

TGIF: Student Sustainability and Environmental Justice Fund Renewal 2025 - 2035

Introductory Statement

The Green Initiative Fund (TGIF) Renewal Referendum will secure an additional 10 years of funding for the TGIF semesterly grant program, the Student Environmental Resource Center (SERC), and expand TGIF grant-funded student financial support programs. In its nearly twenty-year history at UC Berkeley, TGIF has become a critical financial mechanism that materially supports our campus's continued leadership¹ in university sustainability² and environmental and climate justice. It annually funds vital programs necessary to meet our campus sustainability goals³ and University of California Office of the President (UCOP) policies on sustainable practices⁴.

Each year, TGIF allocates over \$375,000 to 10-25 campus departments and registered student organizations (RSOs). These funds support cutting-edge research, advocacy, professional development, and campus improvements in environmental sustainability, climate justice, and education. However, with our current funding levels, we are only able to fund approximately 60% of the annual fundable requests each year. TGIF is housed within the SERC, a campus department that has grown alongside Berkeley's environmental community, providing critical resources, education, and public events for our campus. Finally, TGIF often receives requests to provide other kinds of funding outside of its grant program, including small rolling funding opportunities, travel grants, internship funding, scholarships and more— requests that could be supported with additional financial resources.

Background

The Green Initiative Fund (TGIF) Fee is a student-initiated student fee, first established in 2007, and renewed in 2016, which has provided over \$5 million to 350+ campus sustainability and environmental justice projects. Through TGIF's efforts, our program has directly funded 106 RSOs, 226 campus departments, and over 650 student internships.

Notable TGIF projects include:

- 2008 - [UC Berkeley Campus Dashboard](#)
- 2009 - [Berkeley Student Food Collective Storefront Construction](#)
- 2009 - [BicyCAL shop](#)
- 2010 - [I Heart Tap Water Campaign](#)
- 2011 - [Compost in Campus Buildings](#)
- 2012 - [SERC Development](#)
- 2013 - [Blake Garden ADA Path Native Planting](#)
- 2014 - [Strawberry Creek Stabilizations and Resiliency](#)
- 2016 - [Water Efficiency at the Goldman School of Public Policy](#)
- 2017 - [Chou Hall Zero Waste Certification](#)
- 2018 - [Environmental Education for Students of Color](#)
- 2019 - [Electrifying the ADA Loop Fleet](#)
- 2020 - [Climate Fix Podcast](#)
- 2021 - [Scholarships for Environmentalists of Color](#)
- 2022 - [UC Berkeley COP 27 Delegation](#)
- 2023 - [Inclusive Excellence Hub](#)
- 2024 - [BIPOC Earth Day Festiva](#)

A complete archive of all completed TGIF-funded projects can be found at tgif.berkeley.edu/archive.

In 2013, TGIF joined the Student Environmental Resource Center. For the past decade, the two organizations have served as the hub for student environmental education, professional development, and student funding opportunities. Since its inception, SERC has supported over 200 student staff, expanded and implemented multiple environmental justice programs, provided a physical space and resources for environmental organizations, and has institutionalized campus-wide events and programs including Earth Week, Climate Justice Week, the Zero Waste Research Center, SERC Nature and Wellness Education Together (NEWT), among others.

Between 2020 and 2021, SERC, with approval from the TGIF Committee, piloted three financial programs to support UC Berkeley students materially. First, SERC created the [Brian Gialketsis SERQueer Scholarship](#), in honor of [Brian](#) and his contributions to environmental sustainability, community building, and environmental justice at UC Berkeley and within TGIF. Second, the TGIF Committee approved the [Eco Fund](#), a rolling financial program designed to supplement TGIF by providing small stipends for RSOs seeking funding for sustainability initiatives and events, as well as students requiring financial support for environmental coursework. In 2021, TGIF funded the [SERC Environmentalists of Color Scholarship](#), aiming to bridge the institutional gaps in support for BIPOC environmentalists. In 2023, the TGIF Committee voted to extend funding for the Eco Fund and “[Sister Scholarship](#)” programs for an additional three years by utilizing excess funds returned to TGIF from completed projects. Together, these financial programs have provided \$101,000 to directly support students and student organizations.

The current TGIF fee, passed in 2016, is set to expire in 2026. Since TGIF’s inception in 2007, the environmental and sustainability landscape on campus has changed dramatically, but the need for dynamic sustainability, climate, and environmental justice funding and programming on campus has remained constant, especially in the face of increased youth awareness, anxiety⁶, and activism around the climate crisis. Youth environmental action has and continues to drive international climate accountability⁷, and at UC Berkeley, student engagement and research continues to help UC Berkeley remain a leader in higher education sustainability and global climate research.

SERC, TGIF’s departmental home, has also experienced immense growth in the past decade, highlighting the need for additional resources for this campus department, which does not receive funding from the campus beyond salary support for the SERC Director. Since 2014, SERC has increased student staff positions by 88%, houses over 400 hours of student environmental RSO meetings each semester, and serves as a critical bridge between student passion and campus, local, and global environmental action and research.

TGIF has proven its success through its far-reaching projects. To continue the current program, expand financial and programming offerings through TGIF and SERC, and to expand the pool of grant money given during our semesterly grant cycles, it is necessary to renew and increase the fee to \$15. In the 2007 and 2016 TGIF fee referendums, SERC was not included as part of the fee. To meet the growing demand for environmental programs and student opportunities, part of the funding for the 2025 TGIF fee referendum will support SERC’s programs, operations, and staffing along with TGIF’s grantmaking.

Purpose of the Fee

The fee will fund the expansion of TGIF and SERC to materially support sustainability and environmental justice efforts on campus, including but not limited to, food justice and security, water and energy conservation, habitat restoration, waste reduction and zero waste, sustainable transportation, environmental education, environmental justice, and climate justice and climate change organizing. Funding will also directly support the Student Environmental Resource Center and its student and professional staff, as well as provide new, permanent funding resources for students and the UC Berkeley campus. A small percentage of the fee will go towards general operational costs.

The Green Initiative Fund Fee will provide continuing funding to:

- Expand our current grant offerings through our semesterly grant programs, allowing us to better meet the demand for funding for research, programming, campus improvement, and education surrounding climate change, environmental justice, sustainability, and more
- Develop a new Environmental Fellows Program, which will fund 10-20 paid internships for campus departments who require student support, but struggle to obtain funding or supervisory support
- Institutionalize the Sister Scholarship program, which provides targeted scholarships for Environmentalists of Color and Queer Environmentalists, re-envisioning community scholarship programs to center joy and healing while working to increase diversity in the environmental community on campus
- Expand the Eco Fund and Green Event Certification programs, which provide financial support for students and registered student organizations to cover the costs of sustainable materials, travel, conferences, and events

Fee Breakdown

The mandatory fee will apply to all registered graduate and undergraduate students, including students in self-supporting graduate degree programs, and will be governed by UC Berkeley's standard schedule of refunds. The fee is subject to the following costs and conditions:

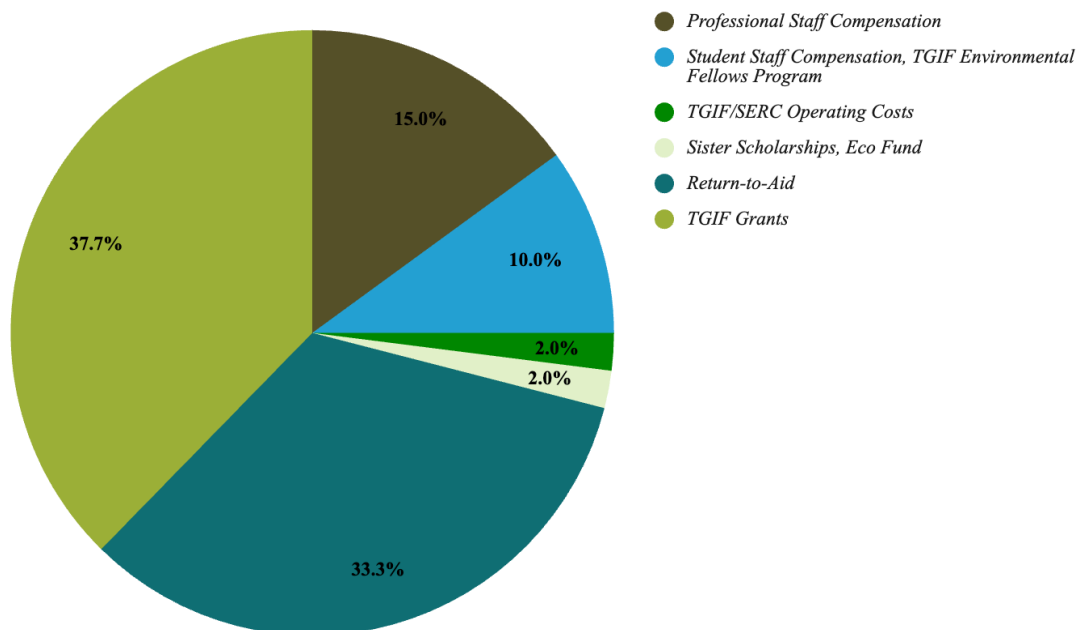
- Collection of the fee will begin with Fall Semester 2025 at \$15.00 per semester and continue at that rate for three years, through Spring Semester 2028. The fee will be in effect for ten years, from Fall 2025 through Spring 2035. Students registering in the summer will be assessed a fee in the same amount as the following Fall Semester, beginning with summer 2026.
- After Spring 2028, the fee will increase every three years to cover the cost of inflation and increased demand and size of future projects in the following manner:

Years	Fee per Student per Semester
2025-26, 2026-27, and 2027-2028	\$15
2028-29, 2029-30, and 2030-31	\$20
2031-32, 2032-33, 2033-34, and 2034-35	\$25

In accordance with campus policy, one-third of the fee will be returned to financial aid to help offset the cost of this fee for students who are eligible for financial aid. The funds collected will be allocated as detailed in the table below.

	Proposed Per Semester Fee- Recipients of Fee	
	Amount (\$15)	Percentage
Return-to-aid	\$5.00	33.33%
TGIF Spring Grants and Mini-Grants	\$5.65	37.67%
Professional Staffing	\$2.25	15.00%
TGIF/SERC Fellowships & Student Staffing	\$1.50	10.00%
Sister Scholarships, Eco Fund, & Other Student Funding Opportunities	\$0.30	2.00%
TGIF/SERC Operating Costs	\$0.30	2.00%
Total Fee	\$15.00	100%

TGIF Fee Breakdown 2025



TGIF Committee

The funds will be awarded by The Green Initiative Fund (TGIF) Committee, a student-majority committee comprised of:

- One graduate Student appointed by the Graduate Assembly (GA)
- One undergraduate Student appointed by the Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC)
- One Student appointed by the Coalition of Eco-Leaders, representing environmental and sustainability Registered Student Organizations (RSOs)
- One undergraduate Student-at-Large, selected by the TGIF Committee, via an application process
- One EJ Student-at-Large, selected by the TGIF Committee, via an application process
- One Staff member from Administration, selected by the Vice Chancellor for Administration & Finance
- One Staff member from Capital Strategies, selected by the Associate Vice Chancellor of Capital Strategies
- One Staff member from Student Affairs, selected by Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Non Voting Members include:

- The Director of Sustainability, or a delegate from their office
- A representative from the Student Environmental Resource Center
- A representative from the campus Energy Office
- A member of the Committee on Student Fees (CSF) and their alternate
- A representative from the Physical and Environmental Planning department
- A representative from the Berkeley Climate Change network, with a focus in research
- The TGIF Manager and TGIF Committee shall invite experts/guests as needed to enhance the Committee's breadth and may invite them to become permanent not-voting members through a vote.

Oversight

The funds will be managed by the TGIF Committee and the TGIF & Sustainability Initiatives Operations Manager, reporting through the Dean of Students Office. The TGIF Committee and TGIF & Sustainability Initiatives Operations Manager are governed by the Bylaws of The Green Initiative Fund⁵. The TGIF Committee will be responsible for approving the TGIF and SERC budgets at the beginning of each calendar year for the following academic year, and will receive a written and verbal budget presentation annually.

After the budgets have been approved and funds are dispersed, the TGIF & Sustainability Initiatives Operations Manager will oversee operations of the annual committees for the Sister Scholarships and EcoFund respectively, who will be responsible for following oversee their budget, provide annual updates to the TGIF Committee, and support TGIF's bi-annual reporting process.

Ballot Language

The existing \$10.00 per-student, per-semester The Green Initiative Fund Fee has awarded more than \$5 million to 350+ projects led by UC Berkeley students, staff and faculty, as well as more than 650 student campus internships since 2007.

Renewing The Green Initiative Fund fee for the next 10 years would support UC Berkeley's commitment to sustainability and environmental justice by (1) increasing the annual grant funding TGIF allocates each year; (2) institutionalizing funding programs that provide scholarships and small financial support to students and registered student organizations (RSOs), (3) funding over 40 student positions through the Student Environmental Resource Center's staffing and new TGIF Environmental Fellows program, (4) provide essential financial support for the Student Environmental Resource Center.

Do you approve the renewal of The Green Initiative Fund at \$15.00 per undergraduate and graduate student, including students in self-supporting graduate degree programs, per semester, with one-third (33.33%) of the fee allocated to Financial Aid, in accordance with campus return-to-aid policy?

Appendix

¹<https://sustainability.berkeley.edu/news/uc-berkeley-takes-1-first-ever-qs-sustainability-world-university-rankings>

²<https://sustainability.berkeley.edu/news/uc-berkeley-receives-highest-rating-platinum-sustainability-achievements>

³https://sustainability.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/uc_berkeley_sustainability_plan_2020_1.pdf

⁴<https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/3100155/SustainablePractices>

⁵<https://tgif.berkeley.edu/bylaws>

⁶[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(21\)00278-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00278-3/fulltext)

⁷<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8694303/#r12>