

CITY OF PITTSBURGH

Youth Climate Action Fund

PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION

Funding available	\$1,000–\$5,000 per project
Application period	August 17–October 2, 2026
Project period	November 2026–April 15, 2027

Applications and program updates: engage.pittsburghpa.gov/pgh-youth-climate-action-fund

1. Program Overview

The City of Pittsburgh, with support from Bloomberg Philanthropies, is offering microgrants for youth-led projects that advance local climate action. The program is managed jointly by the Department of Innovation & Performance and the Department of City Planning's Division of Sustainability & Resilience.

The fund is intended to help young people design and deliver practical projects that address climate challenges, strengthen neighborhoods, and build lasting youth leadership in City decision-making.

2. The Basics

Who can apply: An eligible sponsoring organization working with a team of at least two youth project leads, ages 15–24.

What can be funded: \$1,000–\$5,000 for a project completed in the City of Pittsburgh or directly benefiting Pittsburgh communities.

How to apply: Submit the online application and completed budget workbook through the City's EngagePGH program page by October 2 2026.

When projects happen: Award notifications and project kickoff are expected in November 2026. All activities and spending must be completed by April 15, 2027.

Important: Youth must meaningfully lead project planning, decision-making, implementation, and oversight. An adult-led proposal that merely includes youth as participants is not sufficient.

3. Eligible Applicants

Each application must include:

- At least two youth project leads who will be ages 15–24 during the project period; and
- An eligible sponsoring organization that will receive and manage grant funds.

Eligible sponsoring organizations may include:

- Youth-led organizations, clubs, or groups with an eligible fiscal sponsor;
- Youth-serving nonprofit or community organizations;
- Schools, colleges, universities, and other educational institutions;
- Museums, libraries, neighborhood organizations, and other legally recognized public or nonprofit entities.

The sponsoring organization must be a legally recognized entity, have a bank account in its name, and be able to track and document all grant expenditures. Individuals, private companies, political parties, and party-affiliated organizations are not eligible to receive funds.

A sponsoring organization may submit or sponsor up to three separate applications. Each application must describe a distinct project and youth leadership team.

4. Location and Community Benefit

Youth project leads do not all need to live in Pittsburgh. However, the project must occur within the City of Pittsburgh or clearly and directly benefit Pittsburgh residents or communities. Applications led by Pittsburgh residents or students attending Pittsburgh schools may receive priority when proposals are otherwise comparable.

5. Eligible Project Types

Projects should advance one or more priorities in [Pittsburgh's Climate Action Plan 3.0](#). Relevant topic areas include:

- Energy generation and clean energy;
- Building energy and water efficiency;
- Transportation, biking, walking, transit, and land use;
- Waste reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, and resource recovery;
- Sustainable food systems and urban agriculture;
- Trees, habitat, green space, stormwater, air quality, heat resilience, and other urban ecosystems;
- Climate education, public awareness, research, data collection, and youth climate governance.

Examples include tree planting, pollinator or community gardens, composting and recycling projects, stormwater improvements, climate education, neighborhood data collection, and bike or transportation initiatives. These examples are illustrative, not exhaustive.

6. Application Process and Timeline

August 21, 2026	Application opens
August–September 2026	Information sessions and application assistance
October 2, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. ET	Application deadline
November 2026	Award notification and project kickoff
During project period	Interim progress and expenditure reporting
April 15, 2027	Projects and grant spending completed; final reporting follows
No early spending: Project expenses may not be incurred before the City issues a written award confirmation and any required approval from Bloomberg Philanthropies. Costs incurred before approval are not reimbursable.	

7. Evaluation Criteria

A review panel will evaluate complete and eligible proposals using the following criteria:

- Alignment with Pittsburgh's climate priorities;
- Meaningful youth leadership and decision-making;
- Potential benefit to Pittsburgh residents and communities;
- Clear, measurable outputs and outcomes;
- Feasibility of the work plan, timeline, and budget;
- Readiness to obtain required permissions and coordinate with relevant property owners or City departments;
- Equity, accessibility, and inclusion in project design and participation.

The City may request clarification, recommend revisions, negotiate the project scope or budget, or decline any application. Awards are subject to funding availability and final program approval.

8. Budget and Funding Rules

Applicants may request between \$1,000 and \$5,000. The budget must be reasonable, itemized, directly connected to the proposed activities, and submitted using the City's budget workbook.

Eligible expenses

- Project supplies and materials, including equipment, tools, art supplies, and technology directly needed for the project;
- Rental of equipment or space needed to conduct project activities;
- Community events, workshops, and educational sessions, including printing and basic refreshments;
- Permits and fees required to implement the project;
- Reasonable local ground transportation for youth and team members directly involved in implementation;
- Promotional and documentation costs, including printing, photography, editorial support, and videography;
- Reasonable training and mentorship costs for youth participants;
- Administrative or fiscal-sponsorship costs, up to 15% of the total grant request;
- Limited participation supports, such as transit fare, food per diems, or gift cards, when reasonable and not the majority of the grant;
- Capital items when essential to the youth-led project and no more than 50% of the total grant request.

Ineligible expenses

- Services or expenses already covered by an existing City initiative;
- General rent, utilities, or ongoing operating expenses not specifically allowed above;
- Nonprofit or organizational incorporation fees;
- Speaker honoraria or speaker fees;
- Scholarships or tuition assistance;
- Direct financial support to individuals or families;
- Partisan political contributions, campaigns, fundraisers, voter registration, or lobbying;
- Commercial activities primarily intended to generate private profit;
- Capital campaigns, endowments, or endowed chairs;
- Payments to government officials;
- Events or fundraisers unrelated to youth climate action;
- Regranting or sub-granting funds to another organization or individual.

Budget limits: Administrative/fiscal-sponsorship costs may not exceed 15% of the grant request. Capital items may not exceed 50%. Participation supports must remain a minority of the total request.

9. Permits, Property, and City Coordination

Applicants are responsible for identifying any approvals, permits, insurance, property-owner permissions, utility coordination, or City services needed to complete the project. An award does not itself authorize work on City property or waive any applicable law, code, rule, permit, or safety requirement. The City may

help selected teams identify the appropriate contacts, but the project may not proceed until required approvals are secured.

10. Award Administration and Accountability

- Use funds only for the approved project and budget;
- Maintain receipts, invoices, and other expenditure documentation;
- Notify the City before making a material change to the project scope, timeline, or budget;
- Participate in check-ins, technical assistance, and the spring project showcase;
- Submit interim and final reports describing activities, spending, outputs, outcomes, and lessons learned;
- Return any unspent or improperly used funds as required by the award agreement.

The City may suspend or terminate an award if a recipient does not comply with program requirements, cannot complete the approved project, or uses funds for an unapproved purpose.