



## Green Fund

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**Primary Contact:** Ashley Gehrman  
Public Relations Specialist  
ang496@nau.edu

### **Green Fund Approves Funding for P3 Advisor**

The Northern Arizona University Green Fund has approved funding for a Public-Private Partnership (P3) Energy Advisor to support Northern Arizona University's efforts to decarbonize its campus heating and cooling systems. This initiative marks a significant step in the university's goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, a goal established by President José Luis Cruz Rivera's 2022 declaration of a climate emergency.

The P3 Energy Advisor will assist the university in developing a comprehensive Request for Proposal (RFP) and selecting an experienced private partner to help replace NAU's current natural gas-powered infrastructure with a low-temperature hot water system. The Green Fund allocated \$246,750 to cover the first-year salary of the P3 Advisor, who will guide the university through the early stages of this large-scale transition.

NAU's North Power Plant and South Power Plant currently provide heating and cooling to 65% of campus buildings but account for nearly 42% of the university's total greenhouse gas emissions. These systems, last updated in 2012, rely on natural gas and aging steam infrastructure. Modernizing them is essential for reducing NAU's operational emissions and long-term environmental footprint.

Through a P3 model, NAU will partner with a private organization that will finance and execute the infrastructure upgrades, in exchange for a long-term energy agreement with the university. Two key technologies under consideration are the biomass-to-organic material system and ground source heat pumps, both of which offer carbon-neutral or low-emission alternatives to traditional natural gas systems.

"By funding the P3 Energy Advisor, the Green Fund is laying the groundwork for one of NAU's most impactful sustainability projects to date," said Connier K. Gilliam, project leader and NAU Green Fund Co-Chair. "This partnership will not only help us meet our carbon neutrality goals

but also inspire students and staff to engage in the culture of sustainability that defines NAU's future.”

The project's initial phase will focus on research, planning, and securing partnerships, with the RFP process beginning in early 2026 and the advisor's work commencing in May 2026. Once implemented, this decarbonization effort will dramatically reduce campus greenhouse gas emissions and align NAU with other leading universities pursuing large-scale sustainability infrastructure transformations.

The NAU Green Fund was founded in 2010 and is composed of nine students, in addition to faculty and staff members, who vote to fund projects and research using the \$15 per student per semester Green Fee. All of the Green Fund's meetings are open to the public, and any student, staff, or faculty member can submit a proposal.