



I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

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Date

Contact Information

Organization Name: Girls Spark
Address: PO Box 383, Kennett Square, PA 19348
Phone: 484-604-9303
Website: girlsspark.org
Year Incorporated: 2019
FEIN: 83-2403933

ED/CEO Name: Stormy Bell
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Board Chair Name: Nicole Stephenson
Board Chair Approval (check here): ☒
Primary Contact Name: Stormy Bell
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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: Girls Spark is an organization created by teen girls for teen girls! Our mission is to provide middle & high school girls with a safe, supportive, empowering environment where they can learn, collaborate, and overcome adversity in facing today's social issues.

We are guided by a passionate teen leadership board of high school girls and an adult board with a shared vision of helping girls navigate the challenges social issues they face in today's world.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): Chester County and the Greater Delaware Valley region.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served. (Include Chester County # &/or % served.) Girls Spark empowers and educates middle and high school girls ages 11 to 18. During the 2025–2026 program year, approximately 600 girls participated in Girls Spark activities, expanding the organization's reach and providing more girls with opportunities to build confidence, develop leadership skills, and strengthen their ability to navigate today's social issues.

Annual Budget \$ _____ \$199,100 _____ 1 _____ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
_____ 63 _____ % of budget for program expenses _____ 21 _____ # of Board Volunteers
_____ 20 _____ % of budget for administrative expenses _____ 75 _____ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
_____ 16 _____ % of budget for fundraising expenses _____ 1200 _____ # of Volunteer Hours
100% = total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

This grant proposal is for: ☒ 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: \$ 12,000

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

Empowering Girls, Igniting Confidence

Today's adolescent girls are navigating a rapidly changing world shaped by social pressures, cyberbullying, academic stress, social media, identity development, peer conflict, and evolving expectations about who they should be and how they should succeed. Girls Spark meets these challenges with an empowering approach that focuses not on what girls lack, but on the strengths, skills, and confidence they already possess—and how those strengths can be developed. Through meaningful connections, expert guidance, and opportunities to lead, Girls Spark helps girls build the confidence and resilience to navigate challenges and shape their own futures.

Girls Spark: Building Confidence, Leadership, and Agency

Girls Spark empowers girls ages 11–18 through a unique youth-driven, expert-led model. During the 2025–26 program year, approximately 600 girls participated in Girls Spark activities. Our programming is grounded in a scientifically backed Social and Emotional Learning framework that has demonstrated outcomes including a 50% decrease in anxiety and a 70% increase in self-esteem.

Girls Spark creates multiple opportunities for girls to learn, connect, lead, and grow throughout the year.

Our interconnected program model includes

- School Clubs**, where girls build supportive peer communities and explore issues affecting their lives;
- The flagship **Annual Summit**, which brings girls together for inspiring speakers and interactive workshops;
- Community Summits**, which expand access to leadership and personal development opportunities;
- Virtual **Girl Talk Workshops**, which address timely issues identified by girls; and a
- 10-month Teen Leadership Board**, which provides high school girls with advanced leadership, advocacy, and project management training while giving them a meaningful voice in shaping Girls Spark programming.

Our youth-driven approach ensures that girls are not simply participants—they are active contributors. Teen Leadership Board members help identify relevant topics, vet industry professionals, and influence the direction of the organization. Through this experience, girls learn that their perspectives have value and that they have the ability to contribute to decisions that affect themselves and their communities.

The impact of this approach is evident in Chester County. At Kennett High School, a group of girls developed the confidence and leadership skills to present their vision directly to the school board and successfully secure approval for a Girls Spark club. Their experience illustrates the self-efficacy Girls Spark seeks to cultivate: girls

identifying a need, finding their voices, advocating for change, and creating opportunities for themselves and their peers. Girls along with the others who participate in the clubs are exercising agency over their mental, social, economic and overall wellbeing. They are developing leadership skills by advocating for themselves and their peers.

A Request for \$12,000 in Program Support

Girls Spark respectfully requests **\$12,000 in flexible funding** to sustain and expand this year-round ecosystem of confidence-building, leadership development, and connection. Funding will directly support expert facilitator stipends and the administrative coordination needed to deliver School Clubs, the Annual Summit, Community Summits, Girl Talk Workshops, and the Teen Leadership Board. CCCF support will help ensure that these programs remain accessible, and remove financial barriers so girls can participate regardless of their family's ability to pay.

An investment in Girls Spark is an investment in girls' potential. With CCCF support, girls in Chester County and across the region will have the opportunity to build confidence, strengthen resilience, develop leadership skills, discover their voices, and take meaningful action in their schools and communities. Together, we can empower girls to recognize their strengths, believe in their potential, and become the confident leaders and changemakers of tomorrow.

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

Girls Spark's overall aim is to empower adolescent girls ages 11–18 to build confidence, resilience, self-efficacy, and leadership skills so they can navigate social, emotional, academic, and economic challenges and actively shape their futures. Since 2018, Girls Spark has engaged more than 3,250 girls through a unique youth-driven, expert-led model that combines evidence-based Social and Emotional Learning with real-world opportunities for girls to learn, lead, advocate, and create change.

Our key initiatives include School Clubs, Girl Talk Workshops, the annual Girls Spark Summit, Community Summits, and our 10-month Teen Leadership Board. Together, these programs create a year-round ecosystem where girls can build supportive peer relationships, engage with expert facilitators, explore issues relevant to their lives, and develop practical skills in communication, self-advocacy, resilience, and leadership. The Teen Leadership Board extends this model by placing girls in positions of meaningful organizational leadership. Participants help shape programming, identify topics, vet industry professionals, and develop project-management and advocacy skills.

During the 2025–26 program year, approximately 600 girls participated in Girls Spark activities, demonstrating the growing demand for accessible opportunities that support girls' confidence and well-being. Our programming is grounded in a scientifically backed Social and Emotional Learning framework associated with a 50% decrease in anxiety and a 70% increase in self-esteem.

Girls Spark's distinctiveness lies in our youth-driven, expert-led approach. Rather than simply delivering programs to girls, we create opportunities for girls to influence what they learn and how the organization evolves. Expert facilitators bring research and practical knowledge to issues affecting adolescent girls, while girls themselves help identify the challenges and topics that matter most to them. This creates programming that is both evidence-informed and authentically responsive to girls' lived experiences.

2. Funding request

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

Girls Spark addresses the social, emotional, academic, and economic challenges that can affect girls' confidence, well-being, and ability to advocate for themselves. Girls tell us they are navigating social exclusion, peer conflict, self-esteem challenges, identity development, emotional vulnerability, coping difficulties, social anxiety, and social stereotyping. Girls Spark responds by giving girls practical tools, supportive peer communities, trusted adult and expert guidance, and opportunities to practice leadership.

School Clubs: which extends Girls Spark's mission to educate, empower, and inspire girls by creating consistent, school-based communities where they can connect, learn, and grow together. During the 2025–26 program year, Girls Spark operated School Clubs at **12 schools**, including Kennett High School, Downingtown West High School, Downingtown Middle School, Bayard Rustin High School, Upper Darby High School, Villa Maria Academy High School, and other schools throughout the region.

Funding will support program coordination, expert facilitators, and materials needed to strengthen existing clubs and expand access to additional schools, with a goal of moving from 12-18 schools included.

Girl Talk Workshops: Free, interactive sessions that provide teen girls with a safe, supportive space to build confidence, connect with peers, and develop practical skills for navigating school, friendships, and everyday challenges. Offered virtually through Zoom, with hybrid and in-person options throughout the year, workshops feature engaging discussions, activities, and inspiring women leaders who share tools and encouragement that help girls feel heard, supported, and empowered.

With financial support, the workshops will mirror the growth of the School Clubs as the network expands from 12 to 18 schools. Delivery of in-school workshops is scaling alongside the school clubs, with each club receiving up to five vetted expert workshop speakers per academic year.

Annual Summit: The 2026 Annual Girls Spark Summit, themed “**Unstoppable Me: Inside & Out,**” used interactive activities, guided reflection, and expert-led workshops to help girls explore identity, confidence, and self-expression. Keynote speaker **Dr. Melissa Rice** shared her journey of overcoming anxiety, depression, and self-doubt, inspiring girls to recognize their own strength and understand that challenges do not define them.

Funding will help sustain and expand this high-impact experience by supporting expert speakers, interactive workshops, materials, and opportunities to reach more girls.

Community Summit: Including the Kennett Chester County and DCIU Middle School Girls Summits, bring girls together for engaging, age-appropriate experiences focused on confidence, leadership, and mental wellness. Through interactive workshops, hands-on activities, inspiring speakers, and meaningful discussions, girls build connections, explore new interests, and gain practical tools to navigate challenges with greater confidence. Like the annual summit, funding will help Girls Spark expand these localized summit experiences to more local communities, increasing opportunities for girls in Chester County and surrounding communities to access meaningful, in-person programming.

Girls Spark Teen Leadership Board is a 10-month leadership program that gives high school girls across the Greater Delaware Valley hands-on experience leading initiatives, inspiring peers, and creating positive change for girls in their communities. With mentorship from Girls Spark staff and adult board members, participants build confidence and skills in leadership, teamwork, communication, advocacy, and project management; last year, members rated their experience **4.5 out of 5 stars**.

Funding will support mentorship, training, and leadership opportunities that enable more girls to participate and expand their impact as advocates and changemakers.

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

The need for accessible, empowering opportunities for adolescent girls continues to grow, while girls are navigating increasingly complex social and emotional environments. Girls Spark’s 2025–26 participation demonstrates the demand: approximately **600 girls engaged in Girls Spark activities** during the program year.

Funding now will allow Girls Spark to sustain this momentum and ensure that girls continue to have consistent opportunities to build confidence, resilience, self-advocacy, and leadership skills. A \$12,000 investment will

directly support expert facilitator stipends and the administrative coordination necessary to deliver School Clubs, the Annual Summit, Community Summits, Girl Talk Workshops, and the Teen Leadership Board.

This investment is particularly important because Girls Spark's model is designed for continued engagement rather than a one-time intervention. Girls can move from participating in workshops and clubs to taking on meaningful leadership roles, creating a pathway from personal growth to community impact. With programming remaining assessable, funding also protects access for girls who might otherwise be excluded by cost.

Supporting Girls Spark now will help ensure that the organization can meet growing participation while continuing to provide high-quality, youth-driven programming that equips girls not simply to respond to challenges, but to recognize their strengths, use their voices, and shape their futures.

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

Girls Spark will demonstrate results through a combination of participation data, participant feedback, program evaluations, leadership engagement, and stories of change. We will track the number of girls participating across School Clubs, Girl Talk Workshops, Summits, and the Teen Leadership Board, with particular attention to participation and reach within Chester County.

Program evaluations and participant surveys will measure girls' experiences and changes in areas central to our mission, including confidence, self-esteem, resilience, social-emotional skills, sense of belonging, and ability to advocate for themselves and others. Girls Spark's Social and Emotional Learning framework has demonstrated outcomes including a 50% decrease in anxiety and a 70% increase in self-esteem.

We will also document qualitative outcomes that demonstrate girls putting their skills into action. For example, at Kennett High School, participating girls developed the confidence and leadership skills to present their vision directly to the school board and secure approval for a Girls Spark club. Stories like this demonstrate the deeper impact of the program: girls moving from learning about leadership to exercising it in their own communities.

Together, these quantitative and qualitative measures will demonstrate not only how many girls Girls Spark reaches, but how participation contributes to stronger confidence, self-efficacy, leadership, and agency.