We Mean Green Fund Project Proposal Guide

UNT | DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
We Mean Green Fund

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What is the University of North Texas 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 during the spring and fall.

The fund 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 fund integrate sustainability into the culture of our university's many operations and activities.

Engagement with the fund provides professional development opportunities for students, staff, and faculty alike to expand on skillsets and experiences related to: project planning and evaluation, budgeting, stakeholder engagement and collaboration, education and outreach coordination, leadership, research, proposal writing, project management, and more.

Who can submit a project proposal for 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 but may support projects as collaborators or service providers.

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 past funded projects. While *projects must have an environmentally-focused core*, they can creatively and simultaneously address other areas of sustainable development through integrated approaches. 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.). The We Mean Green Fund may not be used to reduce or replace the 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 oversees the allocation of 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. Proposals are evaluated on how well candidates address the Project Proposal Form prompts and prepare the required proposal materials. Additionally, the WMGF Committee may establish arbitrary funding guidelines for itself from year to year to ensure funding is allocated among a diverse range of candidates and topic areas.

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. Most proposals require review or approval by academic or operational units of the university.

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.

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 for assessment.

Potential for Broad Application: Projects have the potential to be scalable across campus. Project collaboration between one or more units (including departments, divisions, organizations, etc.) is strongly encouraged to increase scalability of project impacts.

Self-Sufficiency: Projects should be self-sufficient without the need for continued management from the green fund. In other words, project implementation should not rely exclusively on green fund staff for completion and 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 review cycle, projects may receive up to $15,000 in funding support.

How does COVID-19 impact project proposals?

Project proposals and budgets should incorporate plans for extensive safety precautions that align with [UNT's COVID-19 safety and risk management strategies](). This includes but is not limited to social distancing, face coverings and personal protective equipment, cleaning protocols, limited in-person gatherings which may require official UNT approval prior to occurring, and no travel. Projects that cannot function in the context of UNT COVID-19 safety 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, then they must communicate with WMGF staff and identify a replacement lead immediately.

- The WMGF Committee reserves the right to request amendments to proposed projects prior to awarding funding. Project teams must agree to follow through with amendments before receiving funding.

- Project teams must make all project invoices and other purchasing documentation available to WMGF staff each time a purchase is made.

- All project spending must comply with UNT purchasing policies and guidelines.

- If funds are not used by the end of August during the fiscal year in which they are awarded, then funding will be withdrawn, and project teams must reapply for future funding unless specified otherwise in the funding agreement or by WMGF staff/committee.

- Any unused project funds will remain in the We Mean Green Fund account and be reallocated to future projects.

- Project teams must provide project photos and written project updates quarterly or as requested by the green fund staff or committee. Otherwise, funding may be placed on hold.

- Projects 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.

- 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 submit a final written project report with photos by a deadline assigned by WMGF staff.

What is the timeline for the project proposal process?

Date	Timeline Items
February 8, 2021	Project proposal materials are **due on Monday, February 8, 2021 at midnight CT**.
Mid February 2021	The student-majority We Mean Green Fund Committee (WMGFC) will meet to evaluate complete, eligible project proposals.
Late February 2021	The committee will send invitations to select candidates who will deliver a 10-20-minute project presentation via Zoom for further consideration on March 12, 2021.
March 12, 2021	Candidates that move to the final review stages will deliver a brief 10-20-minute **project presentation via Zoom** to the committee.
Late March 2021	The committee will deliberate and provide funding recommendations to UNT's Division of Student Affairs leadership for final approval.
September 2021	Projects typically receive funding and begin implementation by the start of the next UNT fiscal year (September).
August 2022	Funded projects conclude by the end of the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

What kind of support is available for interested candidates?

We Mean Green Fund staff is available to answer questions and help navigate the project planning and implementation phases. Need help with brainstorming, facilitating relationships, planning a proposal, submitting 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. Electronic Pre-proposal (optional but highly encouraged)
2. Project Proposal Form
3. Budget and Timeline Excel Document
4. Project Advisor Agreement and Support Letters
5. Visual Slide Deck

Please note, candidates that move to the final review stages will be asked to deliver one brief 10-20-minute project presentation via Zoom to the We Mean Green Fund Committee for further funding consideration on **March 12, 2021**.

Pre-proposal

To initiate your proposal for project funding, first submit one electronic pre-proposal form per project to briefly define your project idea to the green fund staff. Pre-proposals can be submitted at any time. While *optional*, a pre-proposal is worth completing so staff can 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 limit; if responses exceed word limits, your proposal may be disqualified from review.

Budget and Timeline

Project proposals must include a budget that is clearly defined and based on research and a timeline that summarizes tentative project activities and important milestones. Use the provided Budget and Timeline Excel template and follow its enclosed instructions. The budget and timeline templates are within the same excel file but on separate sheets.

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 for budgeting questions.

Project Advisor Agreement and Support Letters

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.

Additional Letters of Support 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.).

Proposals that secure prior review and support from collaborating units are stronger candidates for funding. Approval and review from academic or operational units of the university may be required for project proposals, especially when new campus practices and procedures are involved or physical changes to the university campus are proposed (including but not limited to construction). Green fund staff can assist in the process of securing appropriate institutional support if requested in a reasonable time.

Letters of Support should outline the following:

1. A supporter's confirmation of support or approval for the project
2. How the supporter plans to be involved or support the project
3. Their contact email and phone number, title, department, and signature

Use the Project Advisor Agreement and Support Letter templates included on the We Mean Green Fund website.

Visual Slide Deck

Candidates must submit a PowerPoint slide deck that addresses the four following topics about the project in a _visual storytelling format_. The committee will review the slides with your written Project Proposal Form so the slides should offer visual context of the written material.

Include any supporting materials on the slides that may help the We Mean Green Fund Committee better understand the idea of your project in a visually helpful way. As desired, utilize pictures, tables, charts, figures, graphs, statistics, maps, drawings, data, first-person accounts, specifications, etc. to demonstrate your project idea.

Up to 11 visual slides total are allowable in the PowerPoint document including a project title slide. Include the following headings in the slide deck:
1. Project Description & Objectives
2. Student Impact & Experience
3. Education & Outreach Strategy
4. Budget

Avoid using lengthy text on the slides as this slide deck is primarily intended as a visual aid to supplement the responses to the written prompts in the Project Proposal Form.

Website links are not permitted in the slides.

If selected to deliver a 10-20-minute project presentation via Zoom to the We Mean Green Fund Committee on March 12, 2021, you may repurpose the visual slide deck and modify it to meet the committee's presentation requests.

To allow for visual creativity, a PowerPoint template is not provided.

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

Project proposal materials are due no later than **Monday, February 8th, 2021 at midnight CT**. Late submission may not be accepted. Send an email with all required proposal attachments to wemeangreenfund@unt.edu. You'll receive a confirmation email once all necessary proposal documents are received.

Email attachments should be named with the document category (Proposal Form, Budget and Timeline, Advisor Agreement, Support Letter, Visual Slide Deck) and your project title. For example, "SupportLetter1_MeanGreenGownsforGrads" if your proposal contains multiple support letters.

Required email attachments:
- Project Proposal Form [Word document]
- Budget and Timeline [Excel document]
- Advisor Agreement Letter [Word or pdf document]
- Any necessary Support Letter(s) [Word or pdf document]
- Visual Slide Deck [PowerPoint document]