



## **Youth Investment Program 2010 Grantmaking Plan**

### **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 four years of grantmaking, as outlined in the yearly giving plans, have contributed considerably toward achieving this goal through supporting community parks and youth development programs, and nurturing efforts in communities most in need.

Over the past months, staff has reviewed the Youth Investment Program's 2009 grantmaking to date, with the eye toward understanding lessons learned and identifying improvements. While the program's grantmaking is working well in general, there does seem to be some disconnect between the stated goals of certain grant funds and the applications submitted for consideration. Given this observation, some additional adjustments are necessary to continue meeting the goals of the program, while addressing the needs of the organizations applying for funding. Staff recommendations, informed by the Internal Review Panel, External Advisory Panel, and Youth Investment Committee, are described below.

### **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 2010, 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 efforts aimed at introducing youth to outdoor activities in communities with significant needs (Catalyst Fund)
- Day-to-day operations of promising programs and high-impact organizations aimed at engaging youth in outdoor activities in communities with significant needs (Impact Fund)
- Advancements in 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.



## **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: [PG&E Ratepayer Service Territory Map](#))
- Serve youth who are between the ages of 13 to 18 (non-school-based projects), or between 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades (school-based projects).
- Have been in existence for at least one full calendar year.
- 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 2010.

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 2010. Any funding awards will be contingent on successful completion of the funded project and submission of all requested documentation and reports. In addition, grantees that are seeking a third year or more of funding will be asked to submit a report documenting their successes and challenges in meeting their program outcomes as stated in their grant applications.

## **2010 GRANT PROGRAM FUNDS**

### ***Catalyst Fund: Accelerating Efforts to Introduce Youth to Outdoor Experiences***

This round of funding is only open to organizations whose annual operating budgets are less than \$250,000. A qualified 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 \$250,000; and has not received significant foundation support. 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. Though the Stewardship Council favors proposals from established organizations, applicants in this round will not be required to have been in operation for at least one year.

The Stewardship Council will target up to \$200,000 for this purpose.

### ***Impact Fund: Sparking Innovation and Improving Access to Outdoor Experiences***

The Impact Fund is designed to support youth-serving 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. In particular, these funds have the potential for improving access to high-quality outdoor experiences, 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, program development, and capacity building.

The Stewardship Council will target up to \$600,000 for this purpose.

### ***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 regional or systemic 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. Stewardship Council staff will reach out to local entities to determine the scope and aim of individual grant applications. In general, the fund will continue to target the issues and barriers that keep underserved youth from accessing the outdoors. These include 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 outdoors
- Improved availability of viable open space

However, organizations are welcome to propose and address other concerns as well. The strongest and most promising ideas and proposals will be invited into an Invitation Only application round. Stewardship Council staff will work closely with applicants to provide technical assistance and ensure that their proposals have strong potential for funding.



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.

### ***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 from organizations that 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.

The Stewardship Council will target up to \$1,200,000 for this purpose.

## **PROGRAM OPERATIONS**

### ***Budget***

The Stewardship Council will commit between \$1,600,000 and \$2,100,000 in grant funding for 2010. We will offer four grant funds (see Table A for a summary of key elements for each type of grant):

1. "Catalyst" General operating support ó up to \$15,000
2. "Impact" Program funding ó up to \$50,000
3. "Initiative" Project funding ó up to \$150,000 (Invitation Only)
4. "Infrastructure" Infrastructure funding ó up to \$200,000

### ***Timeline***

Table B proposes a general timeline for 2010. A more detailed timeline will be developed by staff by January 2010 so as to coordinate with board meetings and other scheduled activities.

## **APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS**

The CyberGrants online grants management and application system will continue to be used in 2010. As indicated in Table A, organizations applying for Initiative Fund grants will be required



to have direct conversations with Stewardship Council staff prior to submitting an application. 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 2010 (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 to ensure representative composition. We will continue efforts to increase ethnic and geographic diversity.

### ***Youth Advisory Panel***

The Stewardship Council will recruit and train a Youth Advisory Panel to provide important perspectives and guidance for the review and ranking of Catalyst grants. The Youth Advisory Panel will function much like the External Advisory Panel, but will consist of young adults recommended or nominated by grant seekers or grantee organizations. Nominated reviewers will be vetted and selected by staff. Alumni of outdoor programs will be preferred.

### ***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 2010, 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).

All grants will be reviewed by one of the Advisory Panels. Catalyst Fund grants (up to \$15,000) will be approved by staff. Impact Fund grants (up to \$50,000) will be approved by the Youth Investment Committee. Initiative Fund grants (up to \$150,000) and Infrastructure Fund 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***

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.

**TABLE A: 2010 DISTRIBUTION TARGETS AND PROCESS**

|                                   | <b>Catalyst</b>  | <b>Impact</b>                            | <b>Initiative</b>                                    | <b>Infrastructure</b>          |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>Function</b>                   | Accelerating efforts to introduce youth to outdoor experiences | Sparking innovation and improving access | Lowering the barriers through field-wide initiatives | Building parks and playgrounds |
| <b>Budget</b>                     | \$100,000.<br>\$200,000  | \$300,000.<br>\$500,000                  | \$400,000.<br>\$500,000                              | \$800,000.<br>\$1,200,000      |
| <b>Funding Range</b>              | Up to \$15,000   | \$15,000.<br>\$50,000                    | \$50,000.<br>\$150,000                               | Up to \$200,000                |
| <b>Evaluation</b>                 | up to \$50,000   | \$50,000.<br>\$100,000                   | \$50,000.<br>\$100,000                               |                                |
| <b>Estimated Number of Grants</b> | 8. 10  | 10. 20                                   | 6. 8   | 5. 10                          |
| <b>Solicitation</b>               | Open   | Open                                     | Letter of Inquiry                                    | Open                           |
| <b>Proposal</b>                   | Full proposal online   | Full proposal online                     | LOI→ full proposal by invitation                     | Full proposal online           |
| <b>Review</b>                     | Staff, Youth Advisory Panel                                    | Staff, EAP, and YIC                      | Staff, EAP, and YIC                                  | Staff, EAP, and YIC            |
| <b>Approval</b>                   | Staff  | YIC                                      | YIC→Board  | YIC→Board                      |
| <b>Frequency</b>                  | 2x/year  | 2x/year                                  | 1x/yr  | 1x/yr                          |

**TABLE B: 2010 TIMELINE (SUBJECT TO REVISION)**

| <b>CATALYST FUND</b>       |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| January                    | Release Request for Proposals for Round 1                                       |
| February                   | Grant proposals due for Round 1   |
| April                      | Announce grant awards for Round 1<br>Release Request for Proposals for Round 2  |
| June                       | Grant proposals due for Round 2   |
| August                     | Announce grant awards for Round 2   |
| <b>IMPACT FUND</b>         |   |
| January                    | Release Request for Proposals for Round 1                                       |
| February                   | Grant proposals due for Round 1   |
| April                      | Announce grant awards for Round 1<br>Release Request for Proposals for Round 2  |
| June                       | Grant proposals due for Round 2   |
| August                     | Announce grant awards for Round 2   |
| <b>INITIATIVE FUND</b>     |   |
| January                    | Release Request for Proposals   |
| February / March           | Meet with local agencies, nonprofits, and other potential grantee organizations |
| May                        | Letters of Inquiry due  |
| June                       | Discuss proposed initiatives with applicants                                    |
| July                       | Full proposals due  |
| December                   | Announce grant awards   |
| <b>INFRASTRUCTURE FUND</b> |   |
| January                    | Release Request for Proposals   |
| August                     | Grant proposals due   |
| December                   | Announce grant awards   |