



I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

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Date: 09/02/26

Contact Information

Organization Name: Friends Association for the Care and Protection of Children (Friends Association or Friends)

Address: 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester PA 19380

Phone: 610-431-3598

Website: <https://friendsassoc.org/>

Year Incorporated: 1822

FEIN: 23-1381006

ED/CEO: Joyce Chester, j.chester@friendsassoc.org

Board Chair Name: William T. McGrath

Board Chair Approval: yes

Primary Contact: Lauren Swift, l.swift@friendsassoc.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

☐ Arts, Culture & Humanities

☐ Environment/Animal Welfare

☐ Education

☐ Health

☒ Human Services

☐ Religion

Mission: *Friends Association prevents homelessness by transforming lives, empowering families, and strengthening our community. We believe everyone deserves a home.*

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

Friends serves the entirety of Chester County. Both Family Centers located in the West Chester area (Family Center I is located in the West Chester borough and Family Center II is located in West Goshen Township).

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

Friends serves families and individuals facing significant barriers to housing security and/or are experiencing homelessness. These households are extremely low income, earning below 30% of the Area Median Income. Many families have experienced trauma; been impacted by the justice system in some way; are experiencing challenges such as financial hardship, physical or mental health conditions; and have limited access to resources such as education, health care, employment, food, and reliable transportation.

In FY26, 1390 individuals were served, 660 of those individuals were children. Over half were people of color (49% Black or African American, 7% Hispanic or Latina(o), and 18% multi-racial). 40% identified as having physical or mental health conditions including drug and alcohol dependencies, developmental disabilities, and chronic health conditions.

Across programs, 394 households were served in Eviction Prevention Case Resolution (EPCR), 30 families were housed safely together in the Family Centers (Emergency Shelters), 27 households were placed into stable housing through Rapid Re-Housing (RRH), and 58 families went through Housing Stability Case Management (HSCM). 90% of families maintained permanent housing after program completion.

Annual Budget \$3,770,571 _____ 22 _____ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
 _____ 65 _____ % of budget for program expenses _____ 16 _____ # of Board Volunteers
 _____ 25 _____ % of budget for administrative expenses _____ 49 _____ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
 _____ 10 _____ % of budget for fundraising expenses _____ 157 _____ # of Volunteer Hours
100% = total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Chester County Department of Community Development (DCD): \$268,000
 Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund (PHARE): \$100,000
 825 Paoli Pike Partners, LLC: \$80,000
 Rose and Fran Marinelli: \$54,000
 John Gailey: \$40,000

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: \$5,000

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

Friends Association respectfully general operating funding to sustain the growth of the agency and direct service program support for its four programs. In FY26, Friends added RRH, opened a second Family Center containing an additional 10 units, and expanded EPCR representation from five Chester County district courts to all sixteen. Friends fills a crucial gap in Chester County by providing shelter, housing services, and case management to families of all compositions. Through its two-gen, holistic case management approach, Friends does not only meet immediate housing needs but also empowers families with the tools, skills, and resources needed to acquire and maintain safe, stable housing.

II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information in 1-3 pages. Please be brief.

Nonprofit's overall aims, key initiatives, key achievements & distinctiveness

The mission of Friends is focused on preventing family homelessness, providing shelter and case management to families experiencing homelessness, and keeping families together. Friends programming provides a continuum of care that meets all housing needs of the community. EPCR provides free legal representation, financial assistance, and case management to individuals and families facing eviction, preventing homelessness at the start. EPCR is the only program of its kind in Chester County. The emergency shelters (Family Centers I and II) are the only low-barrier, family shelters to provide shelter to families of any compositions, including single and two parent, multigenerational families, and families with teenage boys. Families are housed in private units so that the whole family can remain together. RRH assists individuals and families for up to 24 months through rental assistance and case management to help maintain stable housing. Each member of the household over 18 contributes a portion of the rent, beginning with 30% of gross monthly income and increasing over time. Lastly, HSCM provides intensive, individualized support for families experiencing housing instability. Case managers help families identify and overcome barriers to housing, connect with community resources, and strengthen financial literacy. Case management includes budgeting, job searching, and daily living skills to prepare participants for housing stability. HSCM is available to families in EPCR, Emergency Shelter, and RRH, allowing Friends to support families as they move from crisis toward long-term housing stability.

Friends has a strong track record of evolving its programming to meet the housing needs of the community. Developed during the pandemic, EPCR is a perfect example. During the pandemic, evictions were at an all-time high. Though Chester County participated in the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), a program that administered funds used to pay rental and utility arrears and rehousing costs, more support was needed for those in eviction court. Friends was the only organization to combine free legal representation, outreach, and case management (including education on tenant rights and understanding leases) with financial assistance. This effective model provides a pathway to housing stability. The Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania used EPCR to benchmark the impact of eviction prevention programs on homelessness. They found that Chester County has a higher rate of withdrawals and settlements in lieu of evictions because of EPCR. Further, withdrawals and settlements are crucial outcomes to track because they indicate that the landlord and tenant have reached resolution outside of the court process. EPCR not only saves the county money by having less hearings but also has a profound impact on children. Not having to go to court also allows parents to be available to take their children to school, resulting in a reduced rate of school transfers, absenteeism, lost school credits, and high school drop out rates. EPCR also allows parents to attend work without interruption, resulting in a healthier local economy.

Friends opened its first Family Center in 1984 with 6 units. Friends remains the only low-barrier family shelter that accepts families of all compositions and has handicap accessible solutions. Friends opened its second shelter in March 2026. Family Center II contains 10 units, more than doubling Friends' capacity to shelter families, together. The Family Center II opening was seamless, already having qualified staff and successful programming in place, replicating the success of Family Center I.

Funding request

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

The primary cause of homelessness in Chester County is the lack of affordable housing options combined with a high cost of living. The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) reports that extremely low-income renters face a shortage of 7.1 million affordable and available rental homes. Approximately 35 rental homes are available for every 100 extremely low-income renters. In addition, income is not keeping up with housing costs. Minimum wage earners must work 95 hours, or 2.4 jobs, to afford a one-bedroom rental home at the fair market rent. One set back, unexpected bill or medical emergency can send a family who is just getting by into housing crisis.

According to the Chester County Department of Community Development 2026 Point in Time (PIT) count, on any given night, 219 individuals in Chester County are experiencing homelessness. The 2026 PIT also concluded that 42% of people experiencing homelessness were families with children. Particularly for children, the effects of homelessness are extremely detrimental. Homelessness affects their mental and physical health, resulting in higher rates of chronic illness, behavioral health challenges, and generational homelessness.

Friends' two-generation case management approach addresses the entire family, breaking the cycle of generational homelessness. Friends provides case management in all programs, including education in financial literacy, tenant rights, and life skills. Families complete individualized service plans that include goals centered around budgeting, employment, health benefits, and transportation. Families are also connected to resources that meet immediate needs, such as food access. This model allows families to break the cycle, giving families the skills required to acquire and maintain stable and sustainable housing.

Why is it important to fund this now?

The primary cause of homelessness in Chester County is the lack of affordable housing options combined with a high cost of living. The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) reports that extremely low-income renters face a shortage of 7.1 million affordable and available rental homes. Approximately 35 rental homes are available for every 100 extremely low-income renters. In addition, income is not keeping up with housing costs. Minimum wage earners must work 95 hours, or 2.4 jobs, to afford a one-bedroom rental home at the fair market rent. One set back, unexpected bill or medical emergency can send a family who is just getting by into housing crisis.

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Friends Association bases all its programs on the National Housing First Model which prioritizes preconditions, combining rental assistance and supportive services. Combining a Housing First approach along with coordinated case management to connect families with housing and support services has proven successful and is crucial to addressing homelessness. Despite these successes, changes and cutbacks to the US

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding threaten these effective efforts to end homelessness. The NAEH reports that reducing funds for these existing programs and shifting their focus to temporary housing programs could put at least 97,000 residents at risk of losing housing. As critical federal and emergency funding sources decline, investment in organizations with proven Housing First programs, like Friends, is more important than ever. Friends has a long history of evolving its programs to meet the changing needs of the community and a demonstrated record of preventing homelessness by keeping families together during times of housing crisis. Funding from the Chester County Community Foundation will ensure that families throughout Chester County continue to have access to eviction prevention, emergency shelter, trauma-informed case management, and the resources needed to achieve long-term housing stability.

How will results & impact be demonstrated?

Data for all households assisted is entered into the Chester County Client Track database, a shared system that allows coordination among other county-contracted agencies. Client Track collects program enrollment, data, and usage; demographic data; and progress toward County objectives.

In addition to Client Track, Friends uses internal systems to capture additional program data. Examples include program intake and exit forms, as well as Family Service Plans.

Friends tracks data for the agency overall as well as each individual program. Overall, Friends tracks the number of individuals and households served, and ages. For individual programs, Friends collects data that provides insight as to how well programs are working and how effective the programs are. Examples include:

EPCR: how many households were served eviction notices, were assisted through EPCR, were settled outside of court due to Friends' intervention, and were granted rental assistance

Family Centers: families who were safely housed in Family Centers, who remained stably housed for at least 12 months

RRH: number of households who were placed into stable housing and received case management

HSCM: number of households who received benefits from partner organizations through Friends referrals, who remained stably housed while in the program, who obtained employment, who remained housed after 12 months

All data systems are used daily to enter participant data, review participant progress, and plan program improvements.