

## Sustainability Student Grant – Application Guidelines

### Table of Contents:

- [Areas of Focus](#)
- [Selection Criteria](#)
- [Eligibility](#)
- [Logistics](#)
- [Restrictions](#)
- [Application Checklist](#)
- [Project Ideas](#)

### Potential areas of focus include, but are not limited to:

Environmental education, environmental justice, behavior change social marketing, industrial ecology, business and environment, sustainable development, environmental economics, engineering and the environment, sustainability policy and research, resource conservation, community awareness, arts and humanities, and health and wellbeing.

### Selection Criteria:

- Projects that map to [Harvard's Sustainability Plan](#) topics will receive priority consideration
- Innovation and creativity
- Visibility and replicability
- Measurable impact on resource conservation or other sustainability metrics
- Impact on furthering sustainability efforts
- Quality of work plan and application.

### Eligibility:

- [Harvard graduate and undergraduate students](#) are eligible to apply and may have a faculty or staff adviser for the project.
- If a project team intends to list an advisor for their project, they will need to submit proof of advisor approval on the project. This will be asked for in the application form.
- Projects associated with programs run by OFS [are](#) eligible (e.g., Council of Student Sustainability Leaders [CSSL] or Student Sustainability Associates [SSAs]); however, if you are a member of one of these programs you must seek pre-approval on your project application from the manager of that program.
  - CSSL Manager: [David Havelick](#)
  - Student Sustainability Associates (HBS) Manager: [Jessica Fixsen](#)
- Individuals or teams can apply. Teams must designate one main contact for the duration of the project.

### Logistics:

- **APPLICATION DEADLINE: Friday, October 16, 2026**
- Awarded funding typically ranges from \$100 – \$2,500; however, larger grant requests may be considered (please contact [rachel\\_martinez@harvard.edu](mailto:rachel_martinez@harvard.edu)).
- We encourage partnerships with staff and faculty members.
- **Before applying**, administrators, facilities/operations staff, and/or appropriate building managers must approve all project proposals from students in their Schools, departments, or locations. For example: If you are working on a project that will deal with an initiative within Harvard Dining, you need to submit proof of support from Harvard

University Dining Services (HUDS) on the project. This will be asked for in the application form.

- Projects spanning more than one academic year must include a plan for continuity.
- Funds must be utilized by a date to be determined by the Office for Sustainability.
- Projects must be completed by May 2026.

#### Restrictions:

- Funds cannot be used to pay for Harvard student time.
- Most travel costs are ineligible for reimbursement, such as travel to or from conferences or travel/housing fees for speakers. In certain circumstances travel may be an approved expense (e.g., travel to the Harvard Forest).
- Funds cannot be used to buy gift cards.
- Funds cannot be used to pay for aspects of the project beyond the pilot, including business startup costs.
- Final budgets are approved by OFS as part of the application process. OFS reserves the right to revise the proposed budget to fit within the scope of allowable expenses.
- Costs outside the scope of your approved budget need to be reviewed by OFS as this may impact your project funding.
- All applicable University and School financial policies must be followed. MORE INFORMATION

Questions? Please email [rachel\\_martinez@harvard.edu](mailto:rachel_martinez@harvard.edu)

#### Application Checklist

Please have answers prepared for the following questions before you complete your application.

- Name (project lead)
- Email address (project lead)
- Phone number (project lead)
- School affiliation (project lead)
- Expected graduation date (project lead)
- Name of other team member(s) if applicable
- Student group affiliation(s) if applicable
- Name and role of faculty or staff adviser for this project
- Adviser email address
- Have you already reached out to relevant university partners? Y/N
  - *Before continuing: administrators, facilities, and operations, and/or appropriate building managers must approve ALL project proposals from students in their Schools, departments, or locations. For example: If you are working on a project that will deal with an initiative within Harvard Dining, you need to submit proof of support from Harvard University Dining Services on the project. Do not forget to attach proof of university partner support to your application. Applications without approval from partner groups will not be considered for funding.*
- Project title
- Does your project meet the basic requirements? (Checklist to check)
- Requested grant amount (\$)
- Synopsis of project (200 words or less).
  - *This paragraph will be published on the OFS website and will be presented to the selection committee. Keep in mind this synopsis will be the selection committee's introduction to your project. Please carefully outline the goals you hope to*

*accomplish, how this relates to campus sustainability efforts, and what makes this work innovative.*

- What is the sustainability focus of the project?
  - *Energy reduction, community engagement, research to inform policy, health and wellbeing, waste or water reduction, environmental education, industrial ecology, sustainable development, business and environment, environmental economics, other*
- Describe how you will quantify the benefits of your project
- Work plan: Describe the goals of your project and outline the project implementation steps and timeline.
- Please address how you plan to expand the project to gain new insights. How will this additional knowledge benefit the Harvard community?
- Has this idea been implemented at Harvard before?
- If yes, please address how you plan to expand the project to gain new insights. How will this additional knowledge benefit the Harvard community?
- Budget
- Outline anticipated project expenses (description and costs)
- Attach any supporting documents that may assist your application

## Potential Project Ideas

Below is a list of ideas for potential projects that students might pursue that resulted from a brainstorm hosted by the Office for Sustainability. This is not a definitive list of projects that could be pursued, but rather we are posting these to help spark your imagination and get you thinking about ideas that might be worth piloting here at Harvard.

If you are a student interested in the grant program, please feel free to reach out to our team if you're interested in pursuing any of these ideas, or have other creative concepts. If you are a staff member and have an idea for a sustainability project or a sustainability challenge that you would like students to work on feel free to submit ideas to [rachel\\_martinez@harvard.edu](mailto:rachel_martinez@harvard.edu) (put "Sustainability Grant Idea" in the subject line).

- Buildings and Landscapes
  - Reduce stress on storm drains
  - Pilot circadian rhythm lighting
  - Submetering for energy, water – to track impact of interventions
  - Audit completed capital projects – did they meet design objectives and sustainability objectives?
  - Pilot an ecosystem services tracking (e.g., iNaturalist, ESII tool)
- Communications
  - Better match-making communications platform to bring together teams of students, staff, and faculty to work on sustainability projects
  - How might art help communicate the existential threat of climate change?
  - Planning for a sustainable commencement
- Education
  - Develop a training for student groups using the [Sustainable Meeting and Event Guide](#) or the [Sustainability Guide for Student Groups](#)
  - Guide for sustainable travel (e.g., how to live sustainably in other countries)
- Resource efficiency and waste reduction
  - Reduce the number of small personal printers on campus
  - Add "what not to bring" to move-in lists

- Reduce “fast fashion”
- Reduce single-use plastic items
- Online ordering – ways to reduce/eliminate packaging and ensure cardboard gets recycled
- FixIt events to encourage culture of repair
- Host a “re-makers” event (instead of a makers event) to encourage culture of repurposing
- Pilot new lab recycling solutions
- Rescuing leftovers from catered events - HKS has a program like this (*make sure to be in touch with Environmental Health and Safety if you’d like to pursue this*)
- Sustainable transportation
  - Pilot innovative bike storage
  - Solution for long-term storage for bikes (over the winter/summer)
  - Urban biking classes
  - Evaluate impact from online shopping, food delivery, or ride sharing
- Well-being
  - Create a guide for purchasing healthier products in everyday life
  - Increase demand for plant-based foods using [behavioral insights](#)
  - Air quality monitoring (*make sure to be in touch with Environmental Health and Safety if you’d like to propose a project related to air or water quality testing*)
  - Measure food insecurity on campus
  - Place-making projects or designs (e.g., pedestrian-izing streets, temporary installations)