



I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

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Date

Contact Information

Organization Name: Downingtown Library Company
Address: 122 Wallace Avenue
Phone: 610-269-2741
Website: downingtowntlibrary.org
Year Incorporated: 1876
FEIN: 23-1440113

ED/CEO Name: Jasmine Smith
ED/CEO E-mail: jsmith@ccls.org
Board Chair Name: Francine Dague
Board Chair Approval (check here): XX
Primary Contact Name: Jasmine Smith
Primary Contact E-mail: jsmith@ccls.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: The mission of the Downingtown Library Company is to ensure that every resident of the Greater Downingtown Area has access to exceptional opportunities to read, learn, create, connect and contribute to a better quality of life.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): Our designated service area includes Downingtown Borough, East Brandywine, West Bradford, Caln, East Caln, Wallace, and Uwchlan townships, which includes over 53,000 people. However, anyone who lives, works, or goes to school in Chester County is eligible for a free borrower's card, and everyone, regardless of residence, can use our building and attend programs.

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

Annual Budget \$ 505,831.03	10	# of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
12.8 % of budget for program expenses	15	# of Board Volunteers
84.2 % of budget for administrative expenses	1	# of Active Non-Board Volunteers
3.0 % of budget for fundraising expenses	120	# of Volunteer Hours
100 % total		

Top 3-5 funding sources:

1. Pennsylvania (Bureau of Library Development) and Chester County
2. Local Municipalities
3. Special Fundraising events
4. Private donations
5. Friends of the Library Book Sale

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: \$__9,000_____

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

We are seeking support for our library programming, which meet our strategic goal to offer “engaging programs that build literacy skills in reading and other areas, such as financial literacy and health literacy.” Our free programs foster the connection, learning, and creativity that we strive to build in our community, with programs designed for ages 0 through adult. Funding helps us to purchase program supplies, hire outside presenters, and provide snacks or prizes when appropriate.

We keep detailed statistics on our programs, which allows us to measure and communicate outcomes. In 2025 we had 18,961 attendances at library programs. This was a 32% increase from our 2024 program attendance, which was already strong compared to previous years. It’s no surprise that our programs are well-attended. In 2025, the library was recognized as a Gold Star Library in the PA Forward program, run by the Pennsylvania Library Association. Our gold star status denotes the fantastic quality of our library literacy programming, which addresses the five core literacies: basic, health, financial, civic, and information.

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

The Downingtown Library Company was formed in 1876 to “sustain a library and reading room for the Borough of Downingtown.” In 1914, the Library Company moved to the stone house at 330 Lancaster Avenue, where it served as a community resource for 100 years. In January 2015, the library moved into a newly renovated building at 122 Wallace Avenue, adjacent to Kerr Park. We are celebrating our 150th anniversary with our patrons, friends, and neighbors in 2026!

The Downingtown Library is known for excellent children's programming and a welcoming environment for families. Patrons also praise our wonderful desk staff for their friendliness and customer service. Adults refer to us as a community hub that brings people together with regular programs like board game night, writer's group, and book club. In 2025, a patron walked through our door over 118,000 times, and we had 18,961 attendances at library programs. This was a 32% increase from our 2024 program attendance, which was already strong compared to 2023.

Although our book collection is small compared to some larger libraries, we have robust circulation, and patrons appreciate that books from other libraries in the system can be requested for pick-up at our location, dramatically expanding the titles available to everyone who uses Downingtown as their home library. In 2025, we circulated over 200,000 items.

In 2025, the library completed a significant achievement in being recognized as a Gold Star Library in the PA Forward program, run by the Pennsylvania Library Association. Our gold star status denotes the fantastic quality of our library literacy programming, which addresses all of the five core literacies: basic, health, financial, civic, and information.

The library's strategic goals are explored in depth in the library's Strategic Plan, which is implemented for 2023 – 2028. These goals include:

1. Promoting literacy for all ages through a well-maintained collection; engaging programs that build literacy skills in reading and other areas, such as financial literacy and health literacy; and educational partnerships.
2. Ensure easy access to our physical and digital resources for all patrons
3. Provide excellent service and a welcoming environment
4. Serve as a hub for community engagement
5. Ensure long-term financial and governance stability
6. Expand the library to meet community demand for programs and spaces

2. Funding request

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

The Downingtown Library's main area of need is support for our robust programming.

1. Children's Programming: The Downingtown library has a particularly strong program schedule for children and families. In 2025, we offered 389 programs targeted to children ages 0 – 5, including regular story times, as well as special activities like sidewalk chalk parties, craft programs, and music programs. These programs brought in 6,013 program attendees. In addition, we held 110 programs for school-age children, teens, and families, which attracted another 4,907 visitors. Our staff organize and lead most of these programs, but we also bring in outside presenters, to provide children with enrichment in many areas. Outside presenters allow us to offer advanced STEM programming, examples of which include a presentation on birds with two live raptors, an interactive session on

trains, and an interactive workshop using strawberries to learn about DNA. We often need to pay outside presenters a reasonable fee. For programs run by our staff or outside guests, we often need to purchase supplies. For example, our painting programs require paint and a canvas for each child. Support for children's programming allows us to hire a variety of presenters, as well as provide supplies for our staff's interactive programs.

2. Adult Programming: The library's programming is an important resource for learning and social connection for adults and seniors. In 2025, we offered 459 adult programs with 3,997 attendances. One of our most popular programs, gentle chair yoga, requires presenter fees for every class. Lectures from outside speakers are also popular, but again, these are paid speaking engagements. Support allows us to continue offering high-interest programs for adults and seniors. We also offer programs for adults that require purchased supplies, especially programs in arts and crafts.

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

As a public library, we offer our programs, services, and materials to patrons for free. Many patrons have the misconception that funding for the library is government-provided, but in reality, only one third of our annual funding is provided by the state and county. We also make funding requests to our supporting municipalities every year, and municipal support accounts for an additional one third of our annual revenue. The final third comes through donations, grants, and fundraising events. We put a great deal of energy into appeals, applications, and fundraising every year to provide the community with our wonderful resources.

Currently, with cuts and uncertainty at the federal level that may trickle down to the state and municipalities, we are more reliant than ever on strong community support. Community support will help us continue offering the same level of services, even if we see reductions in contributions from our state and local government sources. If we are about to experience a period of economic uncertainty, the library's free programs and services will likely see more use, as services like public computers meet needs, and programs allow for fun and enjoyment at no cost. We have been supporting our community with circulating materials and ways to learn for 150 years now, and we hope the community will help us move forward into the next 150 years on a strong financial foundation!

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

For internal tracking and in compliance with requirements from the PA Office of Commonwealth Libraries, we keep detailed statistics on library and program usage. These statistics allow us to report on program attendance, with information sorted by target audience age, as well as program type (in-person, live virtual, off-site). Successful programming looks like maintaining or exceeding our 2025 program statistics. While we would love to increase our program numbers, our program space is small and we only have one program room, so we face physical limitations on growth, as well as limits to what our very busy program staff can add to their schedules. Our 2025 program offerings were excellent and well-attended, and maintaining that level of programming is a mark of continued success.

We can also capture the impact of our programs through patron feedback. They contact us directly or respond to the annual Library System Survey, providing commentary on how our programs provide enrichment and education. A combination of statistics and feedback allows us to demonstrate the impact and results of our programs.