

CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date: September 18, 2026

Contact Information

Organization Name: The Wardrobe

Executive Director/CEO: Sheri Cole

Address: 444 N. 3rd Street, Suite 105, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Phone: 215-568-6693

Website: wardrobepa.org

Board Chair: Christopher Otten

Primary Contact: Wendy Graham, Grants & Operations Manager

Email: wendy@wardrobepa.org

Phone: 215-568-6693 x18

Year Incorporated: 1995

FEIN: 23-2900156

Board Chair Approval: x

Organization Information

Field of Interest:

- ☒ Human Services
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Arts, Culture & Humanities
- ☐ Environment/Animal Welfare
- ☐ Religion

Mission

The Wardrobe eliminates clothing insecurity by providing people experiencing financial hardship with access to high-quality clothing for work, school, and everyday life in a respectful and welcoming environment.

Geographic Area Served

The Wardrobe serves individuals and families throughout the Greater Philadelphia region, including Chester County. The organization has maintained a Chester County presence for many years in Kennett Square and is transitioning its Exton location to a new location in Malvern.

Population Served & Annual Number of People Served

The Wardrobe serves people experiencing financial hardship who need clothing for employment, education, daily life, and other essential needs. In FY2025, The Wardrobe's Dressing Program served 7,553 people, including 5,596 unique individuals. The organization also provided 898 Wardrobe Boxes and served 840 people through Open Wardrobe.

Annual Budget

\$2,606,000

Staff / Volunteers

Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff: 26

Board Volunteers: 16

Active Non-Board Volunteers: 300

Volunteer Hours: Not tracked

Top Funding Sources

Justamere Foundation \$20,000

Longwood Foundation \$125,000

MKM Foundation \$30,000

Philadelphia Foundation \$20,000

Grant Proposal

☒ Direct Service Programs & General Operating

☐ Capacity Building

Funding Request

Amount Requested: \$10,000

Purpose: General Operating Support for Dressing Program Chester County

Brief Description of Request

The Wardrobe requests \$10,000 in general operating support to sustain and strengthen our services to Chester County residents experiencing financial hardship. Through our Kennett Square location and new Malvern location, opening October 8, 2026, The Wardrobe provides free, high-quality clothing for work, school, everyday life, and other important transitions. General operating support helps sustain the staff, facilities, clothing inventory, transportation,

technology, and other infrastructure necessary to provide these services and respond to community needs.

Expected Impact

Funding will help The Wardrobe maintain reliable access to free clothing for Chester County residents through our Kennett Square and Malvern locations. We will measure impact through the number of Chester County residents served, client appointments and visits, clothing items provided, use of our services, and engagement with Chester County referral and community partners.

Our goal is to ensure that financial hardship does not make clothing a barrier to employment, education, stability, or participation in everyday life. By supporting The Wardrobe's general operations, the Chester County Community Foundation will help sustain the infrastructure needed to provide this essential service throughout the county.

Project Timeline

Ongoing: Provide free clothing and related services to Chester County residents through The Wardrobe's Kennett Square location and community partnerships.

September–October 2026: Complete preparations for the new Malvern location and communicate the new location and services to Chester County clients, referral partners, and the surrounding community.

October 8, 2026: Open The Wardrobe's new Malvern location, replacing the former Exton site.

October 2026–June 2027: Continue providing services through both Chester County locations; monitor client utilization, geographic reach, clothing distribution, and referral activity to assess and strengthen service delivery throughout the county.

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

The Wardrobe's mission is to eliminate clothing insecurity by providing people experiencing financial hardship with access to high-quality clothing for work, school, and everyday life in a respectful and welcoming environment. We believe clothing is more than something to wear—it can be an important support for employment, education, financial stability, and participation in the community.

Founded in 1995, The Wardrobe has grown from a small program serving women seeking employment into the largest nonprofit clothing provider for men and women, in Greater Philadelphia. Today, we provide free clothing to thousands of people each year through our locations, community partnerships, Open Wardrobe access, and Wardrobe Boxes. We serve adults, young adults, and youth ages 13 and older, with services designed to meet people where they are and respond to changing needs.

Our key initiatives include Outfits for Work, which provides clothing and workforce support services; Outfits for Life, including Open Wardrobe, which provides clothing for everyday needs, and Returning Wardrobe, which supports people returning to the community after incarceration. We also provide personally styled Wardrobe Boxes, extending our reach to people who cannot easily access one of our physical locations.

In the past year alone, 6,500 people received clothing and support at The Wardrobe through 8,850 dressing appointments, workshops or coaching sessions. Participants include youth, seniors, LGBTQ+ community members, returning citizens, and multilingual neighbors. The Wings for Success support services program provided 53 workshops for 775 attendees covering employment success topics including dressing for success, interviewing and resume techniques. Additionally, we provided 55 coaching sessions for 30 individuals to help them navigate their own path to success and employment. These services directly strengthen local vitality by reducing financial strain on households, supporting workforce participation, and helping individuals remain engaged in their communities. Our reach is supported by more than 350 community partners who connect people to clothing when it is needed for a job, school, reentry, daily life, or other important transition.

Chester County is an important part of The Wardrobe's regional service network. We currently serve Chester County residents through our Kennett Square location and, beginning in October 2026, through our new Malvern location which takes the place of our Exton Mall site which closed in June 2026. Together, these two locations will provide access to free clothing in different parts of the county and allow us to remain responsive to the needs of Chester County residents and community partners. The transition from our former Exton location to Malvern represents a continued commitment to serving the county, not a departure from it. We completed over 1,300 appointments in Chester County in FY2026 and have set a goal to increase that number by 10% in the current year.

What makes The Wardrobe distinctive is the way we provide this basic necessity. Clients do not pay for their clothing, and they are treated with dignity and respect throughout the experience. Our approach, known as the STAR Treatment—Styling, Time, Advice, and Respect—recognizes that receiving clothing should not feel like receiving charity. People should have the opportunity to choose clothing that fits their needs, preferences, and lives.

We also approach clothing insecurity as both a human-services issue and an environmental issue. Approximately 90% of our inventory is donated, and clothing that cannot be used by clients is diverted from disposal through textile recycling and other reuse channels. By extending the useful life of clothing while providing it to people who need it, The Wardrobe creates social and environmental impact at the same time.

Our continued goal is to make sure that clothing is never a barrier to opportunity—and that people throughout Greater Philadelphia, including Chester County, have access to the clothing they need to move forward with confidence and dignity.

2.Funding request

The Wardrobe requests \$10,000 in general operating support from the Chester County Community Foundation to help provide free clothing and related services to Chester County residents experiencing financial hardship.

Flexible operating support is essential to sustaining the infrastructure behind The Wardrobe's direct services. Funding supports the people, facilities, transportation, technology, clothing processing, community outreach, and other day-to-day operations necessary to collect, prepare, and provide clothing to people who need it.

General operating support will help sustain these services and give The Wardrobe the flexibility to respond to demand across the county. Whether a client needs clothing for a new job, school, everyday life, reentry, or another important transition, our goal is to ensure that financial hardship does not prevent them from having the clothing they need.

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

The Wardrobe addresses clothing insecurity, an often-overlooked basic need for people experiencing financial hardship. Appropriate clothing can be essential for starting a job, attending school, participating in an interview, returning to the community, replacing worn or outgrown clothing, or simply managing everyday life. When people cannot afford clothing, a basic need can become another barrier to stability and opportunity.

The Wardrobe provides clothing completely free of charge through our Dressing Program, Open Wardrobe, community partnerships, Wardrobe Boxes, and specialized programs for youth and people returning to the community after incarceration. Our services complement other critical

supports such as food, housing, healthcare, and employment services by addressing a basic need that is often left out of traditional safety-net programs.

Chester County residents access these services through The Wardrobe's local presence in Kennett Square and, beginning October 2026, Malvern. Maintaining access points in both southern and central Chester County is important because transportation, distance, and access to other resources can be significant barriers for people experiencing financial hardship.

The Wardrobe also works closely with community partners that identify people who need clothing and connect them to our services. This partnership-based approach allows us to reach people at important moments in their lives, including when they are entering employment, pursuing education, navigating reentry, or working toward greater economic stability.

Why is it important to fund this now?

The need for clothing assistance does not disappear when someone receives help with food, housing, employment, or other essential services. People experiencing financial hardship continue to need appropriate clothing for work, school, everyday life, and important transitions. The Wardrobe provides that clothing free of charge and works with community partners throughout the region to connect people with this often-overlooked resource.

Support from the Chester County Community Foundation is particularly important now as The Wardrobe strengthens its long-term presence in Chester County.

How will results & impact be demonstrated?

The Wardrobe will demonstrate the impact of general operating support through the number of Chester County residents who access our services and the clothing we provide to meet their needs. We will track:

- Number of Chester County residents served;
- Number of client appointments and visits at our Kennett Square and Malvern locations;
- Number of Chester County residents accessing Open Wardrobe and other services;
- Number and activity of Chester County referral and community partners; and

We will also monitor the geographic distribution of clients to understand how effectively our two locations are reaching residents throughout the county and identify areas where additional outreach or partnerships may be needed.

The Wardrobe's broader measure of success is whether people experiencing financial hardship have access to appropriate clothing when they need it—whether for employment, education, reentry, everyday life, or another important transition.