citizens. The contracts do not cover our costs, but we serve to the need, not to the contract.

Note: Although DeafCAN!'s human services are programs of Christ the King Deaf Church, religion plays no role in DeafCAN! We serve all and do not discriminate in any way in who/how we serve or hire.

Funding request

We are requesting \$7,500 to supplement our Chester County Contract. The current annual contract covers 60% of the services we provide. The needs are greater than the contract pays for. Deaf individuals/families need support due to communication barriers across many 'silos,' including housing, health, financial/employment, legal, MH/IDD/Aging/Family, immigration, and other challenges.

Description of key initiatives

Our primary initiative is to use our newly established online classroom in West Chester to increase our outreach to two isolated Deaf populations, and to better equip a range of professionals to work with the Deaf population:

1. **Reach and support new Deaf immigrants.** We are using our online resources to reach Deaf immigrants (including refugees and asylum seekers) who are unable, or now too afraid, to come to our in-person classes in West Chester. Our classes have focused on citizenship, integration, ASL and English. Now, we also focus on safety, and protecting families from arrest and deportation, as we are their only source to understand critical information. We have assisted Deaf individuals from over 35 different countries, many of whom struggle to access and comprehend even basic information from their families, neighbors, or employers.
2. **Reach, teach, and serve new Deaf inmates.** We serve Deaf inmates in Federal, State, and County jails who often don't participate in programs to help prepare them for reentry, due to communication barriers and lack of accommodations. We also provide advocacy and crisis intervention to help them navigate prison life and build self-esteem and confidence. We have provided the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the PA Dept of Corrections a demonstration of how our remote classes would work for their Deaf inmates, why they are so important, and how they will help them with compliance and communication between inmates and staff.
3. **Provide classes and workshops for professionals in health, human service, education, finance, legal, and other essential fields.** We will provide classes and workshops for professionals in health, human service, education, finance, legal, and other essential fields, who encounter Deaf individuals but rarely have the experience or expertise to help them effectively.

Specific needs and issues to be addressed

Fifty two years after the Rehab Act of 1973, and 35 years after the passage of ADA, Deaf individuals continue to encounter substantial communication obstacles in all aspects of life. Their 'acceptance' of being minimally involved, not knowing what is happening, not getting the promotion (again) etc. 'works' until something more urgent comes up: being fired or laid off, a divorce or family illness or death, their child having trouble in the neighborhood or school, losing their housing... At that point, the need for communication becomes critical and that is when we become involved. Not as interpreters (there are lots of interpreters) but as case workers who advocate, explain, drive to/from appointments, clarify results, think through next steps, sit with, listen, and witness for them and their families. For most of us, these are all taken for granted because they are based on effective communication – exactly what Deaf individuals need.

Our slogan, **CARE COMMUNICATE CONNECT COMMUNITY**, encapsulates our working model. We genuinely **CARE** about reaching out to those who are isolated, confused, and desperate, as we understand the pain of feeling shunned and unheard. We prioritize 'hearing and listening' with our eyes, fulfilling the essential need for **COMMUNICATION**. This serves as the cornerstone for understanding and foundation for building trust, **CONNECTING** individuals with others who can provide assistance. For many, this journey transforms isolation into **COMMUNITY**, whether through our classes, social events, or ongoing support from volunteers and staff. We embody the 'DeafCAN!' spirit, demonstrating that they CAN secure employment, find housing, recover, reconnect, and reclaim what they may have lost or never had.

Activities/Objectives in 2026-27 to implement the initiative:

- Launch our first remote class for Deaf refugees/immigrants with a full schedule/curriculum.
- Hold our first fee-based remote training for professionals and hire a part-time case manager to handle increasing referrals. Transition this case manager to full time.
- Start two pilot classes with prisons, one with the Pennsylvania or other State Dept of Corrections and one with the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Throughout each year we actively organize a range of social and educational events aimed at providing support and fostering a sense of community for Deaf individuals and families. These include ASL classes, a Deaf Expo featuring 30 vendors and 300 attendees, Family Nights once each month, a DeafBlind summer picnic and a DeafBlind Holiday Social.

Why it is important to fund this now

With our online classroom anticipated to uncover more Chester County individuals in need, we are guided to add additional staff for essential remote class and case support.

In the current environment, non-profit organizations must adopt innovative strategies due to several challenges: A decline in federal funding through grants and contracts results in increased competition for support from foundations and corporations. The rising anti-DEI and anti-immigrant movements are already affecting the Deaf Community. Numerous Deaf individuals have faced job losses in federal positions while the enforcement of disability civil rights laws, including the ADA, has been deprioritized.

How impact and results will be demonstrated

We utilize an outcomes based system tailored for Deaf individuals and their families in Chester and Delaware County. We set goals and track progress with our clients, with objectives focused on 14 key 'Social Determinants' that represent the most prevalent challenges: Accommodations (interpreters, captions, safety devices), Education, Employment, Family, Finances, Food, Health, Housing, Legal issues, Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities (MHIDD), Refugee/Immigrant support, Safety, Social/Community, and Transportation.

We recognize that the most significant outcomes of our work, the reasons we serve, will be local and personal – captured in our stories of success, of raising Deaf individuals up from despair to hope and service. These stories and much more are available on our website.

DeafCAN! is dependent on grants and contributions to support our programs. We have built a strong group of donors who, like us, are committed to serving the most vulnerable within our community. We invite you to join in our efforts.