



# Green Building Research Fund

---

Request for Pre-Proposals  
February 4, 2008

## Background

USGBC has committed \$2 million for a research grant fund to underscore the critical role that research plays in advancing building science and market transformation toward environmental and human sustainability. \$500,000 of the total is reserved for K-12 school research relating to occupant impacts.<sup>1</sup> The USGBC Research Committee demonstrated the need for a vast increase in research funding and activity through its work on *Green Building Research Funding: An Assessment of Current Activity in the United States* and *A National Green Building Research Agenda* (both available for [download](#)). This grant fund enables USGBC to act now on those needs while leveraging partnership resources and encouraging other organizations to increase their own research commitments.

## Objective of the Pre-Proposal Phase

This first phase of the application process will evaluate applications based on abstracts of proposed research projects in order to save time for applicants and reviewers. Selected applicants will be invited to submit comprehensive proposals for the final phase of the award process.

## General Objective of the Research Fund

The fund's objective is to provide leverage in achieving progress on critical research and market transformation gaps. Discrete (finite) research projects will result in knowledge, policies, technologies and/or tools that will have an immediate and positive impact on sustainable building development, design, construction and operation.

## Awards

A portfolio of projects will be selected. Several grants will be awarded in two general ranges: \$50,000 to \$150,000, and \$150,000 to \$250,000 (total one-time, non-renewable grant distributed throughout the project timeline). \$500,000 of the \$2 million total is reserved for K-12 school research relating to occupant impacts.<sup>1</sup>

## Outcomes

The research will result in knowledge, technologies and/or tools that will advance building science and market transformation. An emphasis is placed on outcomes that can be immediately disseminated to, and applied by, owners, designers, builders and operators in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Suggested reference: *Green Schools – Attributes for Health and Learning*, National Research Council, 2006.  
<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11756.html>

form of research reports, guidelines and/or tools. Examples include design guidelines for integrated systems; process improvements and tools for design, delivery and operations; metrics, benchmarks, and databases; advanced building materials, components and systems; policy analysis and development; and codes and standards. Additional examples and details can be found in the [National Green Building Research Agenda](#).

## **Duration**

Preferred project duration is one to two years from inception but up to three years will be allowed when a clear need for it is established (e.g., occupant observations over multiple years).

## **Eligibility**

Academic, non-profit and other research institutions are the primary audiences for the grants. For-profit entities are permitted to apply, but are strongly encouraged to partner with academic or non-profit institutions and must clearly describe public versus private benefits. Members of the core Research Committee (see roster, below) and colleagues in each member's immediate organizational unit are not eligible due to the members' roles in grant program oversight and project selection. Committee members must recuse themselves from reviews of proposals submitted by their fellow employees. All deliberations will be performed in accordance with USGBC conflict-of-interest policy. Students are not eligible to be principal investigators. Proposed research projects must be discrete and finite and provide practical outcomes. Research results and outcomes must be non-proprietary and widely distributable. Derivative products can be proprietary. Appropriate research experience is required as well as demonstrated ability to produce useful results.

## **Evaluation Criteria** (in general order of importance)

Criteria will be applied during both pre-proposal and comprehensive proposal application stages, but less so for pre-proposal stage.

1. Relevance to priority research topics identified in the [National Green Building Research Agenda](#). Alternatives may be justified based on one or more of the same criteria used to prioritize topics within the Research Agenda:
  - short timeframe / immediate results: relatively small or easy projects that can quickly make a difference, perhaps substantial;
  - significant level of expected impact;
  - overcomes a barrier to commercialization or market adoption; and
  - sequential significance (a prerequisite for other research).
2. Relevance to [LEED](#) topics and credits, as a basis for technical development of LEED.
3. Likelihood of having immediate, on-the-ground, and quantifiable impact.
4. Multidisciplinary scope and approach.
5. Inter-organizational partnerships (e.g., consortiums).
6. Cost share, including contributions from other organizations (poor: <20%, best: >50%). In-kind contributions are limited to 20% of the total.
7. Duration: 1 to 2 years preferred; up to 3 years for ones collecting data over time.

## **Pre-Proposal Application Requirements**

1. Project narrative, limited to two pages, and including:
  - a) summarized goals, objectives, methods and outcomes;
  - b) relevance of the topic and outcomes to the selection criteria and to specific audiences.
2. Overall timetable (estimated start and completion dates)
3. Budget total.
4. Cost sharing potential: financial and in-kind contributions. Indicate potential partners, interest levels, and confirmed commitments (as possible at this early stage).
5. List personnel such as principal investigators and key researchers. Note titles and general areas of expertise. Identify primary points of contact. List partnering organizations, if applicable.

## **Pre-Proposal Application Process and Schedule**

1. Application period: February 12 through March 6.
2. Submit application via <http://www.miracd.com/usgbc2008Grant/>.
3. Selected applicants will be sent an invitation to submit comprehensive proposals in mid-April. The deadline for the full proposals will be at the end of May. Final determination will be made in late July. Grant funds will be awarded only upon the execution of USGBC's grant agreement.
4. Questions about the RFPP can be directed to [research@committees.usgbc.org](mailto:research@committees.usgbc.org).

## **About USGBC**

The U.S. Green Building Council is the nation's leading nonprofit organization composed of corporations, builders, universities, government agencies, and other nonprofit organizations working together to promote buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy places to live and work. Since its founding in 1993, the Council has grown to more than 12,000 member companies and organizations, a broad portfolio of LEED® programs and services, the industry's Greenbuild International Conference and Expo ([www.greenbuildexpo.org](http://www.greenbuildexpo.org)), and a network of 72 local chapters, affiliates, and organizing groups. The Council's vision is a sustainable built environment within a generation. For more information, visit [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).

## **Research Committee Members**

- Gail Brager, Ph.D., *Chair*; Professor and Associate Director of the Center for the Built Environment, University of California, Berkeley
- Judith Heerwagen, Ph.D., *Vice Chair*; President, J. H. Heerwagen & Associates, Inc.
- Drury Crawley, RA, Technology Development Manager, U.S. Department of Energy
- John Fernandez, Professor of Building Technology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Rich Haut, Ph.D., Sustainable Technology Group Director, Houston Advanced Research Center
- Michael Holtz, FAIA, President, Architectural Energy Corporation

- Bruce Hunn, Ph.D., Director of Technology, American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers
- Vivian Loftness, FAIA, Professor of Architecture; Senior Researcher, Center for Building Performance and Diagnostics, Carnegie Mellon University
- Peter Morris, Principal, Davis Langdon
- Steve Selkowitz, Department Head, Building Technologies Department, Environmental Energy Technologies Division, Ernest Orlando Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
- Alex Wilson, President, BuildingGreen Inc.

***Liaisons to the Research Committee***

- Markku Allison, Resource Architect, American Institute of Architects
- Mara Baum, Designer, Anshen + Allen, 2006 USGBC Ginsberg Sustainability Fellow
- Martha Bohm, Visiting Lecturer, Cornell University Department of Architecture, 2007 USGBC Ginsberg Sustainability Fellow
- Ken Sandler, Co-Chair, EPA Green Building Workgroup, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

**Legal Notice**

A response to this Request for Pre-Proposals does not create a contract between the applicant and USGBC, but instead is an invitation for the applicant to offer a proposal for USGBC's consideration. The decision to select or not select a proposal is made at the sole discretion of USGBC, and may be based on any factors USGBC chooses to consider. By submitting a proposal, the applicant waives any and all claims against USGBC, its officers, directors, employees, subcontractors and agents, and assumes full responsibility for any and all damages, claims, losses, costs and expenses which the applicant may incur arising from or relating to the Request for Pre-Proposals or its response to this Request for Pre-Proposals. This waiver does not apply to damage or loss resulting from the sole negligence, gross negligence, or willful misconduct of USGBC, its directors, officers, employees or agents.