



COLLEGE *of* CHARLESTON

OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

ECOLLECTIVE FUND

STUDENT PROJECT FUNDING HANDBOOK

This document was originally prepared by the 2011-2012
ESPC Committee.

Contributors include:

Adrian Barry
Adam Brunelle
Burton Callicott
Christa Caperton
Jen Jones
Daniel Kassim
Lydia Nickolas

Edited in 2014

Erika Hoffman
Jenny Brennan

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Introduction

This manual is meant to be a guide through the process of applying for funding from the College of Charleston's ECOLlective Fund. It is broken down in a simple to use, step-by-step format. Use it to help answer your basic questions, but do not hesitate to contact the ESPC committee at any time at: cofc.ecollective@gmail.com. We hope this proves helpful—good luck in your search for funding!

THE HISTORY OF THE ECOLLECTIVE FUND

The College of Charleston is one of many colleges and universities around the nation that has a pool of money, generated by student fees, that is earmarked for campus sustainability initiatives. This pool of funds is called the ECOLlective Fund and is generated by the Green Fee that is paid by each student at CofC every semester.

The Green Fee is unique in that it was purely student driven from the beginning, being championed first in 2007 by Alliance for Planet Earth member, Madison Hohman. By 2008, a survey of 1,100 students had been conducted showing that over 90% of the student body supported paying a Green Fee, with more than 70% supporting a fee of at least \$20 per year. In 2009, a Cougar Pulse survey question confirmed the overwhelming student support for the Green Fee. In response, the Student Government Association passed a resolution supporting its adoption by the College's Board of Trustees. By March 2010, Madison and collaborator Jen Jones, a recent addition to the Masters of Environmental Studies program, had formalized a proposal and presented it to the Board of Trustees Finance Committee, where it was approved and forwarded to the full Board later that June. Taking the advice of its Finance Committee and upon hearing the supporting statements from student representatives, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved a \$10 per semester Green Fee, to be collected into what would ultimately become the ECOLlective Fund.



THE ESPC COMMITTEE

The ECollective Student Project Committee (ESPC) is a student led, student driven committee that oversees dissemination of a portion of the ECollective Fund. ESPC was created by Director P. Brian Fisher in the Fall of 2011 in order to provide students with a direct voice as to where their money would be allocated. This 5-7-member team helps students create, develop and successfully defend project proposals that work to create a more sustainable campus. They report directly to the Office Of Sustainability and are advised by a faculty or staff advisor.

ABOUT THIS FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Up to \$5,000 is available for student-run, student-driven projects that seek to make the College of Charleston a more sustainable campus.

There are only two requirements for funding:

- 1. The project team must be led by an official project leader that is a current CofC student.**
- 2. The project must be implemented ON CAMPUS. The fund is built to make CofC more sustainable and, as such, funding will be reserved for on campus projects.**

There is one call for full project proposals mid-semester during the Fall and Spring. The expedited project proposals are accepted on a rolling basis but applications must be submitted 3 weeks prior to the final day of classes for that term. Projects are expected to be implemented within a year of the launch date, however we are flexible under extenuating circumstances.

Some examples of projects that can be funded include:

- The purchase of equipment such as rain barrels, solar panels, etc.
- A stipend for a student worker to complete a project.
- Advertising materials for a recycling initiative or a dormitory energy reduction campaign.
- Expenses to bring in speakers for awareness events.



*This list is FAR from exclusive. As long as it meets the two requirements listed above, it is qualified for funding.

SUSTAINABILITY

ESPC defines sustainability as addressing the needs of the future generations while meeting our current needs, recognizing and respecting resource limits, striving for social and economic fairness and maximizing ecological health. Sustainability is about emphasizing systems thinking (understanding how things influence one another within a whole) within the problem solving process and focusing on the core tenants of community, self-reliance, resilience, system efficiency, and cyclical replenishment.

Projects submitted should reflect these ideals. Applicants are encouraged to submit an “Expression of Interest” form to gain feedback from ESPC before submitting a full proposal (this form is also used to submit applications for expedited requests and is required for all speaker requests). See Step One for more information.

ELIGIBILITY

Any current College of Charleston student may submit an application for grant money and serve as an official project leader. Outside organizations and faculty or staff may and are encouraged to collaborate on projects, however, they must be student-led. ESPC committee members may apply for a grant as an official project leader, but must take leave of the committee during the project process. There is no limit on the number of grants submitted by any one person. However, each project must be completed before submitting a new application.



Process Overview

This evaluation process is designed to allow all applicants to be able to successfully complete the process; we want you to receive funding! With that said, all successful projects require a substantial amount of work. A key goal of ESPC is to ensure that the projects that get funded are, in fact, sustainable. Sustainability must be planned, designed, piloted and tested to be successfully implemented. Your final proposal should mimic a formal grant application.

One of the ways that we have designed the process for success is to pair you up with “caseworkers” that will be there for every step of the process. Your caseworker(s) is a member(s) of the ESPC committee that has been assigned to your proposal. They are there to show you the ropes, offer suggestions, and keep you accountable. They are not there to micromanage your project or do it for you.

THE STEPS

Here we provide a brief overview of how the process works. This will give you a general idea of what to expect. Following this section, we outline each step in detail. It is intended that you read through this entire process before submitting a proposal and then reference each detailed step as you complete it. This step-by-step process is used for evaluating full project proposals. Expedited requests are reviewed after the initial submission of the online “Expression of Interest” form and do not require the submission of a full proposal.

Step One: Step one consists of a submission of an “Expression of Interest” form via the Office of Sustainability website (while not required for full proposals unless applying for a speaker event, this step is strongly suggested before submission of a full project grant application).

Step Two: The applicant(s) will submit a full proposal on the respective semester due date and a request for an in-person meeting with ESPC representatives and the Facilities Coordinator should be made. Additional edits and suggestions will be provided during this meeting.

Step Three: Applicant(s) make necessary changes to the proposal and finalize any loose ends. They will then send finished materials to ESPC.

Step Four: The applicant(s) will formally present the project proposal to the ESPC committee. The committee will then meet and discuss the funding decision.

Post process expectations: Applicants who receive funding will be expected to complete a project blurb, submit blog and website updates, and sign a funding contract that might include contingency items.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Primary considerations:

Costs:

Project applicants should consider both implementation and maintenance costs (short-term and long-term). Costs should be reasonable and detailed to an appropriate extent.

Timeline:

Timeline should be feasible and reasonably achievable within the portion of time mapped out by the applicant.

Methods and Implementation of Accomplishing Project:

Applicants should have a detailed understanding of what they want to accomplish with the project and a clear view of the methods it will take to achieve the goal. The proper channels of approval and a faculty/staff facilitator should also be identified.

The Effects of the Project on CofC:

The project should make a positive and tangible effort towards making CofC a more sustainable campus. Highly visible and inclusive projects are a major plus.

Uniqueness:

The project should be unique and innovative in terms of what it brings to the campus.



F.A.Qs.

1. How do I start the application process?

Visit our website at: <http://sustainability.cofc.edu/espc-student-projects/index.php>. Read about the proposal process and then click the “Apply to ESPC” button at the bottom of the page to submit an “Expression of Interest” form.

2. How do I initiate the expedited application process?

Visit our website at: <http://sustainability.cofc.edu/espc-student-projects/process-expedited.php>.

3. Can I apply for travel funding?

No, this pool of funds is intended to support on campus projects that work to make the campus more sustainable. Travel funds are not eligible for ESPC funding (unless related to bringing a speaker to CofC).

4. Can faculty or staff apply for ESPC funding?

No, this pool of funds is derived from STUDENT fees and, as such, is limited to funding STUDENT projects. A faculty/staff member as part of the project team is fine, and even encouraged! However, the project must be mainly driven by students and the faculty/staff member must be acting in an advisory capacity.

4. Can I reapply if I get rejected?

Yes! And we encourage you to do so if you feel as though you’ve significantly improved your proposal and addressed the concerns the committee listed in your final review.

5. How much funding will I receive?

This all depends on the reasonability of your proposal and the amount requested. Ultimately the committee will decide what you receive. Expedited projects are eligible to receive up to \$500, while full projects can receive up to \$5000 in funding. These are all evaluated on a case-by-case basis and may be subject to some flexibility depending on the quality of the proposal and feasibility of the project.



STEP ONE: SUBMIT THE “EXPRESSION OF INTEREST” FORM

Once you have an idea for a proposal, your first step is to submit the online “Expression of Interest” form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1yYIkrlB7lvRBp9RmCyItzQv75DM8oJjWYq8V5XGpsoc/viewform?usp=send_form.

- This step is not required for full project proposals (unless requesting to bring a speaker to campus), but it is highly recommended. By submitting this form, the applicant(s) is given the opportunity to receive feedback from ESPC before submitting a formal proposal at the mid-semester deadline. An in-person meeting with ESPC representatives will also be scheduled in order to clarify aspects of the process.
- The submission of this form is the only formal step for expedited requests; additional steps in the expedited process will be initiated via email with ESPC representatives.

GOALS FOR THE INITIAL MEETING:

1. Review applicant's idea and help to refine idea
2. Go over ESPC handbook and evaluation rubric
3. Discuss budget and/or its creation
4. Help identify useful contacts
5. Offer suggestions for improvement

The applicant(s) will be contacted by ESPC one week after the initial “Expression of Interest” submission. The email contact for ESPC is cofc.ecollective@gmail.com (correspondence is welcomed). A meeting will be scheduled upon contact from an ESPC representative.



STEP TWO: SUBMIT A FULL PROJECT PROPOSAL AND SCHEDULE A MEETING WITH FACILITIES COORDINATOR AND ESPC REP

Once you've had a chance to edit, improve and finalize aspects of your project idea, you will submit a final proposal on the mid-semester deadline. You will then wait to be contacted by ESPC about necessary edits or final suggestions for proposal improvement. A meeting will be scheduled with the Facilities Coordinator (Jen Jones) and ESPC representative(s) to help clarify the necessary changes/final alterations. You can also use this meeting to practice your final presentation that you will eventually deliver to the entire ESPC committee.

GOALS FOR THE SECOND MEETING

1. Identify and review small edits for final proposal
2. Allow applicant(s) to practice for the final presentation
3. ESPC provides any additional suggestions to prepare applicant for formal presentation
4. Focus on long term planning

The second step will be initiated through contact with your Case Manager and must be completed following Step One.



STEP THREE: MAKE NECESSARY CHANGES TO THE FINAL PROPOSAL AND SUBMIT ALL FINISHED MATERIALS TO ESPC

The applicant(s) must edit and review the final proposal after receiving feedback from ESPC representatives and the Facilities Coordinator. If you reach this step, you should feel comfortable with the merits of your project so long as you have addressed the concerns expressed in the meeting that takes place between Step Two and Three.

GOALS FOR THIS STEP

1. Make all final changes necessary for approval
2. Schedule a final presentation date during the selected two-week period toward the end of the semester

STEP FOUR: FINAL PRESENTATION TO ESPC

The applicant(s) will present a final version of their project proposal to the entire project committee and the Facilities Coordinator. This presentation will give the applicant a final opportunity to convince ESPC that the project is a good use of the ECollective Fund.

After Step Four, ESCP will:

- Provide applicant with evaluation rubrics including notes from ESPC members
- Provide Executive Summary of the decision
- If the proposal is rejected, provide tangible and actionable advice on how to improve the proposal for successful resubmission at a later date.

This presentation will be coordinated through the project Case Manager and scheduled during the designated two-week period at the end of the semester.



PREPARATION

This portion of the handbook is meant to assist you in the preparation and construction of your formal proposal.

CREATING A LINE ITEM BUDGET (SEE EXAMPLE PROPOSAL FOR MODEL)

What the budget should include:

Implementation costs – the costs associated with doing the project. All projects should have a list of costs associated in implementation. Be sure to break down all items line by line (in both per unit cost and a total cost) that are associated with implementation.

Maintenance costs – costs beyond the costs of implementation that help maintain and upkeep the project from year to year (making it sustainable). Not all projects will have maintenance costs.

Sources – How/where did you come up with the numbers that you are using in your budget? Include invoices, price estimates, online price verification, etc.

Other funding – Do you have funding from other sources? If so, list all sources out.

Finally– The actual amount you are requesting for your budget. Check your math multiple times!

*The budget for a full project proposal should resemble a final version at the time of proposal submission. By submitting an “Expression of Interest” form before the proposal deadline, ESPC can assist with the development of the budget.

*The budget for an expedited proposal will be simpler, but should still contain as much information as possible about the project costs.



CREATING A PROPOSAL (SEE EXAMPLE PROPOSAL)

*This outline is specifically created to help with full project proposals.

Cover letter:

Title: Find a title that accurately and succinctly indicates the purpose of your project.

Executive Summary: Write a brief project summary (up to 5-7 sentences) as part of your project cover letter.

Create a section for your project work plan, which will include:

Goals and objectives- A bulleted list of project goals and objectives.

Scope of work- An explanation of the extent of the project. i.e. where it will be installed, how the purpose will be explained, etc.

Methodology/Approach- An explanation of the proposed plan for the installment of this project. What materials will be required, who will be working on it, etc.

Create a section for project team. Each team member will have to include:

Member Type-- The classification of their role in the team (i.e. Project leader, team member, etc.).

Contact Info- Name, e-mail address, phone number.

Educational Info- Expected graduation date and major.

Project role- What the individual will be doing to further the success and implementation of the project.

Experience and Qualifications Relevant to the Project- Any background and expertise pertinent to the completion of the project.

Integration with other responsibilities- Explain how you plan to manage completing this project and carrying out your other obligations.

Create a section for estimated timeline.

Create a list of dates by which certain tasks will be completed and a total project timeline.

Create a section for your detailed budget.

For help creating a budget, see the “Creating a Line Item Budget” section.

Create a section for integration.

Here you will list all internal (campus based) and external permissions and collaborations necessary for the completion of your project. If approval is needed, provide proof of said approval. This can be in the form of an email, letter, etc., but **must be in written form**.

Create a section for continuation.

List the plans for the propagation and maintenance of this project after completion.

The complete outline should look something like this:

Cover Letter: Title
Project Summary

Work Plan:
Goals and objectives
Scope of Work
Methodology and Approach

Project Team:
Member one
Member Type
Contact Info
Expected Graduation Date and Major
Project Role
Experience and Qualifications
Integration with other Responsibilities
Member Two, etc

Estimated Timeline
Budget
Integration
Continuation

PLEASE LIMIT YOUR TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES TO **10**.

THE POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

For Step Four a PowerPoint presentation (or other appropriate visual presentation) must be presented before the full Committee.

General guidelines:

Creating effective slides:

- Create a concise title.

- Use minimal text. (Use text as a jumping point to cue what you're going to say).

- Graphics are helpful!

- Cover all material presented in the proposal outline.

- Use an easy to read font.

- When formatting and designing your slides, think simple. It is more effective and won't distract from your purpose.

Presenting:

- Practice your presentation in front of a mock audience.

- Do not read directly off of the slides.

- Speak clearly and concisely.

- Be animated! A boring presentation is hard to tolerate no matter how exciting the project is!

STEP FIVE: FINAL EVALUATION AND DECISION

PROCESS

Following the completion of Step One through Step Four, the committee will meet privately for a final review and make a decision regarding the applicant's proposal. The applicant(s) will be provided the completed evaluation rubrics and notes from the ESPC Committee, as well as an executive summary of the decision.

DECISION

If the proposal is rejected, tangible and actionable advice on how to improve the proposal for successful resubmission will be provided. While Committee decisions cannot be contested, we do encourage improvement and resubmission at a later date.

POST PROCESS EXPECTATIONS

PROJECT BLURB

All funding recipients will be expected to compose a brief write up on their project which will then be uploaded to our website. The blurb should give readers a clear understanding of what the project is, the goals, and the value of the contribution.

BLOG

Funding recipients will also be expected to submit blog updates for the Office of Sustainability website. This can just be an update on the progress and success of the project; it doesn't need to be terribly formal.

FUNDING CONTRACT

In order to receive full funding, all funding recipients will be expected to sign a funding contract outlining all of the requirements and goals of the project determined by the committee. This contract may also include some contingency items that must be addressed before funding will be completed. Signing your funding contract is an agreement to address all contingency items in order to receive full funding.

SERVING ON THE COMMITTEE

APPLICATION:

The application to serve as a member of ESPC can be found on our website. Applications for the spring and fall will have posted dates available in the same location. Click this link to learn more: <http://sustainability.cofc.edu/espc-student-projects/serving-on-the-committee.php>.

EXPECTATIONS:

Committee members will be expected to meet monthly with the entire ESPC Committee regarding general upkeep. Members will also be responsible for pairing with another ESPC representative as Case Managers. These teams will then be responsible for reviewing applications through Step One and Four. No set hours are required and consequently meetings with applicants and the Committee can be relatively flexible and arranged around Committee members' agendas.

