

Youth Climate Action Fund Application Guidelines

The Youth Climate Action Fund emphasizes innovation, 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.

The Basics

Who Can Apply: A non-profit or public agency sponsoring organization and at least 2, 15-24 year olds who live in, go to school, or want to complete a project that directly benefits communities in the City of Allentown.

What Can be Funded: \$1,000 - \$5,000 for projects within the City of Allentown or directly benefit Allentown communities and align with the City's climate priorities.

How Can I Apply: please submit a 5-10 minute video presentation (or sharable link), and associated slide presentation, by emailing Vincent.Polignano@alletownpa.gov with the subject line: YCAF Last Chance Application.

Eligible 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:

- **Climate education and awareness**, like courses, experiences, or the arts

- **Research and data collection**, like mapping environmental health
- **Resilience and adaptation**, such as addressing water quality or heatwaves
- **Green Infrastructure, reforestation, and environmental protection**, like creating parks, community gardens, or green roofs for community buildings
- **Sustainable agriculture and food systems**, like urban farms that would enrich community access to fresh food
- **Promotion and advancement of circular economy**, like sustainable fashion or rethinking the use of discarded materials
- **Sustainable waste management**, like sorting, collection, or cleaning
- **Sustainable transportation**, like encouraging walking, cycling, and using public transportation
- **Climate governance**, like youth councils or consultation of youth for public

Each project must include:

- at least one output (a direct deliverable, such as number of events held)
- at least one outcome (the result of those activities)
- a numerical target for both

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include **at least two 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

Projects are led by young people, but funds must be disbursed to organizations.

Eligible recipients include:

- Youth-led organizations (e.g. youth clubs or groups)
- Youth-serving organizations (adult-led organizations supporting young people)
- Sponsor organizations, such as city agencies, schools or other educational institutions, museums, or community organizations
- Private companies, individuals or political parties or party-affiliated organizations are not eligible.

All organizations must:

- Be legally registered entities
- Be recognized as a non-profit or charitable organization under local laws (unless a public entity)
- Have a bank account in the organization's name

Other Sponsor Organizations

A public agency or department, community organization, or other recognized organizations or associations can serve as fiscal agents to support project expenses.

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

The Parks and Recreation Department administers the Youth Climate Action Fund and is not eligible as a project sponsor to ensure transparency and avoid conflicts of interest.

Prior Awardees

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

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

Application Process and Timeline:

Applications are due no later than October 23, 2026. Award decisions are expected within 2-3 weeks of the application deadline. **All projects must be competed by April 15, 2027.**

Choose one of two pitch events:

	Event #1	Event #2
Date	August 15	August 19
Time	2:00–4:00 PM	10:00 AM–12:00 PM
Location	Allentown City Hall Council Chambers, 435 Hamilton St	Allentown City Hall Council Chambers, 435 Hamilton St
Registration deadline	Aug 14, 5:00 PM	Aug 18, 5:00 PM
Presentation due (email)	Aug 14, 5:00 PM	Aug 18, 5:00 PM

- **Registration is required in advance:** <https://forms.gle/WmoTZQyg4MGBX5FD7>
- Send your presentation to: **veronika.vostinak@allentownpa.gov**
- Can't make either date? Email veronika.vostinak@allentownpa.gov to discuss options.

Evaluation Criteria:

Proposals will be evaluated based on their alignment with the city's priority climate goals, outlined in this document, potential impact on the community, and the feasibility of implementation.

Applicants do not need to reside in the City of Allentown to be eligible, but residents of Allentown or students of Allentown schools may be prioritized.

Project Proposal Components:

1. Basic Info

- Sponsor Organization/Agency Name
- Whether you received a Youth Climate Action Fund award in the past
- Project name

2. Youth Leads

- Names of at least 2 Youth Project Leads (ages 15–24)

3. Climate Priority

- Which priority/priorities does your project address?

4. Project Description

- Goals, objectives, who benefits, expected results
- What problem are you solving, and why now?
- Confirm it benefits Allentown communities directly

5. Activities: Outputs & Outcomes

- **Output** (immediate result): e.g., # of cleanup events, # of rain garden kits distributed
- **Outcome** (lasting impact): e.g., # of rain gardens planted, # of youth attending city meetings

6. Timeline

- Key milestones
- Full project duration

Note: Funds will be distributed in **November** and must be spent by **April 15, 2027**. Project expenses may not be incurred prior to award confirmation and approval from Bloomberg Philanthropies.

7. Budget

- Itemized expenses
- Amount you're requesting (\$1,000–\$5,000)

8. Impact & Feasibility:

- How the project aligns with city climate priorities
- Expected community impact
- Your youth engagement plan
- City services or permission needed
- Anticipated challenges

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** (such as public transit, ride shares, or taxis) 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.
- **Administrative costs** that local NGOs, civic groups, neighborhood clubs, schools, or other organizations may charge for administering a microgrant on behalf of youth project leads. The costs should be no more than 15% of the microgrant value.
- **Small amounts to enable youth participation** such as per diems for food or gift cards if these expenses are reasonable in proportion to the activities. In no event may these expenses make up the majority of the microgrant.
- **Capital investments** when they do not exceed 50% of the microgrant and are an essential part of the project suggested and led by youth

Ineligible Microgrant Project Expenses:

- Services/expenses 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 contributions or expenses
- Expenses related to political campaigns, fundraisers, or projects
- Expenses related to lobbying (attempting to influence legislation) or voter

registration

- Expenses related to commercial activities
- Capital campaigns, endowments, or endowed chairs
- Payments to government officials
- Events or fundraisers not related to youth climate action
- Regranting or sub-granting to other organizations or individuals

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 interest form here:

<https://forms.gle/coyWphRDhPyqJ1yeA>

Contact Information and Support:

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