

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT GRANT GUIDELINES

Aspen Community Foundation (ACF) is dedicated to supporting children and families living in the Aspen to Parachute region. In 2025, ACF is offering two competitive grant programs for nonprofit organizations in the Aspen to Parachute region: Early Childhood and Youth Empowerment. Eligible nonprofit organizations are invited to apply to ONE of these programs in 2025. Funding is made possible by annual contributions from donors wishing to support pooled grantmaking funds.

A total of \$250,000 will be awarded through ACF's 2025 Youth Empowerment grant cycle via 10 to 15 grants in the \$15,000 to \$25,000 range. Applications will be reviewed in accordance with the following priorities, criteria, and limitations as well as available funds. Past funding from ACF or the Youth Empowerment Alliance (YEA) does not guarantee funding via this process.

Based on limited funding and our commitment to support wide-ranging nonprofits that are positively contributing to and strengthening the Aspen to Parachute region's youth empowerment ecosystem, organizations that received a Jonathan D + Mark C. Lewis Foundation Youth Impact Grant in 2025 will be ineligible to apply for a 2025 ACF Youth Empowerment Grant.

ACF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT GRANTMAKING PRIORITIES

This competitive grant program prioritizes nonprofits working in the area of youth empowerment. The objective of this funding is to support equitable access to culturally responsive empowerment opportunities, career connected learning experiences, and critical resources that are essential to youth gaining confidence and competency to thrive, now and in the future. In collaboration with community partners, ACF's youth empowerment efforts build resilience, improve educational outcomes, and strengthen physical, emotional, and mental health of youth throughout the Aspen to Parachute region.

The following are the areas of impact ACF seeks to have with this funding:

1. Opportunities that support physical, social-emotional, and mental health needs in a culturally responsive and youth-centered way.
2. Opportunities for youth to learn, explore, and discover new interests and activities outside the classroom setting, and those that intentionally serve disengaged youth. These opportunities include (but are not limited to) career-connected and experiential learning and postsecondary planning.
 - a. *ACF defines "disengaged youth" as individuals who are six to twenty-four years old who do not regularly participate in programs and activities beyond those mandated during the school-day or are neither enrolled in an educational institution or employed.*

ACF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT GRANTMAKING CRITERIA

- Alignment with one of ACF's **Youth Empowerment priorities**
- Commitment to serving disengaged and **under-resourced youth and geographies**.
- Meaningful **depth and duration of contact** with those served.
- Clearly articulated metrics and **demonstrated impact** and positive outcomes for youth

ACF also analyzes the operational and financial health of each applicant including their efficiency, solvency and sustainability, leadership strength, and capacity.

ELIGIBILITY

Organizations are eligible to apply if:

- They are classified as tax exempt under the provision of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or are using a fiscal sponsor with a 501(c)(3). Or they are a government entity such as a school district.

- They serve youth ages six to twenty-four years old and provide opportunities for youth living in the Aspen to Parachute region.
- Did not receive funding via a 2025 Jonathan D + Mark C. Lewis Foundation Youth Impact Grant.

ACF COMMUNITY GRANTMAKING LIMITATIONS

1. Support is limited to nonprofit organizations located in, and whose work primarily serves the residents of Pitkin and Garfield counties and the Roaring Fork Valley portion of Eagle County.
2. Requests are not considered for:
 - Organizations outside of ACF's Aspen to Parachute service area
 - Organizations, pilot projects, or programs in operation for less than one year or are less than one year from receipt of 501(c)(3) approval
 - Projects that have been completed prior to allocation decisions
 - Deficits, retirement of debt, or endowments
 - Religious purposes
 - Political campaigns
 - Medical research or hospital equipment
 - Program design, product development, or marketing and promotion
 - Conduit organizations (organizations or events that pass funds to other organizations)
 - Individual schools/classrooms, departments/programs of universities or colleges, or education foundations/organizations that have not coordinated the request with their central school district/university administration or fundraising arm
 - Organizations primarily supported by tax-derived funding unless funding supports a program that is outside of the organization's operating budget
3. Aspen Community Foundation does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, physical circumstances, or national origin. Applicants must hold and demonstrate similar standards.

ACF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT GRANTS PROCESS

Youth Empowerment grant proposals and supporting documents must be submitted via ACF's online grants management platform. Specific deadlines are on ACF's [website](#).

Each organization seeking funding should first review these guidelines and determine whether its proposal meets the criteria and priorities of ACF. If the organization meets the guidelines, begin the application process by navigating to the [grant application platform](#).

Returning applicants will log-in using their username and password created last year. Click "Forgot your Password?" if you need to reset your password access. Contact the ACF Grants Manager for assistance.

If you are a **new applicant**, you will need to create an account in ACF's grant management system.

NEW ACCOUNT CREATION/FOUNDANT GRANT PORTAL

- Click this [link](#) and "Create New Account" to register your organization. You will need your organization's EIN/Tax ID number to complete this process. If you already have an account, use your existing log-in credentials.
- Upon registering, an auto generated verification message will be sent to your email. This message confirms your organization will receive system communications. All emails from the ACF grants portal will be sent by administrator@grantinterface.com. Please add this address to your contact list.

- Your newly created account will provide online access to all ACF grant processes. To add additional users, please contact the ACF Grants Manager.
- To apply for this grant process, select “**ACF Youth Empowerment Grant 2025**” from dropdown options.
- Your work can be saved at any time by clicking the save button located at the bottom of your screen. Questions with an asterisk require a response.
- The Foundant system does not autosave. If you leave or time out on a page without saving, your work will be lost and will need to be reentered.
- Click “Submit” when you have completed your application.
- Need support?
 - The [Foundant Applicant Tutorial](#) article provides a step-by-step guide to account creation and application processes.
 - Contact ACF’s Grants Manager at Scott@AspenCommunityFoundation.org or 970-925-9300.

ACF 2025 YOUTH EMPOWERMENT GRANT ELEMENTS

Eligibility Quiz

Organizations will be asked to affirm that they:

- Serve youth ages six to twenty-four in the Aspen to Parachute region
- Are a 501(c)(3) organization, have a fiscal sponsor that is, or are a qualified government entity
- Did not receive a 2025 Jonathan D + Mark C. Lewis Foundation Youth Impact Grant.

Application

In the application, you will be asked to provide the following information:

1. Youth Empowerment Grant Request

- Select one: type of request
 - General Operating
 - Program/Project
- Select one: funding priority area
 - Opportunities that support physical, social-emotional, and mental health needs in a culturally responsive and youth-centered way.
 - Opportunities for youth to learn, explore, and discover new interests and activities outside the classroom setting, and those that intentionally serve disengaged youth.
- Purpose of request (brief description)
- Requested amount (\$15,000 to \$25,000 range recommended)
- Upload documents:
 - IRS Letter of Determination
 - Organization logo

2. Board of Directors Overview

- Name of current board chairperson
- Email of current board chairperson - *If your organization is awarded a grant, we will require an electronic signature on the grant agreement from your board chair. This will be requested via DocuSign.*
- Number of current board members
- How many board members made a charitable contribution to your organization last year?
- Board governance and effectiveness - *Summarize key issues related to board effectiveness that are being addressed this year.*
- Upload document:
 - List of current board members

3. Organization and Staff Overview

- a. Mission statement
- b. Organization summary - *This should include a brief history of the organization and key programs and services offered.*
- c. Number of full-time employees
- d. Number of part-time employees
- e. Number of employees who are bilingual and/or bicultural
- f. Describe how volunteers support your programs or operations
- g. Annual salary of executive director - *This information will be kept confidential and used for regional analysis purposes only.*
- h. Number of years executive director has been in their current position
- i. Number of years executive director has been with the organization

4. Financial Overview

- a. Fiscal year date range
- b. Current operating budget
- c. Total revenue and expenses for last fiscal year
- d. Total projected revenue and expenses for current fiscal year
- e. Anticipated budget for next fiscal year
- f. Explain any significant budget differences
- g. Current cash reserves
- h. If your organization has an endowment, please share the balance
- i. Upload documents:
 - i. Current FY Budget vs. Actual
 - ii. Current YTD Balance Sheet
 - iii. Last FY Income and Expenses
 - iv. Last FY Balance
 - v. Most recent 990 (not required)

5. Demographics and Impact Overview

- a. Tell us about the youth you serve
- b. Number of youth served by age group
- c. Number of youth served who are low income
- d. Number of youth served by geographic region
- e. Describe how you are measuring your organization's impact
- f. What are your results (or anticipated results if a new program/initiative)?
- g. Describe how you collaborate to fulfill your mission and/or enhance your programs or services
- h. What challenges or barriers are most likely to prevent you from accomplishing your goals this year?

6. Narrative.

- a. **Question 1:** Describe how your request aligns with the selected funding priority area.
- b. **Question 2:** How does your organization/program intentionally serve disengaged and/or under resourced youth?
- c. **Question 3:** Describe the depth and duration of your organization's engagement with youth.
- d. **Question 4:** Describe how your engagement with youth is culturally responsive.

Review your application and submit. You will receive an autogenerated email confirmation once your grant has been submitted.

ACF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT GRANTMAKING TIMELINE

May 1 & 7 Office Hours Virtual Office Hours from 1-2pm MT	April 28 Application Opens	May 29 Application Closes	June - August Staff Review	September ACF Board Approves Grant Awards	September- October Grantee Notifications, Declinations, & Grant Agreements	October Awards Distributed
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Please [email the ACF Grants Manager](#) to RSVP for the office hours and request the zoom link

ACF COMPETITIVE GRANTMAKING REVIEW AND ADMINISTRATION

- This is a competitive process, and not all requests will be funded. Past funding from ACF or the Youth Empowerment Alliance (YEA) does not guarantee funding.
- Each application is assessed on its own merit against the scoring criteria.
 - A total score of 100 is possible.
 - A typical cutoff score for funding is 75. However, all applications undergo further discussion prior to recommendation finalization.
 - Higher scoring applications may only receive a percentage of the total request, typically between 60% and 75% of the amount requested. This will vary depending on funds available for this grant program.
- ACF staff may elect to schedule a meeting with the organization's executive director and/or board chair to discuss the proposal or request clarifying information.
- If the grant's contact person becomes unavailable after application submission, please notify ACF's Grants Manager of a new contact. Applications will not be considered if ACF staff cannot reach the contact person.
- Grant recommendations are reviewed by ACF's Board of Directors. Final grant approval is the sole responsibility of ACF's Board of Directors. The Board requests that its members are not lobbied about grant proposals.
- Organizations receiving funding will be required to sign an agreement that includes the grant's terms and conditions, including marketing and reporting requirements, limitations on grant funds, disposition of unused funds, and other conditions.

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR
Priority Area Alignment	Demonstrates exceptional alignment with one or more priority areas	Demonstrates strong alignment with one or more priority areas	Demonstrates moderate alignment with one or more priority areas	Demonstrates some alignment with one or more priority areas	No explicit alignment with priority areas
Disengaged and Under-Resourced Youth	Demonstrates exceptional commitment to serving disengaged and under-resourced youth	Demonstrates strong commitment to serving disengaged and under-resourced youth	Demonstrates moderate commitment to serving disengaged and under-resourced youth	Demonstrates some commitment to serving disengaged and under-resourced youth	Does not demonstrate commitment to serving disengaged and under-resourced youth
Geographic Reach	Serves the entire Aspen to Parachute region	Serves most of the Aspen to Parachute region	Serves at least half of the Aspen to Parachute region	Serves a portion of the Aspen to Parachute region	Limited to a specific town or school district
Depth and Duration	Demonstrates exceptional depth and duration in its contact with youth	Demonstrates meaningful depth and duration in its contact with youth	Demonstrates moderate depth and duration in its contact with youth	Demonstrates some depth and duration in its contact with youth	Does not demonstrate depth and duration in its contact with youth
Cultural Responsiveness	Demonstrates exceptional cultural responsiveness in its program design and contact with youth	Demonstrates meaningful cultural responsiveness in its program design and contact with youth	Demonstrates moderate cultural responsiveness in its program design and contact with youth	Demonstrates some cultural responsiveness in its program design and contact with youth	Does not demonstrate cultural responsiveness in its program design and contact with youth
Metrics and Impact	Applies outstanding metrics and demonstrates exceptional impact on clients	Applies strong metrics and demonstrates effective impact on clients	Applies average metrics and demonstrates moderate impact on clients	Applies some metrics and demonstrates some impact on clients	Does not apply or describe metrics. Lacks impact on clients or how it would impact clients is unclear

Criteria	Higher Scoring Organizations Will:
Priority Area Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly articulate the request's alignment with one priority areas
Disengaged and Under-Resourced Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate at least 20% of youth served are disengaged -or- Demonstrate that at least 20% of youth served are economically disadvantaged
Geographic Reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate that the entire Aspen to Parachute region is being served
Depth and Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate regular, consistent interactions with youth -or- Demonstrate that services are delivered with fidelity to whatever model is being used
Cultural Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate culturally responsive program design -or- Demonstrate culturally responsive interactions with youth
Metrics and Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly define and demonstrate the metrics used to determine impact Articulate how/in what ways the organization/program is impacting youth