

Final Application Guide

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Congratulations and Good Luck!

Congratulations on having your Preliminary Application accepted by the Patriot Green Fund Committee!

The Patriot Green Fund Committee has put this guide together to help you complete your Final Application process for both Research and Infrastructure Improvement projects and to help give you the best possible chance of your project being approved and awarded funding.

Before you start this process, please read through the entire document including the FAQs and the Application Helpers at the end. Also, please make sure you set up a meeting with PGF staff to get conversations started with the appropriate stakeholders as soon as possible.

Note: Some content in this guide is repeated from the Preliminary Application Guide because it is critical enough that it bears repeating.

Engaging Stakeholders

It is essential that PGF applicants involve the right staff and faculty in their projects early on in the process to ensure the greatest level of success and the most effective use of everyone's time. PGF staff will be able to assist you with setting up meetings with critical personnel to discuss your project idea prior to submitting a final application.

The application form provides a list of potential categories that your project may impact. Below is the list of those categories accompanied by definitions in order to understand the breadth of how your project may impact the campus community, and which stakeholders may need to be included in the process.

- **Education programs:** Select this category if your project contributes to academics on campus in any way. This includes projects that can or will be used by students for future classes as a part of their sustainability education.
- **Green Building:** Select this category if your project impacts the interior or exterior of a building in terms of its sustainability. This includes projects that change, measure, or in any way affect the energy efficiency of buildings.
- **Green Dining:** Select this category if your project addresses Mason's dining options or Mason Dining's operations.
- **Green Living:** Select this category if your project impacts student life in any way. This includes projects involving residential spaces.
- **Green Transportation:** Select this category if your project your project studies or encourages the use of alternative transportation.
- **Recycling and Waste Minimization:** Select this category if your project studies or implements waste reduction methods, technologies, or infrastructure.
- **Sustainable Food Systems:** Select this category if your project involves creating a sustainable food system, such as a garden or other system that involves food being *produced* sustainably.
- **Sustainable Landscaping:** Select this category if your project or research impacts landscapes or methods of landscaping on Mason's campuses.
- **Stormwater Management:** Select this category if your project addresses or impacts issues of low impact development or stormwater management on any of Mason's campuses.
- **Energy Issues:** Select this category if your project addresses or impacts issues of renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation, or climate mitigation.

Other critical questions to be answered include:

- What potential risks are inherent in your project, OR what are the potential perceived risks? How do you plan to deal with these possible risks? Examples include: volunteers trekking through woods on Mason's campuses, bee hives and possible stings, thorny shrubs or plantings, fire, potential trip hazard, etc.
- Does your project impact the exterior aesthetics of any of Mason's campuses?
- Does your project create or contain accessibility issues? Do people with physical limitations need to access the project in any way?

You should submit the following form along with your final application. The form contains a sheet for budget development as well as a sheet to assist you with tracking the team members and stakeholders who will be affected by your project.

<http://go.gmu.edu/PGFBudgetandTeam>

Funding Guidelines

- **Once funded, the PGF can be dispersed through purchases made by Mason departments – either directly through Facilities (Office of Sustainability) or a sponsoring Mason department that can be reimbursed through a journal voucher.**
- You may request money for tools and supplies; printing or mailing fees; consulting fees where necessary; Facilities labor costs; etc.

Restrictions

- The PGF will not be disbursed directly to the applicants to ensure that the funds follow state purchasing guidelines.
- The PGF will not process personal reimbursements.
- Things that cannot be covered by the Patriot Green Fund include: parking tickets or towing expenses; food expenses; decorative flowers or decorations; fuel costs; gifts; student wages, or travel.
- Project funds must be expended by **May 31st** if the project's timeline is scheduled to be completed at the end of the academic year. This is necessary to make sure all purchases are processed before the end of the fiscal year.

Budgeting Tips

When creating your budget, please consider the following tips:

- Be as accurate as possible, so that you do not unexpectedly go over budget. Projects often require more funding than expected, especially when the project is large and requires support from outside entities like Facilities or external vendors.
- You may want to include a small line item of under \$100 for "miscellaneous supplies" to include things like office supplies or other unexpected expenses.



Deadlines

Applicants have the opportunity to submit Preliminary and final proposals three times a semester. For exact deadline dates please refer to the [Patriot Green Fund Website](#). Full scale projects can take months to complete, so please plan your timeline accordingly.

Infrastructure improvement projects that will impact buildings or land use must also be approved by other university committees or approval groups; therefore, these applications may take a little longer to complete. Please be prepared and be patient. The PGF Committee will help you through the process as best as possible.

Selection Process and Criteria

When reviewing projects, the committee will use the following criteria:

- **Necessity:** What need is the project responding to? Will the campus or surrounding community benefit from its implementation?
- **Chance of Success:** Are the obstacles in the project's path insurmountable? Has the applicant gathered a support team to ensure the success of the project?
- **Student involvement:** Will students be involved in implementing the project? How will students benefit from the project?
- **Campus Community Involvement:** Has the applicant considered and identified departments, programs, faculty, staff, etc. that might be involved, or interact, with their project?
- **Economic Feasibility:** How will the cost justify the effects of the project?
- **Project visibility:** Does the applicant have a public outreach plan? How will they inform the Mason community about their work? Is the project itself very visible?
- **Reasonability of Timeline:** How long will it take to implement the applicant's project? Is there a timeline for when the project will start and when Mason can expect to begin seeing results?
- **Program Longevity:** Is this program/project repeatable? What will happen to the project after the applicant leaves the Mason community?
- **Environmental Impact:** What are the environmental costs and benefits associated with this project?
- **Innovation:** Has this project ever been attempted before? Is it pushing the boundaries of its field?

Alternative Funding Sources

Office of Student Scholarship Creative Activities and Research

Specifically geared toward celebrating and encouraging *undergraduate* research and creative activities. OSCAR also supports undergraduate students seeking outside funding sources for their research.

OSCAR Mini Grants: Students who are working on a project can apply for up to \$500 of funding to enhance their success.

University Life Programming Grant

Every academic year, University Life awards grants for programs that impact the quality of campus life at George Mason University. Awards are typically under \$5,000.

Managing Your Project

Your Liaison

If your project is approved, you will be assigned a student member of the PGF committee to serve as your liaison. The liaison will be informed about your project and be available to provide support. It is *your* responsibility to ensure the success of your project, but it is your liaison's responsibility to make sure you have the right people on your team to give you the best chance of success. Liaisons are most often students, and your peers, so please keep in mind that they are also very busy people and be patient when making requests for their time or assistance.

Your liaison is also responsible for ensuring that you are keeping track of your budget and timelines, and for collecting information from you to be able to provide monthly reports to the PGF Committee. Please help them by being responsive and providing them with the information they request from you in a timely manner.

If you ever feel that you are not receiving the support you need, you may contact the Patriot Green Fund Manager at pgf@gmu.edu to get additional help and information.

How to Spend your Award

Upon project approval, you will need to make a detailed inventory of the items that will be needed to execute your project. A template for purchasing items will be provided to you and you will need to enter the items you need when you are ready for a purchase to be made through a Mason purchaser.



Final Reporting and Project Close Out

To ensure that your project endures on Mason's campus and becomes a permanent part of the culture and environment, it is important to do two things: **complete your final report-out, and transition ownership of your project to its final home and owner.**

Completing your final project report-out is easy. Complete the [Final Report Guide](#) or set up a time to meet with your Liaison, and they will interview you using the same questions on the form.

Transitioning your project might be a little more challenging, especially if you have not identified its final home from the start. For this reason, we recommend that you begin seeking out an appropriate final owner of your project right at the start of your project. When you meet with your liaison, between the Preliminary App and Final App processes, they will begin working with you to identify this critical owner. When your project is complete, you must set up a time to give the final owner a tour of the facility, as well as to properly educate them about its operation, to ensure its longevity. So, before you have this meeting, please develop some hand off materials for the adopting organization.

Here is a final checklist for you and your team that should help the transition process:

- We have developed an operator's manual for our final project, to ensure its adopting organization or person fully understands how to maintain it.
- We have sent this operator's manual to our liaison for PGF records.
- Our team has given a walk-through tour of the facility to the adopting organization, and has gained their acceptance and approval to proceed with the transfer of ownership.
- We have sent the contact information for the adopting organization to our liaison, as well as including it our final project report-out.

How to Apply

To download either the **Infrastructure Improvement Final Application** or **Research Final Application**, visit the PGF website here: <https://green.gmu.edu/patriot-green/how-to-apply-for-funds/>

Once completed, please submit the appropriate application and [Patriot Green Fund Budget and Stakeholder Proposal](#) form via email to the PGF Committee at pgf@gmu.edu.

For assistance completing the Infrastructure Improvement Application, please see *Appendix A: Infrastructure Improvement Application Helper*.

For assistance completing the Research Application, please see *Appendix B: Research Application Helper*.

Checklist for Final Submission

- I have downloaded and read this entire packet to ensure my understanding of the process.
- I have downloaded the appropriate Final Application for my project, and it is 5 pages or less.
- I have incorporated the initial feedback from the PGF Committee into my application to the best of my abilities.
- I have completed the [Patriot Green Fund Budget and Stakeholder Proposal](#) and emailed it to pgf@gmu.edu.
- PGF staff has contacted the appropriate stakeholders for me to advise them of my submission and to get their feedback on the scope of my project, and they are all on board with proceeding.
- I have therefore received written approval from PGF staff to submit my final application packet.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What if I'm having a hard time finding an advisor for my research project?

A: For assistance with finding a mentor, undergraduates may contact the Director of OSCAR at oscar@gmu.edu, and graduate students may contact the Fellow of Sustainability Studies at sustainu@gmu.edu. Once you find a mentor, we require an email from your advisor at a "gmu.edu" email account outlining their role (as established by the applicant), in order to verify their support of the project.

Q: Can I get credit for my project?

A: Possibly; this is contingent upon your field of study. Contact your advisor to find out whether you can use your project as an independent study. If you are receiving class credit for your project or if your project will be used to fulfill an assignment for a class, wages cannot be part of the grant request.

Q: How many people will be granted funding?

A: This depends on the amount of funding applied for. We strongly suggest that facility improvement projects over \$20,000 and research proposals over \$5,000 seek other funding sources in addition to the PGF. These sources can be inside or outside of Mason or may be personally funded through donations. (Note: Donations to any Mason effort will be provided with a donation receipt by the Foundation, for the purposes of tax deduction). However, we suggest you apply as soon as possible to ensure funds are spent in time and to ensure availability of funding.

Q: Will someone from the Committee be available to attend my team meetings?

A: Unfortunately, we are unable to attend all of your project implementation meetings due to time limitations. However, if you are awarded funding, will be able to direct you to the right Mason resources to assist you. If you find that you are hitting roadblocks that we may be able to clear for you with the administration, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Appendix A: Infrastructure Improvement Application Helper

Important: Please read the Guide carefully before attempting to complete the application. The Infrastructure Improvement Application, in total, should not be more than 5 pages. Any applications that are too lengthy are at risk of being rejected. Please be respectful of your Committee's time and be as brief as possible.

1. Please describe the project and its purpose.

This should be a detailed project description NOT a reiteration of the purpose of the PGF.

2. Provide a detailed description of the project's goals and objectives with a detailed timeline that includes information about when you expect to start and end your project.

Describe the outcome of your proposed project; objectives should be specific, measurable, and should have estimated deadlines.

3. Describe what research you have performed on this project to determine its relevancy to Mason.

For example, have you researched peer universities who've done something similar, have you spoken with installation companies, have you ensured that this project hasn't been attempted before, etc.

4. How will this project qualitatively reduce Mason's environmental impact?

Use the categories provided to choose which area(s) of sustainability will be impacted, and then provide a short write-up of your own to describe how the project affects the categories you chose.

Education programs: Select this category if your project contributes to academics on campus in any way. This includes projects that can or will be used by students for future classes as a part of their sustainability education.

Green Building: Select this category if your project impacts the interior or exterior of a building in terms of its sustainability. This includes projects that change, measure, or in any way affect the energy efficiency of buildings.

Green Dining: Select this category if your project addresses Mason's dining options or Mason Dining's operations.

Green Living: Select this category if your project impacts student life in any way. This includes projects involving residential spaces.

Green Transportation: Select this category if your project your project studies or encourages the use of alternative transportation.

Recycling and Waste Minimization: Select this category if your project studies or implements waste reduction methods, technologies, or infrastructure.

Sustainable Food Systems: Select this category if your project involves creating a sustainable food system, such as a garden or other system that involves food being *produced* sustainably.

Stormwater Management: Select this category if your project addresses or impacts issues of low impact development or stormwater management on any of Mason's campuses.

Energy Issues: Select this category if your project addresses or impacts issues of renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation, or climate mitigation.

5. What social and/or economic aspects of sustainability might your project impact positively?

e.g. does the project create job opportunities or reduce the operating cost of something at Mason? Does the project encourage community building around sustainability? Does it encourage fair labor practices? Does it increase economic opportunity, equity, affordability of Mason services, etc.

6. Does this project have additional funding sources?

Please include other grants you are applying to or have received funding from

7. Please provide an estimated budget of the project.

Use the provided template. Please go into as much detail as possible, making sure to include a budget for outreach and labor as well.

8. Will the project save or earn money? If yes, estimate how much per year for how many years. Please explain and/or cite your data

9. How will you measure the impact of your project after its completion date?

Describe how you will be able to determine if you achieved your project's goals.

10. Please identify the project manager and persons who will be working on your project whether directly or as approvers, advisers, or stakeholders (people or departments that could be impacted by your project).

Use the provided template. PGF staff should have already informed you of which team members need to be included in your project to ensure its success. Please include information about what department they are from and what role they will play.

11. What benefits are your team members gaining from their participation in this project? (If volunteers feel they are getting a real benefit from the project, they are more likely to stick around to completion.)

For example, are students getting class credit? Are they using service learning hours? If staff members are involved, are their supervisors in support of spending time on this? If faculty, is this project part of research or other career goals in some way?

12. How will you ensure the project is maintained after the initial completion of the installation or implementation?

Provide some details about what departments or organizations have committed to keeping the project going after your team has completed the initial rollout.

13. How does your project build community around sustainability on campus? How will your project engage students, faculty, or staff? Does it also build community with Mason's surrounding community? If so, how?

Sustainability encourages a holistic view of interrelatedness, and examines the way in which humans interact with our world. The PGF Committee wants projects to encourage people to work together to solve problems because those are more likely to succeed. It is also Mason's aspiration to be a regional leader in innovating, and this approach supports that mission. Projects that include the surrounding communities give Mason folks the chance to interact with non-Mason folks on issues that they all care about. This creates possible employment opportunities for students, and brings assistance into the community where it is needed. It can be hard to work with a large team, but the positive benefits far outweigh the challenges.

14. How will you publicize your project and integrate it into various aspects of campus life?

The Office of Sustainability will provide basic support for publicizing your project, including connecting the team with the news desk to get a story done on your project. We will also gladly publicize the story across all our social media channels and support you with creating appropriate signs to educate passers-by. We are seeking your creative ideas for promoting not only your project but some positive behavior changes in our campus community. For example, ribbon-cutting ceremonies, competitions, etc. Ideally, we would like to see how your project may be integrated into academics; how it may result in a community workshop through the Mason Sustainability Institute or other community education organizations; and how it may become part of a longer-term educational series or events. In sum, we want you to tell us how your project may be institutionalized as part of Mason's culture.

15. Please describe any project management experience you or your team has.

It is our experience that there is a great range of comfort levels with interacting with Mason processes and staff to get projects completed, and also with managing projects. Please look at the scope of your project critically to ensure you will be able to handle the management of this project, or recruit team members to assist you. While this will not affect the Committee's decision to approve or deny your application in itself, we will critically examine whether we have the resources to support your project if you are unable to provide those resources yourselves.

Appendix B: Research Grant Application Helper

Important: Please read the Guide carefully before attempting to complete the application. The Research Grant Application, in total, should not be more than 5 pages. Any applications that are too lengthy are at risk of being rejected. Please be respectful of your Committee's time and be as brief as possible

1. Provide an abstract (up to 300 words) that describes the scholarly, original, interdisciplinary, or unique nature of the project.

Include information about the research challenge or research question, methods, and anticipated results or outcomes from this project, and expected contribution to existing research literature.

2. What is the scope of your study? Please include information about when you expect to start and end this project

e.g., target population characteristics, location, detailed timeframe, etc.

3. Briefly describe the expected significance of your research and what you and your faculty advisor hope to discover from your work.

Include relevant context or background of your research.

4. Which categories of sustainability does your research encompass?

Use the categories provided to choose which area(s) of sustainability will be impacted, and then provide a short write-up of your own to describe how the project affects or studies the categories you chose.

Education programs: Select this category if your project contributes to academics on campus in any way. This includes projects that can or will be used by students for future classes as a part of their sustainability education.

Green Building: Select this category if your project impacts the interior or exterior of a building in terms of its sustainability. This includes projects that change, measure, or in any way affect the energy efficiency of buildings.

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Stormwater Management: Select this category if your project addresses or impacts issues of low impact development or stormwater management on any of Mason's campuses.

Energy Issues: Select this category if your project addresses or impacts issues of renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation, or climate mitigation.

5. What social and/or economic aspects of sustainability might your project impact positively?

e.g. does the project create job opportunities or reduce the operating cost of something at Mason? Does the project encourage community building around sustainability? Does it encourage fair labor practices? Does it increase economic opportunity, equity, affordability of Mason services, etc.

6. Explain your motivations for participating in this research project and how your research contributes to the development of your educational and future plans.

The Committee wants the investment you make in this project to benefit your career goals, your personal goals, and/or your educational goals. Explain what aspects this research will support.

7. Does this project have additional funding sources?

Please elaborate on any other grants or awards you are applying to or have received funding from for your project.

8. Please provide an estimated budget of the project, with estimated costs.

Use the provided [template](#). Please go into as much detail as possible, making sure to include a budget for outreach and labor as well.

9. Please identify the research lead and persons who will be working on your project whether directly or as approvers, advisers, or stakeholders (people or departments that could be impacted by your project).

Use the provided template. PGF staff should have already informed you of which team members need to be included in your project to ensure its success. Please include information about what department they are from and what role they will play.

10. What benefits are your team members gaining from their participation in this project? (If volunteers feel they are getting a real benefit from the project, they are more likely to stick around to completion.)

For example: are students getting class credit? Are they using service learning hours? If staff members are involved, are their supervisors in support of spending time on this? If faculty, is this project part of research or other career goals in some way?

11. How do you intend to share your research with the Mason community after it is complete?

Provide some details about what departments or organizations have stated their desire to see the results of this research.

