



# INNOVATION GRANT APPLICATION

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# INNOVATION GRANT APPLICATION

## PURPOSE OF IAS INNOVATION GRANTS

The Innovation Grant Program is designed to encourage faculty, and staff to develop and implement creative, forward-thinking projects that enhance learning, research, sustainability, equity, and community engagement at our university. These projects should create meaningful impacts on campus and beyond.

All proposals must demonstrate clear alignment with the Institute for Applied Sustainability's mission and core commitments. Proposals should articulate how they support the Institute's purpose whether it is in direct alignment with our [2025-2027 Strategic Plan](#), or speaks to the values outlined in our mission.

**Projects can be either operational based or research based.**

**Operational Based projects** Projects that introduce or enhance a process, service, or initiative within or across departments. These may include pilot programs, new sustainability practices, technology adoption, or creative approaches to existing challenges. Projects should demonstrate a clear plan for implementation and potential for long-term impact.

**Research-Based Projects** – Initiatives rooted in academic inquiry that address a relevant issue or question. These may include applied research, interdisciplinary collaborations, or studies that inform policy, practice, or innovation. Preference will be given to projects with a strong potential for publication, external dissemination, or contribution to institutional knowledge.

## IAS MISSION AND CORE COMMITMENTS

The Institute for Applied Sustainability's mission is to:

- Bringing together faculty, students, and staff to foster a culture of sustainability across disciplines to support research, further education and empower learners
- Engaging with communities, corporations, and other organizations to drive change and amplify voices
- Catalyzing sustainable innovation through established programs and dynamic collaborations
- Envisioning new possibilities for regenerating communities, environments, and economies

**Our core commitments are:**

1. Develop programs that elevate the next generation of leaders, partners, and supporters.
2. Take decisive action on our own impact
3. Provide leadership that drives change on campus and throughout the region

**ELIGIBILITY****Eligible Applicants:****Faculty**

Faculty members in the APSOU bargaining unit holding at least a half-time, renewable appointment at SOU for the current academic year are eligible. Projects involving groups must have a majority of the group represented by the bargaining unit.

Any teaching faculty not in the APSOU bargaining unit as described above (i.e. a Term by Term instructor) may be eligible to apply if the application includes a letter of support from their direct supervisor or department chair.

Affiliate Faculty with active SOU ID numbers are eligible. (*Note: this is not the same as loosely associated with the university*). Must provide a letter of support from their department chair.

**Staff**

SOU employees who are benefits eligible and whose primary employment purpose is working as a non-academic member of the University's staff are eligible to apply.

Any staff member with less than .5 FTE may be eligible to apply if the application includes a letter of support from their department head or the supervisor that they report to.

**Students**

Students are ineligible to apply for Innovation Grants. Students should work with a staff or faculty member as the Principle Investigator or Project Coordinator. Alternatively, students can apply for the [Student Green Fund](#).

**Eligible use of funds:**

Must comply with the SOU's financial policies and procedures and be allowable under university and state guidelines. Applicants are responsible for ensuring proposed expenses meet these requirements.

As these are small internally funded grants, indirect costs do not apply.

We welcome proposals for projects in need of either first-mile or last-mile funding, provided the requested support will help catalyze a truly innovative initiative. We do not fund ongoing operations for projects that have already passed their innovative moment or are seeking routine sustainability support.

*Disclaimer:* please keep the carbon footprint of your project in mind as you draft your budget. While it is not expressly against eligibility to include things like air travel in your proposal, we ask that activities with a high carbon footprint are well justified.

## CRITERIA

We expect your application to meet the following criteria...

<b>1. Be innovative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Lead to a new or significantly improved landscape, whether intellectual, practical, organizational, or collaborative, that opens up new possibilities.</li></ul>
<b>2. Impact &amp; Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Clearly identifies the potential short- and long-term impacts.</li><li>– Benefits the campus community, student experience, academic mission, or external partners.</li><li>– Includes metrics or indicators of success.</li></ul>
<b>3. Feasibility &amp; Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Realistic timeline, budget, and implementation plan.</li><li>– Demonstrates capacity to execute the project within the grant period.</li></ul>
<b>4. Collaboration &amp; Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Encourages interdisciplinary collaboration or cross-departmental partnerships.</li><li>– Includes engagement with students, faculty, staff, and or community stakeholders.</li></ul>
<b>5. Sustainability &amp; Scalability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Addresses environmental, financial, and/or operational sustainability.</li><li>– Shows potential to grow, be replicated, or inform future initiatives.</li></ul>

## AWARDS

**Award Ceiling:** \$5,000

**Award Timeline:** One calendar year unless otherwise negotiated.

Evidence of matched funding may be requested at the discretion of the IAS Team.

While the IAS would be happy to support administratively on Innovation Fund projects, Innovation Grants do not expressly include administrative support from the Institute. This should be expressly requested in the submitted proposal and is subject to alterations or denial. The Applicant(s) are solely responsible for all project management or delegation thereof.

## **DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS**

Once funds have been awarded by the Institute for Applied Sustainability, the Principal Investigator/Project Coordinator shall work with the IAS Managing Director to finalize fund disbursement. Funds cannot be transferred outside of Institute accounts. All expenses will be processed through the IAS Cost Center.

The Institute will not reimburse for any expenses incurred prior to funding approval. All conditions particular to your project stipulated by IAS at time of award must be addressed prior to funding dispersal (ie. matched funding letters, letters of commitment/support, etc.).

Any funds unspent by the end of the grant period will be returned to the Institute unless otherwise approved by the IAS leadership team.

## **MARKETING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The following are required of all funded projects:

- An initial press release or story made in reference to IAS support within three months of award finalization and within a relevant timeline to the project. This should include a statement about how your project showcases sustainability
- A mid-project update in the form of an article or story that can be shared through SOU marketing channels
- General public acknowledgement of the Institute for Applied Sustainability's sponsorship of the project.
- Project photographs with signed SOU releases whenever possible
- A final report shall be submitted by the PI/PC to the Managing Director within 30 days of project completion. This report shall include the following:
  - Detailed use of funds
  - Project highlights
  - Comprehensive list of additional project funding sources
  - Project photographs with signed SOU releases (Minimum of 5 quality photos)

## **HOW TO APPLY**

Proposals can be submitted at any time via email to the Managing Director, at [welchki@sou.edu](mailto:welchki@sou.edu). Denied proposals can be resubmitted in the following term.

Applicants may be called for a follow-up to answer questions about their proposal. Follow-up meetings and scheduled at the discretion of the IAS leadership team.

Proposals will be evaluated by the IAS Leadership team. The team is composed of individuals with different backgrounds and specialties. When developing your proposal, ensure that your

rationale, objectives, and methodology are clear and can be widely understood by all. This proposal should be concise and well informed.

A [template](#) can be found at the end of this document.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. Can students apply directly for an Innovation Grant?**

– No, interested students must work in collaboration with faculty or staff member(s) who will serve as the official Principal Investigator or Project Coordinator. Students can however, utilize the student Green Fund as a potential funding source for their project.

### **2. Can funding be used to pay student workers or faculty/staff time?**

– Yes. All salary or stipend requests must be clearly justified and must comply with university policies. It is up to the applicant to verify if the proposed work and payment process is in accordance with SOU policies. IAS staff are available to help work with Business Services and HR to identify pathways for payment.

For the applicant's reference:

- Students *may* be paid via stipend or as an hourly student employee. *Applicants are advised to be familiar with university policies that govern stipends and hourly employee pay.*
- Faculty and Unclassified Staff *may* be paid under an IEA/OWA if the services they are providing are entirely separate from their SOU role.
- Classified Staff *may* be paid as a contractor via a PSC if the services they are providing are entirely separate from their SOU role and they have their own business outside of SOU for providing those services.

### **3. What is the typical timeline from submission to decision?**

– Proposals are reviewed on a rolling basis. Applicants will typically be contacted within four weeks of submission with further questions or final decisions.

### **4. Can I apply for more than one grant?**

– You may apply for multiple projects, but each project must be independent of each other. Applicants may not apply for multiple grants for the same project.

### **5. What if I don't use all the awarded funds within the award timeframe?**

– Unused funds must be returned to IAS unless a written extension or modification is approved by the leadership team.

### **6. What should I do if project expenses or activities change after funding has been approved?**

– Minor alterations to project activities or budget allocations do not require express approval. However, any significant changes to project scope or the approved budget must be reviewed and approved by the IAS leadership team in advance.

#### **7. Do I need to provide letters of support with my application?**

– Letters of support may be required depending on the nature of your project (e.g., if partners or departments are expressly involved, a letter of support is required).

#### **CONTACT**

For further questions about IAS Innovation Grants or the application process, please contact Institute for Applied Sustainability Managing Director: Kira Welch, [welchk1@sou.edu](mailto:welchk1@sou.edu).

## SUBMISSION TEMPLATE

Before completing the template, please read the full Innovation Grant Application for complete guidance on eligibility, criteria and other applicant requirements. Proposals should not exceed 1700 words.

Please use the following template for your proposal:

*Suggestion: create a copy of this document and input your text directly into the template.*

### 1. Introduction:

- a. Project Title
  - b. Principal Investigator/Project Coordinator
  - c. Project Coordinator email address
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### 2. Proposed project

- a. Description of proposed project that includes brief background and rationale (see criteria section for specifics)
- b. Objectives of the proposed project.
- c. How would your project uniquely address topics of sustainability?
- d. Project plan including the following when applicable:
  - Management and delegation strategies
  - Use of student or faculty support
  - Clear research methodologies including required tools and where they will be sourced
  - Expected timeline
  - Any administrative assistance requested from the Institute

250-500 words

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### 3. Budget

- a. Detailed project budget
- b. Summary of how funds will be used
- c. Briefly describe any existing or planned efforts to secure additional funding or in-kind support.

250-300 words

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### 4. Please provide information on the following:

- a. Expected partnerships. Provide evidence of support if you will use any faculty, student, community or similar support (This evidence must be submitted with your proposal)
- b. Outline of how your project includes financial self-sufficiency or income generation
- c. Describe any additional outreach, publicity, or educational components beyond what is required.



200-250 words

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**5. Describe how IAS funding would catalyze your project or program:**

- a. How would your project leverage future funding and create longer-term project implementation and financial sustainability?
- b. Discuss your partnership with the Institute. Do you see further opportunities for Institute collaborations beyond funding?

250-300 words

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**6. Alignment with the Institute**

- a. Explanation of how your project aligns with the Mission of the Institute for Applied Sustainability at Southern Oregon University
- b. Explanation of how your project aligns with IAS's 2025-2027 Strategic Plan
- c. Include [SOU's strategic directions](#) where applicable.

250-300 words

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Please save the template portion as a new file and title it: *IASIFP\_LastName\_FirstName* prior to submission. Please submit to: [welchk1@sou.edu](mailto:welchk1@sou.edu).