



Youth Investment Program 2007 Grantmaking Plan

**Adopted
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Youth Investment Program 2007 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. The Youth Investment Program's Grantmaking Pilot Plan adopted by the Stewardship Council Board in 2005, and implemented in 2006, was a major milestone in working toward this goal. The Plan was well received by stakeholders as it supported the efforts of community parks and youth development programs, and nurtured new efforts in communities most in need.

Following the success of this inaugural grantmaking year, the Pilot Plan was reviewed by Putnam Community Investment Consulting (PCIC) under contract with the Stewardship Council. The PCIC findings (see Attachment A) and analysis revealed that both the Youth Investment Committee and the External Advisory Panel were impressed with the process and results of the first year of giving.

It is important to note that the 2007 Grantmaking Plan preserves the areas identified as most effective in 2006, while also offering significant enhancements for 2007. Significant improvements for the 2007 Grantmaking Plan include:

- Targeting a small round of grants for small, grassroots organizations, with a simplified formula for applying for these funds;
- Separating all park and playground infrastructure funds into one round of giving, apart from program proposals;
- Creating two External Advisory Panels, one for programs and one for infrastructure, to review and recommend proposals related to their fields of expertise;
- Adding clarity to the purpose of the larger, Partnership funds;
- Enhancing financial matching fund requirements and allowing for multi-year funding; and
- Encouraging cross-sector approaches to connecting youth to the outdoors.

The 2007 Grantmaking Plan is outlined in this document. Two reference documents are attached: Attachment A includes a review of accomplishments and an exploration of findings pertaining to the 2006 Grantmaking Pilot Plan; and Attachment B includes a summary of the 2006 Grantmaking Pilot Plan.

II. 2007 GRANTMAKING PLAN

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).

Approach

In 2007, 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. Grant proposals will be accepted for:

- Resources to support day-to-day operations of programs and organizations;
- Investments in larger, more substantial improvements for established organizations with demonstrated capacity to meet the objectives of the Stewardship Council;
- Collaborative ventures that advance the field of outdoor education, health and well being, and cultural relevance through thought leadership and innovative partnerships; and
- Emerging, grassroots efforts aimed at reducing barriers for youth engagement in outdoor activities in communities with significant needs.

Baseline Criteria for Funding

Organizations that apply for funding must:

- Operate within the geographic scope of the Stewardship Council;
- 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).



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).
- Demonstrate a commitment and capacity to collaborate with others in the field.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for connecting youth to the outdoors that go beyond the day-long, 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.
- 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 support their efforts.

Budget

The Stewardship Council will commit between \$2.0 million and \$2.5 million in grant funding for 2007. Four grant funds will be offered (see Table A for a summary of key elements for each type of grant):

1. "Catalyst" – Program funding for under \$10,000
2. "Impact" - Program funding from \$15,000-\$50,000
3. "Collaboration" - Program funding from \$50,000-\$150,000
4. "Infrastructure" - Infrastructure funding up to \$200,000

Catalyst Fund: Nurturing Small Grassroots Organizations

The Stewardship Council will target \$150,000 to support grassroots organizations. The Catalyst funds will be available for qualified applicants requesting less than \$10,000. 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 community need, 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 \$10,000 will be awarded during two funding cycles in 2007. 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.

Collaboration Fund: Developing Field-wide Initiatives and Partnerships

The Collaboration Fund is designed to support field-wide initiatives and partnerships among youth-serving organizations. These grants should result in new or expanded programs that could not be accomplished by a single organization; are innovative and creative in their approach; result in significant local or regional impact; bring together multiple sectors within the broader youth development field for a more cohesive and well-rounded approach to outdoor education; and advance the field of parks and outdoor education.

Both new and existing partnerships may apply for funding. Partner organizations with a history of collaborating must demonstrate how this project will expand their partnership to offer a new level or type of service for young people.

Infrastructure Fund: Building Parks and Playgrounds

In 2006, approximately 60% of grants were awarded for programs and 40% for infrastructure. The following enhancements are recommended in 2007 to increase the strength of proposals seeking funding for infrastructure:

- Create a separate round of funding for infrastructure grants with targeted outreach.
- Distribute awarded funds over a two-year period.
- Create a separate External Advisory Panel, specifically for infrastructure grants.
- Expand the number of weeks available to review infrastructure applications to enable staff to work with applicants as needed to fully understand and vet proposals.

These improvements are intended to result in higher quality applications in addition to more significant infrastructure improvements and investments.

Multi-Year Funding

In 2007, the Stewardship Council will initiate funding of its first multi-year grants. Select programs will be eligible for this type of funding. Staff will carefully review and assess the progress of multi-year funding prior to distributing a second round of funds. It is anticipated that



approximately 25 to 30 percent of grants will commit the Stewardship Council to multiple years of funding. Funds for the second year of these grants will be earmarked in the 2008 budget.

In addition, programs applying for Infrastructure funding will have the option of having funds distributed over two years. We anticipate that three out of the five estimated Infrastructure grants will be paid out over a two-year period.

Application Process

The CyberGrants online grants management and application system will continue to be used in 2007. As indicated in Table A (attached), programs applying for the larger grants (Collaboration and Infrastructure) 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 assigned External Advisory Panel and the Stewardship Council staff.

Organizations that received funding in 2006 are eligible to apply for funds in 2007. Additionally, grant-seekers that are denied funding in one round are eligible to apply in another round in the same funding year.

External Advisory Panel

Based on the success of the pilot year, it is recommended that the Stewardship Council continue to use an External Advisory Panel (EAP) to provide technical expertise and guidance for the review and ranking of competing applications. Starting in 2007, two EAPs will be established. One panel will focus on program grants (Impact and Collaboration grants) and the other panel will focus on parks and infrastructure grants (Infrastructure). Each EAP will continue to be comprised of approximately 10 volunteer members who bring expertise, cultural relevance, and geographic diversity to the review process. EAP members will serve staggered two-year terms. A Request for Proposals (RFP) will be issued to recruit and retain a firm to train and manage the EAP panels and their members. Based on feedback, we will seek to clarify the roles and expectations of the EAP, increase ethnic diversity, and ensure in-person meetings with rotating locations.

Review Process

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 staff¹.

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, Collaboration 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.

¹ Catalyst Fund proposals will not be subjected to full EAP review, although staff may consult EAP members with expertise and/or knowledge as appropriate.



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

Geography

In 2006, 60% of grants were allocated to the Bay Area, 25% to the Central Valley, and 15% to rural areas. The Stewardship Council will continue to focus grantmaking efforts in the major urban areas of the Bay Area, as well as urban communities along the Highway 99 corridor from Stockton to Bakersfield. We will also strive to provide appropriate resources for compelling park and youth program requests from rural areas. Opportunities to provide additional outreach and technical assistance to potential applicants from the Central Valley to improve the quantity and quality of applications will also be sought.

Timeline

The pilot grantmaking year was highly successful in making a large amount of grant investments in a short amount of time. While gratifying, all parties involved in the review and approval process expressed that more time was needed for this process. Table B proposes a general timeline for 2007. A more detailed timeline will be developed by staff by January 2007 so as to coordinate with board meetings and other pre-scheduled activities.

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 from 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: 2007 DISTRIBUTION TARGETS AND PROCESS

	CATALYST	IMPACT	COLLABORATION	INFRASTRUCTURE
Function	Nurturing small grassroots organizations	Sparking innovation and lowering barriers	Developing field-wide initiatives and Partnerships	Building parks and playgrounds
Budget	\$100,000 - \$150,000	\$400,000 - \$500,000	\$500,000 - \$600,000	\$1,000,000 - \$1,250,000
Funding Range	Up to \$10,000	\$10,000 - \$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 LOI
Proposal	Full proposal online	Full proposal online	LOI→ full proposal by invitation	LOI→ full proposal by invitation
Review	Staff	Staff and EAP	Staff, EAP and YIC	Staff, EAP and YIC
Approval	Staff	YIC	YIC→Board	YIC→Board
Frequency	2x/year	1x/yr	1x/yr	1x/yr
Multi-year grant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

TABLE B: 2007 TIMELINE

CATALYST GRANTS	
January	Release RFP for Round 1
March	Grant proposals are due
June	Announce grant awards
April	Release RFP for Round 2
July	Grant proposals are due
September	Announce grant awards
IMPACT GRANTS	
January	Release RFP
March	Grant proposals are due
June	Announce grant awards
COLLABORATION GRANTS	
January	Release Request for Letter of Intent
April	Letters of Intent due
May	Selected organizations invited to submit full proposal
June	Grant proposals due
End of September	Announce grant awards
INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS	
January	Release Request for Letter of Intent
April	Letters of Intent due
May	Selected organizations invited to submit full proposal
June	Grant proposals due
End of September	Announce grant awards



ATTACHMENTS

**Attachment A
2006 Grantmaking Pilot Program Review**

**Attachment B
Summary of 2006 Grantmaking Pilot Plan**



Attachment A 2006 Grantmaking Pilot Program Review

2006 PILOT GRANTMAKING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The following summarizes pilot year grantmaking accomplishments and suggestions for improvement identified by staff, the Youth Investment Committee, and based on research conducted by Putnam Community Investment Consulting (PCIC) in September and October 2006.

Research Methodology

PCIC collected and analyzed data from the following:

- Online surveys of Youth Investment Committee (YIC) and External Advisory Panel (EAP) members.
- Key informant interviews with three YIC and three EAP members.
- Consultations with the Stewardship Council staff and their evaluation consultant (American Institutes for Research (AIR)).
- Document review, including the Grantmaking Pilot Plan; findings from the September 2006 Youth Investment Committee meeting debrief of the pilot year; Requests for Proposals from the pilot year; draft strategic planning documents; and quantitative analysis of grant allocations.

Research Findings

Highlights of Accomplishments

- Overall, respondents indicated that the Stewardship Council was highly successful at impacting youth through significant grant allocations, establishing effective grantmaking processes, conducting outreach, and providing excellent staffing.
- The pilot grant-giving goal of \$2,250,000 (57 grants) was achieved.
- Program funding for 2006 will serve over 9,000 youth and an estimated 28,000 youth will benefit from funding to improve park infrastructure.

“There have been on the ground results from the program’s giving that have directly impacted people’s lives. These results can be seen, and young people can articulate how the funds have helped them connect to the outdoors and their communities.”

—YIC member

Goals and Objectives

By far, respondents indicated that the Youth Investment Program is making great strides in meeting its stated goal and objectives. The only area that some respondents expressed a need for improvement was that of grantmaking for infrastructure and parks. Staff reported that in

reflecting over the pilot year, these goals and objectives remain appropriate with a few minor working changes.

Grantmaking and Grant Allocation

In the pilot year, the Youth Investment Program met its target funding goal and awarded \$2,250,000 in grants for programs and parks. Following are key statistics highlighting characteristics of this funding:

- Approximately 60% of the funds were awarded to programs and 40% to parks.
- 60% of funds were awarded to grantees from the Bay Area; 25% from the Central Valley, and 15% from rural areas.
- Two Small grant rounds yielded \$450,000 (20%) in awards; \$675,000 (30%) was awarded in Midsize grants; and \$1,125,000 (50%) was awarded in Partnership grants.

Infrastructure Funding

There was quite a range of responses related to the challenges of funding infrastructure or parks. Very few respondents indicated that the current allocation of two-thirds parks, one-third programs, was appropriate. Just under half indicated that two-thirds should go to programs and an equal number indicated that the ratio should be flexible. Interviewees commented that the amounts offered to parks were not high enough. They suggested either offering higher amounts or leveraging funds to help attract more of these proposals.

All but one interviewee indicated that having separate rounds of funding for parks and programs with two corresponding External Advisory Panels (EAPs) with corresponding expertise was a good way to ensure appropriate parks funding. They believe separate rounds would help with targeting outreach. With this, staff, the Youth Investment Committee, and the EAP would be able to focus on each area while reviewing proposals (comparing apples to apples); and that the focused EAPs would bring more appropriate and targeted expertise.

“If we can’t make a significant impact on infrastructure, we should assess what we really can do and where can we make a difference.”
—YIC member

Geographic Scope

For the most part, the Stewardship Council supported organizations in its grantmaking from the intended geographic areas. Some interviewees indicated that Bay Area agencies had the greatest grant writing capacity and were concerned about the “poverty of ability to write grants” from the Central Valley and rural areas. Another interviewee commented that the distribution was a good mix, given that it should be based on where PG&E ratepayers are located.

Grant Size

Most respondents appreciated the mix of grant sizes and felt it was important to maintain a funding mix to meet diverse needs. Many interviewees raised the issue of funding more grassroots organizations. The group indicated that it would like to see more atypical, non-traditional groups applying, and more “deference” given to newer, innovative programs. Some

voiced concern that the program was focusing on larger, more established groups. Another area of concern was with Partnership grants. Several interviewees and some staff indicated that the Partnership grants were not well-defined and there was little distinction between those and the Midsize grant applications, with the exception of funding amount. Some felt that these grants should be more targeted with specific objectives and a clear message to promote innovation and creativity.

Grantmaking Approach

There was widespread consensus that the Stewardship Council was highly successful in its first year of grantmaking. Respondents expect that providing leadership to the field and data and evaluation will be enhanced as the Stewardship Council matures as an organization.

“There was excellent public input in the process, and there was great effort to get funds out the door in a timely manner.”

—YIC member

Grantmaking Process Analysis

Youth Investment Committee (YIC)

The Stewardship Council implemented its Pilot Grantmaking Plan by engaging its Youth Investment Committee (YIC) to review, vet, recommend, and approve a large number of applications over four rounds of funding. Upon completion of this pilot year, YIC members indicated that they had an appropriate role in decision-making pertaining to funding in 2006. Two members would have liked more input on the Small grants and an opportunity to review what had been screened out by staff, but they were mindful of the need for grantmaking efficiency.

External Advisory Panel (EAP)

The Stewardship Council successfully created and managed a 12-member External Advisory Panel (EAP) that represented geographic, ethnic, gender, and professional diversity within the youth outdoor education and youth development fields. There was widespread consensus that the EAP made an important contribution to the grantmaking process. EAP members indicated primarily positive experiences. Following are findings pertaining to the use of the EAP in 2006.

- Staff, YIC, and EAP members agree that the Stewardship Council should continue using an EAP.
- EAP members indicated that they were well prepared; that serving on the EAP was a good use of their time; and that interactions with staff were very positive.
- Most YIC respondents and interviewees felt that the EAP was mostly or highly effective in informing the grant selection process. The only downside indicated was the fact that the YIC was not able to discuss the proposals that were “weeded out” by the EAP and staff.

“I enjoyed the work, the interaction, and the feeling of accomplishment. The staff and facilitators were always polite, understanding, and respectful of divergent ideas.”

—EAP member

- The amount of time the members spent serving on the EAP tended to be more than what they expected. Some stated they would have liked staff to have eliminated proposals that they knew would not be funded.
- Some EAP members weren't sure how their input was being used because they did not receive any analysis of how EAP-recommended grants stacked up against the final grant recommendations. Others felt their input was always acknowledged and utilized.
- Several members stated that the process and roles of staff, EAP, and YIC pertaining to proposal review could be made clearer.
- Most EAP members felt that improvements could be made in the funding guidelines to solicit better proposals.

“The staff was very respectful and provided a friendly environment for holding candid discussions.”

—EAP member

“The role of the staff ... was unclear. At first they articulated a listening role and that transformed into participation and at times direction to the facilitator.”

—EAP member

Baseline Funding Criteria

There is agreement that the Pilot Grantmaking Plan was successful in meeting two of the three baseline criteria: 1) That grant applicants serve youth within the geographic scope of the Stewardship Council; and 2) That their organizations be in existence for at least one full calendar year. The third criteria requiring that the applying organization demonstrate a commitment and capacity to collaborate with others in the field, was consistently applied to the proposal review. Staff recommends that this third criterion be moved to the list of recommended criteria and become an area of interest to support.

Grants Management Analysis

The Stewardship Council successfully met its grant management objectives by creating and using the legal agreements necessary to distribute funds, and developing and implementing financial, accounting, and reporting procedures. American Institute for Research (AIR), the evaluation consultant retained by the Stewardship Council, is currently conducting a pilot study of grant reporting documents with grantees. Additionally, CyberGrants, the online application software implemented during the pilot grantmaking year, has streamlined the grants management system.

Areas for Improvement

While the findings were overwhelmingly positive, areas where the pilot year was seen as least successful were primarily in outreach to underserved geographic areas and grassroots organizations, as well as soliciting applications from parks. A couple of interviewees mentioned the lack of diversity of staff.

“The Youth Investment Program did a good job finding opportunities to make good investments in all three [targeted geographic] areas.”

— YIC member

“One of the biggest discoveries was that [the listening sessions] brought together entities that coexist but didn't work together. We envisioned the Partnership grants as a way to bring those groups together. However, we didn't clearly state that [and] ended up artificially forcing them to come together. We need to be clear about the synergies we are trying to achieve and why.”

—YIC member



One felt it may pose a problem with outreach and perception; the other felt it was balanced out by the diversity on the EAP.

Overall improvements suggested by respondents for the 2007 Grantmaking Plan include:

- Leveraging funds (e.g. funder partnerships and additional fundraising for youth programs);
- Seeking more youth input;
- Building capacity in underserved areas, including technical support to regions where proposals weren't competitive;
- Enhancing marketing and outreach to potential grant-seekers;
- Offering multi-year funding, matching grants for larger programs, and smaller grants for grassroots organizations; and
- Alignment of Youth Investment Program objectives with the strategic plan, and making sure the objectives are "measurable" (for example, 'cultural relevance' is a term that is hard to define or measure).

Suggested improvements to the External Advisory Panel for the 2007 Grantmaking Plan include:

- Having two EAPs, one to review infrastructure proposals and one to review program proposals;
- Having EAP members serve two-year terms;
- Clarifying the decision-making process, how EAP input will be used, and the role of staff;
- Increasing minority representation on the EAP, especially among African Americans; and
- Diversification of meeting locations, and considering requiring people to attend in person rather than join via conference call.

Attachment B Summary of 2006 Grantmaking Pilot Plan

REVIEW OF THE 2005-2006 GRANTMAKING PILOT PLAN

In 2005, the Stewardship Council staff, working with the Youth Investment Committee, developed goals and objectives, a three-pronged approach, a grantmaking process, and a grants management system for its pilot year of funding. This section describes these original aims and the anticipated allocation of grant funds in the pilot year.

Goal

In the Grantmaking Pilot Plan, the Youth Investment Program stated the following goal:

The Stewardship Council will launch its giving program and 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

The Youth Investment Program also set out to meet four 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 urban parks and open spaces to make them more accessible and welcoming.

Grant Allocation

The Stewardship Council proposed a total budget of \$2.6 million in the Pilot Plan with the following allocations:

- Approximately two-thirds of the grant funds dedicated to parks (\$1,500,000), and one-third to programs (\$750,000), with three tiers of giving:
 - 20% of funds for Small grants;
 - 30% of funds for Midsize grants; and
 - 50% of funds for Partnership grants.
- The budget also included \$350,000 for staff and consultants to oversee new initiatives, education, convening, evaluation, mentoring, and youth development related analysis.

Approach

To accomplish these objectives, the Youth Investment Program implemented the following three-pronged approach:

- Providing grant support to outdoor programs and parks that target underserved youth, focusing on: supporting day-to-day operations; investments in more substantial improvements for larger organizations; and collaborative ventures that advance the field and cultural relevance.
- Initiating and leading efforts to support the larger field of outdoor education by collaborating with strategic partners to explore best practices and initiate solution-focused assessments to field-wide challenges.
- Data collection and evaluation to assess what worked and didn't work, and to inform best practices for future giving.

Grantmaking Process

The Pilot Plan outlined the following application, evaluation, and approval processes for grantmaking.

Baseline Criteria for Funding

Minimum criteria for funding included:

- Operating within the geographic scope of the Stewardship Council.
- Organizations must be in existence for at least one full calendar year.
- A demonstrated commitment and capacity to collaborate with others in the field.

Additionally, the Youth Investment Grantmaking Pilot Plan was particularly interested in supporting park infrastructure enhancement efforts and outdoor programs that:

- Implement experiences that go beyond the day-long, one-time outdoor experience;
- Seek to 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;
- Make the outdoors a more integral part of young people's lives, to improve their general health and well being;
- Plan for long-range sustainability; and
- Share and reflect the core values of the Stewardship Council.



Application

The pilot year's grant application process transitioned from a paper-based application to a web-based application. Small and Midsize applicants were required to submit a proposal, while organizations seeking Partnership grants were required to submit an initial Letter of Intent (LOI), followed by a full proposal if selected for further consideration.

Evaluation and Approval

During the pilot year, the Stewardship Council formed an External Advisory Panel (EAP) to provide technical assistance, expertise and guidance in the ranking of competing applications. The EAP included leaders in the field of parks and outdoor education who were selected through a nomination and application process and screened for potential conflicts of interest.

Following an initial staff screening, qualified grant applications underwent a thorough review process. Grants under \$20,000 were reviewed by staff and the EAP, before ultimate approval by staff. Midsize grants between \$20,000 and \$50,000 were reviewed by staff, the EAP, and the Youth Investment Committee (YIC) before ultimate approval by the YIC. Partnership grants (above \$50,000) were similarly reviewed before being recommended to the full board for final approval.

Grants Management Process

During the pilot year, the Stewardship Council also developed detailed procedures to manage the grant program, including a legal grant agreement, grant tracking and awarding systems, and a staff oversight system that included grantee reports and some site visits.