

Mayor Malik Launches Youth Climate Action Fund, Providing More Opportunities for Akron Youth

Bloomberg Philanthropies funding will support youth-led climate projects across Akron

Akron, Ohio, July 21, 2026 — Today, Mayor Malik announced the launch of the Mayor's Youth Climate Action Fund (YCAF), a new initiative that will provide \$40,000 in microgrants to empower Akron youth to design and implement projects that improve their community while gaining valuable leadership and workforce experience. Funded through Bloomberg Philanthropies' global Youth Climate Action Fund, the program will award **microgrants ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000** to teams of Akron youth **ages 15 to 24** who develop innovative, community-based climate action projects in specific focus areas: healthy, efficient homes & buildings, transportation & mobility, waste reduction & reuse, and climate resilient communities. Youth teams must apply with an eligible fiscal sponsoring organization that would receive the microgrant award on their behalf and support their implementation efforts. **Youth-led applications will be accepted August 3 through September 14, 2026 at akronohio.gov/YCAF.**

Selected teams will receive funding and mentorship from City staff, fiscal sponsoring organizations, and local community leaders to implement their projects. They'll also showcase their completed projects alongside Mayor Malik and other city leaders in April 2027.

"This program is about much more than climate action," said **Mayor Malik**. "It's about giving young people the opportunity to lead, solve problems, and make a lasting difference in the neighborhoods they call home. By investing in their ideas today, we're helping build the next generation of community leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators while creating a stronger, more resilient Akron. The initiative also reflects the City's broader strategy of creating positive opportunities for young people by connecting them with mentors, community organizations, and meaningful civic engagement."

The Mayor's Youth Climate Action Fund builds upon the City's ongoing commitment to expanding opportunities for young people while supporting Akron's developing Climate Action Plan. In addition to creating meaningful environmental improvements, the program gives participants hands-on experience in grant writing, project development, budgeting, collaboration, and project management – skills that prepare them for future careers and civic leadership.

The initiative also complements the City's partnership with Akron Public Schools' College & Career Academies. Through the Office of Sustainability and Resiliency, the City serves as an Environment and Energy pathway partner at Garfield High School, where students will work on real-world sustainability projects during the upcoming school year. The Youth Climate Action Fund extends those learning opportunities beyond the classroom by supporting youth-led projects that connect civic engagement with career exploration.

Eligible projects will focus on climate action areas such as:

- Healthy, efficient homes & buildings
- Transportation & mobility
- Waste reduction & reuse
- Climate resilient communities

Examples of eligible projects include creating public transportation awareness campaigns, organizing neighborhood clothing or school supply swaps, launching food waste composting initiatives, or developing shade solutions for public gathering spaces.

"Young people already have the passion and creativity to improve their communities," said **Casey Shevlin, Director of Sustainability and Resiliency**. "Whether through their work in Akron Public Schools' College & Career Academies or through community organizations across our city, this program gives young people the resources, mentorship, and support they need to turn their ideas into real projects that benefit neighborhoods across Akron."

To be eligible, youth applicants must:

- Be between the ages of 15 and 24.
- Live or attend school in Akron.
- Apply as a team of at least two young people – more than 2 is great.
- Apply with an eligible fiscal sponsoring organization, such as a nonprofit or public entity, that can receive the microgrant award and administer that funding in support of the youth project.

"I know Akron is full of organizations that care deeply about our young people," **continued Mayor Malik**. "Now is the time to put that commitment into action. I encourage eligible nonprofits and community partners to become fiscal sponsors so that no great idea goes unrealized because a young person lacked the support to make it happen. If you'd like to help but aren't sure where to start, please reach out to us at YCAF@akronohio.gov and we'll work with you every step of the way."

For more information about the Mayor's Youth Climate Action Fund, including eligibility requirements and application details, visit www.akronohio.gov/YCAF or email YCAF@akronohio.gov.

Since its launch, Bloomberg Philanthropies' Youth Climate Action Fund has engaged more than 300,000 young people across five continents, resulting in the creation of more than 1,600 green spaces, the planting of more than 1.8 million plants and 235,000 trees, the development of nearly 5,000 gardens, the launch of 268 composting stations, and the collection of more than 405,000 pounds of trash and recyclables.

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