CHESTER COUNTY community FOUNDATION
28 W. Market Street, Lincoln Biography Building
West Chester, PA 19382
610.696.8211 www.chescocf.org

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 DILIGIENCE

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://chescocf.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://chescocf.org/receive/apply-for-grants/
- **E-mail proposals to** grants@chescocf.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

This page will be shared electronically with Grant Panel Members & Fund Advisors + posted online.

Date 5.27.26

Contact Information

Organization Name: Citizen Advocacy of Chester
Address: 239 Church Street, Phoenixville
Phone: 610 933 1299
Website: https://citizenadvocacycc.org/
Year Incorporated: 1980
FEIN: 23-2117795

ED/CEO Name: Alicia DeMont
ED/CEO E-mail: Alicia@CitizenAdvocacyCC.org
Board Chair Name: Kerry Cook
Board Chair Approval (check here): ☐
Primary Contact Name: Marnie Melvin
Primary Contact E-mail: Marnie@CitizenAdvocacyCC.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission:

The mission of Citizen Advocacy of Chester County is to initiate and support a variety of intentional, long-term relationships that provide advocacy for opportunity, protection from harm, sponsorship into community life, friendship, and justice for isolated people living with a disability.

Geographic Area Served *(If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served):* Citizen Advocacy of Chester County is primarily rooted in northern and central Chester County, but our network of partners and advocates spans the entire county. We also serve portions of Montgomery County, particularly in the areas bordering Chester County.

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

Partners, the people with disabilities that Citizen Advocacy meets and matches with advocates, are diverse ages, skills, races and living situations. One primary principle is we deliberately recruit partners of very diverse capacities and life experiences. For example, partners may live independently, in group homes, in institutions, with their family, in nursing homes, or in prison. Some partners are unable to speak or communicate, or to walk, or see or hear. Others may have debilitating illnesses. Others might have jobs and live alone with only minimal help. All Citizen Advocacy partners have in common the vulnerability to segregation and isolation.

Advocate roles also vary. For example, advocates have: become legal representative payees and powers of attorney, helped secure more appropriate and mainstream educations, provided lifesaving medical interventions, provided transportation to doctors and to jobs, visited faithfully when there are no family or friends, helped with basic needs like grocery shopping and laundry, and included partners in their family activities.

Since the program was founded, we have initiated 338 matches. Currently, the coordinators support 74 individual matches and are recruiting advocates for 5 new partners. 47 or 66% of these relationships are

happening in Chester County. Three of these matches are over 20 years old, a testament to the long-term commitment made by advocates.

Annual Budget $_ 324,802.00_____ __2_____ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
__72_____ % of budget for program expenses ___11_____ # of Board Volunteers
___8_____ % of budget for administrative expenses ___170_____ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
___20_____ % of budget for fundraising expenses ___n.a (we intentionally do not track advocate hours)____ # of Volunteer Hours
100% = total

Top 3-5 funding sources:
We are proudly supported by the Phoenixville Community Health Foundation and Robert L & Agnes Cook Bard Trust. Most of our funding comes from our dedicated individual and corporate supporters. We also have fundraising events throughout the year to bolster our support including an annual Theater Event, Phoenixville Run, Bingo, and Spaghetti Dinner.

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		Technology
	If other, please describe:				

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: $_2,950_____

Proposal Summary: *(a few sentences, please)*
Funding received would directly support the creation of a storytelling video that captures the heart of Citizen Advocacy of Chester County's mission through interviews with advocates and partners. This will be our third collaboration with Delta E. Photography. This video will feature five citizen advocacy relationships, with both advocates and partners sharing how their Citizen Advocacy relationships came to be and how their lives have been impacted. We aim to show the process, impact, and depth of these relationships that built on trust, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to dignity, safety, connection, and opportunity, that would not exist had they not been introduced by Citizen Advocacy. This video will be a documentary/interview style video.

The depth and impact our mission is often difficult to realize, making this storytelling video one of our most powerful tools for building understanding and community investment. It will premiere at our 24th Annual "A Play with A Purpose" theater event at People's Light on February 9th. It will then live on our website and social media, and be used with constituents, funders, and community partners for years to come. Funding for this project would cover production costs with Delta E. Photography, including filming, interviews, and editing across all five featured relationships to produce a 5-7 minute video ready for the February premiere.

CHESTER COUNTY community FOUNDATION

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

Citizen Advocacy is, at its heart, a story of two people who would never have met and whose lives are forever changed because they were introduced by Citizen Advocacy. Since Citizen Advocacy was founded, we have initiated 338 matches, representing 676 individuals who have found connection and support through relationship. Currently, our office supports 74 individual matches, directly affecting the lives of 148 people, and we are recruiting advocates for 5 new partners. However, the true reach impact of this work extends well beyond these numbers. Each relationship has results that ripple outward, strengthening community connections, and creating a network of support that benefits everyone involved. Three of our matches are over 20 years old, a testament to the long-term commitment advocates make. Since expanding our staff in 2022, we have consistently increased the number of new matches made each year. We are currently planning our 40th Annual Phoenixville Run, alongside our annual Spaghetti Dinner and in 2027, we will host our 24th Annual "A Play With a Purpose" event at People's Light.

The longevity of our program, our events, and the relationships supported by the office, reflects the extraordinary, mutual commitment between Citizen Advocacy and our community. Numbers alone cannot capture what this work truly means. Behind every relationship is the story of someone who previously isolated or vulnerable due to society's response to their disability, who now has a committed person in their corner who shows up, hears them, and walks alongside them to make positive changes. These are the stories that move people. Time and again, community members and friends of our work have told us that it wasn't statistics, but hearing directly from partners and advocates themselves, that finally helped them understand the depth of this work. That is why the video we are seeking funding for is so important: it will feature five citizen advocacy relationships, partners and advocates themselves, offering a window into connection, dignity, and impact that can inspire individuals and help us promote and continue this important work.

2. Funding request

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

Citizen Advocacy remains focused on finding people who are at the margins of our communities due to how people with disabilities are historically, and currently, treated. People with disabilities who are isolated or vulnerable often face significant barriers to accessing basic needs such as food, housing, adequate healthcare, safety, and meaningful connection. Navigating systems meant to provide support can be complex and overwhelming, especially without consistent advocacy and continuity. We ask people who are on the icy, insecure, edges of isolation in our community to take a chance on the idea that an independent neighbor will step forward and create a relationship that will be the foundation and catalyst for change. We then find local citizens with complementary qualities who will step up and into those people's lives as citizen advocates. We introduce the new advocate to the philosophy of Citizen Advocacy, and the partner in need of support. We ask advocates to make a long-term, ideally lifetime commitment, to stand for and with their partner. We support advocates to think critically, question the status quo, and transform lives. We encourage citizen advocates to involve their family and friends and to use the contacts and connections they have throughout our communities to create lasting and powerful change. These relationships are not time-limited or service-based, they are built on trust, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to dignity, safety, connection, and opportunity.

The long-term and proactive nature of these relationships causes a paradigm shift in the foundation of a person's life, often breaking life-time patterns of isolation, poverty, and vulnerability and replacing them with safety, greater well-being, and improved prospects in all aspects of their lives. Through 45 years of this work, Citizen Advocacy has shown that it is a critical and effective means to enrich, safeguard, and even save lives in our communities.

This work is relational, not transactional, and that makes it hard to explain through a few sentences or statistics alone. It has to be felt. That is why storytelling, and especially seeing and hearing advocates and partners on video, has become one of the most effective communication tools we have. When people hear directly from an advocate and partner about how their relationship began and how it changed both of their lives, the idea of citizen advocacy stops being abstract. It becomes real. The impact of the relationship is conveyed through the partner's story, but also the advocate's story. The power of the relationship is felt between the two individuals and also ripples outward to families, networks, and communities. These stories are often what move a hesitant prospective advocate to truly understand the ask, or help a funder or community partner truly comprehend the depth of what one relationship can do. Video lets us carry that impact beyond a single room or event, reaching new advocates, supporters, and community members who might otherwise never understand, or experience, the power of Citizen Advocacy.

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

Funding is needed now because we are planning to premiere this video at our theater event on February 9th, and producing a video of this quality takes time. We need to schedule and film interviews with five advocates and their partners, coordinate everyone's availability, and allow Delta E. Photography adequate time to edit and finalize the video before the premiere date. Without timely funding, we risk not having enough time to film thoughtfully, edit thoroughly, and deliver a video that does justice to these relationships and the stories they represent.

This premiere is also a key moment for Citizen Advocacy. It is one of our most visible community events of the year, drawing supporters, prospective advocates, and community members who may not otherwise engage with our work. Debuting the video there gives us the opportunity to introduce it to a large, invested audience all at once, then continue using it on our website, social media, and in future community presentations. Securing funding now ensures we can meet this timeline without compromising the quality or authenticity of the storytelling that makes this video so powerful.

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

We will measure the success and impact of this video in a few ways. First, we will track direct engagement, including attendance at our February 9th premiere event, views across YouTube, our website, and social media, and how often the video is shared or used in presentations to constituents, funders, and community partners throughout the year. Second, and more importantly, we will look for signs that the video is achieving its real purpose: helping people understand and connect with our mission. We will collect feedback from premiere attendees to see whether the video helped clarify what Citizen Advocacy does, and we will track new connections in the months following its release, noting when someone mentions the video as a reason they understood the power of Citizen Advocacy.

While many factors influence engagement, we have consistently heard that our previous videos played a direct role in helping people understand our mission and take the step toward becoming involved or supporting this

work. We expect this video, with its focus on five distinct relationships, to have an even greater impact, and we will continue to use attendee feedback and inquiry tracking to measure and demonstrate that impact over time.

- **Additionally, for capacity building grant proposals:**
  - **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.**

This capacity building initiative will strengthen Citizen Advocacy of Chester County's ability to communicate the depth and importance of our mission to the community, ultimately supporting our long-term ability to recruit advocates, engage funders, and build public understanding of a model that is often difficult to explain in the abstract. Storytelling has proven, time and again, to be one of the most effective tools we have. By producing a new video featuring five citizen advocacy relationships, told directly by the advocates and partners themselves, we will be able to reach new audiences with a message that statistics and program descriptions alone cannot convey. This video will not only serve as a centerpiece for our February 9th theater premiere, but will continue to build our organization's capacity as it lives on our website, circulates through social media, and is used in presentations with individuals and community groups.

The impact of this initiative will be demonstrated through both immediate engagement and longer-term outcomes. In the near term, we will track attendance at the premiere, views across our website and social platforms, and how often the video is used in community presentations. Over time, we will look for evidence that the video is accomplishing its deeper purpose, including feedback from viewers on whether it helped them understand our mission, and any increase in any inquiries that can be traced back to the video. We have already seen this pattern with our previous two videos, where community members and new supporters specifically cited watching previous videos as the moment our mission became clear to them.

To bring this video to life, we will again be working with Delta E. Photography, a team we have partnered with for two previous videos and whose approach has consistently captured the authenticity and emotional depth of our advocacy relationships. The process will include all necessary prep work and coordination with five advocate and partner pairs, documentary/interview style filming of each relationship, and incorporation of key footage from our previous videos to preserve important mission-related content. Delta E. Photography will then edit all footage into a final product of five to seven minutes in length, ready for our February 9th premiere.

We anticipate this project will take place over the coming months, with filming completed in the Fall and final editing finished in time for the February 9th event. The total cost of this initiative, covering all prep work, filming, and editing services provided by Delta E. Photography, is $2,950. Their invoice is attached. We would be honored to partner with the Chester County Community Foundation on this project and would proudly recognize your support in the video itself.

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: **Separate Attachment**
2. List of **Board** of Directors, with their affiliations ***URL:*** **Separate Attachment**
3. Most recent **annual report** ***URL: https://citizenadvocacycc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/Citizen-Advocacy-Annual-Report-2025.pdf***

4. Audited or reviewed recent **financial statement *URL:* https://citizenadvocacycc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Citizen-Advocacy-of-Chester-County-FS-9.30.25-Final.pdf**
5. Itemized **organizational operating budget** with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date : **Separate Attachment**
6. If capacity building initiative, **itemized budget** (including external consultant's proposal, if applicable) **Separate Attachment**
7. Current **strategic plan.** If your nonprofit does **not** have a current strategic plan, **explain why**. **Our Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 is attached. We are currently working with Jenna Armato to develop a new three-year Strategic Plan. We have already had two in-person sessions with our staff and board and have another staff session planned for September 2026. Our plan will be complete and implementation will begin Fall 2026.**

- 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
- Proposals are considered "complete" when CCCF has **confirmed** receipt of the **Grant Proposal Summary Sheet, Narrative & Attachments**.
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CHESTER COUNTY community FOUNDATION

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@chescocf.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 ###