



2025 GLOBAL INNOVATION CHALLENGE ACCELERATING YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY

SUMMARY & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Last Updated: 4 February 2025

Despite recent progress, young people globally continue to experience challenges in their pursuit of employment, including [skills mismatch](#) and gaining access to quality jobs. According to the International Labour Organization, 65 million young people globally are unemployed.¹ Since the Citi Foundation's inception, advancing youth employability has been integral to our mission of supporting low-income communities globally. The Citi Foundation invested more than \$300 million over the last decade alone in programs that supported over one million young people in expanding their skills, experience and networks through its Pathways to Progress initiative. Building on our funding journey, this year's Global Innovation Challenge is focused on youth employability, and we invite proposals from community organizations developing innovative employment solutions for low-income youth primarily between the ages of 15 and 24.²

These innovative solutions could include, but are not limited to:

- Technical and vocational training programs that upskill or reskill low-income youth and move them into employment, which could include paid internships, apprenticeships or formal employment.
- Entrepreneurship programming that specifically focuses on the incubation or scaling of youth-led enterprises to increase job creation and access to self-generated income.
- Efforts to embed financial education programming into workforce development initiatives equipping low-income youth with financial skills and access to safe and affordable financials tools.

FUNDING OVERVIEW

- The Foundation plans to award grants of \$500,000 (USD) payable over two years to 50 community organizations working in select communities where Citi has a presence.
- Grants are meant to be catalytic in nature, supporting the piloting or expansion of ideas and projects in the field of youth employability.
- In addition to grant funds, the Citi Foundation will seek ways to support the selected grantees through volunteerism as well as hosting learning opportunities to promote shared lessons and best practices.

¹ International Labour Organization, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024.

² While there is no universal definition of the youth age group, we are leveraging guidance from the [United Nations](#) where 'youth' is defined as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 years.



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Applicant organizations must be registered as nonprofit entities under local law. For example, for U.S. entities, applicants need to be tax-exempt public charities as per Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.
- Applicants must be able to submit their most recent externally audited financial statements, including auditor's notes, covering some part of calendar year 2023 or a subsequent year.
- Applicant's proposed program must align with the Foundation's mission of supporting low-income communities as defined by local standards and definitions.
- Applicant's proposed program must impact one or more of the target geographies (see Q1).

APPLICATION PROCESS & DEADLINES

Registration Deadline: Organizations must first register and confirm they meet the eligibility requirements to gain access to the Citi Foundation's grantmaking portal. Eligible applicants will receive access to the portal within three business days. The deadline to register to apply is 12 p.m. New York time (Eastern Time) on March 4, 2025. To register [click here](#).

Application Deadline: Applicant organizations must submit their completed applications through the Citi Foundation's online grant portal. The deadline to submit a completed application is 12 p.m. New York time (Eastern Time) on March 18, 2025.

SELECTION PROCESS

Round One: All complete applications submitted by the deadline will be reviewed. We may reach out by email for clarifying information during this first round.

Round Two: A shortlist of organizations will be invited to the second round. During this round, we will request, by email, additional information, or documentation to assist us with our due diligence. You will also need to complete a brief organizational questionnaire. This round may include an in-person or virtual site visit so we can learn more about your organization's mission and track record. Applicant organizations not selected to move forward to this second round will be notified no later than July 2025.

Finalists: From the shortlisted organizations, 50 organizations will be selected as awardees of the 2025 Global Innovation Challenge. All applicant organizations, including those selected for funding, will be informed of the funding decision no later than October 2025.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Does my program have to impact one or more of the Citi Foundation's target geographies to be eligible? What are the target geographies?

Yes, your proposed program needs to impact one or more of the target geographies to be considered for this RFP. The Citi Foundation deploys a “more than philanthropy” approach and focuses on funding programs and solutions in select communities where Citi has a presence. As such, to be eligible for this RFP, your organization’s proposed program needs to impact one or more of the target geographies noted below:

Africa

Algeria, Cameroon, Côte D’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia

Asia Pacific

Australia, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Korea, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam

Europe

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine and United Kingdom

Middle East

Bahrain, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates

Latin America & the Caribbean

Argentina, Bahamas, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad & Tobago and Uruguay

North America

Canada, Mexico and select U.S. states and territories:

California, Florida, Illinois, New York, Puerto Rico and Washington D.C.



2. Does my organization have to be headquartered in one of the geographies listed above (Q1) to be eligible to apply?

No, but your organization's proposed program needs to impact one or more of these geographies to be eligible.

3. Can my organization submit an application in a language other than English?

All applications must be submitted in English with the exception of certain required documents. Please note that the required documents differ depending on whether your organization is registered outside the United States. If your organization is based outside the United States, audited financial statements, annual reports, governing documents and registration documents may be submitted in a language other than English. Refer directly to the online application form for further details.

4. What if my organization is not incorporated as a nonprofit and/or does not have at least one year of externally audited financial statements?

Only organizations that are nonprofit entities under local law will be considered for funding. In addition, only organizations that have at least one year of externally audited financial statements (covering some part of calendar year 2023 or a subsequent year) will be considered for funding. The externally audited financial documents must include an auditor's letter with a signature, complete financial statements and auditor's notes.

5. My organization is based outside the United States, can we apply?

Yes. Organizations based outside the United States that meet our eligibility criteria can apply directly for funding. Grants to organizations based outside the United States will be funded through Charities Aid Foundation America (CAF America). CAF America may require additional information and documentation from an applicant once the Citi Foundation has recommended the grant to them. CAF America will ultimately make the final approval decision for those grants and have oversight responsibility throughout the grant term.

6. Can my organization apply through a fiscal sponsor?

No. For this specific grant program, organizations working with fiscal sponsors are not eligible to apply.



7. If my organization has an active grant with the Citi Foundation, is my organization eligible to apply for the Global Innovation Challenge?

Yes. Any organization that meets the criteria for the RFP can apply.

8. What are the key deadlines and program milestones for this funding opportunity?

Registration Opens	<i>February 4, 2025</i>
Registration Deadline	<i>March 4, 2025, 12 p.m. (noon) New York Time (ET)</i>
Application Deadline	<i>March 18, 2025, 12 p.m. (noon) New York Time (ET)</i>
Review Rounds	<i>March – August 2025</i>
Awards Announcement	<i>Q4 2025</i>

9. Can my organization work in partnership with another organization to submit a proposal?

Yes. Organizations interested in working on a solution together should determine the lead organization and work together to submit one application. Please note that only the lead organization, if selected, would be awarded the grant and would be fiscally responsible for the full grant award and deliverables and for ensuring their partners' compliance with the Foundation's terms of award.

10. Can my organization submit multiple applications?

No. Eligible nonprofit organizations should only submit one application to the RFP. Local affiliates of global nonprofits that meet the eligibility requirements are considered separate organizations and may apply directly for funding. Note that separate organizations should not submit applications for the same program.

11. Can a global, regional or national organization apply for a program that would be delivered by its local affiliate organization(s)?

Yes, an organization working at the global, regional or national level can apply for a program delivered by its local affiliate(s). However, if the local affiliate(s) meets the eligibility requirements on its own, we recommend that the affiliate apply directly.

Please note only one application per program will be accepted. For example, if a regional organization submits an application on behalf of a local affiliate, the local affiliate should not submit another application for the same program. If organizations are collaborating on a project, the partners should determine the lead organization and work together to submit one application for consideration.

**12. What is the size and structure of the grant award?**

Grantees will each receive a two-year, restricted grant of \$500,000. The anticipated disbursement schedule, subject to change, is as follows: \$250,000 of the grant funds in Year 1 (2025) and \$250,000 in Year 2 (2026).

13. How will grant amounts be determined?

The Citi Foundation has standardized the grant size to \$500,000 (USD), which can be utilized by the selected organizations for a period of 2 years. Applicants will be required to submit a detailed program budget that equals \$500,000 (USD).

14. What can be included in the required \$500,000 (USD) 2-year program budget?

The grants awarded through this RFP will be restricted. Funds could cover a range of items, including but not limited to, salaries, technology, program materials, trainings, events, research, communications, marketing, evaluation, convenings and overhead. Further guidance is provided in the grant application.

15. Can any portion of the funds be used for political or lobbying purposes?

The grants awarded through this RFP will be restricted. All applicants should read carefully all the terms noted in the application form for details on the parameters that all grantees will need to adhere, including that grant funds cannot be used for political or lobbying purposes, including, without limitation: participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for elective public office; voter registration or get-out-the-vote activities (unless conducted in a non-partisan manner); making independent expenditures in support of, or in opposition to, any political party or candidate for elective public office; or attempting to influence legislation or any act of a legislative body at the federal, state or local levels.

16. Is there a minimum or maximum organizational budget size that is required for an organization to apply?

No. However, before applying, organizations should consider how a grant of \$500,000 (USD) over 2 years would impact their legal and/or operational status.

17. Which type of organizations and projects will not be considered for funding?

The types of organizations and projects that will not be considered for funding include, but are not limited to:



- Private foundations, including operating and nonoperating foundations
- Organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, sex, gender identity or expression, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, veteran's status, or other legally protected personal characteristic or status
- Individuals
- Lobbying, political causes, campaigns, or candidates
- Memorials
- Gift matching
- Organizations that require the use of a fiscal sponsor
- Organizations that do not meet the eligibility criteria as per this document

18. Will applicants be contacted after submitting their application?

Upon submission of your application, you will receive an automated email confirmation. Your organization may be contacted via email for additional information or documentation. Ultimately, we intend to notify all applicants of the outcome by October 2025. Please refer to page 2 of this document for further information on the selection phases.

19. What are the reporting requirements?

Selected organizations will be required to submit two interim reports over the course of the program and one final report via the Citi Foundation's online grant portal.

20. If my organization isn't selected, will the Foundation provide us with individual feedback upon request?

Given the high volume of applications anticipated, the Citi Foundation will not be in the position to provide feedback to individual applicants.

21. Where can I find more information about this funding opportunity?

Please visit Citi Foundation's [website](#) for more information about this funding opportunity. Please contact citifoundationRFP@citi.com if you have any questions.

22. Can I provide feedback to the Foundation on this RFP?

Of course, and we welcome your thoughts. Please submit your feedback directly to citifoundationRFP@citi.com. The Foundation team hopes to learn from applicants and stakeholders and use those lessons to continue to iterate and improve our approach for the future.