

# City of Ames Climate Action Grant Program



## Community Climate Grant Program Guide



### 2026 Timeline

- Application deadline: June 30, 2026

Awardees are typically notified within 5 weeks of the application deadline. Projects will have up to 1 year to complete the project from the notice to proceed.

### Purpose & Overview

As part of the Climate Action Grant program, City grants of up to \$10,000 are available for community-led projects or initiatives that meaningfully advance the City's sustainability goals, including the [Climate Action Plan](#) and [EcoSmart Programs](#). The purpose of the Climate Action Grant Program is to support community involvement in reducing energy use, encouraging low-emissions transportation, reducing waste, conserving water, and utilizing nature-based solutions.

**Projects must align with the program's purpose and include an education or engagement component.**

Contact Nolan Sagan at 515-239-5227 or [Nolan.Sagan@cityofames.org](mailto:Nolan.Sagan@cityofames.org) with any questions or for help ensuring your project aligns with the goals of the grant program.

The grant program does not limit the nature of proposed projects, but the primary purpose should include one or more of these concepts:

- Physical change or improvement of a structure that improves energy efficiency, long-term sustainability.
- Education or outreach, building community partnerships, understanding, inclusion, and awareness.
- Introduction of a new project or program.
- Improvement and/or expansion of an existing project or program.
- Volunteer engagement or management.

A few examples might include projects that:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy use in buildings or transportation, such as solar, energy efficiency, and electric vehicle charging.
- Increase pollinator habitats, native tree canopy, or local food production. Projects could include establishing a community garden, native prairie, or a tree planting initiative.
- Explore or utilize innovative technologies and/or practices to reduce carbon emissions.
- Education and outreach campaigns focused on specific topics or areas of concern such as waste diversion, clean transportation, or resiliency.
- Sustainable placemaking, improving social and environmental resiliency in public spaces.

Additional information on the City's Climate Action website, [Sustainability in Ames](#), may better inform proposals and spark ideas!

## Requirements

All organizations and businesses within the city of Ames geographic limits are eligible for funding. Partnerships between multiple organizations are encouraged, but only one lead applicant can receive funding for each project. The project must benefit Ames residents. Any applicant or group partnering with an applicant located outside of Ames must demonstrate that the population or area served will primarily be people or places within Ames.

Successful applicants are eligible for one grant award and the project must be completed within the specified timeframe for each grant cycle, typically one year. All application materials and outcomes from awarded projects will be considered public information. Applicants are required to abide by all City, State, and Federal laws and regulations.

The project must align with the program's purpose. Funding will go to projects that are:

- Ready to be implemented and can be completed within 12 months or less
- Focused, planned, and reasonable in scope
- Innovative and impactful, directly related to the City's Climate Action goals
- Sustainable past the project period and/or replicable in the future
- Impactful and measurable (kWh, MT CO<sub>2</sub>e, number of people reached, etc.)
- Locally focused and beneficial to residents of Ames

Projects must also include an education or outreach component. For example, this could include an event promoting the project's completion, a promotional video, or social media posts. City staff are available to assist with this component if needed.

Applicants proposing projects for buildings or property they do not own are required to submit a letter of support from the property owner. Applicants proposing a collaboration with other community partners are encouraged to submit letters of support from those partners.

### *Grant Budget*

Grant applications should clearly indicate how the funds will be used. **A partial match is required** and can be cash or in-kind labor. In-kind labor must be volunteer and not paid work done by employees. Use \$30 per hour to value volunteer time. The matching requirement is 80/20, or 80% grant funded, 20% match. This means the grant may cover 80% of the total project costs up to \$10,000.

- Example total project cost: \$6,000
  - $6,000 * 80\% = \underline{\$4,800 \text{ grant award}}$
  - $6,000 * 20\% = \underline{\$1,200 \text{ required match}}$

Grant funds are intended to be “one-time costs” and cannot be used for operational expenses such as rent or salaries. Tasks should not include costs that primarily benefit the organization (e.g., administrative expenses, overhead, utilities, etc.).

The budget must include all other financial assistance relating to the project, including any City of Ames [Smart Energy](#) or [Smart Watersheds](#) rebates. Other rebates and financial assistance will not count toward the cost share requirement.

### *Grantee Responsibilities*

If awarded, responsibilities include:

- Conduct a mid-year check-in with the City to share a brief status update on the project.
- Submit a final report within 30 days following the completion of the project.
- Document the project through video or photos submitted with invoices and final report to show progress and outcomes.
- Provide documentation of expenses (e.g., scanned copies of all expense receipts) and submit an invoice for reimbursement (template available).
- Disclose any conflict of interest.

## Process

Grants can be submitted at any time during the year, although they will only be reviewed in two award cycles in April and October. The Climate Action Grants Selection Committee is composed of city staff and community members, who will review all applications and determine the selected applicants. The panel will determine awards approximately 5 weeks following the application due date. Applicants may be asked by the award panel to present an overview of their project or answer questions to help clarify information included in the application before a grant is awarded. Grant funds are issued on a one-time reimbursement basis following the completion of the project, (typically issued 1-2 weeks) after proper documentation is received. Grantees may request exceptions to this funding process, but approval or denial of such requests is at the City’s discretion. Request must be made in the application materials.

Applications will be scored by the evaluation panel on the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
<p>#1. The project aligns with and meaningfully advances the program goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project has a clear, tangible impact on one or more program goals. Primary aspects of the project are specifically mentioned in the <a href="#">Climate Action Plan</a> or <a href="#">EcoSmart Programs</a>.</li> </ul>	25
<p>#2. The project will have a sustained beneficial impact (10) on many community members (10) and can be modeled by others (5).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term impact (maximum 10 points) is scored based on how many years into the future the project will continue to benefit the community. Example: 8 years = 8 points.</li> <li>• Breadth of impact (maximum 10 points) is scored based on the population that will benefit from the project.</li> <li>• Replicability (maximum 5 points) is scored based on the potential for other community organizations to implement a similar project.</li> </ul>	25
<p>#3. The project scope and budget are complete and feasible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There aren’t any elements essential for project success missing from the scope or budget.</li> <li>• The cost match requirement is met.</li> <li>• Applicant demonstrates ability to follow through on the proposed scope and budget.</li> </ul>	15
<p>#4. The project outcomes are impactful, specific, and measurable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes can be measured and reported on.</li> <li>• Outcomes adequately capture the project’s impact.</li> </ul>	15

#5. The project and/or organization benefits underserved communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This could include veterans, people with disabilities, those facing food insecurity, low-to-moderate income community members, elderly, youth, English as a second language individuals, and those facing transportation barriers.</li> </ul>	10
#6. The applicant has demonstrated a need for funding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Justification of why it is not feasible to fund this project with the organization's budget.</li> </ul>	10
Total	100

### Reporting

We want to share your project with the community! A midyear check-in and a final report are required to measure the impact of the project so the results can be shared. The final report format is flexible and can be a presentation, video, written report, or a combination of these. City staff can help determine what information to collect, and final reimbursement will not be made until this information has been received. The final report must include:

- A summary of the project including progress and outcomes
- Specific and measured/calculated outcomes
- Other funding associated with the project and its source
- Any material changes to the project from its initial scope
- Any associated volunteer involvement and hours of volunteer time
- Any partners or collaborating entities
- Lessons learned, anything you would have handled differently
- Photos or videos

### Payment Procedures

Please carefully read the information and instructions for requesting payments:

- Work must be verified as complete by the City and materials and services must have been used as described in the grant application to receive reimbursement.
- A reimbursement request form and blank W-9 will be provided.
- Filing a W-9 for the organization with the City will ensure timely payment.
- Please reach out to [Nolan.Sagan@cityofames.org](mailto:Nolan.Sagan@cityofames.org) if you anticipate challenges with fulfilling the project as proposed or have questions about payments. Inability to pay for reimbursable grant expenses should not be a barrier to applying, and we are able to work with recipients to identify alternatives within reason.

## Application

PLEASE NOTE: This pdf version of the grant application is provided for grant planning purposes only. All applications should be submitted online here: [Application Form](#). Contact Nolan Sagan at 515-239-5227 or [Nolan.Sagan@cityofames.org](mailto:Nolan.Sagan@cityofames.org) if accommodations are needed to fill out your application.

# Community Climate Grant Application



## SUSTAINABLE AMES

Thank you for your interest in this grant opportunity. Please complete as much of the application as possible in order to have the best chance of receiving a grant.

The purpose of the Climate Action Grant Program is to support community involvement in reducing energy use, encouraging low-emissions transportation, reducing waste, conserving water, and utilizing nature-based solutions. **Projects must align with the program goals and include an education or engagement component.**

Contact Nolan Sagan at 515-239-5227 or [Nolan.Sagan@cityofames.org](mailto:Nolan.Sagan@cityofames.org) if you need additional help with the application process.

It is recommended that applicants save the form every 5-10 minutes to avoid losing progress. To do this, please click "Save" at the bottom of the page.

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## General Information

Name of project Required

Full name of organization/applicant Required

Amount of funds requested Required

- Must be 10000 or below

Up to \$10,000

Name and title of contact person Required

Contact person's phone number Required

Contact person's email address Required

### Name and contact information of partners

Partners can include organizations, individuals, and businesses that contribute to the project's success.

#### Partner 1

Partner contact name, organization name, phone, and email

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#### Partner 2

Partner contact name, organization name, phone, and email

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#### Partner 3

Partner contact name, organization name, phone, and email

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**Partner 4**

Partner contact name, organization name, phone, and email

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**Partner 5**

Partner contact name, organization name, phone, and email

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## Project Proposal

The purpose of Climate Action Grant Program is to support community involvement in sustainability and climate action by reducing energy use, encouraging low-emissions transportation, reducing waste, conserving water, and utilizing nature-based solutions.

**Please select the goal that best align with your project. (Select 1 option)** Required

- Reducing Energy Use
- Encouraging Low-Emissions Transportation
- Reducing Waste
- Conserving Water
- Nature-Based Solutions
- Other

**Other**

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**Please describe the project.** Required Who, what, when, how, why

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**How does your project align with and meaningfully advance the program goals?** Required

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**Who will your project benefit, and what are the long-term benefits? Can others replicate your project?** Required

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**What education and outreach activities do you plan to conduct?** Required

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**What are some ways that we will know that the outcome was successful? Please include at least three outcomes including at least one measurable outcome.** Required

Measurable outcomes could include kWh, GHG emissions, number of people reached, number of trees planted, etc. City staff can assist in developing measurable outcomes for your project.

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**Does your project and/or organization benefit or include underserved communities in Ames?** Required

This could include veterans, people with disabilities, those facing food insecurity, low to moderate income, elderly, youth, English as a second language individuals, and those facing transportation barriers.

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**Why is there a need for additional funding to support this project, and how do you plan to pay for the match requirement?**

Required

Please describe other potential funding sources, if any, and if the project could still happen with less funding support.

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## Project Timeline and Budget

As a reminder, grant funds may only be used for one-time, capital costs such as equipment and supplies. Grant funds cannot be used for operational expenses such as rent or salaries.

**Estimated Start Date** Required

M	M	D	D	Y	Y	Y	Y
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**Estimated End Date** Required Must not be more than 12 months from the start date.

- Must be after the date you entered for Project Timeline and Budget > Estimated Start Date

M	M	D	D	Y	Y	Y	Y
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## Project Actions and Milestones

Tell us about the steps in your project. Use one line for each action and/or milestone including a time frame. Add additional lines as needed, there is a minimum of 3 actions/milestones.

**Milestone 1**

Action/Milestone (include approximate date) Required

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**Milestone 2**

Action/Milestone (include approximate date) Required

**Milestone 3**

Action/Milestone (include approximate date) Required

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**Milestone 4**

Action/Milestone (include approximate date) Required

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**Milestone 5**

Action/Milestone (include approximate date) Required

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**Milestone 6**

Action/Milestone (include approximate date) Required

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**Milestone 7**

Action/Milestone (include approximate date) Required

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**Milestone 8**

Action/Milestone (include approximate date) Required

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**Milestone 9**

Action/Milestone (include approximate date) Required

## Milestone 10

Action/Milestone (include approximate date) Required

## Project Budget

Please use the budget template below. A completed budget should tell us what you plan to buy with grant money. Indicate whether each item is intended to be grant-funded or in-kind. As a reminder, a partial match is required and must be included in your budget.

Example:

Solar panel materials and installation, \$10,000 grant-funded

Solar panel materials and installation, \$10,000 in-kind

### Budget Item 1

Budget Item (dollar amount & justification) Required

(Select 1 option) Required

- Grant-Funded
- In-Kind

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### Budget Item 2

Budget Item (dollar amount & justification) Required

(Select 1 option) Required

- Grant-Funded
- In-Kind

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### Budget Item 3

Budget Item (dollar amount & justification) Required

**(Select 1 option)** Required

- Grant-Funded
- In-Kind

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#### Budget Item 4

**Budget Item (dollar amount & justification)** Required

**(Select 1 option)** Required

- Grant-Funded
- In-Kind

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#### Budget Item 5

**Budget Item (dollar amount & justification)** Required

**(Select 1 option)** Required

- Grant-Funded
- In-Kind

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#### Budget Item 6

**Budget Item (dollar amount & justification)** Required

**(Select 1 option)** Required

- Grant-Funded
  - In-Kind
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### Budget Item 7

Budget Item (dollar amount & justification) Required

(Select 1 option) Required

- Grant-Funded  
 In-Kind

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### Budget Item 8

Budget Item (dollar amount & justification) Required

(Select 1 option) Required

- Grant-Funded  
 In-Kind

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### Budget Item 9

Budget Item (dollar amount & justification) Required

(Select 1 option) Required

- Grant-Funded  
 In-Kind

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### Budget Item 10

Budget Item (dollar amount & justification) Required

**(Select 1 option)** Required

- Grant-Funded
- In-Kind

**Has the organization previously applied for or received financial support from the City of Ames? (Select 1 option)**

- Yes
- No

Answer this question if you selected 'Yes' in *Project Timeline and Budget > Has the organization previously applied for or received financial support from the City of Ames?*

**If yes, please describe which funding program was applied to, whether funding was awarded, and how much funding was awarded.**

### Letters of Support

Applicants proposing projects for buildings or property they do not own are required to submit a letter of support from the property owner. Applicants proposing a collaboration with other community partners are encouraged to submit letters of support from those partners.

Please attach all files to the end of this form before submitting it.

### General Comments

**Please confirm you have read and agree to the stated requirements in the Program Guide. (Select 1 or more options)**

Required

- Yes

**Date**

M	M	D	D	Y	Y	Y	Y
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*End of form*

*Don't forget to attach all files before submitting this form*