



Camp-School Partnership Project Summer 2025 & 2026 Request for Proposals

Application opens March 3, deadline March 22

<https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=acacamps>

Thanks to the generous support of the SMBC Global Foundation, the American Camp Association is granting \$500,000 to qualifying camps over the summers of 2025 and 2026. Camps can choose to apply for either summer grant cycle, or both. Due to the short turnaround time for the Summer 2025 application window, it is **highly suggested** that camps only apply if they already have an **existing** camp-school partnership that is ready to be subsidized. For camps interested in using these funds to create new partnerships, it is **highly recommended** that they apply for next year's funding cycle, which will open in Fall 2025, for programs taking place in Summer 2026; this will provide time to camps wanting to explore relationships and establish new, strong partnerships.

Find more information about the ACA project here:

<https://www.acacamps.org/research/special-projects/camp-school-partnership-project>

Purpose

To support established camp-school partnerships as a means to increase access to high-quality camp experiences, with the goal **to serve at least 550 campers each summer**, especially those from communities that have been traditionally under-resourced and underrepresented at the majority of summer camps, including youth from lower socio-economic and racially varied backgrounds. We are especially looking to support camps that are serving youth from **New York, New Jersey, Arizona, California, Florida, North Carolina, and/or Texas**, to invest in the communities where SMBC employees live and work. However, camps from across the US are encouraged to apply and will be considered.

Funding Available

\$500,000 over 2 years

- \$250,000 designated for programs operating in summer 2025
- \$250,000 designated for programs operating in summer 2026

Each year, between **5 and 15 camps will receive gifts of \$15,000 to \$50,000. Camps can request any amount within the above range**, and the application review team will determine final awards based on all submission materials.

Camp-School Partnerships

For the purposes of this sole granting opportunity, a *Camp-School Partnership* means that instead of youth registering individually for camp session, a camp serves youth by coordinating with a separate entity in one of the following methods:

- Partnership with public school (district or charter), or school district,
- Partnership with local community-based organization, or
- If not currently in confirmed partnership with a school or community-based organization, the camp has a track record of serving the targeted population and will serve more youth through a clearly defined method (explained in the LOI)

Steps in the Process

1. All interested camps submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) online via the portal
2. ACA reviews the LOI submissions and notifies finalists
3. Finalist camps submit a final application (invitation only)

Application Timelines

Summer 2025 Application Cycle (for programs operating and using funds by October 2025)

March 3, 2025:	Grant Portal Opens (12am) for Letters of Intent (LOI) Submissions
March 22, 2025:	Grant Portal Closes (11:59pm) for LOI Submissions
March 28, 2025:	Finalists notified and invited to complete final application
April 7, 2025:	Final Application due (11:59pm)
April 18, 2025:	Awards Announced
April 28, 2025:	Awardee Meeting 3-4:30pm ET, checks sent out
September 30, 2025:	Grant Reporting Due (includes Photos & Stories of Impact)
TBD:	Volunteer Opportunities for SMBC staff and in-person gathering

Summer 2026 Application Cycle (for programs operating and using funds by October 2026)

July 15, 2025:	Grant Portal Opens (12am) for Letters of Intent (LOI) Submissions
September 15, 2025:	Grant Portal Closes (11:59pm) for LOI Submissions

October 2025:	Finalists notified and invited to complete final application
October 22, 2025:	Final Application due (11:59pm)
November 2025:	Awards Announced
December 1, 2025:	Awardee Meeting 3-4:30pm ET, checks sent out
March 2026:	Awardee Check-in Meeting
September 30, 2026:	Grant Reporting Due (includes Photos & Stories of Impact)
TBD:	Volunteer Opportunities for SMBC staff and in-person gathering

Qualifications

Your camp **can apply** for this program if it meets the following **criteria**:

1. Commits to using Camp-School Partnerships as a means to help reach our goal of 550 campers served in 2025.
2. Requests support of up to \$500 per youth, totaling an aggregate grant between \$15,000 (minimum) and \$50,000 (maximum).
3. Overnight camping experiences with a duration of one-week minimum (6 nights) and take place during 2025 (preference for summer); exceptions for camps less than a week but at least three days will be considered where experiences are used as a gateway to introduce camp to underserved youth.
4. Operates as a tax-exempt organization, or partners with one that applies. (For-profit camps can only participate if partnering with a tax-exempt organization that applies.)
5. Organizations awarded grants will be required to provide a report which includes:
 - a. Youth demographic data;
 - b. Full Camp-School Partnership program costs, and average cost per camper participating via Camp-School Partnership;
 - c. Length of experience, and whether experience happens during normal camp timeframe or otherwise;
 - d. Project-specific evaluation activities;
 - e. Stories and pictures of impact from students/schools that attend camp through the partnership, to be shared with the funder, and potentially used for promotion, publication, and similar publications and activities related to the project;
 - f. Name(s) of partner school(s)/community-based organization(s) and a description of the nature of your relationship; and
 - g. Feedback from both camp and partnering school/ community-based organization on effectiveness of Camp-School Partnership as a strategy for increasing access of underserved youth.

Your camp should **not** apply for this program in the summer 2025 cycle if you desire to start a new partnership – wait for the summer 2026 application cycle to open in the late summer, so that your camp has time to build new relationships.

Camps are allowed to receive grants from multiple opportunities at ACA, and are not disqualified from applying to any future grant opportunities.

Letter of Intent Guidelines

To apply for funding for summer 2025, the first step is to write a Letter of Intent (LOI) that explains how you intend to meet the goals and purpose of the project. *To apply for funding in summer 2026, the application guidelines will be available when the portal opens July 15, 2025.*

We want to understand your partnership from your perspective, and hear about the impact you plan to make in the community and for your campers this summer. For this reason, we are not providing strict parameters for how you should write this letter, just keep it to a maximum of 3 single-spaced pages.

We **highly recommend** you cover the following topics (at least) in your letter, in any order:

1. Introduce your camp and partnership/s
2. Provide evidence of impact
3. Describe how your work with partners is different from regular camp program
4. Explain requested dollar amount and how you will use those funds by October 2025

Submission Evaluation

ACA will choose finalists from the LOI submissions based on – a) targeted learning outcomes, b) demonstrated partnership, c) evidence of impact, and d) plan to meet committed number of campers served by the grant this summer.

File Requirements

Please upload only a PDF document. It should be no more than 3 pages, single-spaced. If a letter is longer than 3 pages, we will not review anything beyond the first 3 pages.

Optional Submission Process

If you are unable to submit a PDF, you can enter text in the online question box. The character limit is 8000, which equals roughly 3 single-spaced pages. If you need any other accommodations for submission, please reach out to the ACA Director of Grant Operations for support: bposatko@acacamps.org.

Final Application Guidelines

If your camp is chosen as a finalist from the LOI submissions, you should be prepared to submit the following information by the application deadline of April 7, 2025. We **highly recommend** that you prepare these before the finalist notification date of March 28, 2025, so that you can quickly submit your final application, if selected to apply.

Required items for final application:

- Letter of Commitment from your partner organization (school, district, or other community-based/intermediary organization)
- Tax-exempt status letter (any type of organization can qualify, including 501c3....)
- Full budget for your partnership, including all income beyond this grant contribution
- Plan for program execution, including how you will meet grant requirements, like providing photos and stories of impact
- Example of a story of impact that you shared externally in the past
- Evidence of ability to meet grant requirements, including camper demographics
- Organization logo and summary blurb, staff assigned to project, and other related items

The review team will evaluate applications on a 4-point confidence scale to determine how likely it is that the camp can execute on their plans and project goals. Applications will be given a score for most of the items above: 1 (not confident), 2 (slightly confident), 3 (confident) to 4 (highly confident). The two letters will automatically receive a 4 if submitted; all other items in the list above will be judged on a 4-point scale.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

1. Write your letter in a Word document.
2. Save it as a PDF.
3. Create a new account in the Online Portal (link below), which is called Foundant.
4. Enter your organization information.
5. Answer required questions (View [Question List Here](#)).
6. Upload your LOI and submit!

ONLINE PORTAL FOR SUBMISSION

<https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=acacamps>

IMPORTANT! *Emails for this application online system (Foundant) come from administrator@grantinterface.com, with the name of "American Camp Association."*

Please add this email address to your safe senders list.

- If you are looking for automated emails from the online application portal, search your email inbox and spam folders for the address above.
- If you have any issues navigating through Foundant or accessing the resources above, contact Bristol Posatko (bposatko@acacamps.org), Director of Grant Operations.

Additional Resources for Online Portal (Foundant)

For our grant applications, ACA uses a new online portal software called Foundant. Here is information from that organization to help you with your account and with using the website.

Tutorials

<https://support.foundant.com/hc/en-us/articles/4479853059991-GLM-Applicant-Tutorial>

- See GLM Applicant Tutorial (**New Dashboard**) content
- This webpage contains a video tutorial as well as step-by-step guides on how to create an account, apply for grants, and manage requests.

Glossary of terms:

<https://support.foundant.com/hc/en-us/articles/4404576157975-GLM-SLM-Glossary>

- This glossary defines the Foundant-specific terms you might come across as you're applying for a grant.

For More Help from ACA

ACA is committed to supporting camps from all fundraising experience levels in applying to funding opportunities. There will be office hours available at the following times:

Thursday, March 6, 2-3pm ET: Zoom Office Hours

- Come ask questions and get your answers. Join via the link at any point within the hour. Guests will remain in the waiting room until it is their turn.

<https://acacamps.zoom.us/j/87826489007?pwd=kpsGueEh92a2oEQ66B4a4Xd2ebbnLh.1>

Tuesday, March 11, 3pm ET: Office Hours at the ACA NY/NJ Tri-State CAMP Conference

- If you will be in Atlantic City, Laurie Browne, Senior Director of Learning & Innovation will be presenting at 2-3pm on our *other* grant opportunity - "How to Apply for a Character at Camp Grant."
- Join us after the session for Office Hours with Bristol Posatko, Director of Grant Operations (and project lead for this opportunity). This will be a casual connection point, and we'll meet in Room 420. Email bposatko@acacamps.org if you plan to connect.

Wednesday, March 12, 4-5pm ET: Zoom Office Hours

- Come ask questions and get your answers. Join via the link at any point within the hour. Guests will remain in the waiting room until it is their turn.

<https://acacamps.zoom.us/j/88569214972?pwd=PqfXxYUnvObW7HFg6Os43aEO7bxLxL.1>

Thursday, March 20, 2-3pm ET: Zoom Office Hours

- Come ask questions and get your answers. Join via the link at any point within the hour. Guests will remain in the waiting room until it is their turn.

<https://acacamps.zoom.us/j/84753629414?pwd=skkaJf56XWW3liZO6jiORd508mxN6f.1>

If you have any remaining questions, reach out to Bristol Posatko, Director of Grant Operations, and project lead: bposatko@acacamps.org. Thank you and good luck!