



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

YCAF

PHILADELPHIA

YOUTH CLIMATE ACTION FUND



SEPTEMBER 17, 2026

YCAF PHILADELPHIA TEAM



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01

ABOUT

TURNING IDEAS INTO ACTION

The **City** and **School District of Philadelphia** opened a new opportunity for young Philadelphians to receive \$3,000–\$5,000 in funding to bring their ideas for cleaner, greener and more resilient communities to life through the Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action Fund (YCAF).

Young people ages 15-24 can work together to propose projects addressing challenges they see in their schools and neighborhoods, including:

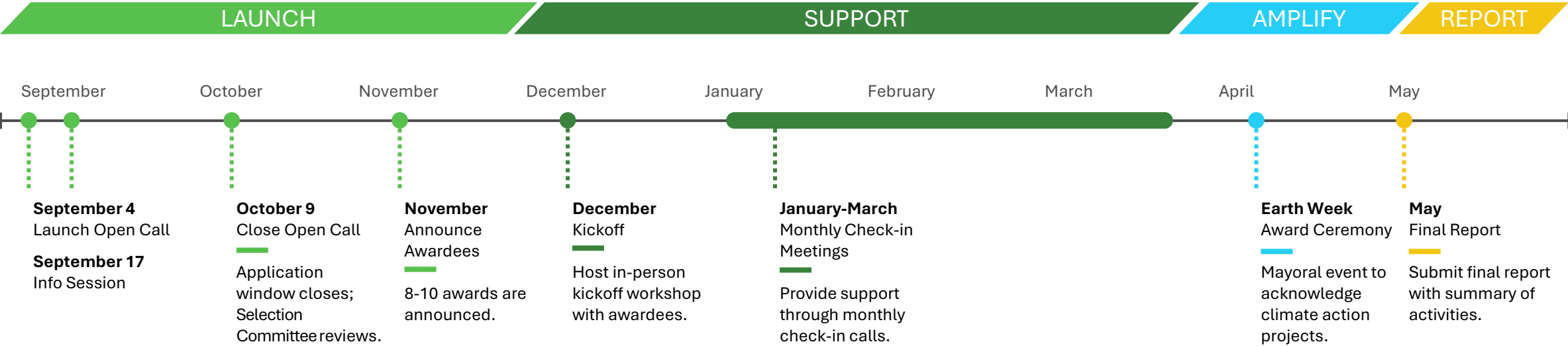
- **Extreme heat**
- **Illegal dumping**
- **Air Quality**
- **Community Greening**
- **Flooding**



“Young Philadelphians know their neighborhoods. They know the challenges their communities face, and they have ideas about how we can make them better. **Our job is to give them the opportunity and the resources to put those ideas into action.**”

– *Mayor Cherelle L. Parker*
City of Philadelphia

KEY DATES & MILESTONES



02

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES & PROJECT CATEGORIES

TWO TRACKS

Young people can participate through **two tracks**:

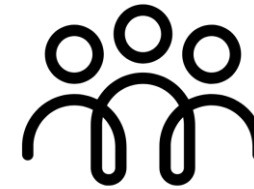


Track 1: District High Schools

Student groups at School District of Philadelphia High Schools can propose projects on school grounds.

- Project Location: District High School grounds
- District High Schools are required to meet with the project team before October 9, 2026.
- All grants awarded to a school project will be administered by the Fund for the School District of Philadelphia.

[Sign up here for a planning meeting here](#)



Track 2: Community-Based Organizations

Community-based organizations can support youth-led projects in Philadelphia neighborhoods.

- Project Location: Neighborhood, legal access required
- Must have 501(c)(3) status.
- Community-based organizations working with a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor are eligible.

5 THEMES



BEAT THE HEAT. Creative ways to provide indoor or outdoor cooling while conserving energy.



RETHINK TRASH. Solutions focused on illegal dumping, recycling, composting or reducing waste.



CLEAR THE AIR. Projects that improve awareness and understanding of outdoor air quality.



GREEN JUSTICE. Tree planting, gardening, community greening and revitalization of public spaces, including vacant lots.



OUTSMART THE RAIN (COMMUNITY TRACK ONLY). Community-based projects that manage stormwater, improve water quality or reduce flood risks.

Philadelphia Climate Priorities

The City of Philadelphia issued a [Climate Action Update](#) in 2025 and is in the process of updating its Climate Action Plan (expected 2027). Goals include:

- Achieve carbon neutrality by 2050
- Divert waste from landfill and incineration
- Expand urban agriculture opportunities
- Protect our waters
- Grow, protect, and care for Philadelphia's tree canopy ([Philly Tree Plan](#))

The School District of Philadelphia [GreenFutures](#) promotes sustainability in schools with a focus on education for sustainability, consumption and waste, energy and efficiency, school greenspaces, and healthy building/healthy living. Goals include but are not limited to:

- Expand environmental literacy and sustainability education
- Increase waste diversion and sustainable purchasing
- Reduce building energy consumption
- 30% Tree Canopy Coverage by 2054

5 THEMES



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OUTSMART THE RAIN (COMMUNITY TRACK ONLY). Community-based projects that manage stormwater, improve water quality or reduce flood risks.

Example Projects & Resources

- **Research the impacts of extreme heat events** on school closures and/or community activities; monitor conditions around campus and the neighborhood
 - Purchase a handheld heat stress meter (e.g., Kestrel)
 - Purchase and install a weather station
- **Cool Energy Challenge:** Students investigate how energy use and classroom/building practices affect comfort. Possible materials:
 - Plug-load meters, temperature, and humidity monitors
 - Smart power strips or timer-controlled strips for selected equipment
 - Infrared thermometers, window thermometers, light meters
 - Draft-detection materials
 - Reminder labels for light switches and equipment
 - Audit/equipment checklists and campaign materials
- **Other ideas welcome**

5 THEMES



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Example Projects & Resources

- **Conduct a bin audit (BINventory)** of your school/neighborhood and purchase necessary bins
 - \$1,000 covers around 100 bins and liquid diversion station
 - Cafeteria sorting station (+\$150-\$350)
 - [Dyvert lids](#)* (+\$100)
 - Create and Print Signage
- **Conduct a waste audit**
 - [Rego](#)* uses AI to turn photos of trash into insights
 - [TerraCycle](#)* diverts non-traditional materials (+\$200)
- **Adopt a block / vacant lot** and host a series of cleanups
 - Litter can install after (\$200-500)
 - Bags, grabbers, gloves, food (lunch)? +(\$300-500)
 - Waste audit during lunch with sorting station
- **Build a Mini Materials Recovery Facility (MRF)**
 - Materials
- **Other ideas welcome**

* Example solution, not an endorsement

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Example Projects & Resources

- **Study outdoor air quality** using [Breathe Philly sensors](#); purchase and install additional sensors.
- **Research the impacts of idling**, especially in school zones.
- **Create activities and/or an information campaign** (social media posts, video, fridge magnets) to let people know about air quality, how to read the air quality index, the dangers of bad air quality, and what they can do to protect their community.
- **Identify sources of air pollution** around the school, bus stops, or community, and develop recommendations/advocacy campaigns.
- **Other ideas welcome**

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Example Projects & Resources

- **Inventory existing tree canopy** by tagging tree locations on SDP property and around the neighborhood; identify gaps in coverage; assess tree health using [Purdue tree doctor app](#)*.
- **Purchase, plant, and prune/maintain trees.**
 - Trees may be purchased through Tree Authority.
 - NOTE: Trees can be on SDP property.
 - Work with PHS treetenders or SDP for guidance on pruning.
 - **For Planting:** Recommend shovels, gloves, rake, scissors, waste bags, and triple ground hardwood mulch
 - **For Pruning:** Recommend pruners, loppers, gloves string, hand and pole saws for pruning from the ground.
- **Revitalize a vacant lot** into a community space.
- **Plant roadside barriers** to reduce exposure to traffic pollution.
- **Plant a community garden or a native plant garden.**
- **Other ideas welcome**

* Example solution, not an endorsement

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OUTSMART THE RAIN (COMMUNITY TRACK ONLY). Community-based projects that manage stormwater, improve water quality or reduce flood risks.

Example Projects & Resources

- **Plant a rain garden.**
- **Install rain barrels.**
- **Mark storm drains and form a storm drain adoption program** to clear litter and leaves from drains before the rain falls.
- **Host a flood prep workshop with community members** to make go-bags and to scan important documents so they have back up digital copies.
- **Create a campaign to get people signed up for flood insurance.**
- **Increase permeable surfaces.**
- **Create a video on what to do before, during, and after a flood.**
- **Other ideas welcome**

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES SUMMARY

- Be proposed, designed, and led by at least two young people aged 15–24;
- All projects must be sponsored by an organization applying on behalf of the youth leaders:
 - 1) **School District of Philadelphia High School**, or
 - 2) **Charitable nonprofit with 501(c)(3) status**, or a community-based organization working with a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor.
- Individuals are not eligible to apply without a sponsoring organization;
- District High Schools who wish to apply are required to meet with the project team before October 9, 2026. [Sign up here for a planning meeting](#). All grants awarded to a school district project will be administered by the [Fund for the School District of Philadelphia](#);
- All projects must be completed by April 15, 2027.

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APPLICATION & EVALUATION CRITERIA

EVALUATION CRITERIA & SELECTION COMMITTEE

Applications will be reviewed by a selection committee consisting of representatives that include the Mayor’s Office – Innovation Team (i-Team), School District of Philadelphia, and City of Philadelphia’s Office of Sustainability.

Criteria	Scoring Details	Points
Clarity of Problem Statement & Goal Alignment	Demonstrates a clear focus and directly addresses Philadelphia’s climate priorities.	20
Role of Young People	Describes leadership, project responsibility, and decision-making roles for young people.	20
Innovation	Approaches the problem with creativity and identifies clear learning objectives.	10
Feasibility & Planning	Presents a clear budget and timeline for completion by April 15, 2027.	20
Budget	Identifies clear and eligible budget uses.	10
Impact	Explains measurable outcomes for the neighborhood and Philadelphia.	20
TOTAL		100

APPLICATION

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW	
*Project Name	Short Project Name
*Name of Organization	Name of lead applicant organization
*Select your track:	1) District High Schools 2) Community-Based Organizations
*Point of Contact Information	Name, Title, Email, Phone Number
*Youth Project Leads:	Youth Lead #1: Name, Age Youth Lead #2: Name, Age

APPLICATION

SECTION 2: DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS ONLY	
*Project Planning Meeting	Did you complete a project planning meeting with the YCAF team? If not, please sign up here prior to submission.
*Affiliated Nonprofit	Does your school have an affiliated nonprofit partner (e.g., “Friends Of” or “Home and School Association”)? If so, what is the name of the affiliated nonprofit partner?
*Student Group	Does your school have a student group that will be involved? If so, what is the name of the student group and describe its activities?

APPLICATION

SECTION 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
*Climate Theme (select one best fit)	Beat the Heat / Rethink Trash / Clear the Air / Green Justice / Outsmart the Rain (Community Track Only)
*Problem Definition	What problem is your project solving and why is it a priority for Philadelphia? (Max 100 words)
*Project description:	Provide an overview of your project, including its main goals and objectives, along with its expected effect on the community and the environment. Describe the current issues or challenges your project aims to address and why this intervention is crucial now. (Max 300 words)
*Project activities and timeline:	Describe the specific activities and steps your project will undertake. Include a clear timeline that shows that the project's activities and implementation will be completed by April 15, 2027. (Max 300 words)
*Role of young people:	Describe how young people will be involved in your project, including their roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for leadership. (Max 200 words)
*Number of young people involved in the project	Estimate the total number of young people who will be involved in your project, including youth leads, volunteers and participants.
*Project Result(s):	Describe at least one measurable result that will show your project's immediate accomplishments and progress. (Max 10 words)
*Project Impact:	Describe how your project will create changes in behavior, knowledge, attitudes or processes (Max 100 words)

APPLICATION

SECTION 3: BUDGET & DECLARATION	
*Microgrant request:	Specify an amount between \$3,000-\$5,000.
*Budget:	Explain as a bullet point list how you would use the microgrant funds for your project. Example: • Supplies and Materials: \$2,300 • Equipment: \$500 • Transportation and Food: \$300 • Events and Communication: \$200 Total: \$3,300
*Declaration:	By submitting this application, I 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.
*Photo Release	By submitting this application, I hereby authorize the City of Philadelphia and School District of Philadelphia to use, re-use, produce, reproduce, publish, store, distribute, re-distribute, transmit, retransmit and display my name, photographic, video, audio or other recordings of images of my likeness and/or statements by me, in or through any form of media now or hereafter known for illustration, social media, promotion, art, editorial, advertising, trade, signage, internet, electronic commerce, grant reporting or any other purpose whatsoever.

04

MICROGRANT RECIPIENTS

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The YCAF Philadelphia team will select **8-10 projects** and notify recipients in **November**.

- **Kickoff Meeting (December, in-person)** – Welcome meeting where participants meet one another, learn about Philadelphia’s climate priorities, and exchange project ideas.
- **Monthly Check-ins (January-March, virtual)** – Opportunity to connect with the cohort, celebrate wins, and troubleshoot challenges together.
- **Earth Week Celebration (April, in-person)** – Short presentations of project highlights to leadership from the City and School District of Philadelphia.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Microgrant recipients will be responsible for the following reporting requirements:

- **Storytelling Moments** – Photos / quotes / videos highlighting the team, project updates, and milestones updates along the way.
- **Youth Survey** – Short, anonymous survey that assesses young people’s understanding of and interest in local policy and climate strategy, as well as their experience with the program. The YCAF Philadelphia team will develop the survey, and grant recipients will administer it.
- **Microgrant Report** - Includes the project’s final budget, the number of youth volunteers, and measured outputs and outcomes.

05

Q&A

FAQs

GOAL ALIGNMENT

Q: What are Philadelphia's climate priorities?

A: The City of Philadelphia published a [2015 Climate Action Plan](#), issued a [2025 Climate Action Update](#), and is in the process of updating the Climate Action Plan for 2027.

The School District of Philadelphia [GreenFutures](#) promotes sustainability in schools with a focus on energy efficiency, waste reduction, and creating healthy environments.

Philadelphia goals include:

- Achieve carbon neutrality by 2050
- Divert waste from landfill and incineration
- Expand urban agriculture opportunities
- Protect our waters
- Grow, protect, and care for our tree canopy ([Philly Tree Plan](#))

PROJECT SCOPE

Q: What role should young people have in the project?

A: All projects must be led by at least two individuals ages 15-24, who actively participate in decision-making and oversight. Organizations administer the project including managing the funds, completing the reporting requirements, and providing project support and oversight.

Q: When does the need to project be completed by?

A: Thursday, April 15, 2027

FAQs

ELIGIBILITY

Q: What types of organizations are eligible to apply?

A: Eligible organizations are:

- 1) **School District of Philadelphia High Schools;** or
- 2) **Community-based organizations with nonprofit 501(c)(3) status**—including youth-led organizations (e.g. youth clubs or groups), youth-serving organizations (adult-led organizations that support young people), and sponsor organizations (museums, community organizations, etc.).

Eligible organizations must have formal incorporation or status, a bank account in its name, and the ability to manage the funds.

Private companies, individuals, and organizations affiliated with political parties are not eligible micrograntees.

Q: How do District High Schools receive the funds?

A: All District High School microgrants will be administered by the [Fund for the School District of Philadelphia](#).

BUDGET

Q: What budget costs are eligible?

A: Eligible costs include but are not limited to project supplies and materials, equipment and infrastructure improvements, transportation, food, events, communications, and other support.

Ineligible costs include: Services covered by existing city initiatives; rent or utilities; lobbying or voter-registration efforts; commercial activities; payments to government officials; 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.

Q: Is there a maximum amount that can be spent on equipment and capital investment for infrastructure improvements?

Yes, equipment and capital infrastructure improvements must represent less than 50% of the project's microgrant budget.

THANK YOU!

- ▶ **Contact:** ycaf@phila.gov
- ▶ **Website:** <https://philacityfund.org/programs/ycaf/>



**Applications due
October 9**

