

OSU Carbon Reduction Grant Program – Call for Proposals

Background

In 2007, OSU President Ed Ray signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), now known as the [Carbon Commitment](#). As part of the Commitment, OSU set a goal of carbon neutrality by 2025. In the following years OSU established its first [Climate Plan](#). Sustainability and climate change solutions are now also reflected in the [OSU Strategic Plan](#).

In 2018, the [Faculty Senate](#) formed the ad hoc Carbon Commitment Committee as a network to promote carbon reducing actions within faculty and beyond. In 2021, this became a standing committee, known as the [Carbon Commitment Committee](#) (C3). The [Sustainability Office](#) helps support this committee and its workgroups.

On June 13, 2024, the Oregon State University Faculty Senate passed a resolution to “*Create a dedicated fund to finance carbon reduction projects initiated by students, staff, and faculty, incentivizing innovation and engagement by colleges, units, and individuals who take significant actions towards carbon reduction*”.

Purpose

OSU has not yet reached its stated goal of carbon neutrality. Therefore, with financial support from OSU Administration, C3 is creating and administering this Carbon Reduction Grant Program to tap into the vast creativity and passion of OSU’s community of faculty, staff, and students to identify and support projects that will help OSU move closer to its climate goals.

Available Funding

Up to \$50,000 has been allocated in the next fiscal year to support this program.

Awards ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000 will be granted at the discretion of the committee based on selection criteria. Securing matching funds to complement supported activities is encouraged but not required.

Timeline

- Proposals are due November 15, 2025.
- Awards will be announced by December 19, 2025, with funds allocated shortly thereafter.
- The performance period should not exceed one year from the date of award. Extensions will be considered on case-by-case basis.

Eligibility

This program is open to all current OSU employees and students.

In alignment with OSU’s and [Strategic Plan](#), the proposed activities financed by this program must have a direct connection to reducing OSU’s climate impacts.

Application Process

Application portal will open on or before October 1. Details will be published on the Sustainability Office website.

Proposal Requirements

Each proposal must address the following questions within a 2 page limit:

1. **Project Title:** Provide a concise and descriptive title for the proposed project.
2. **Project Narrative:** Provide a description of your project's goals and objectives addressing these items:
 - **Problem and Solution:** What are you proposing to do and why? Describe a specific problem statement, your proposed solution, and how that solution addresses the problem in a novel way. To the extent known, why have other attempted solutions for this problem not succeeded thus far? What makes your solution better?
 - **Project Description:** How will your project reduce OSU's climate footprint? This could include reductions in climate impacts from OSU's facilities, operations, and/or the behavior of its people, including employees and students engaged in educational and research activities, as well as OSU's community of stakeholders beyond campus.
 - **Measurement:** How will you assess or measure climate outcomes? How will you know if your project is successful? Be specific. Describe how your project will contribute to OSU's [Path to Carbon Neutrality](#), including quantitative sources of data, validated third-party GHG calculators, or other robust methods for assessing the outcomes of your project.
 - **Outreach:** Describe your plan for informing and engaging people with your project as well as communicating the outcomes of your project. This could include use of media, academic publications, etc.
 - **Feasibility, Timeline and Milestones:** The intended project period is approximately one calendar year or less. Explain how you will complete the project (and expend the awarded funds) within that timeframe. Identify at least one milestone during the course of the project. Explain how each milestone will either confirm the project is going according to plan or that a change may be warranted.

3. Budget

Provide a simple budget table with line items for your requested budget. Further explain if any matching funds are available. Providing matching funds would be considered a plus, but is not required. Finally, explain how your budget is reasonable and appropriate for the scope of activity you propose to perform.

Allowable costs may include but are not limited to:

Material costs, facilities and equipment fees, workshop/conference costs, marketing & publicity, and student wages.

Not Allowable costs:

Capital equipment, faculty/staff wages, gift cards or other compensation for project participation, reimbursement of already-incurred expenses (no retroactive funding), salable merchandise

4. Team

Who is your team leader, the Principal Investigator for this award? Who are the other team members? What are the roles and responsibilities of each team member? Why is this team qualified to successfully carry out this project?

Student-led teams: Please identify an OSU employee who will participate in at least an advisory role. This could be a faculty member or club advisor.

5. Project Sustainability

Briefly explain the conclusion of your project once the grant funds are exhausted. Is there a clear successful end point for your project and will these funds be sufficient to reach that end point? If not and the project is meant to continue after this grant, how will the activity be sustained? Will additional sources of revenue be needed and if so, what is the plan for obtaining those?

Review Criteria & Selection

- Climate Impact (40 pts): Expected reductions in OSU's climate impacts; persistence of savings; cost-effectiveness; scope alignment.
- Feasibility & Readiness (25 pts): realistic plan, milestones, risks/mitigations; necessary approvals lined up; 12-month deliverability.
- Outreach & Replicability (20 pts): education value, number/types of people reached; clarity of artifacts; potential to scale/replicate.
- Team & Partnerships (15 pts): skills match, relevant unit buy-in; student involvement.

Cross-unit collaboration and first-time applicants will be considered positively in final decisions. Projects submitted by students and projects that involve students will be given funding priority.

Reporting

A mid-point report (~1 page) will be required at the halfway point of each project. A template will be provided by the C3 committee at that time.

At the conclusion of your project, a member of the C3 committee will reach out for a final report. The form of the final report will depend on the scope of the project. At a minimum, it will include:

- An executive summary of the work performed with grant support;
- An assessment of climate impacts achieved by the project (as quantitative as possible);
- Other learnings, including failures, that may inform future projects supported by C3 and this grant program.

Restrictions

- Funds will be directed to an OSU index account, not an individual or group of individuals.
- Expenses would follow OSU policies and protocols and be subject to the responsible unit (e.g. Department, Division) budgetary authority.
- The project must be led by OSU employees or students, although partners external to OSU may collaborate.
- If award funds are remaining at the end of the project period, unused funds will be returned to the grant fund for allocation in the next award cycle.