

Foothills Mountaineers
Subcommittee on Strategic Investments

BACKGROUND

The Mountaineers accepts philanthropic donations to help fund shared services across all branches, outdoor centers, and activities, scholarships, youth outreach programs, conservation & advocacy work, and more. To facilitate ways for members to support their branches through philanthropy, The Mountaineers has set up a Branch Support Pilot program so donors can leverage their gifts to support their branch and empower the Branch Councils to direct how a portion of those funds are spent, as outlined in the following [blog post](#).

In FY2022, the organization initiated a new pilot program. From the blog post:

“New in fiscal year 2022, branch chairs and treasurers are participating in a pilot program that allows more flexibility in how philanthropy can be invested in the branch. As part of this pilot, branches can earmark 60% of philanthropic funds restricted to their branch to purchase gear and equipment needed for courses, or to provide recognition and leadership development training for volunteers. The remaining 40% will support the branches’ shared service expenses that help to make volunteer jobs easier.”

Any volunteer may formally request to direct their philanthropy, including employer matching contributions, to a branch and participate in this Branch Support Pilot program by contacting the Development team. A donor must alert the development team for each gift, and whenever possible, include a note in the memo of the gift so it is very clear to the staff administering gift entries. In accordance with the pilot, funds allocated in this way are considered temporarily restricted in line with GAAP principles, and must be spent within the same fiscal year. Any funds that are not spent within the same fiscal year will be leveraged to support the shared services that directly support the Branch.

On November 1, 2022, The Mountaineers published [a follow up blog](#) announcing the pilot would continue into Fiscal Year 2023.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT MONEY

The cumulative 60% earmark on philanthropic funds directed to the Foothills branch by any member(s) shall be reserved for *strategic investment* in the Branch or its Activity Committees.

Strategic investment refers to the use of restricted money to best support the growth and development of the Foothills Branch through the mechanisms authorized by the pilot program, including:

- Gear and equipment purchases necessary for courses

- Providing recognition for volunteers
- Providing leadership development training for volunteers
- Any purpose subsequently authorized by the organization

Money to fund strategic investments shall be considered available when received by the Organization. No proposal may proceed or be considered funded if the cost exceeds the amount available.

Strategic investment money shall be accounted for separately from and shall not replace or diminish any funds normally allocated to the Branch Council or any Activity Committee for volunteer recognition or leadership development, even if a proposal is approved for one of these purposes.

PROPOSALS

Proposals for the use of strategic investment money may be submitted by the Foothills Branch Council through the Branch Chair or by any Foothills Activity Committee through the Committee Chair.

Proposals must:

- Specify the exact amount of funds requested
- Identify how the money will be used
- Identify how the proposal qualifies as a *strategic investment*
- Identify the timeline for when money shall be spent
- Articulate the expected impact of the strategic investment on branch growth, volunteer retention, etc.

Any proposal which includes all of the above elements shall be deemed *valid* regardless of merits. Any proposal which lacks any of the above information or specifies a purpose that is not authorized by current organization policy shall be deemed *invalid*. Invalid proposals must be rejected.

SUBCOMMITTEE FOR STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

The Foothills Branch Council directs formation of a Subcommittee for Strategic Investment (hereafter, the Subcommittee).

Duties

As authorized by the Foothills Branch Council, the Subcommittee shall:

- Receive submitted proposals for strategic investment
- Reject invalid proposals and specify to the submitter what makes the proposal invalid
- Approve or reject valid proposals on the basis of anticipated impact, feasibility, cost, or any other criteria at the discretion of the Subcommittee

- Rank approved proposals in order of priority, which may be based on timeline, cost, impact, or any other criteria at the discretion of the Subcommittee
- Communicate to the submitter when an approved proposal is funded
- Coordinate with the Branch Treasurer to ensure reimbursements submitted for an approved proposal are within the budget and the approved proposal amount
- Coordinate with Accounting and Development to verify the amount eligible for spending.

Administration

Strategic investment money shall be administered by the Subcommittee under the supervision of the Foothills Branch Treasurer.

The Subcommittee shall consist of not fewer than three Members and not more than six.

Members of the Subcommittee may be any full member of the Foothills Branch in good standing and must be nominated by another Member of the Subcommittee or any member of the Branch Council, including officers and at-large members.

Members of the Subcommittee shall be approved by majority vote of the Branch Council. A proposed Member who is on the Branch Council must abstain from the vote on the question of their membership.

All members shall be approved by the Branch Council at least yearly at the first Council Meeting after the beginning of the fiscal year. Vacancies can be filled at any regular or special council meeting throughout the year.

Members should be good stewards of strategic investment money and strive to ensure that approved proposals support the growth and health of the Branch. Ideally, Members should be contributing to the program through their personal philanthropy and/or employer matching, but this is not strictly required.

The Subcommittee shall conduct its business in person or virtually through whatever mechanism is suitable to its Members.

The Subcommittee Members shall designate, by any means agreeable to them, a Subcommittee Chair who shall be the main point of contact on the Subcommittee for receipt of proposals and reports to the Branch Council.

Proposals must be approved by majority vote of the Members of the Subcommittee not abstaining. Any proposal that fails to receive a majority vote, including a tie, shall be considered rejected.

Equipment purchased through this program for courses shall be owned by the Activity Committee that administers said course.

Reimbursements shall, per standard procedure, be forwarded to the Branch Treasurer, who shall require the approval of the Subcommittee prior to forwarding the request to the organization.

Expenses approved under this program, will be coded to Development's budget 20-000-5016 categorized as "Branch Support".

Reporting

The Subcommittee Chair, or their proxy, shall report at each Branch Council any updates on strategic investment proposals, including proposals approved, rejected or funded. If no Member can attend, this report can be sent to the Branch Chair via email, Basecamp or any means suitable to the Branch Chair.

Duration

This policy shall remain in effect until amended or repealed by majority vote of the Branch Council, or discontinuation of the underlying restricted giving policy by the Mountaineers.