

2024 Mason's Living Lab Research Funding

Mason's Living Lab program aims to stimulate and support the development of new research and scholarship initiatives that use the campuses' dynamic, living learning environments with diverse and growing arrays of buildings, roadways, watercourses, and forests and their socio-ecological structures for experimentation and education to develop and advance sustainability solutions.

The Institute for a Sustainable Earth (ISE) and its partners – the Patriot Green Fund and OSCAR – seek to support on-campus research projects within the Living Labs Initiative. **Mason faculty are invited to submit proposals for funding to support research projects that utilize Mason's campuses and socio-environmental systems to develop innovative solutions to local or global sustainability challenges and/or advance a novel sustainability-focused research agenda.** University Sustainability has identified several areas of specific research or innovation interest for Mason, including energy management, carbon reduction, waste management, sustainable transportation (including analysis of existing transportation modalities), water and wastewater management, sustainable business practices, food systems, and campus sustainability culture and literacy. High quality proposals within one of these research domains will be prioritized. However, researchers are also encouraged to submit innovative proposals on other high impact topics.

Initial data collection, implementation of a pilot project, advancing ongoing research, proposal development, testing solution prototypes, and/or implementing a demonstration project of a specific innovation are examples of supported activities, but we encourage other activities beyond these as well. Proposals must discuss how the proposed work will enable the applicants to scale their research agenda and/or advance entrepreneurial activity. Applicants should also reference the UN Sustainable Development Goals when identifying the sustainability challenge(s) that they seek to address with this funding.

Proposals will be considered from individuals or teams. Applicants may submit proposals for up to one year of funding with a budget not to exceed \$25,000. Projects involving undergraduate students should also leverage funding available from OSCAR. Projects requiring materials purchase should also include a complementary PGF application up to the allowable funding limit. If applying for these additional funding sources, include them in the budget as a line item and explain in the justification.

We expect to fund 2-3 projects this year.

Funding decisions will be contingent upon Mason Facilities' approval of the proposed use of the campus environment. **APPLICANTS MUST NOT CONTACT MASON FACILITIES SEEKING APPROVAL PRIOR TO SUBMISSION OF THEIR PROPOSAL.** The Living Lab program managers will work with applicants of proposals that review highly to obtain the necessary approvals. Applicants may contact the Living Lab program managers at malila@gmu.edu prior to proposal submission with questions about potential use of the campus environment. Details about the proposal requirements and process can be found below.

Key Dates

Call for Proposals Released: Feb 26, 2024

Proposal Due Date: Mar 29, 2024

Funding Decisions: Apr 19, 2024* (*contingent upon Mason Facilities' approval)

Eligibility/Requirements

- All faculty who are currently allowed to submit proposals under Mason's [Principal Investigators Policy 4012](#). Faculty are encouraged to propose projects that integrate multiple PIs, disciplines, and programs.
- Projects may address all stages of research and scholarship from basic/fundamental research and scholarship to applied/translational projects.
- A faculty member may only participate as a member of the proposing team on 1 proposal in this competition.

Proposal Requirements

Participants seeking this support must submit a proposal that includes the following components.

- 1) **Cover Page** (Up to 1 page)
 - a) Title of Proposal
 - b) Names and Affiliations of Proposing Team Members [both Mason members and external partner(s), if any]. For Mason team members, include the Department and College/School.
 - c) Project Summary (200 words maximum) – brief description of the project to be published on the Living Lab webpage
- 2) **Project Description.** (3 page maximum). The project description must:
 - a) Clearly identify and justify how the proposed work will advance an innovative sustainability solution; describe how the proposed work will engage Mason’s campus environment and its socio-environmental systems; describe how the proposed project will lead to sustained or scalable research and/or impact; and discuss how the project can advance Mason’s strategic goals.
 - b) Include a detailed work plan that outlines a timeline for the proposed work, identifies the project team and their roles in the proposed work, and describes the milestones and anticipated outcomes. Include the estimated number of people affected by the project outcomes.
 - c) Describe how you will engage student researchers and scholars during the activities.
- 3) **Funding Plan.** (3 page maximum, provide an itemized proposal budget spreadsheet that also includes current and pending support from other sources for this project).

The project budget must be detailed and well-justified. The project budget request from the Living Labs initiative may not exceed \$25,000. Projects with smaller budgets are encouraged.

Funds may be used for research support personnel (including students), consultants, training and/or other project-related expenses. Budgets may include small stipends for faculty (\$500 per faculty member) but may not be used for faculty summer salary or release time during the academic year.

Funding leverage opportunities:

Projects involving undergraduate students should also consider [funding available from OSCAR](#). OSCAR offers campus-wide support for grants with undergraduate student participants, including a research or project assistant program, funding programs for student projects related to the grant, a travel fund for students presenting their work off campus, writing support for grants and supplements supporting undergraduate students, and help recruiting students to work on projects. Any undergraduate student from any college or major who is enrolled at George Mason University can be supported by OSCAR’s programs.

For materials purchase applicants should also present a complementary [Patriot Green Fund \(PGF\) application](#) up to the allowable funding limit.

OSCAR and PGF funding should be included as line items of pending support in the budget.
- 4) **Biographical statements.** Proposing teams should submit brief biographical statements for each team member (200 word maximum per person).
- 5) **Letters of collaboration (OPTIONAL).** Proposals may include letters of collaboration that confirm the participation of key partners in the proposed work. These letters must be brief (no more than 1 page each) and should not include description of work beyond what is included in the project description.

Format

Margin: No smaller than 1-inch margins

Font Size Font size of no less than 11 point

Line Spacing: No more than 6 lines per vertical inch, single space

Figures are included in the page count.

References are **not** included in the page count and should be listed after the Project Description.

Submission

Applications must be submitted **as one complete PDF document** by 11:59 pm EST (Eastern Standard Time) by March 29, 2024, to malila@gmu.edu, use subject line "Living Labs Grants 2024".

Review Criteria

Reviewers will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals:

- ***Overall quality of the project proposed***
- ***Clarity, feasibility and promise of proposed project goals, funding plan, and outcomes***
- ***Experience and expertise of project team***

Post Award

- Applicants will be required to submit a brief Final Report.

Points of Contact

Please direct questions to malila@gmu.edu or Judit Ungvari at jungvari@gmu.edu. Applicants are encouraged to contact the program managers before sending their proposals. For PGF related questions contact Kelsey Naupari-Camacho, Patriot Green Fund Coordinator at pgf@gmu.edu, for OSCAR related questions contact Karen T. Lee, Assistant Director OSCAR at klee57@gmu.edu.