So You Want Funding for a Sustainability Project?

A student's guide to winning a Green Fund Project Grant

What is the Green Fund?

The Green Fund is a resource that's available to all students, staff, and faculty to help support sustainability projects that take place on the Florida State campus.

Projects should benefit FSU and address one (or more) of the following strategic areas:

- Climate Action;
- Waste Minimization;
- Resource Stewardship;
- Education for Sustainability.

Any project above $5,000 will need some sort of cost sharing provided by the sponsoring department or another funding source.

What the Green Fund is NOT . . .

The Green Fund is *not* for:
- Personal theses, dissertations, or research;
- Ongoing expenses like stipends or salaries;
- Food or t-shirts;
- Events;
- Supplies that are already available in your department.

As a general rule of thumb, if the project primarily benefits a single individual, it will not be funded.

What does the Green Fund pay for?

The Green Fund *will* provide resources for:
- Infrastructure on the FSU campus;
- Supplies and equipment specific to the project;
- Transportation expenses;
- Other project expenses like licensing, postage, copying, etc.

Who can apply for the Green Fund?

Any currently enrolled FSU student can apply for the Green Fund! Faculty and staff can apply, as well. All students must have a faculty and/or staff sponsor who is willing to serve as an advisor and financial manager for the project.

What do decision makers look for in an application?

Sustainable Campus looks for three main things in an application:

- Feasibility - Is the project well thought-out, and does it seem possible within the given budget and time frame?
- Benefit - Who is the project benefitting, and how do they benefit?
- Cost - How much does the project cost, and is the project an efficient use of funds?

How do I develop a project idea?

1. **RESEARCH**

   Notice that something at FSU could be more sustainable? Do some digging and learn *why* it's not being done already. Maybe there are structural issues that go way beyond the level of an individual project. Maybe there's no one to maintain such a project. Or maybe it's totally feasible, and no one's thought of your idea yet.

   If you're wondering whether or not your idea falls within the scope of the Green Fund, look at previously funded projects.

Project Stoplight:

Red: Hold Your Horses	Yellow: Proceed with Caution	Green: Go for it!
Composting is great for the environment, so why aren't we doing it here at FSU? There are a lot of structural barriers in place that prevent us from implementing composting at a university-wide scale. Previous composting pilot projects on smaller scales haven't been well maintained. For these reasons, the Green Fund committee puts a halt to most composting proposals.	Reusable water bottles are better than disposable ones, so it'd be a good idea to purchase a big batch for my outdoor sports team, right? Wait just a minute! Are there even water fountains to fill up near the practice field? For this type of project, the Green Fund committee will ask you to do your research to prove that your idea is not only feasible to implement but makes sense given the space requirements.	Saving water by taking shorter showers is a smart way to conserve resources. Installing timers to the outside of shower stalls in the residence hall would be a cost effective way to encourage students to shower more efficiently. If you've gotten the go ahead from University Housing stakeholders, the Green Fund committee will probably approve a well written and thoughtful proposal.

Ask Yourself: Who has already tried to do this, and why did it not work out?

2. CONNECTING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

So now you've got an idea and an understanding of what's been tried and what hasn't been tried. Next, reach out to stakeholders to see if they're interested in collaborating on a project.

If you have an idea for an outdoor educational space, reach out to FSU Facilities. If you want to make a change in the residence halls, connect with University Housing. If you're excited to introduce a new piece of technology to your department, work with your department chair.

Do not submit a project proposal for infrastructure change on campus without speaking to the relevant Facilities stakeholders first.

How do I reach out to stakeholders?
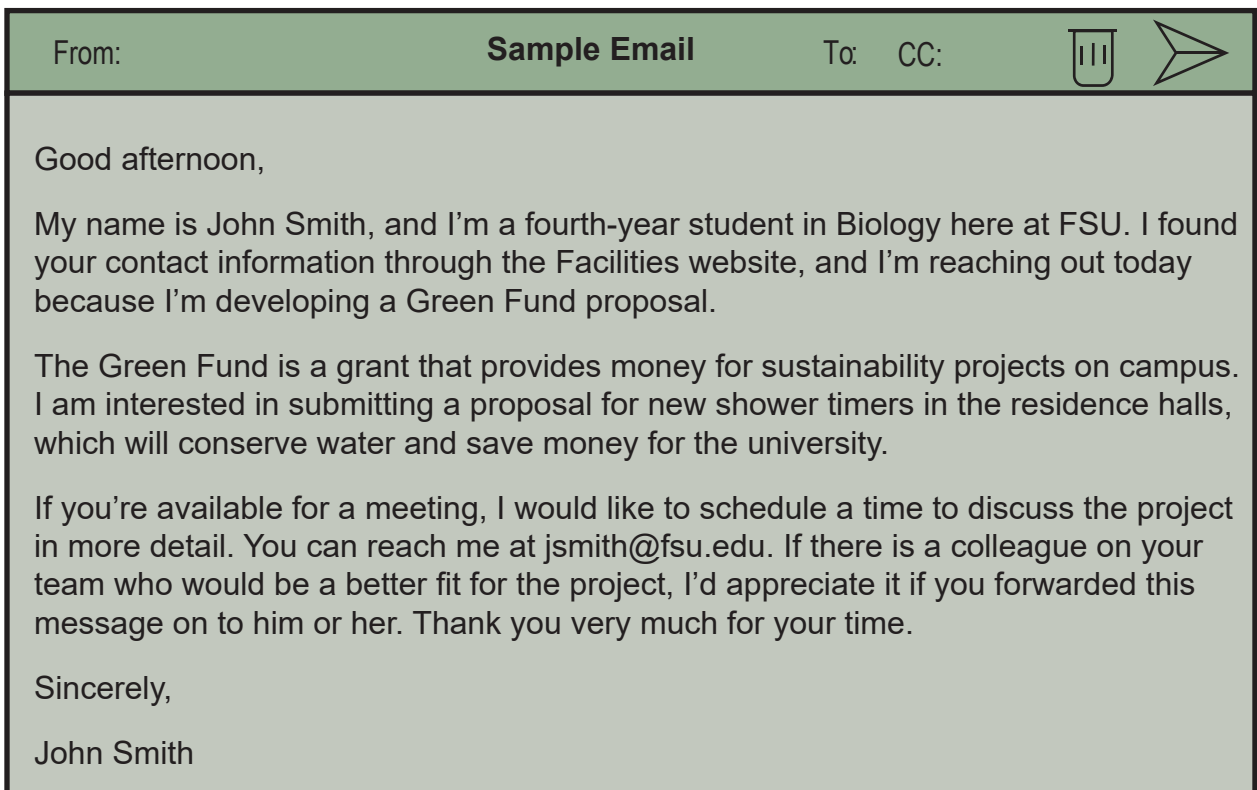### I don't even know anyone outside of my department!

1. **Research -** Start with Google. Type in your search terms and navigate to the appropriate FSU website. Find the About tab and look for "Team" or "Staff."

2. **Reach Out -** Identify someone on the team who looks like they might be helpful to your project. Send them an email or give them a phone call to introduce yourself and your project. Ask them to refer you to a different member of their team if someone else would be a better fit for your project.

3. **Meet -** Once you've established contact, set up a meeting to discuss the project in more detail. *Come prepared.* Be ready to talk about things you learned through your research and have a rough idea of materials, supplies, and other equipment that might be needed.

4. **Be willing to *listen* -** Sometimes stakeholders will have ideas and suggestions that will push your project forward. Other times, stakeholders will share challenges that might make your project impossible. Hearing the word "no" is never fun, but by talking to stakeholders *before* finalizing the details of your project, you won't waste your time on a proposal that's never going to be feasible.

The Art of the Cold Email Introduction

When reaching out to a new contact, try to keep your introduction short and to the point. Whether by phone or by email, here's a basic structure that you can use:

- *Paragraph 1:* Introduce yourself and explain how you were referred to the person you are contacting.

- *Paragraph 2:* Explain why you are contacting them.

- *Paragraph 3:* Explain how they can contact you for more information. Ask them to refer you to a different colleague if someone else on their team would be a better fit. Thank them for their time.

From:	**Sample Email**	To:	CC:	

Good afternoon,

My name is John Smith, and I'm a fourth-year student in Biology here at FSU. I found your contact information through the Facilities website, and I'm reaching out today because I'm developing a Green Fund proposal.

The Green Fund is a grant that provides money for sustainability projects on campus. I am interested in submitting a proposal for new shower timers in the residence halls, which will conserve water and save money for the university.

If you're available for a meeting, I would like to schedule a time to discuss the project in more detail. You can reach me at jsmith@fsu.edu. If there is a colleague on your team who would be a better fit for the project, I'd appreciate it if you forwarded this message on to him or her. Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

John Smith

Ask Yourself: Who do I need to get permission from to make my project successful?

3. READ THE INSTRUCTIONS

The stakeholders are on board, you've found a faculty member who's willing to oversee your project, and now you're ready to write the proposal! What's next?

READ THE INSTRUCTIONS!

Review the Sustainable Campus Green Fund website, especially the general FAQ section and How to Apply section. Before you email Sustainable Campus with a question, make sure it hasn't already been answered in the FAQ section first!

Register through the SurveyMonkey site and take a look at every piece of the application, making sure that you understand what each question is asking. Review the budget form and connect with your advisor to make sure that they are aware of all relevant financial policies, as well.

4. DEVELOPING YOUR PROPOSAL

As you're putting your project idea onto paper, remember to answer thoroughly the following questions:

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?
- How?

If you don't have answers to these questions, the Green Fund review committee isn't going to fund your project proposal. Get the basics down first, and then think through the details.

Do your homework and carefully work with stakeholders to estimate accurate costs for your project. Break implementation of the entire project down into smaller steps, and think about every task, supply, and resource that you will need to complete each step.

Have your faculty advisor check your work, and run the numbers by your stakeholder partner! The more details the better. The review committee should know exactly how you will implement your project idea every step of the way.

For more resources, visit:
- The AASHE Campus Sustainability Hub for sustainability project ideas, resources, and guides from other institutions
- The Deforest Action Student Project Planning Guide

Ask Yourself: Did I answer the 5 W's and can I explain every step of the implementation process?

5. APPLY

After you submit your application, be sure to keep all relevant documents on hand in case the review committee has further questions. Make sure you distribute final copies of your application to stakeholder partners and your advisor so everyone is on the same page.

Ask Yourself: Do I have all my research, documents, and applications in one, easy-to-find place?