

# YVCF Community Grant Cycle

## About YVCF Community Grants

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**.

## Current and Past Grant Recipients

## 2026-27 Grant Guidelines

### Eligibility for YVCF Community Grants

- Grant requests must be limited to \$10,000 or less.
- An organization—defined as a single legal entity—may apply for only one YVCF Community Grant per year.
- Geography: Funds must serve Routt and/or Moffat County. Organizations operating beyond these two counties must explain how the funds granted by YVCF would be used only within Routt and/or Moffat County.
- Financial History: In order to apply, an organization must have at least one-full year of operating history and financials.
- Reporting: If you received this grant in the past year, a report is due upon application for subsequent funding. If funds have been fully expended, submit a final report at that time. If still in progress, a progress report including timeline for final expenditure of 2025 funds is due with your application (**by June 1, 2026**).
- IRS status: 501(c)(3) public charity or fiscally sponsored through a 501(c)(3) organization.

### Learn More About 501(c)(3) and Fiscal Sponsorship

- Read the [IRS explanation of 501\(c\)\(3\) charitable organizations](#) (a 2-min. read).
- Read [about fiscal sponsorship](#) from the National Council of Nonprofits (a 3-min. read)
- 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 YVCF's grantmaking department for details.

## New for 2026

- **Updated Finance Scoring:** More detailed rubric for questions pertaining to the organization's financials.

## Grant Types

Each grant is either for unrestricted purposes or issued as a programmatic grant. It is important to understand the difference and whether you are eligible (or required) to complete one application or the other. ***Applications have different questions so make sure to confirm your eligibility before starting application!***

## Program Grants

Within YVCF's Community Grants, programmatic funding is restricted in one or more ways. Applications must explain specifics of how funds will be used and grant reports will document these specific uses.

You **must** apply for a program grant if **any** of the following are true for your organization:

### Annual Operating Budget \$1 Million and Above

- As part of every application, you will upload a board-approved operating budget for your organization for the current fiscal year. "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](#)]

### Faith-based

- 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.

If **any** of the above are true for your organization, you **must** apply for a program grant.

In certain rare cases, an applicant who is eligible to apply for a general operating grant may opt to apply for a program grant instead. If you think you might want to make this choice, we recommend contacting us well in advance of starting your application to confirm the pros and cons.

## General Operating 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.

**Applying for a general operating grant is optional.** *If you are eligible*, we encourage most applicants to apply for this type of grant. You are eligible if all of the following are true for your organization:

### Annual Operating Budget Under \$1 Million

- As part of every application, you will upload a board-approved operating budget for your organization for the current fiscal year. "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](#)]

### Not Faith-based

- 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.

If **all** of the above are true for your organization, we encourage you to apply for a general operating grant: the money would be unrestricted so that you can use it for whatever needs (including programs) that you determine are greatest.

## Important Dates

- **Mon, April 13, 2025** – Applications opened
- **Tue, April 28 (12:00-1:00pm)** – YVCF Grant Application Training (CRAIG) – in-person at Craig Chamber.
- **Wed, April 29 (10:00- 11:00am)** – 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**
- **Fri, May 22** – Deadline to contact YVCF to discuss your organization or program (technical assistance only with the application after this date)
- **Mon, June 1 (11:59pm Mountain)** – Grant applications due
- **July 30-August 21** – Site visits from a grant review committee member\*
- **Wednesday, September 9** – Organizations notified of grant award

*\*If you do not hear from a Committee member about setting up a site visit by July 10, please let Greg and/or Camille know and we will reach out to the Committee member.*

## Applications and Scoring Rubrics

- 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**. Our free trainings (available live or recorded) should prove very helpful for all applicants: see the schedule below.
- **2026 Scoring Rubric:** review detailed criteria by which your application will be evaluated. ([Click here to view/download](#))
- **Application questions:** view the application questions in advance. ([Click here to view/download](#)).

### Grant funds may NOT be used for:

- × Debt reimbursement, retroactive grants, or projects already completed prior to submitting application.
- × Purposes that do not meet YVCF's **non-discrimination policy**.
- × Religious activities (see explanation under “Faith-based” above).
- × Political activities (including any amount of campaigning, as defined by the IRS; nonpartisan voter education is not considered a political activity.)

If you have any questions, please contact [Greg](#) or [Camille](#).

## APPLICATIONS OPEN APRIL 13, 2026 – JUNE 1, 2026

**OPEN NOW - CLICK HERE TO APPLY!**

## Training, Tips, and Advice

[Watch our 2025 Training video for grant applicants](#) (90 min.)

- View the **presentation slides/links**
- Above video includes the NEW 2025 training on “Financial documents and budgets for grant applicants” from YVCF finance director Karen O’Connor and finance review committee chair Chris Godfrey: [Click here to view](#) (26 min).
- **Video on “What do funders look for in grant proposal budgets?”** (2.5 min) from Candid.

### 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).
- 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.
- Work offline (e.g., in Microsoft Word or Google Docs) to prepare your answers then copy-paste them into the online grant application when final. **SAVE OFTEN when working in the online application portal: it does not automatically save your work** and tends to log you out (without notice) after sometimes only a matter of minutes.
- **Prepare/submit your report** on last year’s grant by 6/1 (see Eligibility above).
- **Plan enough time:** Application includes 33 questions – estimated time to complete: 1 to 3 hours
- Ask for **technical assistance prior to May 22**. 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!

## Top Tips for Program Grant Applicants

- **Make the most of questions #5a and #12a to briefly encapsulate the program.** Reviewers need to know that this is not just money thrown into the general pot, that it is specifically designated and protected for use in specific program(s). If you work outside these two counties, mention Routt &/or Moffat in this description, e.g., "Summer 2026 children's camps in Moffat County."
- **Include revenues in your program budget!** This is specified and required in the question. Include confirmed and anticipated revenues and indicate status, e.g., "secured," "applied/pending," "anticipated," etc.
- **Do not indicate anywhere in your application that "general operating" will be covered** by this grant. As a program grant, all use of these funds will be restricted to specific program(s). Referencing "general operating" is highly likely to confuse reviewers.

## Technical Assistance with Application and Online Grants 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. Free online PDF converting tool here: <https://www.adobe.com/acrobat/online/convert-pdf.html>
- If more than one document, they must be combined into one document upload per question. 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 must not be **editable**, so it will be **read-only**
- File must not be **password protected**
- Filenames can sometimes cause problems. Best practices:
  - No more than 30 characters
  - No spaces: use a hyphen instead.
  - No dots/periods other than the final one before the "pdf" filetype.
  - No other special characters, such as ampersands or parenthesis.
  - Distinguish it from your other uploads for the same application.
  - Help reviewers know which applicant & which question, e.g., *MyNonprofit-BudgetFY24.pdf*
- File size must be less than 10MB. If you encounter that limit, try:
  1. 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 [grants@yvcf.org](mailto:grants@yvcf.org) with:
    1. [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);
    2. the file attached (some large files may not email easily).

### Word Counts/Error for Exceeding Word Limits

- Our system may not count words the same way as MS Word, Google Docs, etc. So you may find that certain formatting may add to your word count, such as:

Example	Potential Alternative
Using a hyphen – like this – with spaces around it may add to your word count	Using a longer “em dash”—like this—without spaces around it may reduce word count.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bulleted or numbered lists created outside the grant software and pasted in (like this line) may add a word count for each bullet.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paste in your text without formatting (or use the “Paste from Word” clipboard icon above the text entry box) and make sure there aren’t manually entered bullets or numbers.</li><li>• Then format lists using bulleted or numbered list icon above text entry box.</li><li>• This way bullets or numbers on each line shouldn’t add to your word count.</li></ul>

### Trouble with Text Formatting

- **Keep it simple!** We encourage you to keep text formatting to a minimum—only where necessary for clarity. Our reviewers use different devices and browsers which may show formatted text differently than you intended.
- **Pasting plain text or Copy-pasting from Microsoft Word** – For longer answers there are formatting buttons at the top of the text-entry window. [Click here to see how to find them.](#) One (a small rectangle with a “W”) is for pasting text from Microsoft Word. Next to that is one (with a “T”) for pasting plain text without formatting (after which you would need to recreate any formatting within the portal).

## FAQ

### *Our programs extend outside of Routt and Moffat county, but we do offer programming in Routt and/or Moffat county. Are we still eligible for a general operating grant?*

Yes! We have updated our eligibility requirements so that all organizations operating within Routt and Moffat county are eligible to apply for general operating grants so long as they meet the budget and non-faith based requirements. However, if your programming extends beyond the Yampa Valley, we do ask you to demonstrate how the funds from your grant will stay within Routt and Moffat county.

### *What activities are allowed within a faith-based organization’s programmatic grant request?*

While our granting requirements for this particular grant cycle don’t allow us to fund “religious activities,” the program grant option is intended to make the other aspects of your work eligible. Eligible programs do not include: “religious services, promotion of religious beliefs, or activities that are restricted to church or religious group membership.” If you can make the case that those activities are not what this grant would be funding, then you should be eligible. Examples include food pantries or soup kitchens addressing food insecurity (without a required religious component), thrift store operations, or winter coat drives.

### *We’re a small organization that doesn’t file a full 990 form each year. What do we upload for question #26?*

Even the smallest organizations (under \$50,000 in annual revenue) should still be annually submitting a “postcard” 990, formally known as the “Form 990-N, Electronic Notice (e-Postcard).” What works for our purposes is a PDF copy of the confirmation you receive upon submitting the most recent version of that annual form. That confirmation could be an email you receive or a screen capture of the confirmation screen of your web browser upon submitting it. [Learn more about the 990-N from the IRS.](#)

### *For budgets over \$1M what is expected for a program grant?*

The key is to assure the committee that the money they grant isn’t just a drop in a bucket, lost in a much larger budget. They hope to see that the money moves the needle in a specific way and enables impact that might not be possible without this grant.

### *What should I include in “Cash on Hand”?*

The **U.S. Chamber** defines “cash on hand” as “any accessible money, funds in bank accounts, or liquid assets that could be accessed within less than 90 days.”

### *I’m eligible to apply for general operating. Should I apply for a program instead?*

While providing a specific sense of how you’d like to use the funds is helpful, we will almost always recommend applying for general operating (instead of a program grant) so that you aren’t as restricted if you do win the grant. That way if you were to secure funding for your program through other channels (or if the program were to change), you wouldn’t have to give this grant back!

For both general operating and program grants, a key aspect of the application is explaining the audience served, the charitable need, etc. (questions 19-22). You’ll want to be sure the application is clear on those details and provides compelling evidence of the positive impact these grant funds would make.

### **Helpful links:**

- [Current and Past Grant Recipients](#)
- [Communications Guidelines for Grant Recipients](#)
- [1-Question Grant Report Template \(PDF\)](#)
- [1-Question Grant Report Template \(MS Word\)](#)
- [Grant Reviewer Login](#)