

Creative Young Entrepreneur Toolkit



Hosted by the Grand Rapids Junior Chamber



Introduction

The Creative Young Entrepreneur (CYE) program is an international competition designed to inspire and support young entrepreneurs. It challenges participants to showcase active businesses through innovative business plans, market strategies, and sustainability goals.

Eligibility

- *Open to both JCI + GRJC members and non-members*
- *Businesses must be active for a minimum of 3 months*
- *Applicants must be 18-40 years old.*
- *Submissions require a detailed business plan, a presentation, and a demonstrated ability to clearly articulate business goals*

Creative Young Entrepreneur

National Pitch Competition

Hosted by the Grand Rapids Junior Chamber

The Grand Rapids Junior Chamber is West Michigan's premier leadership development organization designed to empower your future leaders with skills vital for long-term organizational success. Throughout their membership, members are led through various leadership modules and given opportunities to apply their new skills to real-world challenges.

BUILT FOR LEADERS. DRIVEN BY PURPOSE.

Junior Chamber International is a global network of changemakers building better leaders for a better world. For over 100 years, we've helped young people grow through real-world projects, leadership training, and meaningful connections that drive positive change.

CREATIVE YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

The JCI Creative Young Entrepreneur Program is a competition with the main objective to motivate and inspire JCI's enterprising young leaders. Starting in 2022, young people from outside of our network will be able to submit their businesses through a Business Plan Template with the opportunity of having it reviewed by delegated experts. The CYE Program, through sponsors and partners, will reward the winners of the competition for their efforts and also play an important role in inspiring and promoting participants to create innovative new businesses, and therefore jobs, in line with the JCI RISE Initiative to tackle the economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

LOCALLY ROOTED, GLOBALLY CONNECTED.

JCI members span more than 5,000 communities in over 100 countries. Through local initiatives and international collaboration, we create a ripple effect of change that transcends borders and cultures. As a global youth leadership organization, we connect young leaders worldwide, fostering knowledge exchange, cultural understanding, and joint efforts on projects that address societal challenges. From small community actions to large-scale international campaigns, JCI provides a platform where leadership meets service and vision meets action.

LEARN MORE

GRjuniorchamber.com



"Being a member of the Grand Rapids Junior Chamber has been a life-changing experience. To have the privilege of building skills in project management, leadership, and strategic thinking while connecting with an international network of ambitious leaders is one opportunity that does not come around every day. GRJC has aligned my passion for growth and opportunities with incredible opportunities. I proudly dedicate my career's success to the GRJC."

*-Celeste Ross, MBA, SHRM-CP
Grand Rapids Junior Chamber President*

Registration Fees

How to Apply

1. **Register online via the provided link on the CYE website**
2. **Complete the application form in English**
3. **Submit a detailed business plan, including market analysis, strategy, and financial data**
4. **Upload a one-minute pitch video (horizontal format).**
5. **Attach a high-quality head-and-shoulders photograph (300 dpi)**
6. **Indicate whether participation will be online or in-person for the Area Conference and World Congress**
7. **Conference and World Congress**

Local Competition

In-Person Participant

100 USD

Virtual Participants

50 USD

Note:

In-person participants must purchase their own travel and accommodations as they are the participant's responsibility.



Competition Breakdown



Online Application Review

A jury of experts will carefully review all submitted applications and select 20 contestants to participate in the preliminary round. The selection will be based on the quality of the business plan and pitch video submitted.

Local Competition

Preliminary Round

In this stage, only twenty (20) selected participants will have the opportunity to pitch their businesses for one minute and thirty seconds. Following these pitches, our judges will deliberate on selecting four finalists who will advance to the final round. Please note that the number of finalists may be adjusted at the discretion of the jury members based on the quality of the submissions received.

Final Round

The final round features the four finalists. Each finalist will have three minutes to pitch their projects, followed by a six-minute question-and-answer session with the judges.

Competition Details

Language

All application forms will only be accepted in English since this will be the pitching competition language.



Hybrid Event

In-Person Participation

If you prefer the in-person experience and want to present your business in front of a live audience, you can do so by attending the Grand Rapids Junior Chamber Event. Please note that in-person pitching requires a separate ticket for the event itself, which is not included in the CYE registration fee and it's mandatory for this format.

Online Participation

Pitch your idea comfortably from your location. We will provide details and instructions with support for virtual pitching.

Prizes



Local Competition

1st Place

The winner will receive \$1,000 USD and exclusive access to the JCI in Business Program, which provides specialized resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities designed for top innovators. Additionally, the winner will receive complimentary Area Conference in Antigua registration to compete as JCI USA's CYE participant and travel accommodations up to \$2,000 USD and complimentary annual membership to the Grand Rapids Junior Chamber.

2nd Place

The runner-up will receive complimentary annual membership to the Grand Rapids Junior Chamber, access to the JCI in Business Program and access to the 2025 World Congress CYE Program.

Area Conference

1st Place

The winner will receive \$5,000 USD and exclusive access to the CYE Accelerator Program, which provides specialized resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities designed for top innovators. Additionally, the winner will gain access to the 2026 World Congress CYE Program.

2nd Place

The runner-up will receive free registration for the 2026 World Congress to continue networking and development.

World Congress

1st Place

The winner will receive \$10,000 USD and exclusive access to the CYE Accelerator Program, which provides specialized resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities designed for top innovators.

2nd Place

The runner-up will receive free registration for networking and development.

Disclaimer for Area Conference and World Congress:

- In-person participants must purchase a separate ticket*
- Travel and accommodation are the participant's responsibility*
- Cash prizes will be transferred after the World Congress*



Guidelines

Accuracy and Honesty:

All business plans, pitches, and presentations must accurately represent the venture. Any misrepresentation will lead to disqualification.

Competition and Differentiation:

Your business proposal should clearly differentiate your business from competitors. The clarity and descriptiveness of your proposal are crucial and can significantly enhance your chances of becoming a finalist. In the business world, this distinctiveness is essential to attract and inspire stakeholders to support your venture.

Eligibility Restrictions:

The project bearer cannot be a current member of the JCI Board of Directors, and paid staff members are ineligible to participate.

Submission Deadline:

The application form must be submitted by the deadline specified by JCI World Headquarters. Late applications will not be accepted.

Language Requirement:

All application forms and presentations must be in English, which will also be the language used for pitching and training sessions.

Submission Limit:

Only one submission per business is allowed.

These guidelines are designed to ensure a fair and impactful competition, encouraging innovation and integrity among participants.

