



Youth Investment Program 2009 Grantmaking Plan

I. INTRODUCTION

The Stewardship Council is dedicated to investing in efforts to improve the lives of young people through connections with the outdoors. Implementation of the Youth Investment Program's first three years of Grantmaking, as outlined in the yearly giving plans, have contributed considerably toward achieving this goal through supporting the efforts of community parks and youth development programs, and nurturing efforts in communities most in need.

Blueprint Research & Design, Inc. (BRD) reviewed the 2008 Grantmaking Plan under contract with the Stewardship Council. The BRD findings (see Memo from BRD) and analysis suggests that the grantmaking process is generally working well. Given that long-range planning is underway, the same overall grantmaking strategy will be continued in 2009. However, a number of modest enhancements and refinements are reflected in the plan.

II. GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Goal

To improve the lives of underserved youth by providing greater access to outdoor experiences — from urban parks in the city to watersheds in the wilderness.

Objectives

- Increase the participation of underserved youth in successful outdoor urban and wilderness programs.
- Improve the cultural relevance of outdoor and park programs to better serve and reflect the diverse youth of California.
- Make the outdoors a more integral part of youth's lives to improve their general health and well-being.
- Improve the infrastructure of community parks and urban open spaces to make them more accessible and welcoming.
- Support coordinated approaches to helping youth get outdoors and to increase their well-being through partnerships among diverse sectors involved in youth development (e.g., health, environmental justice, mental health, education, and juvenile justice).

Program Strategy

In 2009, the Stewardship Council will continue to implement a highly-respected and targeted grantmaking program to reduce physical, financial, and social barriers to enable youth participation in outdoor experiences. To achieve its stated goal and objectives, the Stewardship Council will direct grants to support:

- Emerging, grassroots efforts aimed at reducing barriers for youth engagement in outdoor activities in communities with significant needs (Catalyst Fund)
- Day-to-day operations of promising programs and high-impact organizations (Impact Fund);
- Advance the field of outdoor education through projects that help eliminate frequently-cited barriers to connecting youth with the outdoors (Initiative Fund);
- Substantial improvements in the infrastructure of community parks and urban open spaces that are planned and executed by established organizations that have demonstrated capacity (Infrastructure Fund).

Priorities

Across these various funds, the Youth Investment Program is particularly interested in supporting outdoor programs that demonstrate the following elements:

- Demonstrate well-rounded approaches to youth development (e.g., combining outdoor education with academics, health, food, environment, environmental justice, leadership, media, or other youth development models).
- Employ best practices for outdoor and/or environmental education that actively engage learners, promote discovery, and address the interconnectedness of relationships in the natural and social environments.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for connecting youth to the outdoors that go beyond the one-time outdoor experience.
- Integrate outdoor education into the lives of young people and transfer the lessons learned from outdoor experiences to school, home, and community.
- Recognize and address the need for adult relationships in youth's lives and seek to incorporate adult relationships as a component in its approach. This relationship may be in the form of mentors, extended kin care, foster care, families or extended family members.
- Demonstrate a commitment and capacity to collaborate with others in the field to make the outdoors a more integral part of youth's lives.
- Share and reflect the core values of the Stewardship Council including collaboration, stewardship, discovery, sustainability, and leadership.
- Bring resources and funds beyond those of the Stewardship Council to ensure continuance of efforts over time.

III. APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

Baseline Criteria for Funding

To be eligible for consideration, organizations that apply for funding must at minimum:

- Be a federally and California exempt organization under IRC Sec 501(C)(3) and/or classified as a public charity or a public agency, school district, or a federally recognized tribe, or a fiscally sponsored project of an exempt organization.
- Operate within the geographic scope of the Stewardship Council; simply put, the youth



served must come from the PG&E ratepayer service territory. (Reference maps are available on our website.)

- Serve youth who are between the ages of 13 to 18 (non-school-based projects), or between 7th and 12th grades (school-based projects); and
- Have been in existence for at least one full calendar year (with the exception of the Catalyst Fund for grassroots organizations).
- Meet the eligibility requirements of the individual grant fund.

Geographic Focus

Prior to developing our grantmaking program, the Stewardship Council identified three geographic areas of focus for our funding efforts. They are: the metropolitan Bay Area, the urban areas of the Central Valley ("the Highway 99 corridor"), and rural areas with high rates of poverty. These areas will continue to be the target of our grantmaking for 2009.

While the Stewardship Council has made strong efforts to increase the pool of applicants from these geographic areas, it also recognizes that additional outreach and technical assistance is needed. These efforts will take place primarily through local third party experts in collaboration with Stewardship Council staff

Previous and Current Grantees

Previous award winners are welcome to apply in 2009. Any funding awards will be contingent on successful completion of the funded project and submission of all requested documentation and reports.

Multi-Year Funding

The Youth Investment Program will explore the creation of a multi-year funding opportunity. The committee will explore the concept of inviting previous and current grant award winners to a special invitation multi-year grant round. The YIP will explore providing successful grantees with a multi-year grant on the condition that they also participate in a rigorous evaluation of their efforts and programs. The details and plan for such a program will be fully explored in early 2009.

IV. 2009 GRANT PROGRAM FUNDS

Catalyst Fund: Nurturing Grassroots Efforts to Improve Access to Outdoor Experiences

This round of funding is only open to organizations whose annual operating budgets are under \$150,000. The Stewardship Council will target up to \$150,000 to support grassroots organizations. The Catalyst funds will be available for qualified applicants requesting less than \$15,000. A qualified grassroots organization is defined as one that is all or largely volunteer driven; has few full-time staff persons or equivalent; has an annual budget, including projects, of less than \$150,000; and has not received significant foundation support. Grassroots organizations must identify a significant need related to access to outdoor experiences, describe why that need is a priority for the community, develop a clear plan for translating that need into action, and demonstrate an ability to account for the expenditure of funds. Grants of up to

\$15,000 will be awarded during two funding cycles in 2009. Applicants in this round will not be required to have been in operation for at least one year.

Impact Fund: Sparking Innovation and Lowering Barriers

The Impact Fund is designed to support more established organizations with the resources they need to get underserved youth connected to the outdoors. These grants have the potential to provide resources to overcome some of the obstacles and barriers identified in the Stewardship Council's background research. Organizations are encouraged to request funds that will address the barriers that are keeping youth from getting outdoors. In particular, these funds have the potential for lowering the threshold for accessing the outdoors; enhancing the cultural relevancy of the programming offered by the grant-seeking organization; or creating an innovative approach to reaching this population. These funds may be used for, but are not limited to, dedicated programming or operations, program staff, development, and capacity building.

Initiative Fund: Lowering the Barriers to Connecting Youth to the Outdoors

The Initiative Fund is designed to support ventures that eliminate frequently-cited barriers to connecting young people with the outdoors. Grantees will create initiatives that demonstrate their ability to reduce local and/or regional barriers and that will have a ripple effect in their community and region. Grantees in the Initiative Fund will be expected to document their project, approach, successes and challenges and to widely share their work and findings. As a result of the Initiative Fund, organizations, agencies, youth providers and others working to get youth connected to the outdoors will be able to reduce the barriers and increase access to the outdoors and open space for the youth in their region.

The Initiative Fund is aimed at (but not limited to) improving access of underserved youth to the outdoors by eliminating frequently-cited barriers such as:

- Lack of transportation to reach open spaces
- Programming that is not culturally relevant
- Little to no access of appropriate gear
- Misperceptions about safety risks from being in the outdoors, and
- Improved availability of viable open space*

Grantseekers are encouraged to request funding for programs and projects that will result in demonstrated effectiveness. Approaches and methodologies may include (but are not limited to): multi-generational programming, programming involving adults/parents/families, coalition building, building of youth leadership, cross-sector collaborations, partnerships and collaborations, networking, etc.

The Stewardship Council will target up to \$500,000 for this purpose.

*These grants are not for improving park/open space infrastructure. If you wish to submit a proposal to improve infrastructure, see the Infrastructure Fund below.

Infrastructure Fund: Building Parks and Playgrounds

The Infrastructure Fund is designed to support efforts to improve community parks and open space to make them more accessible, viable and safe for children and youth. Proposals will increase and/or greatly improve park infrastructure and will directly result in creating more welcoming environments. These grants are intended to support proposals that have identified park projects that address the lack of outdoor space for underserved children and youth and that will result in long-term infrastructure improvements that encourage park usage. **The Stewardship Council will only consider proposals that can demonstrate that the entire project can be completed within two years of funding.** The Stewardship Council will favor proposals that involve existing facilities and those that create facilities that have broad community impact and are accessible by the target population.

V. PROGRAM OPERATIONS

Budget

The Stewardship Council will commit between \$1.5 million and \$2.0 million in grant funding for 2009. We will continue to offer four grant funds (see Table A for a summary of key elements for each type of grant):

1. "Catalyst" – Program funding for under \$15,000*
2. "Impact" - Program funding from \$15,000-\$50,000
3. "Initiative" - Project funding from \$50,000-\$150,000
4. "Infrastructure" - Infrastructure funding up to \$200,000

**Note: the Catalyst fund is only open to organizations with annual operating budgets of \$150,000 or less.*

Timeline

Table B proposes a general timeline for 2009. A more detailed timeline will be developed by staff by January 2009 so as to coordinate with board meetings and other pre-scheduled activities.

VI. APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

The CyberGrants online grants management and application system will continue to be used in 2009. As indicated in Table A (attached), organizations applying for **Initiative** Fund grants will be required to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) as a first step to receiving funding. Select organizations will be invited to submit full proposals only after review and consideration by the Stewardship Council staff.

Organizations that received funding in previous years are eligible to apply for funds in 2009 (subject to completion of their current grant award agreements and reports). Additionally, grant-seekers that are denied funding in one round are not eligible to apply in another round of the same fund in the same year.

External Advisory Panel

The Stewardship Council will continue to use two External Advisory Panels (EAP) to provide technical expertise and guidance for the review and ranking of competing applications. As in previous years, one panel will focus on program grants (Impact and Initiative Funds) and the other panel will focus on infrastructure grants (Infrastructure Fund). The program EAP will comprise approximately 20-25 volunteer members, each of whom will participate in two of the three proposed review sessions. The infrastructure EAP will comprise approximately 10 members. EAP members will serve staggered two-year terms though exceptions may be made this year to facilitate the increased size of the program EAP. We will continue efforts to increase ethnic and geographic diversity.

Review Process

The Stewardship Council will maintain its multi-step review process for our grants. In order to be awarded funding, an application must be successful in all levels. In 2009, the review process will continue to be organized around the criteria framework and ratings scheme that was put in place in 2007. All applications will be first reviewed by staff for completeness and suitability for funding. Following an initial screening, the review and approval of grant awards will be commensurate with the level of funding being awarded (see attached Table A). Grants under \$15,000 will be reviewed and approved by staff.

All grants over \$15,000 will be reviewed by one of the External Advisory Panels. Impact grants (up to \$50,000) will be approved by the Youth Investment Committee. In addition, Initiative grants (\$50,000 to \$150,000) and Infrastructure grants (up to \$200,000) will be recommended by the Youth Investment Committee to the full board for final approval.

Staff will continue to keep full written records on the results of each application and will provide input to unsuccessful grant seekers as requested.

Grant Review Process and Oversight

The Board delegates to staff the responsibility for the selection of the Catalyst Fund awards with the understanding that the grantmaking plan will require ongoing oversight by the Youth Investment Committee. On a quarterly basis, the Youth Investment Committee will receive an update from staff outlining the process and outcomes of the funding rounds and assessment of their effectiveness. The Youth Investment Committee will maintain the right to require greater oversight of any or all grant rounds, as well as final approval of the Catalyst Fund grant awards.

Table A: 2009 Distribution Targets and Process

	Catalyst*	Impact	Initiative	Infrastructure
Function	Nurturing small grassroots organizations	Sparking innovation and lowering barriers	Developing field-wide initiatives through Partnerships	Building parks and playgrounds
Budget	\$100,000 - \$150,000	\$400,000 - \$500,000	\$400,000 - \$500,000	\$800,000 - \$1,200,000
Funding Range	Up to \$15,000	\$15,000 - \$50,000	\$50,000 - \$150,000	Up to \$200,000
Estimated Number of Grants	10 to 15	10 to 20	6 to 8	5 to 10
Solicitation	Open	Open	Open LOI	Open
Proposal	Full proposal online	Full proposal online	LOI→ full proposal by invitation	Full proposal online
Review	Staff	Staff and EAP	Staff, EAP and YIC	Staff, EAP and YIC
Approval	Staff	YIC	YIC→Board	YIC→Board
Frequency	2x/year	2x/year	1x/yr	1x/yr

**Note: the Catalyst fund is only open to organizations with annual operating budgets of \$150,000 or less.*

TABLE B: 2009 TIMELINE (SUBJECT TO REVISION)

CATALYST AND IMPACT FUNDS (GRANT ROUNDS RUN SIMULTANEOUSLY)	
January	Release Request for Proposals for Round 1
February	Grant proposals are due
April	Announce grant awards Release RFPs for Round 2
June	Grant proposals are due for Round 2
October	Announce grant awards
INITIATIVE GRANTS	
January	Release Request for Letter of Intent
February	Letters of Intent due
March	Selected organizations invited to submit full proposal
April	Grant proposals due
July	Announce grant awards
INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS	
January	Release Request for Proposals
July	Grant proposals due
November	Announce grant awards