Application Guide

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Background Information

What is the UW-Madison Green Fund?

The UW–Madison Green Fund supports student-initiated projects that address the environmental footprint, social impact, and operating costs of campus facilities. All students are welcome to apply.

The power of the Green Fund lies in its cascading impacts. While these projects reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save operating costs, they also inspire learning, research, and career paths for students and new campus standards.

Students drive the project development process. They identify potential upgrades, meet with building managers and tradespeople to refine the project scope, run impact calculations, write funding proposals, and work with communicators to tell the story about the project outcomes.

Students gain invaluable experience navigating administrative processes, grounding their studies in practice, and sparking questions for future study. Meanwhile, Green Fund staff walk with students through the process, facilitating connections, offering feedback, and helping the students navigate university systems.

Students observe campus with different eyes than faculty and staff do. The campus community benefits from the perspectives of students when it can tap into and encourage this creativity.

What types of projects are eligible?

The Green Fund supports the purchase of equipment to reduce the environmental footprint and operating costs and improve the social impact of campus facilities.

We strongly encourage proposals informed by research and that test out technology or processes that, if proved effective, could be implemented across the UW campus. The Green Fund does not, however, cover the wages of researchers. Likewise, we encourage outreach and education related to a funded project but will not pay for the time to do so. Many classes and student organizations are natural partners for such efforts. Educational signage can be funded as part of a larger intervention.

Please see the projects page of our website to learn more about the types of projects that the Green Fund has supported in the past: [https://sustainability.wisc.edu/greenfund/green-fund projects/](https://sustainability.wisc.edu/greenfund/green-fund-projects/)

How does the process work?

Student applicant(s) will initiate the project and play the roles of advocate, visionary, and connector. Students must work in partnership with maintenance, construction, procurement, and/or administrative staff associated with the location of their proposed upgrade. Working relationships with staff should be established prior to submitting a Full Application.

Office of Sustainability staff can help problem-solve and facilitate connections with facility staff. Students are expected to work directly with facility partners to complete the project.

The Green Fund will disburse funds directly to the host facility. Once completed, any physical improvements will be owned and managed by the host facility. The purchasing of any needed materials or equipment will follow UW–Madison procurement policies and procedures.

Who can apply?

Any student in good academic standing can apply to the Green Fund, including full- or part-time students and both undergraduate and graduate students. Consult your school or college for academic standing requirements. For undergraduates, typically this means not being on probation or in dropped status; for graduate students, the requirements are more complex.

How much funding is available?

The Green Fund has $50,000 to disburse during the 2025 – 2026 academic year. We anticipate funding four to ten projects. Applicants may identify additional sources of support, such as in-kind contributions from the host facility (e.g., labor provided by the host facility to install materials purchased by the Green Fund) or external funding (e.g., a government rebate for energy efficiency). The budget section of the application form requests both the amount requested from the Green Fund and any amount(s) provided by other sources.

Please note when an infrastructure project budget exceeds $50,000, the state of Wisconsin requires additional project review. This review extends the timeline to two to three years depending on the project's complexity. The Green Fund Review Committee will consider applications for larger projects, but applicants should be aware of the implications of proposing projects over this $50,000 threshold.

What is the timeline?

Please note: this timeline may shift slightly as the process unfolds. Our website: http://sustainability.wisc.edu/greenfund will always have the most up to date calendar.

Pre-proposals can be submitted anytime. Green Fund staff will then work with you to connect with facilities staff to develop your ideas ahead of the Full Application deadlines.

Full Applications can be submitted and will be funded twice a year.
The deadlines for 2025-2026 are: Monday, October 20, and Wednesday, March 11 at 11pm.

Wednesday, September 3	First day of classes Fall 2025
Tuesday, September 16	Green Fund Fall Kickoff & Picnic
Monday, October 20 (11pm)	**Full Application Due (Fall Deadline)**
October 21 – November 19	Green Fund Review Committee evaluates applications
November 27 – 30	Thanksgiving Recess
December 8 – 18	Green Fund staff communicate funding decisions to applicants
December 10	Last day of classes Fall 2024
December 12 – 18	Final Exams

Tuesday, January 20	First day of classes Spring 2025
Wednesday, March 11 (11pm)	**Full Application Due (Spring Deadline)**
March 12 – April 8	Green Fund Review Committee evaluates applications
March 28 – April 5	Spring Break
April 20 – 30	Green Fund staff communicate funding decisions to applicants
May 1	Last day of classes Spring 2025
May 3 – 8	Final Exams

Who evaluates proposals?

The Green Fund Review Committee (GFRC) consists of nine people: two students, two faculty members, three facilities staff members, and two Office of Sustainability staff members. GFRC members will first evaluate applications individually and then meet to decide which projects to fund. Office of Sustainability staff will communicate the outcomes to all according to the above timeline.

How are proposals evaluated?

A successful application will both present a creative idea and demonstrate a clear path to implementation in partnership with a host facility. Projects must result in measurable impacts. The Green Fund application package includes a *Budget and Impact Tool* to aid in the measurement process. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Implementation (40 points total)

   Evaluated based on responses to the *Application Form*, *Support Letter*, and report from Green Fund staff on communications to date.

   a. Did the applicant demonstrate the ability to accomplish what they set out to do (15 points)?

      i. Did the applicant build a working relationship with relevant staff at the host facility (maintenance, construction, administration, procurement)?

      ii. Is the application understandable and complete?

      iii. Did the applicant collaborate with Green Fund staff during the application development process?

   b. Does the host facility have the capacity and willingness to construct and maintain the proposed improvements (25 points)?

2. Impact (60 points total)

   Evaluated based on responses to the *Budget and Impact Tool.*

   a. Environmental – Would the project lead to measurable reductions in energy, water, and solid waste consumption and carbon emissions; reduced exposure to environmental contaminants/ improved air quality (20 points)?

   b. Economic – What is the Return on Investment (10 points)? Has the host made meaningful contributions to the project budget (10 points)? c. Social –Would the project contribute positively to workplace safety, social justice, or another metric of social impact (10 points)?

   d. Educational - To what extent would funding this project deepen the educational impact for the student team and other students and staff on campus? (10 points)

GFRC members classify proposals into one of the following categories:

Ready for Funding – The proposal fits the scope of the Green Fund. Minor details still need to be worked out, but the project team could implement the project if funded.

Needs Work - The proposal fits the scope of the Green Fund. Major details still need to be worked out. It may or may not be feasible to implement the proposal.

Does not Fit the Scope of the Green Fund – Regardless of the level of detail, the Green Fund is not the appropriate funding source for this proposal.

How will students be supported in their work?

Office of Sustainability staff are available to support students during the brainstorming, development, application, and implementation phases of the project. We encourage students to attend Green Fund semester kickoff meetings, ask questions, and contact us if challenges arise at any time during the process. Applicants are also welcome to submit proposal drafts for feedback ahead of the deadline.

How can you help us improve the Green Fund?

We welcome feedback to improve the Green Fund process for future years. Please feel free to email with any suggestions to Ian Aley, Green Fund Program Manager, UW-Madison Office of Sustainability at iraley@wisc.edu

Application Instructions

What is included in the application package?

The application package includes the following materials:

1. Application Guide
2. Pre-Proposal
3. Application Form
4. Budget and Impact Tools
5. Support Letter

How and when do I submit application materials?

Application materials should be submitted by sending an email with attachments to Green Fund Program Manager, Ian Aley: iraley@wisc.edu who will respond confirming that your application was received.

Please save all application materials so that file names include the document type (Pre-Proposal, Form, etc.) and your project title. For instance, "YourProjectTitle_Pre-Proposal.doc"

Questions?

If you have questions or feedback about the Application Guide and other materials or would like support as you write your pre-proposal or full proposal, please contact Ian Aley, Green Fund Program Manager with the UW-Madison Office of Sustainability: iraley@wisc.edu.

Pre-Proposal

The *Pre-Proposal* is a quick and easy form that you can submit (email iraley@wisc.edu) at any time to indicate interest in applying to the Green Fund. Green Fund staff will review your Pre-Proposal and offer feedback to help you refine your ideas before fleshing them out in the *Application Form*, *Budget and Impact Tools*, and *Support Letter*.

Much of the work of the Green Fund is about building relationships with facilities staff, including maintenance, procurement, and management so that a project can be realized.

We understand that project details, student applicants, staff contacts, and other specifics may change between the Pre-Proposal and the Full Application. Please provide us with as much information as you have. This will help us give focused feedback to help you refine your ideas. **Do not worry if you are still working out some of the details. This is just the start of the conversation.**

Application Form

The Application Form gives the Green Fund Review Committee a summary of your proposed project and information on your project team.

Host Facility

Green Fund projects must impact UW–Madison facilities. If a project is located on-campus it easily meets these criteria. If your project is located off-site but impacts campus facilities, please explain this connection.

Attachments

Students must complete and upload the Application Form and the Budget and Impact Tool. The Staff Contact is responsible for uploading the Letter of Support.

Impact and Budget Tools

The *Budget and Impact Tools* support applicants in communicating the anticipated impacts and costs of the proposed project. Impact and budget calculations will be the result of research and conversations with your host facility staff. We expect you to show your work, cite your sources, and state your assumptions. If you require additional space or if you have supporting documentation (e.g., a quote from a vendor), feel free to include an attachment in your application materials.

We anticipate project proposals to be diverse in their scope and focus. There are several templates of the tools that you can choose to work from. Projects are rarely “one-size fits all”. Feel free to adjust the tool to best communicate the impacts of your proposed project. If the *Budget and Impact Tools* do not fully capture the impact of your proposed project, please contact Ian Aley (iraley@wisc.edu). We would be happy to help you modify the tool to better

capture the details of your proposed project.

You will notice that we have provided five categories of tools:

1. Energy Efficiency
2. Energy Production
3. Waste
4. Water
5. General (*Use this one for projects related to food, arts and culture, nature, and/or other creative projects with impacts not easily captured by another version of the tool.*)

Please use the specific sheet in the workbook that aligns the closest with your project. Follow the instructions on the "Instructions" tab and reach out if you have any questions.

Units

The "Units" tab provides some general numbers on the pricing of utilities and other operation costs at UW-Madison and some notes on potential opportunities and challenges for projects in each of the resource areas. This tab also suggests some outside data sources.

Impact Tool

Work with facilities staff to estimate the line items in the worksheets. Additionally, this process may require internet research, a phone call to suppliers, or investigating past utility bills. Please thoroughly explain the sources of your data and how you arrived at your estimate.

Please use the appropriate unit of measure based on the type of project you propose. Consult the "Units" tab for pricing and sources of information for carbon conversion multipliers.

Insert "N/A" for any cell that is not applicable to your project. Provide evidence as best you can for claims of anticipated impact: this could be an academic study or industry data. If you anticipate an impact other than the ones listed, feel free to add additional row(s).

Budget Tool

Itemize materials and labor required to implement your project proposal. Seek out cost quotes with the support of facilities staff.

A host facility may commit labor or materials to the project's implementation or an applicant may receive an outside grant/rebate. Please add values to the column corresponding to the type of contribution to the overall budget.

If your project has received other funding sources, check in with your other funders and project partners to ensure participation in the Green Fund is allowed.

Support Letter

The *Support Letter* conveys to the Green Fund Review Committee that the host facility for your proposed project is willing and able to implement your idea.

Please give your Staff Contact person the *Support Letter* form early enough to give them sufficient time to complete it. Requesting this Letter of Support should be the culmination of an ongoing conversation with maintenance, construction, procurement, and/or accounting facilities staff.