



GREEN CINCINNATI PLAN
Seeds of Change
Grant Program
YOUTH CLIMATE ACTION
Supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies



GCP Seeds of Change Youth Climate Action Program Overview Packet

Background & Overview

Cincinnati was one of 100 cities across the world selected to receive and initiate the Youth Climate Action Fund microgrant program thanks to Bloomberg Philanthropies, United Cities and Local Governments, and the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at John Hopkins. Cincinnati was awarded \$50,000 beginning in 2024 because of its leadership in sustainability initiatives and the 2023 Green Cincinnati Plan (GCP) which provides 30 goals, 40 strategies, and 130 priority actions in aim of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. Due to the success of 2024's pilot round and subsequent 2025 round, Cincinnati has been selected once again to continue awarding grants in 2026. As part of the City's [GCP Seeds of Change Grant Program](#) that assists communities in taking the steps to pursue the goals of the GCP, the Youth Climate Action grant invites participants ages 15 through 24 to continue this work and create new climate change mitigation strategies that promote sustainability, equity, and resilience.

Purpose

The GCP Seeds of Change Youth Climate Action grants aspire to uplift youth and award sustainable innovation. The grants will support youth-led and or youth-serving initiatives that tackle issues related to climate change within the City of Cincinnati. These projects should involve and benefit neighborhoods and residents most affected by climate change.

Use of Funds

The city is accepting project applications that range from \$1,000 to \$5,000. The projects should bring the goals of the GCP to life through creative ideas, solutions, and initiatives that combat climate issues locally.

The proposed projects need to be launched and completed within the six-month grant period (between October 2026 and April 2027).

The types of projects that could align include but are not limited to: awareness, education, research and co-development initiatives, launching climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives, and youth involvement in leadership of the GCP. Consider project ideas that focus on the needs in priority communities. For more information on climate indicators and neighborhood priorities, check out the [Climate Equity Indicators Report](#). More in-depth project ideas are available [here](#)!

Eligible microgrant project expenses include:

- 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.
- Funds to enable youth participation such as bus fare, providing food, or gift cards are permitted, but they should not make up the majority of microgrant. Microgrants are not intended as stipends or salary for the youth leads, but rather to encourage volunteerism and civic engagement.

Ineligible microgrant project expenses include:

- Services covered by existing city initiatives
- Rent or utilities, unless specified above
- Youth or adult stipends or salary
- Nonprofit/NGO incorporation fees
- Speaker honorariums and speaker fees
- Scholarships
- Direct support to individuals or families
- Partisan political work
- Political campaigns, fundraisers, or projects
- Capital campaigns, endowments, or endowed chairs
- Events or fundraisers not related to youth climate action

Eligibility

To qualify for the grant, interested groups must meet the following eligibility criteria. If all requirements are met, the applicant is encouraged to proceed with the application. All applications must be received by September 25th at 11:59 PM to be considered.

1. Youth-Led and/or Youth Serving – Applicant’s project must feature at least 2 individuals between the ages of 15-24 in leadership positions who actively participate in decision-making and/or be a part of an organization that provides core programs and resources specifically designed for youth.
2. New – The efforts must create a new project or initiative; not expand an existing activity.
3. Actionable – The efforts must be fully completed within the six-month grant period.
4. Nonprofit Status– Applicants must prove their nonprofit status or apply with the support of a nonprofit or fiscal sponsor. See Resources for more information.

5. Impact Cincinnati – The efforts must impact one or more neighborhoods within the city limits.

Project teams that received funding from previous rounds of the GCP Seeds of Change Youth Climate Action Grant program are eligible to apply this year as well. Proposed projects must still be new, they cannot be a continuation of the project that was funded last year.

Before Applying

Some people may have experience applying for grant funding while others do not. To increase participation and ensure complete applications are submitted, a virtual Info Session will be held Tuesday August 25th 5:30-6:30 PM to provide more information about the program. If any questions arise before the info session or application due date, please email oes@cincinnati-oh.gov and a team member will respond.

The info session will provide more background on the grant program and allow time for questions. The session will be recorded and uploaded to the OES website for you to access at your leisure. In addition, the grant program team will be available for virtual office hours to answer your questions and provide feedback on your application. These sessions will be available from August 24- September 25 and bookable online via Calendly.

Step	Date
Virtual Info Session	Tuesday, August 25th, 2026 5:30PM – 6:30 PM Click here to register
Virtual Open Office Hours	<i>Open August 24-September 25! Mondays 10AM-12PM (join here) and Wednesdays 2PM-4PM (join here)</i>
Transportation & Neighborhoods Idea Jam	Thursday September 3rd 2026 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm Village Green Foundation Community Room Click here to RSVP
Zero Waste Idea Jam	Saturday, September 12th 2026 10:30am-12:30pm Walnut Hills Branch Library Click here to RSVP

Fiscal Sponsorship

To receive grant funds for your project, your organization must be affiliated with a non-profit. If your group does not have this, you can still receive grants by partnering with a non-profit that will act as your “fiscal sponsor”. This means that the non-profit will handle the funds for your project and make sure they are used in alignment with the project application. If you already have a connection with a non-profit, you can ask them to be your fiscal sponsor. If not, you can contact OES at oes@cincinnati-oh.gov for more information on how to find a fiscal sponsor. All entities applying using a fiscal sponsor must have a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two groups. You can find a template MOU and more

details about fiscal sponsorship [HERE](#).

Applying

To be eligible for funding, you must submit a completed application by the deadline of September 25th, 2026, by 11:59 PM. Any incomplete or late applications may not be considered. A complete application includes the application form (online, paper), project budget, vendor registration, and MOU if applicable. To make the process easier, you are encouraged to complete the [online application](#). If you need to submit a [paper application](#), please mail it or drop it off at the following address. All components must be submitted together by September 25th for your request to be eligible for consideration.

Office of Environment and Sustainability
Attn: Seeds of Change Grant Program, Youth Climate Action
Centennial II 805 Central Avenue Suite 700
Cincinnati, OH, 45202

Timeline

Step	Date
Application DUE	September 25 th by 11:59 PM
Application Review/Approval	October 1 st – October 13 th 2026
Award/Decline Notification	October 19 th , 2026
Implementation Timeframe	October 19 th – April 15 th , 2026
Grant Reports DUE	April 15 th

Decision Making

During this program, 8-15 grants will be awarded from \$1,000 to \$5,000 each, for a total of \$40,000.

Projects that match the following priorities will be the strongest:

- The project will benefit communities most impacted by climate change. Check out the [Climate Equity Indicators Report](#) to find climate equity indicator information and priorities for each neighborhood.
- Youth from communities most impacted by climate change (heat, flooding, poor air quality) are leading or have contributed to the project's design
- The group applying for the grant can carry out the project
- Alignment with at least one of the GCP's sustainability, equity, and resilience strategies

A group of 6-8 youth community members will review the applications and make decisions based on these priorities. Interested in being on the review committee? Fill out the short interest form [HERE](#) by September

9th. The commitment will involve approximately 10 hours of your time between September-October 2026. This commitment will be volunteer. Many thanks for your interest!

Awards

After being selected for a grant, the grant recipient will be notified by email and the project will be eligible to begin implementation. If the grant is given to a non-profit organization or business other than the one carrying out the project, a written fiscal sponsorship agreement must be made between the two organizations and submitted with the initial application. You will find a fiscal sponsorship agreement template with the other resources below. The awarded organization will also need to register as a vendor of the city as part of the application process. This is a necessary step in order for the awarded organization to receive grant funds promptly following award. The organization must keep proof of payments in the form of receipts for final reporting.

Reporting

Grant recipients are asked to document the impact of funded efforts by photos, stories, numbers, and any other means desired. In July, a mid-project update will be requested that maps out the project's progress so far. Final grant reporting is due April 15th, 2026. Templates for reporting will be provided.

Questions

Contact the Youth Climate Action team at oes@cincinnati-oh.gov and we will reply as promptly as possible.

Resources

- [Budget Spreadsheet](#)
- [Application](#)
- [Fiscal Sponsor Overview and Template](#)
- [Example Project Ideas](#)
- [Green Cincinnati Plan Website](#)
- [Climate Equity Indicators Report](#)
- [Climate Safe Neighborhoods Resilience Plans](#)
- [GCP Equity Framework](#)

Other related funding:

- [City Competitive Grant Programs List](#)
- [City Community Budget Request](#)
- [Keep Cincinnati Beautiful Safe & Clean Neighborhood Fund](#)
- [Hamilton County Resource grants](#)
- [Hamilton County INSPIRE Youth Initiative Grant](#)