

Youth Climate Action Fund

Program Charter

Round 1: 2026-27

“Climate change is an all-hands-on-deck challenge, and it’s critical that young people—who have the most at stake—help lead the way.”

— Michael R. Bloomberg, UN Special Envoy on Climate Ambition and Solutions

Welcome

Welcome to the Youth Climate Action Fund.

You are joining a global cohort of 300 cities working to strengthen how cities partner with young people to develop local climate solutions. Together, you will engage more than 300,000 young people aged 15 to 24 across the program to put these ideas into action in your community.

The program equips cities to surface new ideas from young people, support them through small grants, and build their capacity to engage young people in advancing local climate priorities.

To do so, the Youth Climate Action Fund team, including your city's coach, will support you with practical tools, advice, and opportunities to learn from other cities in the cohort.

This document is your starting point. It outlines the program and provides practical guidance to help you make it a success in your city.

How to Use This Charter

This document provides an overview of the full program, including key requirements, timelines, and resources. You are not expected to absorb or act on everything at once.

The program is designed to be delivered in phases, with dedicated coaching support, practical tools, and step-by-step guidance along the way. Each section of this charter will become relevant as you move through the program.

For now, focus on the First Steps section, which outlines what you need to get started.

The Youth Climate Action Fund is established and supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies and delivered in partnership with the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation (BCPI) at Johns Hopkins University, C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) as a fiscally sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA).

The development of the program and this charter have benefited from the evaluation research by the Good Services Lab, Bloomberg Center for Cities at Harvard University.

Section 2

First Steps

We provide checklists for each phase of the program to support your work at every step. Start with the following:

	Understand the Program Start by getting oriented. Read this Program Charter to understand the program's goals, expectations, and key milestones. Note any questions to raise with the program team in the upcoming events or by email.
	Confirm and Set Up Your Participation These steps enable your city to receive funding. Submit required financial and administrative documentation through the City Intake Form, including signing this charter on page 5. Note that final grant awards are subject to review and approval by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.
	Build Your Team Put the right people and structures in place. Identify your core team, including a City Lead and at least one additional team member. Engage key collaborators across departments (e.g. contracting, data, evaluation).
	Plan Ahead Set yourself up for a smooth start. Add key dates to your calendar, including the program kick-off, and ensure the mayor is invited. Prepare your communications, but do not announce participation before April 29, 2026. See Appendix B on page 20 for guidance.

Questions? Contact the program team at info@youthclimateactionfund.org or visit [website]. Key materials are linked in the Resources section at the end of this document.

Program in Brief

The Youth Climate Action Fund aims to:

- Equip cities to partner with youth in developing and implementing solutions to local climate challenges
- Create pathways for youth ideas to move from input to implementation, aligned with city priorities
- Build lasting city capacity and structures to engage with youth
- Increase trust between cities and young residents through visible collaboration and results

The program is structured in two rounds. Cities that demonstrate strong performance and meet program requirements may be selected to participate in Round 2, with additional funding to continue and build on their work.

Round 1 at a Glance

Participating Cities	300 cities across six continents
Funding per city	US\$50,000 per city
Grants to projects <i>(we call them microgrants)</i>	US\$1,000–US\$5,000 per project
Number of projects per city	8-50 youth-led climate projects
Participating youth	15–24 years old
Program Period	April 2026–May 2027

Program Phases and Key Deadlines

The program is structured in five phases: Design, Launch, Support, Amplify and Report. The Youth Climate Action Team, including your city coach, will support you in planning and implementing each phase.

Program Charter Timeline and Phases

Key milestones from application launch through final reporting



What We Provide

- **Funding:** A grant of US\$50,000 to support local youth-led climate projects with US\$1,000–US\$5,000 microgrants. Up to US\$10,000 may be used for the city's administrative costs.
- **Coaching:** Dedicated support from an experienced coach who will work with your city throughout the program, including regular one-on-one meetings, to discuss progress, troubleshoot challenges, and prepare for key milestones.
- **Learning opportunities:** Online events and training sessions to help you meet program requirements and learn from experts and your colleagues around the world.
- **Templates and Guidelines:** A resource library with examples from other cities as well as templates for communication, project selection, co-design, and project support.

What We Expect from Participating Cities

- **Accountability:** Cities are responsible for delivering the program in line with this charter and the grant agreement. This includes transparent project selection, appropriate use of funds for charitable purposes, meaningful youth involvement and leadership (not substituting for paid labor or being directed by local government), active participation in program activities, and timely, accurate reporting.
- **Mayoral Leadership:** Active participation of the mayor and city leadership, like promoting the open call on social media or interviews, attending or hosting events, joining design sessions, visiting schools and projects, and collaborating with the youth council.

- **Program Team:** A team including at least one City Lead and one supporting staff member. The most effective teams bring together perspectives from multiple city departments and may even include a young person or community partners.
- **Open Call:** A public application process for youth-led climate projects aligned with your city's Climate Action Plan.
- **Co-Design:** At least one design or co-creation session with young people and city staff to share your city's climate priorities and support potential applicants in developing project ideas.
- **Review:** Meeting with your coach for eligibility review prior to your project selection.
- **Disbursement:** Funding of a minimum of US\$40,000 as US\$1,000–US\$5,000 microgrants to local youth-led climate projects, spread across a minimum of eight projects.
- **Mayor's Event:** At least one event for the grantees to meet with the mayor.
- **Participation:** Program team's attendance of minimum 80% of program webinars, regular meetings with your coach and timely responses to program outreach.
- **Updates:** Surveys and reports to mark progress and support program execution.
- **Communication:** Announcement of project results on Earth Day (Thursday, April 22, 2027).

Program Charter Acknowledgement and Agreement

By signing below, I confirm that our city is enthusiastic about pursuing this grant opportunity and looks forward to engaging in the process while understanding that the award of any grant agreement is solely at the discretion of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors and is contingent upon the city's timely submission of all required documentation. Further, I confirm that if awarded a grant, our city agrees to abide by the requirements within this Program Charter.

Name: _____

Title: _____

City: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

What is a Microgrant Project?

Before moving into the program phases, this section outlines the structure and requirements of the microgrants, which are at the core of the program.

Microgrants are small grants (US\$1,000–US\$5,000) that support youth-led climate projects aligned with your city's priorities. They are designed to surface new ideas from young people and enable them to take action in their communities.

A microgrant project must:

- be proposed, designed, and led by at least two young people aged 15–24
- align with your city's climate priorities
- be completed by Thursday, April 15, 2027
- operate within a budget of US\$1,000–US\$5,000 using eligible expenses (see Appendix)
- focus on youth leadership and action; equipment and infrastructure costs should not exceed 50% of the project budget

Here are some examples of the types of eligible projects:

- 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 decisions

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

An 'output' is a direct deliverable or measurable result of activities (like 'number of clean-up events held'), and an 'outcome' is what happens because of those activities. Both need to have a numerical target. A project description template will be available in the Resource library.

Example Project (what happens in the project)	Example Output (what are the project activities)	Example Outcome (what happens as a result of those activities)
Organize a series of city park clean-ups	Number of youth-led clean-up events	Number of bags of trash picked up
Start a newsletter on city meetings related to climate	Number of youth registered for the newsletter	Number of youth attending public city government meetings
Create and distribute home rain garden kits at school	Number of rain garden kits distributed	Number of rain gardens planted
Start a collaboration to turn food waste into fertilizer pellets	Number of fertilizer pellets created	Number of pounds of food waste repurposed

Who Can Receive a Microgrant?

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

For compliance purposes:

- The city unit managing the program cannot act as a sponsor for a project
- Sponsors cannot be partisan organizations or political parties
- Microgrant recipients cannot be the subject of any applicable sanctions regime

How Do You Select Microgrant Projects?

Projects must be sourced through an open call and selected by an independent selection committee. The city lead is responsible for doing the eligibility review with the coach but should not be a member of the selection committee. The selection committee should consist of at least three people, including members of your city's team as well as external advisors who bring additional expertise on working with youth and climate action. Selection committee members should not be directly affiliated with potential grantees or projects, to avoid conflicts of interest.

Selection requirements:

- Each microgrant must fund a distinct youth-led climate project.
- A single organization may receive up to three microgrants for separate projects.
- Selected projects should cover a range of climate themes; funds should not be concentrated in a single theme or type of intervention.
- Cities must award between 8 and 50 microgrants and should aim to receive at least twice as many applications as funded projects.

What Other Costs Are Covered?

You can use up to 20% of your US\$50,000 grant (i.e. US\$10,000) to cover administrative costs related to program execution. Cities may also choose to cover these costs separately to allocate the full amount to microgrants.

If your city uses \$10,000 for admin costs:		If your city covers all admin costs:	
Min. projects (\$5,000 grants)	Max. projects (\$1,000 grants)	Min. projects (\$5,000 grants)	Max. projects (\$1,000 grants)
8	40	10	50

Eligible administrative expenses include:

- City staff (salaries and other compensation): Staff compensation for program administration; stipends for reviewing and evaluating project proposals.
- Events and communication: Costs associated with the organization and promotion of an Open Call; organizing informational and celebratory events for youth microgrant recipients; stakeholder and youth engagement activities, including forums and feedback sessions.
- Fees: Consulting and service fees related to program delivery.

Section 4

This section outlines how to implement each phase of the program. You will be supported throughout the process by your city's coach, program webinars, and resources on the program website.

Phase One: Design

One of the goals of the Youth Climate Action Fund is to build deeper trust and collaboration between local governments and young people. A well-planned open call is essential to achieving this trust. The steps below outline how to prepare before launching your call, with support from your coach, program webinars, and the open call planning template available on the program website.

	Download the open call planning template.
	Add the May and June webinars to your calendar.
	Schedule the first meeting with your city's coach.
	Read your city's Climate Action Plan and discuss with your team, which two to four themes you want to focus on. Use the insights from program webinars and from your coach, the template's questions, and the examples on the program website to consider how you communicate your priorities to youth in a concrete and engaging manner.
	Use the microgrant application template to develop an application that clearly outlines your city's climate themes and the criteria for selecting projects. Be clear and specific about how to apply, what format the proposal should take, when it is due, eligibility requirements, and who will make the decisions and when. Please make sure that you include the required fields from the template application. Test the application language with young people where possible.
	Talk to your colleagues to understand which youth programs or nonprofits your city already works with; who could publicize the open call, serve as mentors, or advise on the microgrant process; and which new contacts are worth establishing. <i>Tip: An AI tool (if your city permits use) can help enrich your initial list.</i>
	Talk to your colleagues about your chosen climate themes and how your

	city's experts can help young people understand the themes and develop their projects. Sharing their expertise and developing projects with youth is a great way to engage colleagues.
	Establish an independent selection committee to review proposals and select projects that meet program goals and eligibility requirements. The committee should include members of your city's team and external advisors who bring additional relevant expertise. Members must not be affiliated with any applicants or projects to avoid conflicts of interest (whether directly or indirectly, e.g., via family relationships).
	Use the template plan to define how partner organizations, city departments and other channels will support outreach and what each needs from you, including when and where you will host a design session to support youth to submit applications. - <i>Tip: An AI tool (if permitted) can help draft outreach texts, social media posts, and emails for partners to use.</i> - <i>Tip: Use the templates for workshops and design sessions on the website as a starting point or identify colleagues or partners who have experience from developing projects with youth.</i>
	Work with the mayor's scheduler or communications team to secure mayoral participation in at least one key moment during outreach.
	Set up a dedicated, easily accessible website to announce the program, advertise the open call, explain the proposal submission process, and keep young people updated on the program's status. Discuss with your city's communications team on how to announce the call on social media and the city's website.

Phase Two: Launch

Communicating openly and actively about this opportunity is a way to build excitement and trust. The strongest projects often emerge from collaboration between young people and city staff.

	Launch your open call any time between July 15, 2026 and September 4, 2026 through your city's communication channels. You can find communication guidelines and materials at the end of this document as well as on the program website.
	Promote the call widely through events, social media, and visits to schools. This is also a key moment to engage your mayor.
	Close your call for proposals 6 weeks after it opens, and no later than Friday, October 16, 2026.
	Submit the City Open Call Report through the program website reporting portal by Friday, October 16, 2026. This enables your coach to complete an initial eligibility review of the proposals.
	Meet with your coach to review proposals before submitting them to the selection committee to make sure they meet eligibility requirements and identify projects that could use additional workshoping with the applicants.
	Meet with the selection committee and choose at least eight youth-led projects that meet the goals and eligibility requirements of the Youth Climate Action Fund.
	Inform the selected applicants and begin the process of fund disbursement.
	Disburse all funds to the selected projects before Friday, November 13, 2026.
	Complete and submit the City Disbursement Report by Friday, November 27, 2026.

Phase Three: Support

Once projects are selected and microgrants are disbursed, your role shifts to supporting youth grantees in implementing their projects. Many participants will be doing this for the first time, and your support is critical to building confidence and trust.

	Organize at least one event for grantees with the mayor to encourage and support project implementation. An award ceremony is a great moment to bring youth and the mayor together.
	Provide instructions or training to grantees as needed, including support with financial tracking and reporting.
	Schedule regular check-ins either online or in person with the grantees; make clear you want to celebrate small wins and troubleshoot challenges together in real time. Tools like Canva or Google doc templates can help with agendas and updates. These check-ins will provide you with the information you need to update each project's status in the monthly City Pulse Check Survey.
	Select a consistent channel that works for your youth participants (text, WhatsApp, email, or social media). QR codes or contact-sharing apps can make it easier for youth connecting via mobile. If the channel you chose does not seem to work, try something else.
	Keep a simple record of attendance, notes, and feedback from each meeting; regularly collect feedback and use it to adapt your approach. Survey tools or a shared spreadsheet can provide support.
	Document key program moments with photographs and save them in a shared folder accessible to your team. Submit photographs and impactful stories to the Youth Climate Action Fund team through the reporting portal at any point during the implementation phase.
	Flag highlights or implementation challenges to your coach and in your monthly Pulse Check Survey. Your coach is available to help you navigate any challenges that arise during project implementation. Do not hesitate to reach out to your coach between scheduled meetings.

Phase Four: Amplify

Helping your grantees tell their story is a way to show that you care and you see the value of their efforts. The projects are also an exciting and concrete way for your city to highlight its climate priorities.

	Visit projects and take photos of the achievements of youth. Invite the mayor and your other city colleagues to join you on these visits. Submit photographs through the reporting portal on the program website at any time.
	Invite youth participants to share a brief quote about their experience and amplify their stories through city or partner channels. You can also provide quote cards, captions, and short videos for the grantees to use in their channels. Submit stories through the reporting portal on the program website at any time.
	Organize a closing event for youth, partners, city leadership, community, and media. Plan a public moment where the mayor names what youth accomplished and connects it to the city's climate priorities; where possible, invite youth to present to the city council or serve as ambassadors.
	Identify at least one opportunity for continued engagement with participating youth and maintain a communication channel to keep them connected.
	Talk to your city leadership and colleagues about ways that you can strengthen young people's role in your climate governance and general city governance. The program website will have examples of lasting youth engagement that other cities have established as a result of the program.

Phase Five: Report

Reporting plays a vital role in capturing stories and key data to celebrate youth achievements in your community and across the world. Reporting also helps to track the impact and effectiveness of the program. During your time as a participating city, we'll ask you to complete the following surveys and reports.

Report	Purpose	Due
City Intake Report	This form collects the information necessary to begin processing your Youth Climate Action Fund grant including contact information, tax information, city verification materials (such as an organizational chart and evidence of legal status), and the signed program charter indicating your understanding of this material and desire to participate in the program. You will not be able to receive funds until this report is submitted, so complete it as soon as possible.	Immediately
Youth Surveys	Assess young people's understanding of and interest in local policy and climate strategy, as well as their experience with the program. The short surveys are anonymous and optional, to protect the privacy of youth. You will receive your city's anonymized results to support your local advocacy for youth voice.	Twice, after project selection and at project completion
City Pulse Check Surveys	Brief updates on your progress between major milestones, including the number of proposals received, the types of projects proposed, and any challenges encountered.	Monthly, due by the end of the month starting May 31, 2026
City Open Call Report	Completed six weeks after the launch of your open call, this report provides the titles and descriptions of all project proposals submitted by youth so that coaches can perform an eligibility check prior to your	Due by Friday, October 16, 2026

	committee's final selection of projects. Submitting as early as possible ensures adequate time for your coach to review proposals with you and still meet the selection and disbursement deadline.	
City Disbursement Report	Carried out after project selection, this report will include key program indicators, including the number of projects awarded, detailed project descriptions, the total value of microgrant funds disbursed, the planned one output and outcome indicators per project, and the status of implementation of youth-led projects.	Due by Friday, November 27, 2026
Microgrant Report	Filled out by the organizations receiving microgrants and submitted to your city, these reports include the project's final budget, the number of youth volunteers, and measured outputs and outcomes. You will need these reports to complete your Final City Grant Report, so you should require submission at least two weeks before the final report is due.	Suggested: Friday, April 30, 2027
Final City Grant Report	Submitted at the end of the grant cycle, this report provides a comprehensive overview of program delivery. It must include a financial report comparing the approved budget to actual expenditure by line item and demonstrate that funds were used for charitable purposes in accordance with the grant agreement. The report should also detail the impact of each project, including the number of youth volunteers involved and the outputs and outcomes achieved. Include a set of photographs (with captions) for each project, as well as copies of the individual Microgrant Reports submitted to your city.	Due by Friday, May 14, 2027

About Data Collection

Throughout the program, cities will be asked to report both quantitative metrics (e.g. number of proposals, participants, and volunteers) and qualitative insights (e.g. photos, videos, and stories). This information helps demonstrate impact and support learning across the program.

Artificial Intelligence Use Disclosure

Reports, applications and other materials submitted through this program may be used to help train and improve artificial intelligence (AI) systems developed for the Youth Climate Action Fund, which can assist in grant administration, technical assistance and outcome assessment. We will remove all personally identifiable information, including names, contact details, and other data before any such use. The underlying content and insights from submissions may be retained in de-identified form to support charitable program improvement. AI tools will not make decisions regarding city funding, performance, and continuation in the program. By submitting a report, you acknowledge and consent to this use of your de-identified information.

Appendix A: Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

This appendix details which project expenses are eligible and ineligible for Youth Climate Action Fund microgrants.

Eligible Microgrant Project 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

Expense Eligibility Examples

Project Description	Eligibility	Reason
Gift cards to a local grocery store to thank youth leads for their volunteer efforts and time commitment.	Eligible	Funds to enable youth participation should be reasonable, based on the activities, and cannot exceed 50% of the microgrant.
Paying a local environmental scientist a fee to lead a hands-on soil testing workshop with youth participants over three sessions.	Eligible	Reasonable fees for training and mentorship in a workshop setting with active youth participation are covered.
Paying a fee to a keynote speaker to give a presentation at a youth climate event.	Not Eligible	Speaker honorariums and one-time speaking fees are not covered, even for climate-related events.
Producing and distributing pamphlets to support the election of a local political candidate.	Not Eligible	Funds cannot be spent to support political campaigns or partisan political organizations.
Installment of solar panels for municipal buildings, like schools.	Not eligible	Funds should be used for youth-led activities and no more than 50% of the microgrant should be directed to capital investments.

Appendix B: Storytelling and Communication

Below you'll find guidance, resources, graphics, and messaging to help your city and your mayor share and celebrate your participation with local media, on social media platforms, and with constituents.

The program and the selection of cities will be officially announced at Bloomberg CityLab on Wednesday, April 29, 2026. All communication on your city's participation in the program is strictly forbidden up to that moment. As a reminder, award of any grant is subject to approval and ultimate discretion by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.

Once the official announcement has been made, you may announce your city's status as a participant in the upcoming cohort of the program. We encourage you to communicate this news on the city's and city officials' social media channels, using the following guidance and resources:

Social Media

When sharing social content, please tag the following partner handles:

- Bloomberg Philanthropies on [Twitter/X](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).
- Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins University on [Twitter/X](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#).
- C40 Cities on [Twitter/X](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#).
- United Cities and Local Governments on [Twitter/X](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

Visual Assets

Please use the following graphic assets for social media posts and program-related web pages on your official city website:

- Logo: High resolution logos are available on the Youth Climate Action Fund website. We encourage you to include the Youth Climate Action Fund logo on relevant webpages and communications to help promote the program to young residents.

We encourage you to share your city's stories of impact and success with the Youth Climate Action Fund team, so that they can be shared with the program's funder, and other cities. With support from your coach, you can upload project updates and captioned photos to the program website at any time, outside of regular reporting.

For any questions on the communication guidance here, or for additional support, please reach out to Sam Fuld at Bloomberg Philanthropies (sam@bloomberg.org).

On the Youth Climate Action Fund website, you can also find examples and inspiration from other cities in the program.