

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/>
- ◇ 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
- ◇ Proposals can be submitted **anytime all year**.
- ◇ Proposals are reviewed the 15th bi-monthly.
- ◇ Grant **awards** typically range from **\$2,500-\$10,000**.



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.chescocf.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.

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I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit www.chescocf.org

Date – July 16, 2026

Contact Information

Organization Name: **The Oaks Ministry**
Address: **24 S. 3rd Street**
Oxford, PA 19363
Phone: **484-368-7268**
Website: **www.theoaksministry.com**
Year Incorporated: **2016**
FEIN: 47-3342955

CEO Name: **Lauren Arnold**

ED E-mail: **lauren.arnold@theoaksministry.com**

Board Chair Name: **PJ Schreese**

Board Chair Approval (check ☒ here):

Primary Contact Name: **Lauren Arnold**

Primary Contact E-mail:

lauren.arnold@theoaksministry.com

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 Oaks Ministry partners with women on their journey toward healing by providing Christian-based, holistic, trauma-informed care in a transitional housing setting. We foster resilience and empower women to reclaim their lives, build stability, and move toward their God-given potential.

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

The Oaks Ministry primarily serves women in Southern Chester County, Pennsylvania, with a focus on women experiencing homelessness or housing instability in and around the Oxford region and surrounding Chester County communities. We also serve women in our Lancaster County location.

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

The Oaks Ministry serves adult women experiencing homelessness or housing instability, often related to trauma, domestic violence, substance use recovery, incarceration, financial hardship, mental health challenges, and other life crises. In 2025, The Oaks served 11 women through its long-term transitional housing program. Residents are women without children in their care who need safe housing, structure, trauma-informed support, and practical services that help them move toward long-term stability.

Annual Budget \$ 309,990

30 % of budget for program expenses

65 % of budget for administrative expenses

5 % of budget for fundraising expenses

100% = total

3.5 - of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

8 - # of Board Volunteers

16 per month - # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

50 Hours per month - # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources: Individual Donors, Corporate Donors and Churches

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: \$6300.00

Proposal Summary: The Oaks Ministry is requesting to fund Project CREATE, a trauma-informed expressive arts wellness program for women in its 9- to 18-month transitional housing program. This funding will provide 36 facilitated sessions that help residents strengthen emotional regulation, and learn healthy coping skills, resilience, self-awareness, and supportive relationships as part of The Oaks' holistic model of care.

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 Oaks' key initiatives include its three-phase program model: Phase I: Stabilization & Safety, focused on safety, counseling, structure, emotional regulation, and basic needs; Phase II: Responsibility & Growth, focused on accountability, financial responsibility, relationships, and sustained stability; and Phase III: Transition & Independence, focused on long-term housing planning, community connection, and readiness for life beyond the program.

The Oaks is distinctive because it blends clear program structure with whole-person care. Residents are supported through professional services, volunteer mentors, financial coaches, trauma-informed practices, and the Eight Dimensions of Wellness, allowing The Oaks to address not only housing insecurity but also the emotional, relational, financial, physical, social, and spiritual factors that affect long-term stability.

2. Funding request: What specific needs & issues are being addressed, via what programs and services?

The Oaks Ministry is requesting **\$6,300** to implement Project CREATE, a trauma-informed expressive arts program that will become part of Phase I daytime programming before residents begin employment. This program addresses the emotional and relational needs of women entering transitional housing who are working through trauma, homelessness, substance use recovery, grief, relational instability, and other barriers to long-term stability. Phase I focuses on safety, stabilization, counseling, structure, emotional regulation, basic life skills, and trust-building, making it the right time to introduce creative, trauma-informed wellness support.

Project CREATE will provide 6 cohorts of 6 sessions totaling 36 facilitated expressive arts sessions that help residents build emotional regulation, healthy coping skills, self-awareness, resilience, and safe connection with others. This strengthens The Oaks' current services, including safe housing, case management, counseling, mentoring, financial advising, wellness programming, and phased goal planning.

Budget Narrative: The total request of \$6,300 is based on 36 sessions at \$175 per session. Funds will support direct program costs only, including facilitator fees, art supplies, and program supplies needed to deliver Project CREATE. No funds are being requested for personnel, administrative costs, or overhead. The Herr

Foundation has already awarded \$2,500 toward the broader Project CREATE initiative, and this request would fully support the implementation of the foundational 36-session program for residents.

Why is it important to fund this now?

Funding is important now because Project CREATE fits directly into The Oaks Ministry's Phase I daytime programming, when residents are not yet working and are focused on safety, stabilization, counseling, structure, emotional regulation, and basic life skills. Phase I is the critical window to help women build trust, process trauma, develop healthy coping skills, and prepare for the responsibility of work and long-term stability.

By funding Project CREATE now, CCCF will help The Oaks strengthen an existing program gap with structured, trauma-informed expressive arts support during the time residents are most available and most in need of intensive stabilization. This investment now will coincide with the Herr Foundation's \$2,500 funding and allow The Oaks to integrate Project CREATE into its current residential wellness programming without adding personnel or administrative costs.

How will results & impact be demonstrated?

Results and impact will be demonstrated through The Oaks Ministry's existing documentation and evaluation systems. Residents already complete stability assessments at intake, every three months, and at exit, allowing staff to track progress across key areas such as mental health, housing stability, transportation, life skills, relationship safety, substance use recovery, and community support.

For Project CREATE, The Oaks will also track attendance, resident participation, facilitator observations, and resident feedback. Impact will be measured by improvements in emotional regulation, healthy coping skills, self-awareness, social connection, and overall wellness, using The Oaks' Eight Dimensions of Wellness framework as a guide.

Program staff will review this information through case management, house manager reports, mentor feedback, and ongoing program evaluation to determine how Project CREATE is strengthening residents' stability, resilience, and readiness to move through The Oaks' phased program.

Additionally, for capacity building grant proposals: n/a

- **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 - **Attached**
2. List of **Board** of Directors, with their affiliations **URL:** <https://theoaksministry.com/>
3. Most recent **annual report** **URL:** <https://app.candid.org/profile/9432182/the-oaks-ministry/?pkId=6f7db1e6-b67d-447c-8c13-06a659439d89&isActive=true>
4. Audited or reviewed recent **financial statement** **URL:** <https://app.candid.org/profile/9432182/the-oaks-ministry/?pkId=6f7db1e6-b67d-447c-8c13-06a659439d89&isActive=true>

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**. - **Attached**
- 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**
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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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