

## ATTACHMENT 2.1

### GATEWAY MOUNTAIN CENTER

Project: Youth Environment and Adventure Camps

Recommended Funding: \$150,000

Location: Various locations across the Lake Tahoe Basin.

---

#### Overview

##### Background

Gateway Mountain Center (Gateway) focuses on transforming the lives of youth through nature-based learning, wellness adventures, and innovative, non-traditional therapeutic approaches to mental health and wellness. Over the past 15 years, Gateway has worked with hundreds of high-need, high-risk, underserved Tahoe youth through nature-based experiences and wellness adventures, reconnecting youth to themselves, nature, and their communities. Gateway provides guided mountain adventure and education experiences to students in Tahoe Truckee Unified School District alternative education sites—Sierra Continuation High School and the Truckee Community School.

One of Gateway's primary goals is to significantly expand outdoor adventure, leadership, and wellness programming for Hispanic and other underserved youth living in the Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin).

Gateway's programs and activities serve some of the most at-risk youth in the Lake Tahoe region. For example, 60 percent of Gateway's participants report feelings of hopelessness, 16 percent have seriously considered suicide, 50 percent use drugs or alcohol with 35 percent being heavy users. These statistics are well above statewide averages for youth in alternative education programs. Current Gateway programs and activities support over 300 at-risk Tahoe youth annually. Most of these youth attend alternative education schools where 85 percent of the students are Hispanic.

##### Detailed Description

###### 1. Major Elements and/or Steps

The recommended grant award supports materials and staff costs to plan, implement, and evaluate several programs and activities over two years (2023 and 2024):

- Youth Environment and Adventure (YEA!) Summer Overnight Camps: Four-day, three-night summer camping excursions around the Basin emphasizing leadership development, environmental education, resource restoration,

community service, and stress reduction for under-resourced youth. The camps will serve approximately 120 youth over two years.

- YEA! Day Camps: Day camps held on weekends at locations throughout the Basin. Participants learn about environmental education in conjunction with personal development emphasizing self-awareness, maintaining and building positive bonds with peers and mentors, and a personal connection to nature. The day camps will serve approximately 100 youth over two years.
- YEA! Internship Program: This new program offers YEA! Camp graduates Assistant Guide positions with YEA! Programs. The program offers participants free Wilderness First Aid (WFA) and Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training, and support to attend symposiums about the environment, forestry, outdoor leadership and education. Gateway provides career counseling and assistance in finding a first job in conservation, restoration, outdoor education, and associated fields through coaching for job applications, resumes, and interview coaching.
- BASECAMP for Adventure: Year-round, after-school program offered once per week providing seasonally appropriate outdoor experiences throughout the Basin. This program will serve approximately 500-600 students over two years.
- School Field Trips: Field trips offered to school classes at North Tahoe Middle and High Schools and special education classes throughout the Truckee Tahoe Unified School District. Outing curriculum is the same as YEA! Camps. The field trips will serve approximately 250 students.
- Nature Wellness Walks: Year-round monthly outings for youth and family members around the Basin. Older youth and young adult graduates of YEA! Programs are paid as assistants as they gain experience developing into outdoor guides. Approximately 50 families will participate in this program.

## 2. Overall Context and Benefits

The grant expands Gateway's programs and activities, as they will offer more trips and activities and hire additional staff to support more participants. Overall, the grant helps more at-risk youth improve mental health, reduce substance dependency, and develop vocational skills for careers in natural resource management and recreation. Providing two years of funding helps Gateway more strategically plan programs and staffing to accommodate expanding participation and needs.

## 3. Schedule

California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) funding supports the programs and activities described above beginning in fall 2022 and running through calendar year 2024. Due to award timing of the proposed grant aligning with the current academic year, Conservancy staff will expedite funding to support academic year 2022-23 program needs.

## Financing

The recommended grant supports personnel costs for program development, field instruction, and programmatic evaluation. The grant also supports direct costs such as equipment rentals, transportation, permit fees, and supplies.

Conservancy funding leverages an additional \$341,501 from other grants, donors, and project partners.

Staff recommends the grant budget as shown below. The budget may be adjusted among line items, but total expenditures under this grant will not exceed \$150,000.

Task	Amount
YEA! Summer Overnight Camps	\$67,500
YEA! Day Camps	\$20,000
YEA! Internship Program	\$12,500
BASECAMP for Adventure Afterschool Programs	\$31,000
School Field Trips	\$9,000
Nature Wellness Walks	\$10,000
Total	\$150,000

## Authority

### Consistency with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan

The recommended action advances Strategic Plan Goal 3 to provide public access and outdoor recreation for all communities because it supports free outdoor programs for youth of color and youth struggling with mental health. Additionally, the recommended action supports Strategic Plan Goals 1, 2, and 4 by building a pipeline for local Hispanic and other underserved community members into careers in conservation, restoration, and forestry.

### Consistency with the Conservancy's Program Guidelines

The recommended action is consistent with the Conservancy's Grant Guidelines, Funding Considerations 1, 2, 9, and 10 because: the recommended action generates multiple benefits by providing direct access to the outdoors and is consistent with relevant existing plans and guidance; Gateway has demonstrated a track record of high-quality work and relevant experience; and strong community and stakeholder support exists for Gateway's programs.

## Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act

Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.), certain classes of activities are statutorily exempt from CEQA or are exempt because they have been determined by the Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency to have no significant effect on the environment. Staff has evaluated this grant and has found it to be exempt under CEQA. The authorization of this grant qualifies for a categorical exemption under CEQA Guidelines section 15301 – Existing Facilities. Staff has prepared a notice of exemption (NOE) (see Attachment 2.3). If the Board approves this grant, staff will file the NOE with the State Clearinghouse pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, section 15062.

### List of Attachments

Attachment 2.2 – Resolution 22-09-05.2

Attachment 2.3 – Notice of Exemption

- Exhibit A – Location Map