

Youth Investment Program 2011 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 five years of grantmaking, as outlined in the yearly giving plans, have contributed considerably toward achieving this goal through supporting community parks, playgrounds and outdoor programs that connect underserved youth to the outdoors. In 2011, the need for these types of programs, and the funding to support them, has never been greater.

Over the past months, staff has reviewed the Youth Investment Program's 2010 grantmaking to date, with the eye toward understanding lessons learned and identifying improvements. While the program's grantmaking is working well in general, there is room to improve both the strategic direction of our grantmaking and to fine tune our specific efforts to help build resources in the field. In 2011, some additional adjustments are necessary to continue meeting the goals of the program, while addressing the needs of the organizations applying for funding. Moreover, the Stewardship Council would like to ensure the successful launch and build out of the Foundation for Youth Investment (FYI). Staff recommendations in this plan have been informed by a survey of grant reviewers from the past two years, input from our external grant review panel members, (Youth Advisory Panel (YAP), External Advisory Panel (EAP)), and members of the Youth Investment Committee.

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.
- Partner with organizations at the forefront of outdoor leadership training, to create an institute to train a pool of qualified, culturally relevant instructors to effectively connect with underserved populations.
- 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 2011, 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);
- 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.)
- Serve youth who are between the ages of 13 to 18 (non-school-based projects), or between 7th and 12th grades (school-based projects): [\(except for Infrastructure Fund grants\)](#)
- Have been in existence for at least one full calendar year: [\(except for Catalyst Fund grants\)](#).
- 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 2011.

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 2011. The Stewardship Council does not have a formal policy on multi-year or ongoing support for existing grantees. However, applicants should not presume that once awarded, the Stewardship Council will continue to fund their programs year to year. N.B. Any [ongoing](#) 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. Please contact staff or see our website for further clarification.

2011 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. 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 \$250,000 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. This round of funding is only open to organizations whose annual operating budgets is more than \$250,000. If your organization has an annual operating budget of less than \$250,000 you may not apply to the Impact Fund; you are eligible to apply to the Catalyst Fund. Please note this is a change from our previous years. 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.

To help diversify and balance our funding across the PG&E rate payer area, in 2011 we are dividing the two Impact [SH1] rounds by region. The first round will be open for programs located in the Bay Area [SH2] ~~and north~~, and the second later round will open for Central Valley all other grantseekers.

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

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

In 2011 we are shifting our strategic approach to the Initiative Fund. In 2011, our strategic focus will be on the issues and barriers related to cultural relevancy and diversity in the environmental and outdoor education fields. To this end, the Stewardship Council has granted \$550,000 to the Foundation for Youth Investment to implement and manage a strategic initiative fund to address these barriers.

Please see the FYI website for more information: www.foundationforyouthinvestment.org.

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 engagement with natural spaces. **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 \$1,750,000 and \$2,550,000^[SH3] in grant funding for 2011. 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 – up to \$15,000
2. “Impact” – Program funding – up to \$50,000
3. “Infrastructure” – Infrastructure funding – up to \$200,000

Timeline

Table B proposes a general timeline for 2011. A more detailed timeline will be developed by staff by January 2011 so as to coordinate with board meetings and other scheduled activities.

APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

Our online grants management and application system will continue to be used in 2011. The Stewardship Council does not accept hard copy documents. Any applicant must have their 990s available on Guidestar for review.

Organizations that received funding in previous years are eligible to apply for funds in 2011 (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 Funds) and the other panel will focus on infrastructure grants (Infrastructure Fund). The program EAP will comprise approximately 20-25 volunteer members. The infrastructure EAP will comprise approximately 10-15 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

In 2011, the Stewardship Council successfully instituted a Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) to provide important perspectives and guidance for the review and ranking of Catalyst grants. The

Youth Advisory Panel will continue to function much like the External Advisory Panel, but 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 2011, 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. Applications that do not have all documents uploaded into our online system will not be considered for funding. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that they are applying to the correct fund. Please check our FAQ section of our website for further clarification. 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. Infrastructure Fund grants (up to \$200,000) will be recommended by the Youth Investment Committee 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. All awards are reported to the board.

TABLE A: 2011 DISTRIBUTION TARGETS AND PROCESS

	Catalyst	Impact	Infrastructure
Function	Accelerating efforts to introduce youth to outdoor experiences	Sparking innovation and improving access	Building parks and playgrounds
Budget	\$150,000– \$250,000	\$300,000–\$500,000	\$800,000–\$1,200,000
Funding Range	Up to \$15,000	\$15,000–\$40,000	Up to \$200,000
Evaluation		\$50,000–\$100,000	
Estimated Number of Grants	8–16	10–20	5–10
Solicitation	Open	Open	Open
Proposal	Full proposal online	Full proposal online	Full proposal online
Review	Staff, Youth Advisory Panel	Staff, EAP, and YIC	Staff, EAP, and YIC
Approval	Staff	YIC	YIC→ Board
Frequency	2x/year	<u>12x/year per geographic region</u> [SH4]	1x/yr

TABLE B: 2011 TIMELINE (SUBJECT TO REVISION)

CATALYST FUND	
January	Release Request for Proposals for all Rounds
February	Grant proposals due for Round 1 BAY AREA ONLY
June	Announce grant awards for Round 1
July	Grant proposals due for Round 2 NON BAY AREA ONLY
October	Announce grant awards for Round 2
IMPACT FUND	
January	Release Request for Proposals for all Rounds
February	Grant proposals due for Round 1 BAY AREA ONLY
June	Announce grant awards for Round 1
July	Grant proposals due for Round 2 NON BAY AREA ONLY
October	Announce grant awards for Round 2
INFRASTRUCTURE FUND	
January	Release Request for Proposals for all Rounds
August	Grant proposals due
December	Announce grant awards