

We Mean Green Fund Project Proposal Guide



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What is the We Mean Green Fund?

The University of North Texas' green fund, the We Mean Green Fund (WMGF), empowers members of the UNT community to improve our institution through campus projects that embody passion and spirit for environmental sustainability. The fund was initiated in 2010 by a majority vote of the student body and is continuously made possible by the UNT student body through a \$5 [Environmental Service Fee](#) collected from students each spring and fall.

The student fee supports the advancement of campus environmental sustainability efforts through community-driven project ideas and leadership. Through joint engagement and enthusiasm from students, faculty, and staff, the projects financed by the We Mean Green Fund integrate sustainability into the culture of our university's many operations and activities.

Participation with We Mean Green Fund projects provides students and employees an opportunity to expand on professional skillsets and experiences related to project planning and evaluation, budgeting, stakeholder engagement, outreach coordination, leadership, and more.

Who can submit a project proposal and receive funding?

Project proposals may be submitted by current UNT students, staff members, and/or faculty members on behalf of an individual, UNT program, organization, office, or department. Non-university affiliated individuals and organizations may not submit proposals.

What can funds be used for?

Funds may be used to provide environmental improvements at the university through environmental services, benefits, and support such as (but not limited to) recycling, transportation, employment, product purchasing, matching funds for grants, planning and maintenance, irrigation, etc. Please [visit our website for examples of funded projects](#). While *projects must have an environmentally focused core*, they can simultaneously address [other areas of sustainable development](#) through creative approaches. Projects should enhance student learning and campus life while addressing environmental sustainability topics such as waste reduction, energy or water conservation, transportation, building efficiencies, landscaping, gardening, biodiversity and more. Examples of relevant projects include but are not limited to educational engagement efforts related to environmental sustainability (e.g., workshops, art exhibits, volunteer efforts, seminars, events, etc.), campus environmental enhancements and infrastructure, and pilot programs to improve campus environmental impacts (e.g., green energy, green spaces, waste reduction strategies, etc.). *Funds may not be used for personal research projects or to reduce/replace money allocated by the institution for environmental projects.*

Who evaluates projects for funding?

The student-majority, student-led [We Mean Green Fund Committee](#) evaluates project proposals and allocates funds from the Environmental Service Fee which means the decisions behind this student-funded program are led primarily by students. The committee evaluates complete proposals only and may establish additional funding guidelines from year to year to ensure funding is allocated among a diverse range of candidates and topic areas. Proposals are evaluated on how well candidates address the required proposal materials.

What are the eligibility criteria for project proposals?

To be eligible for funding, project proposals must follow instructions outlined in proposal materials and address the following criteria:

Connection to Campus: Projects should directly address environmental sustainability on the University of North Texas campus or in the capacity that on-campus activities directly influence environmental sustainability in the surrounding community.

Environmental Benefits: Projects should demonstrate a reduction in UNT's carbon footprint or provide other environmental benefits such as (but not limited to) stormwater management, biodiversity, conservation, waste reduction, clean energy & transport, etc.

Feasibility and Institutional Support: Projects should be feasible and have written confirmation of support from appropriate campus entities prior to submission. All projects must have the support of a UNT faculty or staff advisor who is committed to advising the project throughout its implementation and seeing it to completion. If your project proposes physical changes to the university or new campus practices/procedures that will impact any department's functions or operations, you will be required to submit a Project Approval Form from appropriate campus entities. See page 8 for examples of potential approvers.

Appropriateness of Schedule and Budget Request: Projects must have a feasible timeline and budget that are clearly defined and based on research.

Student Experience: Projects include opportunities for student involvement and/or will positively impact the student experience. Direct student involvement in project planning and implementation is strongly encouraged.

Education and Outreach: Projects consider education and outreach opportunities and include these elements as part of the project implementation plan.

Metrics: Projects have clearly defined, measurable outcomes, backed by metrics.

Potential for Broad Application: Projects have the potential to be scalable across campus.

Self-Sufficiency: Projects should be self-sufficient without the need for continued management from the green fund. Project implementation should not rely exclusively on green fund staff for completion. Project leadership is the responsibility of the candidates who submit the proposal. While not required, preference may be given to projects that can obtain matching funds from sources beyond the green fund or include a plan for sustained funding.

How much funding is available?

During the 2021 fall proposal review cycle, the We Mean Green Fund Committee may allocate up to \$100,000 to support spring projects. Projects that receive funding in this cycle must conclude by the end of the 2022 spring semester; therefore, the scope and budget of each project must be manageable by the deadline. Projects with smaller budgets of \$20,000 or less have a stronger likelihood of receiving funding. However, you may propose a larger budget. Please check greenfund.unt.edu for updates about available funding for the 2022 spring proposal review cycle.

How does COVID-19 impact project proposals?

Project proposals and budgets should incorporate plans that align with [UNT's COVID-19 safety and risk management strategies](#). Projects that cannot function in the context of UNT COVID-19 guidelines are unlikely to receive funding this cycle.

What are the expectations after a project receives funding?

By submitting a WMGF project proposal, candidates agree to the following terms if funded:

- Project teams are responsible for leading and implementing projects if awarded funding. If a primary leader of the project leaves the project team, then they must communicate with WMGF staff and identify a replacement lead immediately.
- The WMGF Committee reserves the right to request reasonable amendments to proposed projects prior to awarding funding. Project teams must agree to follow through with amendments before receiving funding.
- All project spending must comply with UNT purchasing policies. Funds will be transferred to the receiving department in a special project account that teams can spend from.
- Project teams must make all project invoices and other purchasing documentation available to WMGF staff each time a purchase is made.
- Project teams must spend WMGF funds according to the approved project budget and must consult with the We Mean Green Fund Committee to request any budget alterations or adjustments during the project.
- If funds are not used by the required deadline, then funding will be withdrawn, and the project team must reapply for future funding unless specified otherwise in the funding agreement or in writing by the WMGF staff or committee.
- Any unused project funds will return to the We Mean Green Fund and be reallocated to future projects.
- Project teams may be asked at any time to attend meetings to present the progress of their project and the management of funds.
- Project teams must provide project photos and written project updates at both the midpoint and completion of the project and additionally as requested by the green fund staff or committee. Otherwise, funding may be placed on hold.
- Project teams must submit a final written project report with photos by a deadline assigned by WMGF staff.

What is the timeline for the project proposal process?

Fall 2021 Dates	Timeline Items
October 25, 2021	Project proposal materials are due on Monday, October 25, 2021 at noon CST.
Late October - November 2021	The student-majority We Mean Green Fund Committee (WMGFC) will meet to evaluate complete, eligible project proposals.
December 2021	The committee will deliberate and provide funding recommendations to UNT's Division of Student Affairs leadership for final approval.
January 2022	Awarded projects typically receive funding and begin implementation by January of the spring semester.
May 2022	Funded projects conclude by the end of the spring semester (May).
August 2022	Project bills are paid no later than the end of August of the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Spring 2022 Dates	Timeline Items
February 21, 2022	Project proposal materials are due on Monday, February 21, 2022 at noon CST.
Late February-March 2022	The student-majority We Mean Green Fund Committee meets to evaluate complete, eligible project proposals.
March-April 2022	The committee will send invitations to candidates who will deliver a 10-20-minute project presentation for further consideration.
April-May 2022	The committee will deliberate and provide funding recommendations to UNT's Division of Student Affairs leadership for final approval.
September 2022	Projects proposed in the spring typically receive funding and begin implementation by the start of the next UNT fiscal year (September).
August 2023	Funded projects conclude by the end of the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

What kind of support is available for interested candidates?

We Mean Green Fund staff is available to answer questions and help you navigate the project planning and implementation phases. Need help with brainstorming, facilitating campus relationships, planning a proposal, or maneuvering university processes and systems? Contact wemeangreenfund@unt.edu or call 940-565-4587 for assistance.

What are the components of a complete project proposal?

A complete We Mean Green Fund project proposal includes the following materials:

1. Interest Form
2. Project Proposal Form
3. Budget Excel Document
4. Project Advisor Agreement (and Project Approval Forms where applicable)
5. Video Pitch

Please note, candidates that move to the final review stages during the spring 2022 proposal review cycle may be asked to deliver a brief 10-20-minute project presentation to the We Mean Green Fund Committee for further funding consideration.

Interest Form

To initiate your proposal for project funding, first submit one [Interest Form](#) per project to briefly define your project idea to the green fund staff. Interest Forms can be submitted at any time. Interest Forms provide staff with information to help them offer feedback, confirm feasibility, connect you with appropriate campus entities, advisors, or team members, and provide guidance on how to move forward successfully to compose your project proposal as a compelling narrative for the We Mean Green Fund Committee's review.

Project Proposal Form

The Project Proposal Form provides the We Mean Green Fund Committee with a summary of your proposed project and the context of its feasibility and impact. It also identifies your project team. The Project Proposal Form consists of prompts which must be completed to be considered for funding. Each prompt has a specified word or character limit; if responses exceed word limits, your proposal may be disqualified from review. Use the provided editable Project Proposal Form and follow its enclosed instructions.

Budget Excel Document

Project proposals must include a budget that is clearly defined and based on research. Use the provided Budget Excel template and follow its enclosed instructions.

When developing the budget, consider the project's needs for equipment, general materials or supplies, construction, publicity and marketing, personnel and wages, consultants, and more. Proposals including construction may require the assistance of a [professional UNT cost estimator](#). Consult with the green fund staff first for budgeting or cost estimating questions.

Project Advisor Agreement

All projects require a signed Project Advisor Agreement letter from a UNT faculty or staff member who will take on the role of project advisor and assist with project implementation and completion. Use the provided Project Advisor Agreement template.

Project Approval Form

If your project proposes physical changes to the university or new campus practices or procedures that will impact any department's functions or operations, you must submit a Project Approval Form from appropriate campus entities confirming their support/approval of the project. Signed Project Approval Forms are requested from all project stakeholders whose involvement or approval is necessary for project completion (e.g., UNT faculty, staff, departments, organizations, external units, etc.). Use the provided Project Approval Form and follow its enclosed instructions.

If you need assistance in identifying the entities from which your project might require approval, contact We Mean Green Fund staff at WeMeanGreenFund@unt.edu.

Below are examples of potentially necessary project approvers depending on the project scope.

- *Art in Public Places Committee* – oversees the acquisition, placement, maintenance, and insurance for campus artwork installations
- *Athletics* – oversees sporting events and activities
- *Building Managers/Proctors* – oversees building-specific maintenance and operations
- *Deans or Department Chairs* – oversees academic unit or area of concern to support students
- [Design Review Board](#) – oversees approvals for any new building [project](#) such as ones related to improvements or construction affecting the campus exterior public space, existing building appearance, landscape, or campus aesthetic
- *Dining Services* – oversees campus dining operations including retail options
- *Facilities* – oversees [construction](#), grounds maintenance, recycling, custodial, vehicle rentals, campus maintenance, key requests, and event support services (see examples of [Billable Services](#))
- *Housing* - oversees residence life and residence halls
- *Risk Management* – oversees emergency management, safety services, environmental health and safety, and insurance and claims
- *Student Affairs* – provides students with support for academic success, social engagement, and personal/professional growth through various departments
- *Transportation Services* – oversees campus parking and transit
- *University Brand Strategy and Communications* – oversees UNT’s branding approval, social media, advertising, and news and media relations

Proposals that secure prior review and support from collaborating units are the strongest candidates for funding. Green fund staff can assist in the process of connecting you with appropriate institutional support if requested in a reasonable time.

Video Pitch

Project teams must submit a 3 to 4-minute personal elevator pitch video (formatted as an MP4 file). The goal of the video pitch is to convey the importance of your project idea in a concise way that demonstrates your passion for advancing your sustainability mission on campus. This video should *not* use the written proposal as a word-for-word script; the video is supplemental to the written proposal and should help amplify your narrative with additional information giving the committee a greater understanding of your project and your intentions. To allow for a free range of creativity, a video template is not provided. At a minimum, your video pitch should include the following information

- A passionate, yet brief, description of what your project is and why you are proposing it

- A brief mention of who the project team consists of (students, faculty, staff, departments, etc.) and who you will be working with to achieve the project (such as but not limited to the Project Approval Form supporters)
- The funding needs of your project
- How your project will impact the campus community

The video may be a recorded slide show or use other creative angles to convey your pitch.

When is the project proposal due and how do I submit it?

Fall 2021 deadline: Monday, October 25th, 2021 at noon CT.

Spring 2022 deadline: Monday, February 21, 2022 at noon CT.

Late submission may not be accepted.

Send an email with all required proposal attachments to WeMeanGreenFund@unt.edu. If files are too large to send over email, send them through your UNT Microsoft OneDrive. You'll receive a confirmation email once all necessary proposal documents are received. The We Mean Green Fund is not responsible for any delays in the receipt of or failure to deliver proposal materials.

Email attachments should be named with the document category (Proposal Form, Budget, Advisor Agreement, Approval Form, Video) and your project title. For example, "ApprovalForm1_MeanGreenGownsforGrads" if your proposal contains multiple approval forms.

Required email attachments:

- Project Proposal Form [Word document]
- Budget [Excel document]
- Advisor Agreement Letter [Word or pdf document]
- Any necessary Project Approval Form(s) [pdf document]
- Video Pitch [MP4 file]