



The sample language in this guide is designed to help you build your proposal. Adapt and expand each section to reflect your YMCA's unique story, community needs, partnerships, and sustainability goals. The strongest proposals are those that clearly communicate your local impact.

Sustainability Planning Grant Proposal Guide

Prompt I: Describe the sustainability opportunity, challenge, or priority your YMCA is seeking to address.

Modify examples based on your selected sustainability priorities.

Refer to the YMCA Sustainability Action Planning Toolkit for additional Green Goal examples and planning ideas.

I. Case for Support

[Organization Name] is committed to creating a healthy, resilient, and sustainable future for the communities it serves. As community needs continue to evolve, our organization recognizes the importance of thoughtfully planning for initiatives that strengthen environmental stewardship, organizational resilience, and community wellbeing. Through this planning effort, the YMCA seeks to better understand [identified sustainability opportunity or challenge] and develop a strategic roadmap that will guide future investment and decision-making.

Planning grant support will provide the time, expertise, and resources needed to thoughtfully assess current conditions, engage stakeholders, evaluate opportunities, and identify practical solutions that align with both community priorities and the YMCA's long-term mission. By investing in planning today, [Organization Name] will be better positioned to make informed decisions, leverage future funding opportunities, and implement sustainability initiatives that create meaningful, measurable impact for years to come.

Prompt II: Describe how grant funding will support the planning process.

Government Funders:
Clearly identify planning activities, deliverables, timelines, and anticipated planning outcomes.

Foundation Funders:
Emphasize how planning will strengthen future impact, reduce risk, and maximize the effectiveness of future investments.

II. Planning Process

Planning grant support will enable [Organization Name] to thoughtfully evaluate opportunities, engage key stakeholders, and develop a comprehensive strategy for advancing [identified sustainability priority]. Rather than moving directly into implementation, this planning process will provide the foundation necessary to ensure future investments are informed, strategic, and responsive to community needs.

Funding will support activities such as [community engagement], [feasibility studies], [master planning], [engineering or technical assessments], [energy or facility audits], [professional consulting], or other planning activities appropriate to the proposed project. Each component of the planning process has been intentionally designed to gather information, evaluate alternatives, and establish a clear path toward successful implementation.

The completed planning process will position the YMCA to confidently pursue future funding opportunities while ensuring that proposed sustainability initiatives are practical, community-informed, and aligned with organizational priorities.

Prompt III: Describe the goals and objectives the planning process is expected to accomplish.

Government Funders:
Include measurable planning deliverables, timelines, and completion milestones whenever possible.

Foundation Funders:
Highlight how planning will strengthen organizational capacity and prepare the YMCA for long-term community impact.

III. Planning Goals & Objectives

The primary goal of this planning effort is to establish a thoughtful, data-informed framework that guides future sustainability initiatives while strengthening [Organization Name]'s ability to serve the community. Through this process, the YMCA seeks to better understand existing conditions, evaluate opportunities, build organizational capacity, and identify practical strategies that support long-term success.

Planning objectives should provide measurable milestones throughout the planning process and may include [completing assessments], [engaging stakeholders], [developing implementation recommendations], [prioritizing future projects], [identifying funding opportunities], or [building strategic partnerships]. Together, these objectives create a roadmap that supports informed decision-making and positions the organization for successful implementation.

Prompt IV: Describe the activities that will take place during the planning process.

Government Funders:
Clearly outline planning phases, timelines, stakeholder involvement, and anticipated planning deliverables.

Foundation Funders:
Highlight collaboration, innovation, and opportunities for community participation throughout the planning process.

IV. Planning Activities

Planning activities have been intentionally designed to gather information, engage stakeholders, and develop recommendations that support informed decision-making. Throughout the grant period, [Organization Name] will undertake a coordinated planning process that provides a comprehensive understanding of current conditions while identifying practical opportunities for future sustainability investments.

Activities may include [stakeholder engagement], [community listening sessions], [technical assessments], [data collection and analysis], [site evaluations], [consultant facilitation], [strategic planning workshops], and development of an actionable implementation roadmap. Each activity contributes to a stronger understanding of organizational needs while ensuring future projects are grounded in thoughtful planning and community input.

By investing the necessary time and resources into planning, the YMCA will be better equipped to make informed decisions that maximize community benefit and long-term organizational success.

Prompt V: Describe the anticipated outcomes of the planning process.

Government Funders:
Focus on measurable planning deliverables and how they prepare the project for future implementation.

Foundation Funders:
Emphasize how planning creates a pathway toward lasting community benefit and future action.

V. Anticipated Planning Outcomes

Upon completion of the planning process, [Organization Name] expects to have a clear, actionable roadmap for advancing [identified sustainability priority]. The planning effort will result in thoughtful recommendations, defined implementation priorities, strengthened organizational capacity, and a greater understanding of the resources needed to successfully move the project forward.

Planning outcomes may include [completed assessments], [strategic recommendations], [conceptual designs], [implementation priorities], [cost estimates], [funding strategies], [community partnerships], or other planning deliverables that support future implementation. Together, these outcomes will position the YMCA to pursue additional funding opportunities with greater confidence while reducing uncertainty and strengthening future project success.

Beyond the completion of planning documents, this process will establish a strong foundation for future investment, collaboration, and sustainable community impact.

Prompt VI: Describe how planning activities and outcomes will be measured.

Government Funders:
Include measurable outputs whenever possible, such as the number of assessments completed, stakeholders engaged, or plans developed.

Foundation Funders:
Balance quantitative measures with stories, lessons learned, and evidence of organizational growth or community engagement.

VI. Evaluation Framework

[Organization Name] is committed to evaluating the planning process to ensure grant investments produce meaningful and actionable results. Evaluation activities will assess progress toward planning goals, completion of key deliverables, stakeholder engagement, and the overall effectiveness of the planning effort.

Success will be measured through [completed planning milestones], [stakeholder participation], [planning deliverables], [consultant recommendations], [community feedback], or other evaluation measures appropriate to the project. These findings will demonstrate the value of the planning process while helping inform future decision-making, implementation efforts, and funding strategies.

Evaluation findings will extend beyond reporting requirements, informing future planning and long-term success.

Prompt VII: Describe how planning grant funds will be used.

Government Funders:
Ensure each budget category directly supports a planning activity or deliverable described elsewhere in the proposal.

Foundation Funders:
Demonstrate thoughtful stewardship by explaining how planning investments will maximize future community impact.

VII. Budget Request

[Organization Name] respectfully requests planning grant support to complete the activities necessary to develop a comprehensive strategy for [identified sustainability priority]. Requested funding will provide the resources needed to conduct a thoughtful planning process while ensuring that future implementation efforts are guided by sound analysis, community input, and strategic decision-making.

Grant investments will support [professional services], [technical assessments], [community engagement], [planning workshops], [data collection], [consultant support], [feasibility studies], or other planning-related expenses that directly contribute to successful project development. Each budget item has been carefully considered to maximize the value of the planning process while establishing a strong foundation for future implementation.

By investing in planning today, funders help position the YMCA to pursue larger implementation opportunities with greater confidence, stronger partnerships, and a clear roadmap for success.

Prompt VIII" Explain why your YMCA is prepared to successfully complete the planning process.

Government Funders:
Highlight organizational capacity, partnerships, geographic reach, and experience managing projects or public funding.

Foundation Funders:
Emphasize trust, community relationships, mission alignment, and the unique role your organization plays in creating positive change.

VIII. Organizational Readiness

[Organization Name] is well-positioned to successfully lead this planning effort because of its strong community relationships, experienced leadership, and long-standing commitment to serving the evolving needs of the community. Guided by the YMCA's mission and informed by local partnerships, the organization recognizes the value of thoughtful planning as the foundation for meaningful, long-term impact.

Throughout the planning process, the YMCA will engage staff, community partners, participants, and subject matter experts to ensure recommendations are informed by diverse perspectives and aligned with community priorities. This collaborative approach strengthens organizational capacity while creating shared ownership of future sustainability initiatives.

By investing in this planning effort, funders are supporting an organization committed to thoughtful stewardship, strategic decision-making, and responsible preparation for future implementation. The resulting roadmap will position [Organization Name] to pursue future funding opportunities with confidence while creating sustainable solutions that strengthen the community for years to come.