2024-25 Grant Guidelines

At the Yampa Valley Community Foundation, we proudly support a philosophy of trust-based philanthropy in our relationship with every grantee. This approach commits to building relationships based on transparency, dialogue, and mutual learning. We seek to streamline applications and reporting, attaching fewer strings to funding. We partner with local nonprofit organizations for a stronger combined effort towards achieving shared community goals.

The Yampa Valley Community Foundation, in partnership with the Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation, donor advised fund holders, and other granting endowments, offers once-a-year grants up to **$10,000**. In addition to our annual grants, organizations working collaboratively to make a regional difference in the Yampa Valley may be invited to apply for a YVCF Impact Grant up to $30,000. Click here to learn more about our Impact Grants.

Current and Past Grant Recipients

General Information

Each grant is either for unrestricted purposes or issued as a programmatic grant:
- **Unrestricted (General Operating) Grants:** The 2024-25 grant cycle will again focus on unrestricted grants. Unrestricted funding provides grantees the flexibility to assess and determine where grant dollars are most needed. These grants allow for innovation, emergent action, and organizational sustainability. To qualify for unrestricted grants, the organization must serve Routt and/or Moffat Counties and must meet all other eligibility requirements posted in these Community Grant Guidelines.
- **Programmatic Grants:** We will accept programmatic grant applications from eligible organizations when an operating grant is not appropriate. ***If your organization fits any of the following descriptions, you must apply for a program grant:***
  Organizations with annual operating budget over $1 million
    - As part of every application, you will upload a board-approved *operating budget* for your organization. "An organization-wide operating budget accounts for everything the nonprofit spends to carry out, evaluate, and administer all its programs and activities." (source: Candid – click to learn more)
    - Eligible budgets must be board-approved **for the current fiscal year** (at the time of submitting your application).
  Organizations with service areas that extend outside Routt and Moffat Counties
    - If your organization provides services outside Routt and Moffat County, you must submit a program grant that includes details on how requested funds would stay within these two counties.
    - Organizations which operate elsewhere but have a dedicated chapter, regional office, franchise, etc. specific to Routt and/or Moffat county must submit a program grant *unless that regional entity has its own distinct governing board and operating budget.*
    - If your Routt- and Moffat-based services reach people from outside these two counties (such as performances attracting visitors), this does not require you to submit a program grant.
  Faith-based organizations
    - We define a *faith-based organization* to be one whose published mission or vision includes values attributable to a specific institution of religion or belief.

- These grant funds may not be used for *religious activities* including, but not limited to: religious services, promotion of religious beliefs, or activities that are restricted to church or religious group membership.

NEW FOR 2024

- **Higher maximum:** the new **$10,000** maximum grant request allows for potentially larger grants but also means the overall process will be more competitive. Make sure to read all guidelines and take advantage of training materials listed below to improve your application.
- Separate questions: **if you are required (or choose) to submit a programmatic grant,** note there are separate questions, intended to save both you and our reviewers time and focus on what matters most.
- **More Changes:** Applications and scoring rubrics have been updated to respond to applicant and review committee feedback. All applicants, whether new or returning, please read all guidelines and the scoring rubric. Free trainings should prove very helpful for all applicants: see the schedule below.
- **Scoring Rubric:** review detailed criteria by which your application will be evaluated:
    - 2024 Scoring Rubric
- **Application questions:** view the application questions (for reference only; does not include tips and links to resources available through the online application):
    - General Operating Application Questions (sample for reference only)
    - Program Grant Application Questions (sample for reference only)

Eligibility

- Grant requests must be limited to $10,000 or less.
- IRS status: 501(c)(3) or fiscally sponsored through a 501(c)(3) organization.
  Learn more
    - Read the IRS explanation of 501(c)(3) charitable organizations.
    - Read about fiscal sponsorship (from the National Council of Nonprofits)
    - In very select cases, certain government entities may be able to serve as fiscal sponsor of a project that is not a 501(c)(3). Before applying, contact program officer Greg Hamilton for details.
- Geography: Funds must serve Routt and/or Moffat County. Organizations operating beyond these two counties must apply for a programmatic grant and explain how the funds granted by YVCF would be used only within Routt and/or Moffat County.
- **Report**: Past grantees must have submitted a report on the previous year's grant prior to new applications being considered. Click to download our simple one-question report form (Microsoft Word document – contact us if you need a different format).
- Grant funds may NOT be used for:
    - Debt reimbursement, retroactive grants, or projects already completed.
    - Purposes that do not meet YVCF's non-discrimination policy.
    - Religious activities (see "Faith-based organizations" above).
    - Political activities (including any amount of campaigning, as defined by the IRS; nonpartisan voter education is not considered a political activity.)

Important Dates

- **Mon, May 6, 2024** – Application will open (here)

- **Tue, May 7** (10:00-11:30am) – YVCF Grant Application Training (STEAMBOAT) in-person at YVCF, Steamboat Springs (virtual/online access available and session will be recorded).
  • 11:00-11:30am: financials training for grant applicants (in person +virtual/online/recorded).
- **Wed, May 8** (10:00-11:00am) – YVCF Grant Application Training (CRAIG) – in-person at Craig Chamber (virtual/online access available and session will be recorded)..
- **Wed, May 29** – Deadline to contact YVCF to discuss your organization or program (technical assistance only with the application after this date)
- **Sun, June 9 (**11:30pm Mountain) – Grant applications due
- **Mon, September 1**6 – Organizations notified of grant award
       If you have any questions, please contact Greg Hamilton at greg@yvcf.org.

APPLICATION OPENS MAY 6, 2024

click for application website (past applications)

Training, Technical Assistance, & Resources

- **Watch our 2023 Training video for grant applicants** (75 min.)
  • View the presentation slides/links
- Video on "What do funders look for in grant proposal budgets?" (2.5 min) from Candid.
- Video on "Essentials of Financials for Grantseekers" from YVCF finance director Karen O'Connor: Click here to view (18 min).
  • View the presentation slides

General Advice on Preparing to Apply
- Primary grantwriter**: log in now** to the application system. Create your log-in details (or confirm they still work).
- **Review questions and rubric** now. The rubric is your key to how your answers will be evaluated: think creatively about how your organization can score highly in all sections. Large or small, new or old, and whatever the focus of your work, there is a way for every organization to make your case.
- **Plan ahead** for anything you may need to gather, from financials to details of programs.
- Consider **who else needs access** or will be providing materials such as budgets. The application has as a feature to invite collaborators to work with you.
- **Gather required materials** so they are handy.
- Prepare/submit your **report** on last year's grant by 7/15 (see Eligibility above).
- **Plan enough time:** Application includes 34 questions – estimated time to complete: 1 to 3 hours
- Ask for **technical assistance prior to May 29**. This includes clarifying requirements for organizations that must apply for a program grant, questions about budgets and financials, or any other questions about the application or our review process. In the final 10 days prior to the deadline, assistance is limited to technical issues with the application software; other assistance can not be guaranteed.

Specific Tips for Applicants
- Emphasize both **need and impact**: these are charitable grants, so make the case for why our funds are needed (versus other forms of funding). Also make sure to demonstrate how that funding is likely to make a positive impact.
- Provide **evidence**: back up plans, assurances, aspirations, or promises with past impact data, testimonials, case studies, research, or other compelling arguments for the viability of your plans.
- Explain **jargon, acronyms**, etc. on first usage. Better: use language that "cannot be misunderstood."

- **Do not repeat answers** in multiple sections: you may reference answers provided in other sections, e.g., you could mention: "See 'Vision' section above." No two questions are identical: make sure to read carefully and respond to the specific requests in each question.
- **Anticipate reviewer questions** (and address them): If, for instance, something in your budget might be concerning or confusing, include an explanation on a cover page or as a note adjacent to that part of the budget. Consider adding margin notes or an extra column to explain any terms or budget categories that aren't common knowledge.
- Check documents to be uploaded for **legibility and completeness**: text large enough to read? Nothing cut off? Header text to explain which document is which?
- Our in-person and recorded trainings will provide many more tips to set you up for success!

Technical Assistance with Application and Online Grant Software

Web browser issues? Having trouble logging in or saving application?
- We suggest you clear your cache and some other backend web browser data that can cause problems. Click here for an article on how to clear them in Google Chrome. For other browsers do a web search for your browser name + "how to clear cache." We suggest clearing:
  - Cookies and other site data
  - Cached images and files
  - Site settings
  - Hosted app data

Document uploads
- Must be in PDF format. Access a free online PDF converting tool here: https://www.adobe.com/acrobat/online/convert-pdf.html
- If providing multiple documents for one question, you must combine into a single PDF. Access a free online PDF merging tool here: https://www.adobe.com/acrobat/online/merge-pdf.html
- Watch for errors or lost data! Please proof all your documents before uploading.
- *File size too large?* The system has a 10MB limit. If you encounter that limit, please try the following:
  1. Access a free online PDF compressing tool here: https://www.adobe.com/acrobat/online/compress-pdf.html
  2. If that doesn't get it below 10MB, please email greg@yvcf.org with:
     a) [preferred] a link where we can download the file from the cloud, such as Dropbox, Google Drive, or others (please make sure permissions allow us to download the file).
     b) the file attached (some large files may not email easily).

Helpful links:

Current and Past Grant Recipients
Communications Guidelines for Grant Recipients
1-Question Grant Report Template (download Microsoft Word document)