



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
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FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

2026 YMCA of the USA National Competitive Sports Events Financial Assistance

GUIDELINES

Overview

A limited number of financial assistance awards (up to \$600) are available to eligible youth athletes participating in YMCA National Competitive Sports Events to be used ONLY to cover transportation and lodging expenses for the sports event.

Background

YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) recognizes the commitment an athlete makes to training and competing in swimming and gymnastics competitions. We realize the financial strain these competitions can have on families. Y-USA hopes to alleviate some of the financial pressures associated with participation by making financial assistance available to local YMCAs to help offset an athlete's transportation and lodging expenses to a YMCA National competition event.

Travel and lodging financial assistance **shall not exceed \$600.00 per applicant. The funds will be distributed from Y-USA directly to the local YMCA** with a notification to the Athlete's YMCA coach approximately 6 weeks after the YMCA National competition.

Eligibility Requirements

- The applicant/athlete's application must be submitted by their YMCA Head Coach
- The local YMCA submitting the application must be in compliance with "The Rules that Govern YMCA Competitive Sports" and must be a chartered YMCA branch or association located in the United States.
- The applicant/athlete must have qualified, registered for and competed in the applicable YMCA National Competition.
- **The applicant/athlete or their family must be receiving assistance under their local YMCA's official Financial Assistance Program.**
- **The applicant/athlete's parent/guardian must consent to the application being submitted. Coaches will be required to submit a signed parental consent form within the application.**
- The Travel Assistance Request form (see below) must be completed in the Y-USA Grants Portal (SmartSimple). The local YMCA must specify the level of financial need they are requesting to help offset the applicant's travel and lodging expenses (note: a request cannot exceed \$600 per applicant).
- The local YMCA Executive Director and Head Coach must submit a signed letter(s) supporting and recommending the applicant's participation. The letter(s) must include:

- A statement indicating why a request for financial assistance is needed.
- A statement of support and/or recommendation for the applicant

How to Apply

Applications are accepted via Y-USA Grants Portal (SmartSimple) (<http://yusa.smartsimple.com>) during the application windows stated below. First-time submitters must register online at yusa.smartsimple.com. **The application form must be filled out completely and submitted by the applicant's YMCA Head Coach** with the necessary documents attached before it can be considered. The submitting Head coach will receive a confirmation email upon successful submission. The CEO of the applicant's YMCA will also be notified upon submission of the financial assistance application. Please note all applications must be submitted in SmartSimple to be valid. Submission Materials:

- Completed Travel Assistance Application Form
- Recommendation letter(s) signed by Head Coach and Executive Director
- Signed Parental/Guardian Consent form

Please note: the YMCA National Travel Assistance committee will only consider the requested submission materials.

Submitters new to Y-USA's Grants portal should review step-by-step training materials on the [Link](#) Fundraising Community.

Deadline and Notification Dates

Please note the application periods for each National Championship Competition. Applications will only be accepted for each Competition in the stated application windows.

2026 YMCA National Short Course Championship

Date	Description
February 2, 2026	Application Open
March 23, 2026	Application Closes at 11:59PM ET
Late March 2026	Head Coach Notified of Award Status
Monday, March 30 - Friday, April 3, 2026	YMCA National Short Course Championship Competition

2026 YMCA National Gymnastics Championship

Date	Description
February 16, 2026	Application Open
May 1, 2026	Application Closes at 11:59PM ET
Mid May 2026	Head Coach Notified of Award Status
June 27-July 1, 2026	YMCA National Gymnastics Championship

2026 YMCA National Long Course Championship

Date	Description
June 1, 2026	Application Open
July 21, 2026	Application Closes at 11:59PM ET
Late-July 2026	Head Coach Notified of Award Status
Tuesday, July 28 - Saturday, August 1, 2026	YMCA National Long Course Championship Competition

Evaluation Criteria

Financial Assistance applications will be reviewed by the YMCA National Travel Assistance committee and Y-USA staff. Financial Assistance is awarded based on the individual's financial need, participation, and overall character as demonstrated in the submitted application and letter(s) of recommendation.

Award Disbursement

Financial Assistance will be awarded to selected applicants in amounts not to exceed \$600. The local YMCA Head Coach will be notified by e-mail regarding the status of the application. The Committee reserves the right to adjust the dollars approved based on the number of applicants and the application evaluation. **If approved, the awarded funds will be sent directly to the local YMCA for allocation to the Applicant. Funds will be distributed approximately 45 days after notice of award, and only after verification of the applicant's attendance at the National Competition.**

Acknowledgment

Please note: After travel assistance funds have been distributed, the YMCA National Travel Assistance Committee encourages acknowledgement of the receipt of funds to the committee. Acknowledgements can be sent to Jim Ryan (jim.ryan@ymca.net) for distribution to the Committee. This serves as confirmation that athletes received funds after checks have been mailed to Ys.

APPLICATION

The application questions are provided here for reference only. Please note that the application must be completed and submitted in the Y-USA Grants Portal (SmartSimple) to be valid.

Eligibility Quiz:

- Is your local YMCA in compliance with "[The Rules that Govern YMCA Competitive Sports](#)"?
- Are you a YMCA Head Coach applying on behalf of a Y youth athlete who has qualified, registered and will compete in one of the following events during the calendar year: YMCA National Short Course Championship, YMCA National Long Course Championship, OR YMCA National Gymnastics Championship?
- Is the applicant and/or the applicant's family receiving assistance under your local YMCA's official Financial Assistance program?

Application Questions

Event Information

1. Select the National Competition that you are requesting travel assistance for:
 - YMCA National Short Course Championship
 - YMCA National Long Course Championship
 - YMCA National Gymnastics Championship

Head Coach Information

2. I am the Head Coach of the applicant. (Yes or No)
3. If no, please provide the name and email of the applicant's Head Coach.

Applicant Information

4. Applicant's Name
5. Parent/Guardian Phone Number
6. Parent/Guardian Email
7. Parent's Address (Address, city, state, zip)
8. Is the applicant receiving assistance under your YMCA's official assistance program? (Yes or No).
9. How many years has the applicant participated in the applicable YMCA sport (i.e. Swimming and/or Gymnastics)? Please include the number of years participating in the national competition sport ONLY.
10. How many years has the applicant competed at a YMCA National competition in their respective sport?

Request Details

11. Please enter requested amount for financial assistance (*Not to exceed \$600*):

(Note: Requested funds are only to cover travel and lodging costs)

Letters of Reference

12. The local YMCA Executive Director and Head Coach must submit a signed letter(s) supporting and recommending the applicant's participation. The letter(s) must include:

- A statement indicating why a request for financial assistance is needed.
- A statement of support and/or recommendation for the applicant

Upload the YMCA Executive Director Letter of Reference and Head Coach letter(s) of reference here. *Please note: the review committee will not consider any additional supporting documentation besides the letters or recommendation; please do not upload any additional documentation beyond the required letters.*

Parental/Guardian Consent

13. The Head Coach is required to obtain parental/guardian consent to submit this application on behalf of the applicant. Please upload a signed and dated copy of the consent form signed by at least one parent/guardian of the applicant. Please use the consent form template provided here.

Applicant Commitments

Please check each statement to confirm your agreement of the financial assistance policies:

- Financial assistance funds, if awarded, are to be used exclusively to cover travel expenses to the applicable National Competitive Sports Event for the applicant/athlete stated in this application.
- Financial assistance funds, if awarded, will only be disbursed after confirmation that the applicant/athlete has participated in the applicable National Competition.
- Financial assistance funds, if awarded, will be disbursed to the local YMCA directly for allocation to the awarded applicant/athlete.
- My supervisor and the Branch Executive/CEO are aware and approve of this application.

YMCA of the USA National Competitive Sports Events Financial Assistance PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

I hereby consent to an application for financial assistance on behalf of my child to be submitted, by the child's local Y Head Coach, to YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) via Y-USA's SmartSimple online application system. I understand that the submitted application on behalf of my child will be reviewed by YMCA of the USA staff and members of the YMCA National Travel Assistance Committee. I understand that the goal of this application is to request financial assistance to cover travel and lodging expenses related to the child attending a YMCA National Competitive Sports Event.

I understand that in order to submit an application for the YMCA of the USA National Competitive Sports Events Financial Assistance, I must provide the following information which will be included in the application:

- Child's name
- Parent/guardian name, phone number, email address, and mailing address
- Number of years child has participated in local YMCA sports
- Number of years child has competed at a National YMCA sports competition

Additionally, I understand that the following information will be provided in the application by the local Y:

- Name of YMCA Sports Competition for which the assistance is being requested
- Letters of recommendation for my child, signed by the Head Coach and local Y Executive
- Confirmation that child/child's family is receiving financial assistance under the local Y's official Financial Assistance program
- Requested amount of financial assistance (cannot exceed \$600)

I understand that submitting an application is not a guarantee of funding, and I will be informed of the status of the request at the email address provided in the application. I further understand that financial assistance, if awarded, will be paid directly to the local YMCA for allocation.

By signing below, I affirm that I have read the above in its entirety and I understand the nature of the YMCA of the USA National Competitive Sports Events Financial Assistance. I also affirm that my questions regarding the program have been answered to my satisfaction.

A signature delivered by e-mail delivery shall create a valid and binding obligation of the party executing (or on whose behalf such signature is executed) with the same force and effect as if such signature page were an original thereof.

I affirm that I am the parent or legal guardian of _____
(Child's Name)

Signature of parent or legal guardian: _____

Printed name: _____