We Mean Green Fund Project Proposal Guide

UNT | DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
We Mean Green Fund

Contents

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 skill sets 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. Visit our website for examples on previously 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 9-10 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. Consider creating SMART goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound.

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 2022 fall proposal review cycle, the We Mean Green Fund Committee may allocate up to $70,512.64 to support projects. Projects that receive funding in this cycle must conclude by the end of the 2023 summer 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 2023 spring proposal review 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 kind of proposal should I submit?

Quick-Proposal

This is for proposals that can be completed within a short amount of time and are either already approved by associated parties, or do not require approval. The funding required for quick proposal projects is typically under $3,000.

Quick-Proposals are great for project such as one-time events, small structures or grounds projects for planting native plants, educational signage campaigns, purchasing sustainable goods for campus, and more.

General Project Proposals

Semester-Long Projects
These proposals are for larger projects that may require approvals from various departments across campus and can be completed within one semester (typically the spring). Funding required for semester-long projects range from $3,000 to $60,000.

Examples of previous semester-long projects include the [Mean Green Fix and Wear](#) workshops, the [Community Garden Pollinator Mural](#) project, and the Water Bottle Refilling Stations project. Projects that take one semester long could be events, educational campaigns, establishment of structures on campus that promote environmental sustainability, and more.

Year-Long Projects and Multi-Year Projects
These projects are large-scale projects that require approvals from various departments and organizations across campus. Implementation for these projects occur over a long period of time, such as one year or longer, and typically have a funding requirement of over $5,000.

The [Native Bed Expansion](#) project and the [Central Campus Pollinator](#) project are both projects that took place over one year. Fund projects that have taken place over many years include the [Union Rooftop](#) project, the [UNT Community Garden](#), and the [Mobile-Bike shop](#). Projects that fit in this category are geared toward making a long-lasting impact on campus and typically require a through maintenance plan.

What is the timeline for the project proposal process?
Regardless of the type of project you submit, there are important steps you need to take to get your project funded. Below is a suggested timeline of steps to take when you plan on bringing an idea for We Mean Green Fund consideration.

1. Get connected with the UNT We Mean Green Fund Staff by filling out an [interest form](#), emailing [WeMeanGreenFund@unt.edu](#), or calling 940-565-4587.
2. Make campus connections.
   o Find other students who are interested and create a project team!
   o All student project leaders are required to have a UNT staff or faculty advisor. As your professors or other members of the UNT community to be your project advisor.
3. Set up an initial planning meeting with the WMGF Staff.
   o Receive valuable feedback regarding your project idea.
   o Staff will provide project teams with proper proposal documents.
4. Finish the first draft of your proposal and submit for WMGF staff review.
   o The WMGF staff will provide feedback and let you know of any necessary approvals that are needed.
5. Finalize proposal documents and send in to [WeMeanGreenFund@unt.edu](#) for approvals.
6. Once approved, present to the WMGFC.
7. Funding status is released.

Deadlines for 2022-2023

Fall 2022 Dates	Timeline Items
September 18th, 2022	Quick-Proposals are due to be considered for Fall 2022 funding implementation.
October 16th, 2022	Quick-Proposal applications are due to be considered for Spring 2023 funding and implementation. Spring semester project proposals are due to be considered for Spring 2023 funding and implementation.
November 2022	Project teams for spring semester project proposals will present to the student-majority We Mean Green Fund Committee (WMGFC).* *Presentation Dates TBD, connect with the WMGF for the most updated information.
December 2022	Project teams may be invited for follow-up presentations to the We Mean Green Fund Committee. The committee will deliberate and provide funding recommendations to UNT's Division of Student Affairs leadership for final approval.
January 2023	Awarded projects typically receive funding and begin implementation by January of the spring semester.
May 2023	Funded projects anticipated to conclude by the end of the spring semester (May).
August 2023	Project bills are paid no later than the end of August of the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Spring 2023 Dates	Timeline Items
March 12th, 2023	General project proposal materials for implementation for the 2023-2024 academic year are due.
Late March- Early April 2023	Project teams for spring semester project proposals will present to the student-majority We Mean Green Fund Committee (WMGFC).* Project teams may be invited for follow-up presentations to the We Mean Green Fund Committee. *Presentation Dates TBD, connect with the WMGF for the most updated information.
May 2023	The committee will deliberate and provide funding recommendations to UNT's Division of Student Affairs leadership for final approval.
September 2023	Projects proposed in the spring typically receive funding and begin implementation by the start of the next UNT fiscal year (September).
August 2024	Funded projects conclude by the end of the 2023-2024 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. Supplemental Budget Document
4. Project Approval Forms (where applicable)
5. Presentation or Video Pitch

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 Application

The Project Proposal Application 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 Application consists of prompts which must be completed to be considered for funding. In this application, you will submit information about how your project addresses environmental sustainability on campus, as well as provide information about the project timeline and budget.

Supplemental Budget Document (Excel)

Project proposals must include a budget that is clearly defined and based on research. In addition to the budget on the project proposal application, project leads may use the provided Budget Excel template. 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 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.).
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.

Project Presentation

Projects requesting funding over $3,000 must submit either a video pitch (MP4 file) or present a live presentation to the We Mean Green Fund committee. The goal of this presentation or pitch is to convey the importance of your project idea in a way that demonstrate your passion for advancing your sustainability mission on campus. The presentation or pitch should *not* use the written proposal as a word-for-word script; this presentation is supplemental and should help amplify your narrative with additional information, giving the committee a greater understanding of your project and intentions. When determining if your project team should submit a video or participate in a live presentation, consider that live presentations provide the opportunity to interact with and answer questions from the committee members. Choose what make the most since for your project and project team. Live presentations opportunities are *not* guaranteed until all proposal documents have been submitted and approved by the required partners.

Presentations and video pitches should include the following information, at minimum:

- o A passionate, yet brief, description of what your project is and why you are proposing it
- o A mention of the project team (students, faculty, staff, departments, etc.) and who you will be working with to achieve the project.
- o The budget request for your project
- o How your project will impact the campus community (student impact and environmental impact)

Time Limit: Video pitches are limited to 5 minutes, and live presentations are limited to 10 minutes including a question-and-answer session.

When is the project proposal due?

See the WMGF Website or reach out to WeMeanGreenFund@unt.edu for the most updated deadlines for project submissions.

Quick-Proposal Application Deadlines

September 18th, 2022: Last day to be considered for Fall 2022 funding
October 16th, 2022: Last day to be considered for Spring 2023 funding
Availability for Quick-Proposal project applications fluctuate depending on funding availability

Spring Semester Project Proposal Deadline

October 16th, 2022
For implementation and completion during the 2023 spring semester

Year-long and Multi-Year Project Proposal Deadline

March 12th, 2023
For implementation during the 2023-2024 school year

Submitting your application

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, Approval Form, Video) and your project title. For example, "ApprovalForm1_MeanGreenGownsforGrads" if your proposal contains multiple approval forms.

Required email attachments:
- Project Proposal Application [Word or PDF Document]
- Supplemental Budget Document [Excel document]
- Any necessary Project Approval Form(s) [PDF document]
- Video Pitch [MP4 file] unless prefer an in-person presentation with the committee.