Fundraising Plan – Chill Foundation

Hailey Castillo

Jennifer Devon

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Summary

The Chill Foundation is a youth-focused nonprofit that was founded in 1995 by Jake and Donna Carpenter, founders of Burton Snowboards. It empowers young people through boardsports programming – snowboarding, surfboarding, stand-up paddleboarding and skateboarding – by teaching them skills that they can use beyond the board. Chill has locations in 10 countries and 24 cities, serving over 30,000 youth since its inception. In 2024, it generated over $5.2 million in revenue, primarily through corporate sponsorships, individual donations, grants and special events.

One of Chill's goals over the past few years has been to diversify its funding, and the objective of this fundraising plan is to help the foundation achieve this goal, aiming to reach for $6 million in revenue during the 2026 fiscal year. The fundraising plan will focus on building a comprehensive strategy that includes annual giving, major gifts and corporate and foundation support as well as starting a planned giving program.

Fundraising Goals & Strategies

With a $6 million revenue goal, this fundraising plan aims to reach a 15% increase from 2024. This goal will help Chill hire additional development staff, launch its planned giving program and support foundation expansion. By reaching this goal, Chill will be able to achieve its mission of inspiring young people through boardsports and building a more equitable outdoor community (Chill, 2025).

Chill's current fundraising plan includes funding from corporate partnerships, individual contributions, grant income and special event income which has sustained the foundation over the years. However, to strengthen its financial sustainability, considering soliciting annual and major gifts, and deepening relationships with corporations and foundations as well as implementing a planned giving program will support Chill's success down the line.

Annual Giving

According to Worth (2016), "annual gifts are the largest source of unrestricted revenue and for some nonprofit organizations a critical component of the operating budget." While Chill has a donation page on its website which allows donors to give once or monthly, it currently does not have an ongoing campaign to promote annual giving. By seeking these recurring donations, Chill will be able to support its daily operations and have supplemental income to hire additional staff for the planned giving program.

As for annual giving strategy, Chill can utilize its current ambassador, athlete and alumni network through digital means. By using email newsletters, social media and the foundation website, Chill can regularly communicate impact and giving opportunities. Such opportunities will include "Shred Every Month," a recurring campaign that allows donors to support specific programming on a monthly basis. Moreover, Chill can capitalize on current events, such as the winter and summer X Games for example, to promote giving for snowboarding and skateboarding programs, respectively. The foundation can also schedule campaigns for holidays, Giving Tuesday and seasonal program launches.

Email newsletters will allow Chill to reach its current network and audience, keeping them up to date with how they can support its mission through annual giving. On Instagram, Chill currently only has 13.7k followers. However, by making collaborative posts with @burton and @burtonsnowboards, which collectively have over 2.3 million followers, Chill can promote the new annual giving program on social media and reach a new audience, including new donors who may not have known about Chill or its mission previously. Such posts could include infographics that promote the annual giving program and how to donate, while others could thank previous donors, promote the impact of annual gifts and video testimonials from Chill participants.

Having a broad-based annual giving program will open the door for first-time donors and be a vehicle for establishing a pipeline of potential major-gift prospects (Worth, 2016). Using social media and leading traffic to the Chill website will give first-time donors the information they need to get involved and sign up for newsletter communications to stay updated on all-things annual giving.

Major Gifts

The major gifts cycle includes identification, cultivation, solicitation, thanking and stewardship, and such gifts are over and above the donor's regular annual gift (Worth, 2016). Given Chill's size and financial goals, major gifts should be defined at $50,000 or more and directed as restricted support for efforts including geographic expansion, equipment acquisition (physical capital) or program innovation.

Chill's extensive athlete ambassador network, including Olympic medalists and X Games champions, represents a strategic opportunity to identify major gift prospects. These professional athletes often earn significant prize money and endorsement income beyond medals, positioning them as high-capacity donors with a personal connection to Chill's mission.

To engage athletes in major giving, Chill should follow the traditional gift cycle. First, identify prospects by leveraging existing relationships and monitoring their engagement with Chill. Cultivation should include inviting them to events, sharing impact reports, and connecting them with youth participants. Solicitation should be personal and ideally peer-led by fellow ambassadors or board members. After securing a gift, Chill should provide naming opportunities, recognize donors publicly, and report regularly on the impact of their contributions. This approach not only secures major gifts but also amplifies Chill's visibility through athlete influence.

Corporate/Foundation Support – Strengthening Relationships

With support from large companies like Mountain Dew, Milk Makeup and JPMorgan Chase as well as numerous foundations and program/national partners, Chill can continue to expand its outreach to other organizations invested in youth development, diversity, equity, and environmental sustainability. One key opportunity lies in targeting companies with established corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs, especially those interested in supporting youth engagement, outdoor recreation, and community building. Chill's commitment to treating employees equitably and promoting access to the outdoors positions it as a natural fit for mission-driven partnerships (Worth, 2016).

Chill can expand its existing partnerships while also identifying smaller companies with emerging CSR initiatives. These smaller, values-aligned organizations can benefit from the visibility and impact of supporting Chill's programs, while Chill gains access to diversified funding and in-kind support. Sponsorship packages should be tailored to align with CSR goals, providing opportunities for brand promotion, employee engagement, and community impact storytelling.

To increase corporate giving, Chill can create CSR-aligned sponsorship packages for small and large companies, which will include customizable benefits like recognition, social media exposure, and involvement opportunities to fit each partner's goals. Moreover, Chill can promote its employer matching gift program to deepen partner commitment and increase giving through employee involvement.

On the foundation side, Chill should continue applying to major youth, education and sports-focused funders. Proposals should emphasize Chill's DEI outcomes, mental health impact and alignment with foundations' strategic goals. Cultivating relationships with program officers, reporting on outcomes transparently through impact reports and identifying long-term funding opportunities will be essential to maintaining and expanding foundation support.

Planned Giving

The Chill Foundation recently implemented the Jake Burton Carpenter Legacy Circle which "honors those who share Jake's vision and enduring investment to create a more equitable outdoor community" (Chill, 2025). This strategy allows donors to include Chill as a beneficiary in their will or estate plans. However, apart from bequests, Chill should also introduce retirement plan/IRA beneficiary designations.

Given the physical risks involved in boardsports, planned giving also resonates with Chill's community of athletes, alumni and ambassadors, who may feel especially motivated to make meaningful, enduring contributions. Naming Chill as a beneficiary of a retirement plan or IRA not only supports the foundation's future but also offers donors tax advantages (James, 2018).

To implement this program effectively, Chill should hire a part-time planned giving officer, supported by consultants if necessary, to manage cultivation, compliance and donor relationships (Weinstein & Ross, 2000). Gifts from annual giving could potentially support the hiring of new staff members needed to support planned giving. The planned giving strategy should include board and staff training to ensure alignment, and a communication plan that utilizes Chill and Burton's wide social media reach, donor events and ambassador networks.

Messaging should highlight the personal and financial benefits of legacy giving, tailored to the motivations of different donor segments (Sargeant & Shang, 2017).

With the right staffing, training, and outreach, planned giving can become a powerful pillar of Chill's fundraising strategy, securing its future while allowing supporters to make a lasting impact on the youth the foundation supports.

Gift Types and Restrictions

Most of Chill's unrestricted gifts will come from annual giving efforts, which help support everyday operations and allow flexibility in funding things like staffing and marketing (Worth, 2016). Restricted gifts will mainly be sought through major gifts and grants, and will focus on specific needs like expanding into new cities, purchasing equipment or launching new programs. For this fundraising strategy, the foundation will not be focusing on physical capital gifts like buildings or facilities, since it runs programs through existing locations, such as ski resorts and skate parks, provided by its partners. Endowment gifts will also not be a current priority, but planned giving could eventually help build long-term financial support through that kind of funding later on.

Timeline

Given the extensive fundraising plan, successful implementation will require a year-long strategic approach across all staff departments at Chill. Below is the timeline to ensure operational success:

- January
    - The development team will start planning annual giving campaigns, including writing appeal communications (Warwick, 2001), focus on donor segmentation and plan donor communications.

- Board members receive updated fundraising talking points and are encouraged to reach out to their networks for cultivation and stewardship.
- Hiring process for planned giving officer begins.

- February
  - The marketing and development teams will send annual appeal communications (direct mail, personal emails), promote “Shred Every Month” and begin social media outreach efforts by posting collaborative posts with partners and Chill alumni testimonials.
  - National Snowboard day is February 21, so social media will promote an annual giving campaign, asking donors to contribute every February to support.
- March
  - The planned giving officer will introduce the planned giving program to the board of directors.
  - At “A Day for Jake” on March 15th, celebrating the life of Jake Carpenter, participants will be introduced to planned giving program and how they can support Chill’s mission. A recap video will be shared on social media.
  - Development team will begin major gift cultivation to prepare for X Games Osaka and X Games Salt Lake City, which both occur in June.
- April
  - The grants manager will submit LOIs and grant applications to foundations that align with Chill’s mission and goals.
  - The marketing team will run a targeted email campaign sharing donor spotlights, program impacts and soft launch planned giving program.

- May
  - o The development team and senior leadership will reach out to new potential corporate sponsors and partners.
  - o The marketing team, administration and senior leadership will begin planning for a half-year donor recognition event to happen in June, supporting National Skateboarding and Surfing Day.
- June
  - o Alumni, programs and development teams will collaborate on an online donor appreciation campaign will begin, leading up to the donor recognition party.
  - o The development and marketing teams will send a six-month program impact newsletter to donors.
- July
  - o First half year campaign performance will be evaluated by the marketing and development teams.
  - o Finance team will direct an internal fundraising audit.
  - o Re-engagement campaign for “Shred Every Month” donors: marketing and development teams will send emails and create social posts to encourage current donors to increase their monthly gift or invite a friend to join.
- August
  - o Planned giving program will be pushed on social media and through newsletter by marketing and development teams.
  - o Planned giving officer will send personal emails to potential donors.

- Development and marketing teams revise campaign strategies based on performance data from the first half of the year and adjust messaging for upcoming fall initiatives.

- September
  - Board of directors will host alumni and ambassador events to help cultivate major gifts.
  - Development team conducts personal outreach to donors with handwritten notes or phone calls to thank them for their support and share specific updates on how their gifts made an impact.
- October
  - Development and marketing teams will prep communication efforts and campaigns for Giving Tuesday, Christmas and New Year's.
- November
  - Given the holiday season, the marketing team will focus on emotional storytelling across all platforms and promote Giving Tuesday. The goal is to inspire a surge in end-of-year giving by connecting donors emotionally to Chill's impact and encouraging them to make a meaningful contribution before the year ends (Worth, 2016).
- December
  - All teams will wrap up fundraising efforts.
  - Marketing team will send out end-of-year thank you cards.
  - Chill to host annual holiday parties celebrating donors in Colorado, California and New York.

Conclusion

This fundraising plan outlines a clear path for the Chill Foundation to diversify its funding and reach its $6 million revenue goal for fiscal year 2026. By building out a strong annual giving program, growing major gifts, deepening relationships with corporate and foundation partners, and expanding the planned giving program, Chill can strengthen its financial foundation and support its long-term goals. These efforts will allow Chill to continue growing its impact, reach more young people, and build a more equitable outdoor community on and off the board.

References

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