

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@chescof.org with questions.

*Connecting people who care with causes that matter,
so their philanthropy makes a difference, now & forever.*

The logo for the Chester County Community Foundation. It features a circular emblem with a stylized 'C' and 'F' inside. To the right of the emblem, the words 'CHESTER COUNTY' are written in a small, sans-serif font, followed by 'community' in a larger, green, lowercase sans-serif font, and 'FOUNDATION' in a smaller, green, uppercase sans-serif font below it.

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://chescof.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.chescof.org
- Proposals are only accepted electronically. The format is online at <https://chescof.org/receive/apply-for-grants/>
- **E-mail proposals to grants@chescof.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.

Please contact Kevin Baffa, Grants Administrator
at (610) 696-8211 or grants@chescocf.org with questions.

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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

Contact Information

Organization Name: The Sprouts Program
Address: 111 Croton Road, Wayne, PA, 19087
Phone: 610-389-7686
Website: N/A
Year Incorporated: 2026
FEIN: 41-4631171

ED/CEO Name: Emily Wang
ED/CEO E-mail: ewang2708@gmail.com
Board Chair Name: Xueyuan Liu
Board Chair Approval (check here): ☒
Primary Contact Name: Emily Wang
Primary Contact E-mail: ewang2708@gmail.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 Sprouts Program aims to empower local youth and encourage active STEM exploration and interest through free programming.

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

Malvern, Berwyn, Wayne, Radnor, Paoli, Devon

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

Youth from grades K-6; est. 150 people served yearly.

Annual Budget \$2,000 (FY27) _____ 0 _____ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

_____ 77 _____ % of budget for program expenses _____ 3 _____ # of Board Volunteers

_____ 3 _____ % of budget for administrative expenses _____ 3 _____ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

_____ 20 _____ % of budget for fundraising expenses _____ 400 _____ # of Volunteer Hours

100% = total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Board contributions, in-kind contributions, community donations

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: \$ _____ 1000 _____

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

The Sprouts Program is asking mainly to fund volunteer and program expansion. Currently, we have one long-term program and four pop-up curricula. However, the materials we use in our curricula are household and not very advanced. Our requested funds will go directly towards developing our long-term curriculum, organizing community and volunteer events, and most importantly, developing new curricula. Using these funds, we will be able to purchase more advanced equipment such as pressure gauges, scales, and basic engineering tools such as circuits and wire. Additionally, we will be able to develop new courses based on more advanced ideas and real child interests.

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 Sprouts Program aims to not only educate and expose students to STEM concepts and application, but also to instill an early love of science and encourage self-discovery and learning. Distinct from general STEM education, Sprouts encourages student curiosity and hands-on learning while fostering an environment to make mistakes without fear.

A Sprouts course teaches 1-5th graders basic experimental design and botany, which is followed by student design and execution of their own science project. Students' effort will culminate in an end-of-year celebration, consisting of a presentation of their findings. In its debut year, Sprouts partnered with 2 library systems and had 35+ registrations in total for the three nine-week, in-person classes. The pop-up program, launched in August 2026, has so far had over 100 registrations and is partnered with four community organizations.

2. Funding request

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

Sprouts offers free STEM programming to youth. A unique component of our programming is its hands-on and individualized aspect. Students are encouraged to think for themselves and apply principles to the real world. The programs are designed to help foster an interest in science. Our differentiating factor is our long-term programs. Students work in small-group classes to brainstorm, design, and execute their own experiments with teacher guidance, which is meant to instill a curious mind and scientific self-sufficiency in each child.

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

Any additional funds will be immediately used to develop our 2027 programs and, if received within an appropriate timespan, to enrich the experience of our 2026 students. Our pop-ups in particular have had consistently full or near full registrations, totaling 100+ since August – in order to meet the demand and develop a lasting impression on our students, it's important to consistently develop new pop-up workshops and long-term classes. In places where there is a lack of community partners, we may also use these resources to rent a classroom and impact a wider audience.

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

Registration numbers are already and will continue to be tracked for each program and pop-up. Additionally, we document each new community partner and area reached. Instructors also provide qualitative feedback to the board after each session to evaluate the interest in each curriculum. We will also gather participant feedback on program reception, whether or not their interest in science increased, and what specific things they learned to gauge effectiveness.

- 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.

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**
 2. **List of Board of Directors, with their affiliations URL:**
 - Board Chair: Xueyuan Liu
 - Board Vice-Chair: Yashvi Jain
 - Board Treasurer: Keerti Jain
 - Board Secretary: Emily Wang
 3. **Most recent annual report URL:**

As The Sprouts Program has not reached its first full year yet, we do not have an annual report to disclose at this time. However, we can provide information regarding our activities up to this date.
 4. **Audited or reviewed recent financial statement URL:**

As a small, volunteer-led nonprofit in its first year of operation, we do not have audited or reviewed financial statements. The Sprouts Program has filed its applicable Form 990-N with the IRS, and our current-year operating budget and fiscal-year-to-date results are attached.
 5. **Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date**

We do not have a prior fiscal year budget; Sprouts has only existed for this fiscal year.
 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.**

As a very new, small, volunteer run nonprofit, we do not have an outlined strategic plan right now. We are currently focusing on expanding our volunteer base and the reach of our free STEM education, as well as developing new programs. As our experience grows, we plan to evaluate reception and feedback to outline more concrete growth guidelines and a plan.
- 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**.
 - Proposals are shared electronically and online with Fund Advisors, Donors & Grant Panels.
 - Per IRS Regulations, applicants must be charitable, tax-exempt organizations with 501(c)(3) certification & cannot be individuals.

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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

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