GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

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Contact Information

Organization Name:Assisting the Community Together
Address: 10 W. Barnard St, West Chester, PA 19382
Phone: 610-695-8007
Website: www.assistingnow.org
Year Incorporated: 2010
FEIN: 27-4033006

Date 9/13/26

ED/CEO Name: Hallie Romanowski
ED/CEO E-mail: hallieromanowski@me.com
Board Chair Name: DR. Jacquelyn Rothera
Board Chair Approval (check here):[X]
Primary Contact Name: Hallie Romanowski
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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: To build a community that empowers the un- and under-employed to stabilize their households and build toward self-sustainability.

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

Assisting the Community Together(ACTnow) provides financial support to residents of the West Chester zip codes and to households experiencing homelessness anywhere in Chester County; its Community Cupboard serves anyone residing in Chester County.

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

ACTnow serves then un- and under-employed households within the West Chester zip codes and to those experiencing homelessness in Chester County.
Household Income: In the last year, 64% of households that received financial assistance were single adult households - 38% of those had income - all with income were lower than 57% of area median income. An additional, 52% of households had zero income. Demographics: In 2025, 55% of households served were experiencing homelessness. The racial breakdown was fairly even across blacks, whites, and hispanics with 4% identifying as Asian, or of mixed race.

Annual Budget $531,900
86 % of budget for program expenses
8% of budget for administrative expenses
6 % of budget for fundraising expenses
100% = total

3 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
6 # of Board Volunteers
144 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
5270 # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources:

This grant proposal is for: ____Direct Service Programs & General Operating &/or X Capacity Building

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

	Contingency Planning		Partnerships, Collaborations		Merger, Closure
	Mission, Vision, Strategy		Board Engagement & Leadership	X	Marketing, Communication
	Resource Development		Operations	X	Technology
	If other, please describe:				

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: $7,300

Proposal Summary: *(a few sentences, please)* Items included in this request included technology to replace worn, poor-performing computers and enhance our efficiency in managing volunteers schedules. In addition, we are requesting funds to improve our marketing at community events and allow us to hold a donor/ volunteer appreciation event.

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

Established in 2010 in response to growing needs in our community, the mission of Assisting the Community Together(ACTnow, formerly ACT in Faith of Greater West Chester) is to build a community that empowers the un- and under-employed to stabilize their households and build toward self-sustainability.

ACTnow was created to help meet the needs of those who: do not qualify for support through other agencies, are facing a hardship that is not supported by another agency, or need help navigating services. ACTnow helps people navigate the social service system, connects them to other resources as appropriate, and provides "gap services" to meet needs that lie beyond the scope of other resource agencies, but are barriers to self-sustainability.

We provide support in 3 Program areas: Basic Need (e.g. groceries, medical expenses, clothing) Employment Support (e.g. photo ID, car expenses, job search/resume support, childcare, work clothing, cell phone, bus tokens) and Housing Stabilization (e.g. eviction prevention, security deposits, utility expenses.) The services through which these programs provide support are: Client Emergency Fund - emergency financial assistance, Community Cupboard - grocery cupboard with a significant focus on personal care and household items (not covered by SNAP/FoodStamps) and perishable and non-perishable foods to supplement what people can afford to purchase, receive via SNAP, or obtain at another area cupboard. In addition, ACTnow provides System Navigation as it relates any of the above Programs (e.g.information and referral, benefit/housing enrollment and recertification assistance, and job search/application support).

Achievements & Distinctions: ACTnow addresses immediate and short term needs and work towards long-term solutions that help individuals, and families, establish sustainable household stability. As an "approachable" resource addressing the disproportionate burdens placed on the underserved, we are uniquely-positioned to act as a "bridge" for underserved community members to transition them to engagement with a broad array of anti-poverty resources. As a result, we have become a relied upon resource for both the un- and under-employed and area service agencies whose scopes do not meet all needs. For the last two years, 43% of new clients referred to us for financial assistance have been referred by other agencies. When household stability is not attainable for everyone ultimately the impact goes beyond the households in question - effecting the entire community. Systemic issues as well as factors such as household composition, mental health/addiction, employment status, housing conditions, and access to resources can all be prohibitors to sustainable household stability. In addition, living in poverty has an adverse impact on the health and well-being of the entire family. We strive to meet people where they are, build a relationship with them, and empower them with knowledge, tools, and resources.

After 12 years of serving the community we had built relationships with peer organizations, donors, faith communities, businesses, and our service population and we had established our role in the County's continuum of care and identified areas in which we could be of more service. Positioned for growth, we were limited by physical space in our rent-free space inside the Church of the Holy Trinity. As a result we embarked on a three year journey to raise capital to fund the renovation of much larger space in an adjacent properly owned by the church. In March 2024, we relocated to our new, street-level space that accommodates 4 additional workstations, a larger waiting room and grocery cupboard as well as a cupboard storage room. Since moving, we've added 12 new regular volunteer shifts and can now accommodate volunteer partnerships with both the Chester County IU and West Chester University. Between 2023 and 2025 we've seen an 28% increase in households served and a 27% increase in volunteer hours.

The the fall of 2025, we began hosting a "dayroom", called The Cafe, for residents of Safe Harbor shelter and those who are unsheltered. This is a safe space, out of the elements, that has allowed them more access to our services, allows us to better serve them and affords us the opportunity to develop relationships. Those who utilize the space network, support each other's efforts, and volunteer for ACTnow. Early data shows that those who engage in the use of The Cafe are making bigger strides in regain stability and moving toward self-sufficiency more quickly that they otherwise would have.

Our goals are to continue to: identify gaps is service and work to provide services to address those needs, build relationships and cultivate collaborative partnerships across the community, provide employment and volunteer opportunities for those who want to engage, past client in particular, and diversify our funding streams.

2. Funding request

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

1) Currently, we utilize an internal Google Calendar to track volunteer schedules. As many/most of our volunteers are not tech-savvy, this calendar it mostly utilized by staff and a "copy" of the schedule is re-created via a dry erase board. The monthly calendar is created and the board hangs is space common to our volunteers. As updates come in, staff needs to update both Google and the white board. Dual entry increases the risk of errors and inconsistencies, and frustrations. Updates are often texted to staff during off-hours or very busy moments when quick access to update the white board isn't possible and often results in missed updates. Additional white boards are maintained for "to do" items and process updates for volunteers. The digital calendar being requested is a wall mounted screen that can be updated via a phone application allowing for instant, remote updates of all kinds - schedule changes, to-do tasks, process updates, and and other information that staff needs to convey to our volunteers daily. It's "on stop" communication that will eliminate inefficiencies, inaccuracies, and save a tremendous amount of time and frustration for all involved.

2) ACTnow staff and office volunteers have historically relied on donated computers. As the older computers have failed, we have needed to replace. The last two donated computers are slow, glitchy and in serious need of being replaced and we will need to purchase two more for new staff. In addition, we will need to purchase "dongle" adaptors for these computers to address required passkeys for security authentication in order to access our Salesforce database.

3) In 2026, through the generosity of the Foundation, we are able to funds almost every aspect of our rebranding from ACT in Faith of Greater West Chester to Assisting the Community Together(ACTnow). The remaining item that requires rebranding is the canopy for our 10 x 10 tent which we use for street events and fundraisers.

4) The pandemic stifled our bi-annual "big" donor/volunteer celebration. As we emerged from the pandemic, the organization what in the midst of a capital project to remodel and move into new, larger space at 10 W. Barnard Street. While we have have had a few small, very simple events to acknowledge our donors/volunteers, we have not had our bi-annual "Thanks to You" event since 2019. Our goal is to have an event that is worthy of the donors and volunteers whose support turns our mission into reality and changes lives throughout our community.

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

  Funding these initiatives now is import because it will fund much-needed technology and help us enhance our community reach and donor/volunteer stewardship, all while freeing thousands of dollars to be re-directed to meet the increasing needs of the community. Inflation is felt by all across all sectors of the economy. And while we're all feeling it's impact, inflation is thrusting, already vulnerable households, - those who are un- or underemployed or living on a fixed income - into crisis. Housing costs have soared so rents are higher, car expenses are higher, and grocery prices are staggeringly high, therefore when people seek our assistance the amount needed (the cost to us) to meet their needs, remove the barrier, and overt the crisis is higher. Having the organizational needs, outlined above, funded via the Foundation, would have a double impact because it will fund our organizational needs, as well as allow us to stabilize more households within our community.

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

  All pieces of the technology being requested will improve the efficiency of the users and vastly improve our volunteer scheduling and communications. Significant staff time will be freed from the need to trouble shoot computer issues and revise/re-revise multiple communication media, allowing them to focus on meeting the needs of those who seek our support. The tent canopy will allow us to continue to market our brand and bring attention to the community needs that inspire our work. The ability to hold an event, worthy of the celebrants, will help us express our deep appreciation for those who are ACTnow possible. Being able to do all of this without impacting our programs will be the true demonstration of the double impact of these funds.

- **Additionally, for capacity building grant proposals:**
  - **How will this capacity building initiative impact your nonprofit?**

    Having the organizational needs outlined herein, funded via the Foundation, would resolve issues of growing inefficiency, allow us better market our work, and allow us to properly acknowledge our donors/volunteers without impacting our programming. If granted, our organizational capacity will be expanded without restricting our ability to stabilize more households within our community.
  - **How will this impact be demonstrated?**

    The $7,300 being requested would cover the much-needed capacity items described above and $7,300 of additional support will be allocated to vulnerable households via security deposits, eviction prevention, car repairs, groceries and much more. The impact will expand ACTnow's capacity and it will provide life-changing support to many in our community.