

# USAID Youth Actively Create Opportunities Activity

## Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO)

Dear Prospective Applicants:

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Prime Recipient Improving Economies for Stronger Communities (IESC) invites applications for the Youth Actively Create Opportunities Activity Grants Program. IESC is issuing three Annual Program Statements (APS) for grant activities that accelerate and expand upon the Activity’s objectives to address youth priorities and increase youth economic opportunities, competencies, and youth civic engagement in North Macedonia.

The purpose of these APSs is to disseminate information to prospective applicants so they may develop and submit applications for IESC funding. These APSs: (A) describe the types of activities for which applications will be considered; (B) describe the funding available and the process and requirements for submitting applications; (C) explain the criteria for evaluating applications. Subject to the availability of funds, IESC anticipates awarding multiple grants as a result of these APSs, on a first-come-first-served basis. To be competitive under this solicitation, applications must be fully responsive to all directions within the individual APS document.

Issuance of this notice does not constitute a binding commitment on the part of IESC to issue an award, nor does it commit the IESC to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. IESC reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted under these APSs.

### 1. BACKGROUND

The USAID Youth Actively Create Opportunities Activity is a five-year initiative aiming to increase positive youth contributions to society and collective youth leadership. To achieve this, IESC and Macedonian partners Center for Entrepreneurship and Executive Development (CEED) Hub Skopje and Youth Educational Forum (YEF) prioritize a youth-centered local systems approach to jointly implement activities under the Activity’s three Components:

- Component 1: Partnerships created to support economic opportunities attractive to youth.
- Component 2: Youth’s competencies for jobs, progressive careers, and civic life strengthened.
- Component 3: Values and experience that underpin self-reliance promoted.

### 2. OBJECTIVE & SCOPE

The Youth Actively Create Opportunities Activity is seeking full applications for grant activities that accelerate and expand upon the Activity’s objectives to address youth priorities and increase youth economic opportunities, competencies, and youth civic engagement in North Macedonia. The following grant packages are available:

APS number	Grant Technical Description	Purpose of Grant	Ceiling Amount*	Minimum Required Leverage**	Grant Duration
APS YACO 01 – 2024	Rapid Response Grant	Addresses the immediate programmatic needs of youth-serving organizations, such as improving youth spaces and undertaking youth-led community-based activities.	\$20,000	5%	3 - 9 months
APS YACO 02 – 2024	Challenge Grant	Addresses formal and non-formal youth skilling challenges via training, internship, and career guidance, leading to first or better employment.	\$50,000	15%	6 - 18 months
APS YACO 03 – 2024	Sustainable Growth Grant	Addresses systemic challenges in the youth-development and broader employment ecosystem, to increase youth employment and youth participation in society, and increase the long-term capacity for self-sustainability of the grantee or other stakeholders.	\$150,000	20%	12 - 24 months

\*Ceiling amount is the maximum amount to be awarded;

\*\*Leverage is calculated as a percentage of amount of funding provided by USAID.

### 3. ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants must be registered in North Macedonia and may include youth groups, youth serving organizations, the private sector, community organizations, private education and training institutions, professional or business associations, and NGOs. In addition, applicants can apply with partners of the abovementioned organizations. Such partnerships will consist of one lead applicant who meets all eligibility criteria and will be the grant recipient. The partnership organization will provide the lead applicant with support, resources, and or/technical expertise; they will not receive a subgrant of the USAID funding. Eligibility of the above mentioned applicants differs per APS and is in accordance with the proposed objectives per grant package.

Applicants currently implementing grant activities may apply for a new grant to build-on and/or upscale activities, however the new grant must begin after the expiration of the preceding grant and applications must be received within the APS deadlines.

An Applicant can submit only one application and only under one APS of its choice.

### 4. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Full applications should be submitted in electronic copy. All applications should reference the APS number and the grant technical description, namely **Rapid Response Grant**, **Challenge Grant** and/or **Sustainable Growth Grant**.

Electronic copies in Word and Excel format and signed copies of the originals in PDF format should be emailed to: [yacogrants@iesc.org](mailto:yacogrants@iesc.org).

Please note that the email **cannot exceed the maximum size 25MB**.

To make the information on grants accessible to all interested applicants and give them a chance to ask questions about the process and receive guidance on how to submit a full application, virtual info

sessions will be organized in Macedonian language with the possibility to ask questions in Macedonian and Albanian language:

Virtual info session	Date	Time (UTC/GMT +2 hours)
Microsoft Teams	May 20, 2024	11:00 hours
Microsoft Teams	May 22, 2024	13:00 hours

To attend the virtual info sessions, please register by filling in the required information on the following link <https://forms.office.com/r/Q6myv8T758> **no later than May 20, 2024**.

Applicants can also send questions about the APS process to [yacogrants@iesc.org](mailto:yacogrants@iesc.org) until **May 27, 2024**. No later than **May 31, 2024**, all answers to questions will be posted on the following Activity's website: <https://iesc.org/program/north-macedonia-youth-actively-create-opportunities/>

Full applications due dates are listed in the table below. Applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered nor will incomplete applications that do not include all required annexes.

Overview of key dates:

Activity	Dates
Registration for the virtual info session due date	<b>May 20, 2024</b>
Virtual info sessions	<b>May 20, 2024 and May 22, 2024</b>
Questions due to <a href="mailto:yacogrants@iesc.org">yacogrants@iesc.org</a>	<b>May 27, 2024</b>
Posts responses to questions	<b>May 31, 2024</b>

Annual Program Statements Timeline	Dates
APSs start date	<b>May 2, 2024</b>
APSs end date	<b>November 7, 2024</b>

Applications can be submitted at any time between the above listed APS start date and end date. The applications received will be reviewed twice during the APS timeline, on the below listed dates, in the order in which they were received. YACO reserves the right to close the notice of funding opportunity as soon as all funds have been obligated.

Application Reviews	Review Date	Estimated start date of the grant
Period 1 Review	<b>June 7, 2024</b> (at 14:00 hours (UTC/GMT +2 hours))	<b>November 2024</b>
Period 2 Review	<b>November 7, 2024</b> (at 14:00 hours (UTC/GMT +2 hours))	<b>February 2025</b>

To access the full Annual Program Statements and related annexes, click on the relevant links below:

<a href="#">APS YACO 01 – 2024 Rapid Response Grants</a>						
<a href="#">APS YACO 02 – 2024 Challenge Grants</a>	<a href="#">Annex 1</a>	<a href="#">Annex 2</a>	<a href="#">Annex 3</a>	<a href="#">Annex 4</a>	<a href="#">Annex 5</a>	<a href="#">Annex 6</a>
<a href="#">APS YACO 03 – 2024 Sustainable Growth Grants</a>						