

# The Green EDGE Fund

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2016-2017 Annual Report



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# Introduction to the Green EDGE Fund

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## Mission Statement:

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The mission of the Oberlin College Green EDGE Fund is to support projects that promote environmental sustainability within the Oberlin community while demonstrating innovation, education, and leadership, and projects at Oberlin College that meaningfully improve efficiency and reduce resource consumption.

## Funding Structure:

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The Green EDGE Fund is a student board that manages a set of accounts designated for loan and grant allocations. Efficiency Loans are funded through Oberlin College while Sustainability Grants and the Carbon Management Fund Grants are funded through student semesterly green fees.

*Sustainability Grants* are allocated to projects that promote environmental sustainability within the Oberlin Community, and do not have clear and calculable financial savings for Oberlin College. These projects do not necessarily result in direct resource use reductions, but do promote environmental sustainability as defined by the sitting Board.

*Efficiency Loans* are allocated to projects that reduce resource consumption and have clear and calculable financial savings for Oberlin College. This account operates on a revolving loan fund model; all financial savings directly resulting from these projects are paid by the College into the Efficiency Loan Account on an annual basis until 150 percent of the initial investment is repaid so that further loans can be made. Savings may be calculated based on conservative estimates or measurable changes in resource consumption data.

*Carbon Management Fund (CMF) Grants* are allocated to projects that provide verifiable sequestration of carbon and are situated in or around Oberlin within a 6-county region including: Lorain, Erie, Huron, Ashland, Wayne, and Medina. These carbon sequestrations are meant to be attributed to specific areas of the College for which carbon offsets have not yet been acquired such as student travel to and from campus. Non-Recourse Carbon Investments do not have payback requirements, but do require a calculation quantifying the carbon saved through the project. Non-Recourse Carbon Investments are awarded based on the relative cost to offset a

metric ton of CO<sub>2</sub> or equivalent greenhouse gases by the project and an additional consideration of non-carbon related benefits resulting from the project.

## Green EDGE Fund Board Members and Advisors

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### ***Fall 2016:***

Chair: Julia Murphy

Vice Chair: Erik Gonzales-Kramer

Treasurer: Danyang Dong

Public Outreach Coordinator: Skyler Davis

Account Manager: Rebecca Chant

Student Senate Liaison: Ben Jennings

Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES) Liaison: Hillary Pan

Carbon Management Fund Liaison: Maya Sosland

Board Advisor: Sean Hayes

Administrators: Heidi Pycraft, Meghan Riesterer, Jim Klaiber

### ***Spring 2017:***

Chair: Julia Murphy

Vice Chair: Erik Gonzales-Kramer

Treasurer: Danyang Dong

Public Outreach Coordinator: Skyler Davis

Account Manager: Rebecca Chant

Student Senate Liaison: Cecilia Wallace and Ramsha Babar

Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES) Liaison: Hillary Pan

Carbon Management Fund Liaison: Leah Finegold

Board Advisor: Sean Hayes

Administrators: Heidi Pycraft, Jim Klaiber, Meghan Riesterer

## Meeting Times, Minutes

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The Green EDGE Fund meets regularly on Wednesdays from 12:15 to 1:15 in the AJLC. On Sunday afternoons, generally from 3:30 to 4:30, the students of the Green EDGE Fund meet and have a working group meeting, where they dedicate some time to work on their tasks collectively. Green EDGE Fund meeting minutes can be found in the [EDGE Fund Minutes Fall 2016/Spring 2017](#) Google document.

# Projects Approved in 2016-2017

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Projects that have been officially approved by the GEF this academic year and either have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. Project managers on the GEF serve as the primary contact for duration of project development and implementation.

## Sustainability Grants Approved Last Year:

### Fall 2016:

#### Tappan Tree Planting Reapproval

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Approved Sep 26th, 2016

**Summary:** This is a reapproval for Tappan tree planting at \$3706. We support this because it can offset the carbon emission from student transportation to and from campus.

[Link to Approval Document.](#)

#### Carbon Offsetting Tree Purchase (Sustainability Grant)- Official Reapproval Doc

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Approved Nov 7th, 2016

**Summary:** The funding is for the adjustment of the increased expenditure of the previous tree-buying project that was worthy of pursuing. We approved the increased cost.

**Background Premise:** It's part of the comprehensive carbon offsetting project on the forest north of the PV array.

**Cost-Benefit Analysis:** This approved grant is a section of a previous proposal. It's worthy of the additional grant because this tree-planting area is highly visible to the student body and to visitors, and will provide opportunities for students to plant trees during the following spring.

[Link to Approval Document.](#)

#### Transition to a paperless HR Department

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Approved Nov 23th, 2016

**Summary:** It's a fund to help Human Resource Department at Oberlin to become paperless. This fund provided stipends for Oberlin students to help input the paper-recorded data for the recent five years to the newly purchased software system. This fund also supported to purchase a document scanner to facilitate the data import process

**Background Premise:** There is a need for HR department to become paperless in this digital world. And HR showed the willingness and demonstrated the feasibility.

**Cost-Benefit Analysis:** \$7045 approved. This is a reasonable request as it involves payment for labor for a long period of time.

[Link to Approval Document](#)

## Empowering Poor Communities with Sustainability Resources Project

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Approved December 7th, 2016

**Summary:** Submitted by Oberlin Underground Railroad Society. The fund helps retrofit the PWCC community Center that's instrumental for poor communities in Oberlin.

**Background Premise:** PWCC is GEF's important partner and GEF's connection to the town as a whole. It's important to support their sustainability effort.

**Cost-Benefit Analysis:** \$3920 approved. The sustainability of energy and cost input for the PWCC will empower the organization and also the people who interact with it as there is education component involve as well.

[Link to Approval Document](#).

## Eastwood School Tower Garden Project

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Approved December 8th, 2016

**Summary:** A commercially designed tower garden that makes fresh product accessible and the process educational. The project provided funding for purchasing the equipment of tower gardens for Oberlin Schools.

**Background Premise:** It's great effort to provide sustainable and healthy food to the Oberlin Community, and it's a unique learning opportunity for Eastwood Elementary School students.

**Cost-Benefit Analysis:** \$3206.65 approved. The project was interactive between the infrastructure and the school and we were sure that the project would go well, especially the educational component for student to understand processes of growing vegetables.

[Link to Approval Document](#).

## Spring 2017:

### Campus-wide Teak Porch Swings

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Approved February 7th, 2017

**Summary:** A purchase of swings installed around prominent and convenient locations on campus to benefit people who visit and stay at Oberlin, and improve outdoor experience.

**Background Premise:** Oberlin Campus area lacks outdoor facilities to accommodates outdoor recreational needs during warmer days. This helps people to go outside of buildings and enjoy the nature elements. It's good for physical and mental health.

**Cost-Benefit Analysis:** \$3840 approved. The swings last long time. And the recreational benefit will manifest immediately after installation.

[Link to Approval Document](#).

## Central Dining System Food Rescue Program

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Approved February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017

**Summary:** A purchase of bike trailer to transport excess food production from CDS to Oberlin Community service

**Background Premise:** CDS produces unconsumed food every day and most of them go to waste. The program partners with Oberlin Community Service and the food can feed people in need.

**Cost-Benefit Analysis:** \$3500 approved. The food waste in CDS is a serious issue needed to be addressed. The program will run as long as the partnership exists and the partnership among college entity, student, and town organization is important for the GEF.

[Link to Approval Document.](#)

## Great South Woods Prairie Restoration Phase 1 and 2 of Western Reserve Land Conservancy

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Approved April 17th, 2017

**Summary:** The purchase of raw materials for biological restoration on preserved land.

**Background Premise:** The GEF has long-lasting relationships with the Conservancy and helped purchasing the land for protection. The restoration process is crucial for the improvement of natural surroundings and sequestering excessive carbon in the atmosphere.

**Cost-Benefit Analysis:** \$4987.23 funded. It's an essential part of the development of the land for conservation purposes. The biological benefit is enormous.

[Link to Approval Document.](#)

## Efficiency Audits for Oberlin's Faith Communities

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Approved May 22nd, 2017

**Summary:** The funding allowed energy audits of religious buildings around Oberlin, which would further prompt energy efficiency upgrade of those buildings. This is a collaboration among the GEF, POWER (energy efficiency group) and religious organizations.

**Background Premise:** GEF encourages energy efficiency of Oberlin communities and already partnered with POWER implementing many projects. This is a continual effort for building efficiency upgrades.

**Cost-Benefit Analysis:** \$5000 funded. Energy audit is crucial for large-scale energy efficiency upgrade. The cost will be paid off in the long run.

[Link to Approval Document.](#)

## Oberlin School District Food Service Tower Garden Project

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Approved May 22nd, 2017

**Summary:** The commercial product Tower Garden was successfully trialed, and the School District intended to make expansion on this idea. The funding helped further purchase of Tower Gardens.

**Background Premise:** The previous projects were successful and realized goals of many aspects such as food security/health and education. The GEF supports its expansion.

**Cost-Benefit Analysis:** Its gives students chance to plant their own vegetables, supplement their school meals, and receive education about food systems and biology of plants. Even though it's a reoccurring proposal, we would love to support it for longer period.

[Link to Approval Document.](#)

## **Oberlin Community Sevice Food Dehydrator**

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Approved June 27th, 2017

**Summary:** The GEF funded the food dehydrator which can buffer OCS's food rescue program and provide preserved food for people in need.

**Background Premise:** It's one of the elements that build a robust food rescue program for OCS. It would benefit Oberlin Community as a whole.

**Cost-Benefit Analysis:** Funded \$1127.21. It's the cost of the machine purchase with no labor cost.

[Link to Approval Document.](#)

## **Oberlin Community Services People's Orchard**

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Approved July 18th, 2017

**Summary:** Purchase of fruit trees and maintenance thereof.

**Background Premise:** This is a continuation of people's garden and food pantry program. This provides people under poverty line to pick up food for themselves to supplement their diet.

**Cost-Benefit Analysis:** \$600 funded. It's worthy of supporting the expansion of food programs at the OCS.

[Link to Approval Document.](#)

## **Efficiency Loans Project Approved Last Year:**

**No projects approved this year because of the large-scale strategic funding in the previous year.**

## **Carbon Management Fund Projects Approved Last Year:**

**Spring 2017:**

## Amendment to Carbon Management Fund Local Offset Accounting training proposal

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Approved Feb 20th, 2017

**Summary:** This proposal adjusted the labor cost for training program for GEF board members to better review carbon offsetting proposals.

**Background Premise:** The GEF has newly established a Carbon Management Fund to offset College's and Town's carbon footprint to reach the carbon neutrality goals. The training is necessary to move forward.

**Cost-Benefit Analysis:** \$850 funded. The cost is minimal for the training sessions.

[Link to Approval Document.](#)