

# **Chester Public Library ARPA Proposal Form**

## **Submitter Contact Information**

Chester Public Library

Stephanie Romano, Library Director

21 W Main St.

860-526-0013 x 227

librarydirector@chesterct.org

## **Proposal information**

*Author resident, business, non-profit, government or civic organization:*

*Chester Public Library*

*Description of Project:*

The Chester Public Library would like to request \$6000.00 from the town's ARPA grant money to fund a concrete pad for our newly purchased carousel seating complete with a solar umbrella that is also a charging station. The money being asked for will cover materials needed to complete this project. Equipment rental, cement, and decorative stamp which will match the exterior of the building. All labor will be done by the Chester Town crew.

This outside area is being created for those patrons still uncomfortable being inside the building for long periods of time, for those who utilize the libraries Wi-Fi from their vehicles, and overall make it a more inclusive and inviting environment.

The Chester Public Library is a quaint little library that acts as the gateway to the towns center. The building itself is historic and is listed on the State Register of Historic Buildings. With that being said, the 2000 square foot building is one of 6 principle public libraries in the state with no wheelchair accessibility. To make up for this shortcoming, the library provides curbside service, homebound delivery, and holds programs at accessible locations which in the past have included North Quarter Park, the Town Hall, Chester Meeting House, and the libraries own lawn.

Currently, we are unable to make our building accessible which is why we are developing our outside lawn area, making our resources available to everyone. We have already purchased the following items with ARPA money received from the CT State Library made possible by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS): Solar Powered umbrella and charging doc plus a 4-seat carousel table with wheelchair accessibility (the picture shown below does not have the wheelchair accessibility, this is to give you an idea) as well as an outdoor book return. I have also submitted in my budget proposal to the town, fencing

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that will go along the back edge of the property to ensure the safety of library patrons when outside and new outdoor lights. New plantings will be installed that will showcase the beauty of this historical building creating a warm and welcoming space. By developing our small yard into a workable outdoor area, we expect higher visitation by patrons especially as the warmer weather nears. An inviting outdoor spot gives our patrons a place to work and utilize the libraries Wi-Fi as an alternative to sitting in their cars. A solar powered table allows patrons a comfortable place to sit and work allowing them to use their personal devices to log into our databases and other resources such as healthcare, job searches and education; the library has additional Chromebooks for patrons to borrow. An outdoor book drop makes for easy returns without the inconvenience of getting out of the car. Wireless printing is now available thanks to ARPA funds.

Last year, the Peach Pit foundation through the Community Foundation of Middlesex County gave county libraries money to spend on something “fun”. COVID put a halt to so many activities and changed our lifestyle dramatically, the Peach Pit Foundation wanted libraries to do something fun for their community. The library purchased outdoor games which includes an oversized tic-tac-toe, jump ropes, hula hoops and a corn hole game. These items were put out daily last summer and continued through the fall as long as the weather remained pleasant, for families to enjoy and we loved seeing them outside having fun. These are the things that bring individuals and families together and we are expanding this initiative with outdoor seating and workspace.

This additional money to help complete a stamped concrete pad for our solar table will foster community gatherings, provide additional workspace as well as an area to host programs in an inviting, safe environment for current and future Chester residents and everyone who visits.

*ARPA funds requested (\$): \$6,000*

*Who would most benefit from the project if approved: See Description*

*Positive impact of project to the Chester community: See Description*

*How the proposed project aligns with any action items the town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) (section 6): This proposal supports Objective 5.2: Provide facilities that enhance livability, enrich learning opportunities and cultural awareness, and cultivate social interaction.*



 **SUNBOLT**



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