



**NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE**

**“GREEN GRANTS”**

**Submission Guidelines -  
2009-2010 Academic Year**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The NYU Sustainability Task Force is pleased to announce the third annual round of competitive funding for “Green Grants” - project proposals that spark the imagination of the NYU community and advance our long-term future as a sustainable university.

The last cycle of grants funded 23 diverse projects (out of more than 75 submissions) for a total of \$150,000. This year we hope to see even more variety and participation.

## **PURPOSE**

Green Grants support projects that improve operational environmental performance, foster environmental literacy and community engagement, advance applied research goals, and demonstrate the viability of best practices and technologies.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Any NYU student, faculty, or employee may serve as the lead sponsor of a project. Project leaders must be affiliated with NYU during the 2009-10 academic year. Alumni, community organizations, and interested neighbors are permitted and encouraged to collaborate with current students/faculty/staff and serve as members of project teams.

## **GUIDELINES**

Projects of many types and sizes have received Green Grants. These have included capital and infrastructure improvements, playful or intriguing public programming, innovations in campus systems and processes, and new community tools or resources.

Examples of recent Green Grant projects include:

- Disposable bottle behavioral research coupled with water fountain quality testing
- Pilot campus bike-sharing program
- Environmental public art competition
- High-efficiency hand dryer pilot installation
- Study of sustainable rooftop perimeter barriers
- Community Agriculture Club start-up garden

For descriptions, photos, videos, and more on past funded projects, visit:

[www.nyu.edu/sustainability/greengrants](http://www.nyu.edu/sustainability/greengrants)

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- **Feasibility** (Is the project likely to succeed? Have contingencies and major obstacles been well accounted for? Does it use funding efficiently and effectively, within one academic year, given finite available resources?)
- **Environmental Impact** (Does the project measurably reduce waste, pollution or other harms? Does it improve environmental performance or result in positive impacts?)
- **Community Impact** (Does the project lead to increased understanding, greater engagement, or sustainable behavior change in the NYU or neighborhood community?)
- **Economic Impact** (Will the project yield financial benefits? Is there a cost-savings, return on investment, or payback over time?)
- **Intellectual Impact** (Does the project advance the university's teaching, learning, and research mission? Does it yield new information or research findings regarding sustainability? Does it offer lessons or solutions to other problems as a result?)
- **Innovation / Imagination** (Is the project interesting? Does it achieve something new? Does it put a new twist on an old solution, or creatively engage multiple or unusual disciplines?)
- **Institutionalization / Scalability** (Can the project become embedded in NYU's routine operation? Does it need only startup funding to then sustain itself over time? Can it be expanded campuswide, if successful? Will it yield valuable regional, national, or global results?)
- **Visibility** (Does the project reach or affect a significant number of people? Will it effectively broadcast its content, values, or outcomes to the public? Will it enhance NYU's capacity to engage the campus community in contributing to sustainability?)

## TOPICS/AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Submissions are encouraged across areas impacting operations, education, and research, targeting environment-related issues involving NYU's relationship with energy, water, waste/recycling, transportation, food, and procurement, and affecting NYU's buildings and construction, budgeting, planning, health, quality of life, and land use practices.

Additionally, a number of topics and areas have been identified by the Sustainability Task Force as holding special interest. These topics may present particularly ripe opportunities for pilot projects, fill established needs or gaps in current programs, or be uniquely well-suited to the Green Grants model.

2009-2010 areas of special interest include projects that target, address, or support:

*Operational changes –*

- **Energy- / water-saving efficiency projects**
- **Local-based carbon offsetting**
- **Conservation behavior change research**
- **Environmental impacts of eating meat**
- **Cost-saving projects with investment return**
- **Resource / energy efficiency in science labs and data centers**
- **Bicycling community support initiatives**

*Engagement efforts –*

- **Community partnerships**
- **Playful, innovative, and hip “green” student programs**
- **Incoming freshman / transfer student recruitment/orientation/welcome programs**
- **Volunteer coordination and distributed project facilitation**
- **Applied environmental arts and creative uses of public space**
- **Graphic design projects and templates (for signage, statistics and other information)**
- **New Media and communications technologies**

*Academic initiatives –*

- **Curriculum development and support materials for new and existing courses**
- **Environmental literacy promotion, deepening student/faculty/staff/public understanding**
- **Faculty engagement, increasing participation and contribution to green initiatives**
- **Graduate and doctoral student research**
- **Environmental assessment, measurement, and program evaluation**
- **Data visualization, feedback systems, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) projects**

## **FUNDING PARAMETERS**

Proposal budgets may fall within a range of \$0 - \$20,000 (not including funding from other sources). Projects are expected to use all funding within a single academic year. All budgets must be fully justified and itemized; priority will be given to proposals demonstrating efficient and effective use of funds.

The Green Grants are awarded in the spirit of the “community development grant” model, and are not intended as a replacement for conventional academic grant funding. Because the intent is to support pilot initiatives, Green Grants are not a substitute for recurring annual funding or large-scale capital financing that may be suitably obtained through other University budgets. Project leaders are encouraged to seek other sources of funding, including matching funds, in addition to pursuing Green Grants.

Projects are not required to achieve cost savings, but a return on investment over time may add to a proposal’s appeal, or may facilitate wider subsequent implementation. Short- and long-term financial benefits should be noted, especially for projects that reduce consumption of energy, water, or other resources. Other significant non-environmental “co-benefits” of projects should be described in a similar fashion.

Funds may be used to award small stipends to students for work on projects, but not to supplement the salaries of current full-time NYU employees (faculty, administrators, and staff). Because the Green Grants are designed to advance a spirit of community service, project participants are encouraged to donate their time and labor, using funding for tangible goods and other necessities.

Some other funding-related parameters and guidelines:

- Funding may be used to pay consultants or outside vendors for project services
- Purchased gear such as video cameras or laptops, and capital infrastructure such as energy generation or efficiency equipment, are returned to the university at the end of the grant term, remaining property of NYU (though on loan)
- Project leaders are asked to estimate the total budget and line items even where uncertainty exists (as well as to note this uncertainty where possible).
- Some standardization of common budget items and procured goods/services may be offered to amend submitted proposal budgets. For instance, if two undergraduate students request stipends, two projects need to buy office supplies, or two brands of measurement equipment are included in project budgets, the Green Grants Committee may propose alternatives and standard costs for these items. NYU bulk and institutional discounts frequently result in lower-than-anticipated budget expenses.

Project leaders are encouraged to partner with NYU administrative departments or staff who can function as logistical and budgetary liaisons. Administrative partnerships may also be sought subsequent to the first round of project submissions (see below).

## **SUBMISSION PROCESS**

### **STEP 1: EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

Applicants first submit a 1-2 page Expression of Interest (EOI) that outlines the broad concept, scope and budget of a proposed project. Information described in the EOI is nonbinding, and does not limit what an applicant may include in the subsequent full proposal. If possible, an EOI should be submitted as soon as an applicant has begun to develop an idea. The EOI deadline is **Monday, June 15**.

The EOI submission form is available at: [www.nyu.edu/sustainability/ggeoi](http://www.nyu.edu/sustainability/ggeoi)

Applicants are now able to use this form to submit EOIs directly, and may use an access code to revise or alter their entries after submitting. A document-format version of the form is also available, for offline use and/or to protect against internet connection problems or lost submissions.

Additionally, this year applicants may also check a box to post an EOI proposal concept publicly on the Green Grants website. This is an effective way to draw on community feedback, request help or expertise from throughout the university, and seek a partner – or, just browse the public listings to find a project to join.

The Green Grants Committee will respond and provide specific feedback about each EOI in advance of the full proposal deadline. This feedback is designed to highlight likely obstacles that applicants should address in full proposals, suggest dialogue between applicants developing similar or synergistic ideas, and share initial Committee reactions to the scope and intent of applicants' projects.

EOIs enable the Committee and participating administrative offices to work with applicants to address questions and solve logistical problems in advance of full proposal applications and decisions. EOIs also enable the Committee to connect applicants with relevant university experts, administrative decision-makers, and other useful resources.

Project leaders are encouraged to begin work on full proposal applications prior to receiving EOI feedback, in order to ensure sufficient time for submission. Early submissions of EOIs are appreciated.

## **STEP 2: PROJECT PROPOSAL**

Applicants next submit a full proposal, in accordance with these guidelines, which details the content, scope, timeline, implementation plan, budget, and other information regarding their project. The project proposal deadline is **Monday, July 27**.

The proposal submission form is available at: [www.nyu.edu/sustainability/ggproposal](http://www.nyu.edu/sustainability/ggproposal)

The Green Grants Committee will review project proposal submissions and narrow them down to a list of finalists, using the criteria described above. The Committee will contact project leaders to notify them of their status as finalists and raise any remaining logistical, financial or other issues encountered which may prevent otherwise-strong proposals from moving forward. Because so many proposals significantly impact the university's operational processes or physical infrastructure, they frequently require fine-tuning to be practicable and executable through a Green Grant.

As an example: a student may propose placing a wind turbine on an NYU residence hall, but the building in question may be found to be structurally unsuitable. In this case, the Committee may propose an alternate building. As another example: an administrator may propose purchasing new water-efficient building equipment, but the equipment may be found to be available from an alternate vendor for less than half of the proposed budget. In this case, a reduced budget may be suggested.

It is not the intent of the Green Grants Committee, however, to alter the essential goals or outcomes of any submitted proposal without the willing consent of a project's leader. Applicants will have the opportunity to discuss and revise their proposals, and if proposed modifications are found to be unworkable, to reject Committee changes and withdraw the proposal from consideration.

Applicants submit final revised versions of proposals before the **Monday, August 31** deadline, and the Committee announces award decisions in early September.

## REVIEW PROCESS

All project proposals are evaluated by the Green Grants Committee of the NYU Sustainability Task Force, which includes students, faculty and administrators/staff.

Members of the 2009-2010 Green Grants Committee:

- Efrain Azmitia (Co-chair, Professor of Biology, Faculty of Arts and Science)
- Pierre Hohenberg (Co-chair, Senior Vice Provost for Research)
- Lynne Brown (Senior Vice President, University Relations & Public Affairs)
- Mark Gordon (Senior Designer, Strategic Assessment, Planning & Design)
- Cecil Scheib (Director of Sustainability & Energy, F&CM)
- Chris Schlottmann (Program Coordinator, Environmental Studies)
- Mark Godwin and Eric Riley (University Development and Alumni Affairs)
- Colin Beavan (Author and Blogger, “No Impact Man”)
- Zoe Abram (Student, Gallatin School of Individualized Study)
- Miranda Wooster-Tierney (Student, Environmental Studies Program)

The Committee may reach out to relevant NYU faculty or administrative staff experts for review and input on proposal-specific technical questions or conceptual issues. Sustainability Task Force coordinator Jeremy Friedman aids and supports the Committee in evaluating proposals, but does not serve as a voting member.

The Committee’s final award decisions will be reviewed and ratified by the Sustainability Task Force Steering Committee before an announcement is made near the launch of the 2009-2010 academic year.

## TIMELINE

**Wed April 22<sup>nd</sup>:** 2009-10 Green Grants Launch at Info Session and Symposium event

**Mon June 15<sup>th</sup>:** Expression of Interest deadline

**June:** Expression of Interest feedback sent to applicants (on a rolling basis)

**Mon July 27<sup>th</sup>:** Project proposal deadline (first round)

**August:** Finalist proposal notifications and revision feedback sent to applicants

**Mon August 31<sup>st</sup>:** Revised project proposal deadline (second round)

**September:** Third annual Green Grant project awards announced