

Youth Climate Action Fund Application Guidelines

Globally, it is projected that by 2030, 60% of urban residents will be under the age of 18, positioning youth as key participants in shaping urban futures. This next phase of the Youth Climate Action Fund emphasizes greater ambition, more creative solutions, and the long-term integration of youth engagement into city practices through co-design and co-governance projects. Allentown is now part of an international network of over 90 cities across five continents participating in the Youth Climate Action Fund. Together, these cities are addressing climate change challenges while fostering deeper trust and collaboration between local governments and youth.

Program Objectives and Eligibility Criteria

The City of Allentown, in partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies, is pleased to announce the Youth Climate Action Fund, a micro-grant program that supports youth-led projects that promote innovation, sustainability, and resiliency in Allentown.

Project Types

Microgrant projects must be focused on one or more of the city's key climate priorities identified in [Vision 2030](#). Climate priorities identified in Vision 2030 include:

- **Physical Health** (Air Quality, Water Quality, High Heat)
- **Connected Communities** (Walking, Biking, Public Transportation)
- **Environmental Stewardship** (Access to Parks/Open Space, Decreasing Illegal Dumping and Litter)
- **Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions** (Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy, Waste Reduction)
- **Community Empowerment and Collaboration** (Governing Committees, Education and Awareness, Policy Recommendations)
- **Green Infrastructure** (Stormwater Management, Flood Resilience, Green Spaces)

Project Examples

Examples of projects may include, but are not limited to:

Awareness, Education, Research, Co-Development Initiatives

- **Youth Climate Advisory Boards:** Establish advisory boards or councils composed of young people to work alongside city officials in designing and refining climate policies and programs, ensuring that they reflect the needs and perspectives of youth.
- **Youth-Led Climate Education Programs:** Develop educational initiatives led by young people that target local schools and communities to increase awareness and understanding of climate issues.

- **Youth Climate Hackathons:** Organize hackathons where young tech-savvy individuals can create innovative solutions and apps to address climate challenges in the city.
- **Youth-Led Climate Surveys and Research:** Engage youth in conducting surveys and research on local climate impacts, helping to gather valuable data for decision-making.
- **Youth-Designed Public Art and Awareness Campaigns:** Encourage young artists to create public art installations and awareness campaigns that convey the urgency of climate action and the city's goals.

Launching Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Initiatives

- **Community Gardens, and Urban Farming:** Support youth-led initiatives to create community gardens, green rooftops and urban farming projects to promote sustainable food production and reduce carbon emissions.
- **Youth-Managed Recycling and Waste Reduction Programs:** Empower young people to lead efforts in recycling, waste reduction, and upcycling programs, making communities more environmentally friendly.
- **Green Transportation Initiatives / Designing Streets with Kids:** Encourage youth to propose and implement bicycle-sharing programs, pedestrian-friendly initiatives, and electric vehicle charging stations to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- **Youth-Led Reforestation and Tree-Planting Campaigns:** Mobilize young volunteers to plant trees, improve urban green spaces, and increase urban canopy coverage for better air quality and climate resilience.
- **Climate Resilience Workshops and Disaster Preparedness:** Youth groups can organize workshops and training sessions on disaster preparedness, climate resilience, and community-based responses to extreme weather events

Involvement in Governance of Local Climate Action Plans

- **Youth Climate Participatory Budgeting:** Establish dedicated resources for young residents to allocate annually toward climate priorities set by cities for programs created by youth.

- **Youth Climate Ambassadors:** Designate youth climate ambassadors to represent young people's perspectives in city council meetings, climate task forces, and public consultations.
- **Youth-Hosted Climate Town Halls:** Organize town hall meetings moderated by youth leaders where community members can discuss climate-related concerns and ideas for solutions.
- **Youth Climate Data Monitoring:** Develop apps or youth citizen science platforms for tracking and reporting on local climate data, helping authorities make informed decisions and involving young people in data-driven governance.
- **Youth-Created Climate Action Plans:** Encourage youth teams to develop their own climate action plans for their communities, which can be integrated into the city's broader

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include **at least three individuals aged 15-24 years old** who reside in, go to school, or whose initiatives directly benefit the City of Allentown. Applicants should also include a Youth-Led, Youth-Serving, or Other Sponsor organization and identify a fiscal lead associated with the sponsoring organization.

No more than three microgrants may be awarded to the same grantee organization.

Youth-Led and Youth-Serving Organizations

Organizations can be either youth-led or youth-serving organizations. *A youth-serving organization* is generally led by adults and provides programs and resources intentionally designed to meet the needs of young people.

Organizations must be legally recognized as incorporated entities with clear charitable goals. *Private companies are not eligible as micrograntees.*

Organization must have a bank account registered under the organization's name, not under an individual's name.

Other Sponsor Organizations

A city agency or department (such as a library, museum, school, public works department), community organization, religious organization, or other recognized organizations or associations can serve as fiscal agents to support project expenses. *The Parks and Recreation Department*

houses the Youth Climate Action Fund and is not eligible as a project sponsor to ensure transparency and avoid conflicts of interest.

Youth groups, classroom initiatives, school clubs may choose to submit projects and wish to manage funds through their affiliated schools.

Prior Awardees

Prior awardees are eligible applicants; however, they must propose a new project.

All projects need to be composed of at least three individuals aged 15-24 who actively participate in decision-making and oversight.

Application Process and Timeline:

*****Applications submitted before 11:59pm on Sunday March 16, will be prioritized for funding.*****

All applications must be submitted online through the [designated portal](#) **no later than 11:59pm on Sunday, April 6, 2025.**

Supporting documents, such as project budgets, should be uploaded along with the submission of your application form.

Awards are expected to be announced in April and May and funds will be issued in mid-June.

Evaluation Criteria:

Proposals will be evaluated based on their alignment with the city's priority climate goals, outlined in [Section 1 \(Program Objectives and Eligibility Criteria\)](#), potential impact on the community, and the feasibility of implementation.

Applications submitted before 11:59pm on Sunday March 16, will be prioritized for consideration of funding.

Project Proposal Components:

Project Description: Provide a brief overview of your proposed project. Include the project's objectives, who will benefit from it, and the expected results.

Activities: List the specific activities you will carry out as part of the project and how these activities serve your project goal. At least one project *output* and one project *outcome* should be listed.

Outputs are the direct results of project activities, showing immediate accomplishments and progress. They provide a snapshot of the project's activities and immediate achievements.

Outcomes are specific and measurable lasting changes or benefits from a project, showing its real-world impact and demonstrating how the project makes a difference over time. They reflect changes in behavior, knowledge, feelings, or processes.

Timeline: Create a timeline showing key milestones and the project's duration.

Note that project expenses cannot be spent before the microgrant is awarded, and the project must be completed no later than October 31, 2025.

Budget: Outline the project's expected expenses. Include itemized costs and specify the amount of grant funds you are requesting.

Budget template: You can use the linked template to provide a breakdown of how you plan to use the microgrant funds, including **itemized expenses**. Budgets should demonstrate **cost-effectiveness** and **clear reasoning** for each expense. You're welcome to use your own format so long as you include the same information.

Budget and Funding Guidelines:

Grant amounts will range from \$1,000 to \$5,000 per project.

Eligible Expenses

Project supplies and materials, including rental and purchase of items directly needed to carry out the project, such as equipment, tools, art supplies, or technology.

Costs for organizing community events, workshops, or educational sessions, including venue rental, printing of materials for participants, and basic refreshments.

Costs for any **necessary permits** to implement the project in accordance with local regulations.

Reasonable ground travel expenses for youth participants or team members directly involved in project implementation.

Promotional materials to raise awareness about the project, encourage engagement from stakeholders and the greater community, and share project results including photography, editorial support, and videography.

Reasonable fees for training and mentorship offered in workshops with youth participants

Project sponsorship costs that local NGOs, civic groups, neighborhood clubs, schools or other organizations may charge for receiving a microgrant on behalf of youth project leads. The costs should be no more than 15% of the microgrant value.

Microgrants are not intended as stipends or salary for the youth leads, but rather **to encourage volunteerism and civic engagement**. Therefore, the following expenses are permitted, but they should not make up the majority of the microgrant: funds to enable youth participation such as bus fare, per diems for food or gift cards.

Ineligible Microgrant Project Expenses:

Services covered by existing city initiatives

Rent or utilities, unless specified above

Nonprofit/NGO incorporation fees

Speaker honorariums and speaker fees

Scholarships

Direct support to individuals or families

Partisan political organizations

Political campaigns, fundraisers, or projects

Capital campaigns, endowments, or endowed chairs

Events or fundraisers not related to youth climate action

Reporting and Accountability:

Grant recipients will be required to submit interim and final reports detailing project progress, expenditures, and outcomes. A template for reporting will be provided to grant recipients upon award notification.

Application Assistance

This year we're excited to announce 1:1 mentorship to help youth form their ideas and complete their application. To request assistance, please fill out the [YCAF Mentorship Request Form](#).

Contact Information and Support:

For questions or inquiries about the Youth Climate Action Fund, please contact veronika.vostinak@allentownpa.gov.

Application

Allentown received \$100,000 to distribute as microgrants to fund a groundswell of youth-led climate initiatives. From co-governance efforts to inform the City's new Climate Action Plan development to launching recycling or waste reduction initiatives to participating in mitigation planning or preparedness programs, efforts stemming from the new Youth Climate Action Fund will advance critical community goals such as meeting decarbonization commitments or reducing consumption-based emissions.

The City of Allentown anticipates awarding a minimum of 17 microgrants ranging from \$1,000 - \$5,000 based on the scope of the project. Projects must be completed by October 31, 2025.

To review application guidelines, please visit: <https://www.allentownpa.gov/YCAF>.

For questions or inquiries about the Youth Climate Action Fund, please contact veronika.vostinak@allentownpa.gov

*****Applications submitted by 11:59pm on March 16, 2025 will be prioritized*****

Final Application Deadline: 11:59pm on April 6, 2025

Section 1

General Information

1. Grant Application Organization/Group Name
2. Did your organization/group receive a microgrant in Round 1 of the program?
3. Mailing Address
4. Project Name
 - a. The project name provided may be used for award announcements or other communications

Section 2

Youth Project Lead Information

5. Youth Project Lead Names (must be a minimum of three leads between ages 15-24)
6. Age(s)
7. Contact Email
8. Contact Phone Number
9. Are you a resident of Allentown?
10. Do you go to school in Allentown?

11. School Name

Section 3

Fiscal Lead Contact Information

Sponsoring organizations can be either youth-led, youth-serving organizations, or other incorporated entities with clear charitable goals.

A youth-serving organization is generally led by adults and provides programs and resources intentionally designed to meet the needs of young people.

12. Fiscal Contact Name

13. Relationship to Applicant(s)

14. Contact Email

15. Contact Phone Number

16. How does your project advisory support your proposed project?

- a. Examples include mentorship, financial support, project management, time management, technical expertise, etc. (Max 100 words)

Section 4

Project Description

17. Microgrant project proposals must be focused on one or more of the city's key climate priorities identified in Vision 2030

(<https://www.allentownpa.gov/Portals/0/adam/Content/A1VfZENzfk2R7ENEFu4TsQ/Url/UrbanSystems.pdf>).

Please indicate which climate priority or priorities your project will address.

- a. **Physical Health** (Air Quality, Water Quality, High Heat)
- b. **Connected Communities** (Walking, Biking, Public Transportation)
- c. **Environmental Stewardship** (Access to Parks/Open Space, Decreasing Illegal Dumping and Litter)
- d. **Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions** (Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy, Waste Reduction)
- e. **Community Empowerment and Collaboration** (Governing Committees, Education and Awareness, Policy Recommendations)
- f. **Green Infrastructure** (Stormwater Management, Flood Resilience, Green Spaces)

18. Project Type: *What type of engagement strategies will your project utilize?*

- a. Awareness & Education
- b. Research

- c. Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Initiatives
- d. Climate Adaptation Initiatives
- e. Climate Action Planning or Advisory Activities
- f. Co-Governance
- g. Other (please indicate)

19. Project Description

- a. Provide an overview of your project, including its main goals and objectives, along with the expected impact on the community and the environment. Describe the current issues or challenges your project aims to address and why this intervention is crucial in our present moment..(Max 300 words)

20. Project Location *Projects must directly benefit the City of Allentown*

Section 5

Project Activities

21. Outline the specific activities of your project (Max 300 words)

22. How do these activities contribute to your overall goals of the project? *(Max 200 words)*

23. Project Output(s)

- a. Describe at least one output you will track. Outputs are the direct results of project activities, showing immediate accomplishments and progress. They provide a snapshot of the project's activities and immediate achievements. Max 20 words.

24. .Project Outcome(s)

- a. Describe at least one outcome you will track. Outcomes are specific and measurable lasting changes or benefits from a project, showing its real-world impact and demonstrating how the project makes a difference over time. They reflect changes in behavior, knowledge, feelings, or processes. *Max 20 words.*

Section 6

Project Timeline

25. Provide a timeline indicating key milestones and expected duration of the project (Max 100 words)

- a. Note: Project funds will distributed in June and must be spent no later than October 31, 2025

26. How do you plan to ensure timely completion of each milestone? *(Max 100 words)*

Section 7

Project Budget

27. Refer to the [budget template](#). There you can provide a breakdown of how you plan to use the microgrant funds, including itemized expenses and a justification for the expense. You're welcome to use your own format so long as you include the same information.

Please email your budget to veronika.vostinak@allentownpa.gov at the time of your application submission.

Section 8

Impact and Feasibility

28. How does your project align with the City of Allentown's climate priorities? *(Max 200 words)*
- Please reference question no. 17 or the project guidelines document for more direction.
29. What potential impact do you expect your project to have in the Allentown community? *(Max 200 words)*
30. Outline your youth engagement plan. *(Max 200 words)*
- Describe how young people will be involved in the project including their roles, responsibilities and opportunities to promote leadership skills. *(Max 200 words)*
31. Describe anticipated challenges that may arise while implementing your project.
- Or, if your project is already being implemented, what are some challenges you have already been facing?
32. City Services Requested *(Max 100 words)*
- The City wants to build deep relationships and trust with Youth as part of the Youth Climate Action Fund. Are there city services or support that can increase the impact or scope of your project?

Section 9

Supporting Materials

33. Supporting Documents
- Please email your budget and up to 3 additional supporting documents to veronika.vostinak@allentownpa.gov. This may include letters of support or any other additional materials that may strengthen your application.

File names of supporting documents must be listed to be considered.

34. Before Photos

- a. If applicable, email up to 5 "before" photos relevant to your project for reporting purposes. Email photos with the highest resolution possible to veronika.vostinak@allentownpa.gov.

File names of before photos must be listed below to be considered.

35. Additional Information. (Max 100 words)

- a. Include any additional information or details you think are important for the consideration of your application

Section 10

Declaration

By submitting this application, we agree to comply with the terms and conditions of the Youth Climate Action Fund and commit to using the microgrant funds responsibly and transparently to advance our project's objectives.

36. Youth Project Lead(s) Signature

- a. Insert digital signature of youth leader(s) proposing the project

37. Fiscal Lead Contact Person Signature

- a. Insert digital signature of adult leader from sponsoring organization