*Please submit this completed application, the supplemental budget spreadsheet, and any relevant supporting documentation by the deadline indicated in your Step 1 notification letter to* [*Sustainability-Committee@Illinois.edu*](mailto:Sustainability-Committee@Illinois.edu)*.The Working Group Chairs will be in contact with you regarding any questions about the application. If you have any questions about the application process, please contact the SSC at* [*Sustainability-Committee@Illinois.edu*](mailto:Sustainability-Committee@Illinois.edu)*.*

# General Information

**Project Name:** Lean & Green

**Total Amount Requested from SSC:** $1307.50

**Project Topic Area(s):** ☐Energy ☐Education **✔**Food & Waste

☐Land ☐Water ☐Transportation

# Contact Information

### Project Lead

Applicant Names: Joshua Kirby & Momo Sahoo

Unit/Department or RSO/Organization: Illinois Enactus

Email Address: leanandgreen@illinoisenactus.com

Phone Number: Josh Kirby: (217) 899-2787

Momo Sahoo: (510) 789-7194

### Financial Contact *(Must be Full-time University of Illinois Staff Member)*

Contact Name: Mark Smith

Unit/Department: College of Business - Finance

Email Address: smithmk@illinois.edu

Phone Number: 217-333-2747

Organization Code: 389005

**Primary Project Team**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Name* | *Department/Organization* | *Email* |
| Moumita Sahoo | College of Business/Enactus | msahoo2@illinois.edu |
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# Project Description

***Provide a brief background of the project, its goals, and the desired outcomes.***

Lean & Green is a project within a Registered Student Organization called Enactus on the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign campus. The organization seeks to make sustainable impacts within the community by addressing prevalent social, economic, and environmental issues. The organization is not for profit.

Lean & Green’s goal is to improve access to nutritious meals. The roadmap to this goal is twofold with affordability and ease in assembly as its key tenets. The idea for this project initially came from students that expressed interest in cooking and learning to cook. This interest translated into a vision when we identified a significant low-income population (the median household income in Urbana-Champaign is $48,323: 10% lower than the average income in Illinois) and a large student base (of the roughly 35,000 student population, about 40% receive some sort of financial help) that were both reliant on food lacking nutritional value because of it relatively inexpensive nature.

We began by researching existing recipes and found ways to improve them by making healthy substitutions and adjusting ingredients to offer additional nutrition. This has been an ongoing process, as we are looking to continue to grow our selection. In general, once a recipe meets internal standards, we perform a cost analysis to determine if we can produce it at an affordable rate for our customers. If the recipe is financially feasible and meets our health requirements, we add it to our recipe book. Currently, the recipes are a spicy black bean burrito ($1.30), spinach and tomato pasta ($1.83), chicken and parmesan noodles ($2.25), and creamy chicken pesto ($1.26). In the past, we have also prepared baked vegetable ziti ($3.53) and one-pan chicken parmesan and veggies ($2.55). In the future we will be working with food and nutrition science professors to ensure that our meals meet “high nutrition standards” to continue to deliver quality and a variety of options.

Currently, we collect orders through our website. We set a date by which meals need to be ordered and purchase the required ingredients to fulfill all orders once that date is met. All ingredients are portioned, placed into plastic wrapping, and packaged into a box along with a recipe. The meal kit is completely ready to cook upon delivery.

As of now, our project sells mainly to the student population at a low cost, with minimal profit. These profits are to be reinvested within the business to subsidize meal costs for the low-income population close to campus. As the business continues to scale, the goal is to provide a “Buy 1, Give 1” offering: whenever a student purchases a meal, one is to be donated to low-income individual in the Champaign community. This is very similar to the model of the shoe company TOMS. After some initial testing, we have sold 45 meals, with profit of $104.13, which proves this model is capable of being successful and scalable.

The desired outcome of the project is to combat food insecurity in low-income communities by providing individuals who live in these communities access to healthier foods at a cheaper cost.

***How will this project improve sustainability at UIUC?***

Our project aims to improve sustainability at UIUC by creating a scalable business model that addresses food insecurity among low-income individuals and students within the community. As the project continues to grow through expansion and acquisition of larger prep areas, more workers, and more efficient systems, the business will continue to reach more individuals in need. The end-goal is to hand off this business to a community organization that can utilize profits generated from the business to continue addressing the issue of food insecurity in low-income communities. In addition to scaling outwards, the business will serve as an education resource by improving our customer’s knowledge of nutrition and healthy foods. Subsequently, this will allow our business to create a sustainable impact by combatting the issue of food insecurity in a twofold manner: providing cheap healthy foods to people in low-income communities and information on healthy foods and general nutrition facts.

***Where will the project be located? Do you need special permissions to enact the project at this site? If so, please explain and attach a letter of support to your application.***

The project will be located at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. We do not need any special permissions to enact the project at this site.

***Other than the project team, who will have a stake in the project? Please list other individuals, groups, or departments indirectly or directly affiliated to this project. This includes any funding entities (immediate, future, ongoing, etc.) and any entities that will be benefiting from this project.***

Other than the project team, other stakeholders will include students on campus and low-income individuals within the community. Because they are our target market, they will be the direct stakeholders associated with this project. Indirectly, we will also be impacting wholesale grocery stores and community organizations. Our suppliers are largely wholesale grocery stores where we buy the ingredients for all of our recipes. Furthermore, community organizations are another area that we will effect because of their place as a liaison between us and low-income individuals and their potential as an eventual owner of the business.

***Please indicate how this project will involve or impact students. What role will students play in the project?***

This project impacts and involves students. 40% of the University of Illinois’ student population utilizes some sort of financial aid. We can impact students by providing them an affordable, yet healthy meal option. In this, we can help students save money, while also contributing towards their well-being.

As the business continues to expand, we will be implementing a “Buy One, Give One” model as mentioned above where each purchase will result in an automatic donation of a meal to an individual in the low-income population. In the Champaign-Urbana community, the poverty rate is 28.2%. This is where we involve students. Buying a meal not only helps them, but also helps someone else in-need within the community. This is an effective way to engage college students in an effort towards creating a greater sense of food security between students and low-income individuals.

The level of impact is tied to the scale of the business. As more students participate, we will be able to grow the business and as the amount of funding grows, the impact level is essentially limitless.

# Financial Information

*In addition to the below questions, please submit the supplemental budget spreadsheet available on the Student Sustainability Committee website. Submission of both documents by the submission deadline is required for consideration of your project.*

***Have you applied for funding with SSC previously? If so, for what project?***

Lean & Green has never applied for SSC previously, but Illinois Enactus has directly been working on a project (H2Grow) that received an SSC grant to create an aquaponics system.

**If this project is implemented, will there be any ongoing funding required? What is the strategy for supporting the project in order to cover replacement, operation, or renewal costs?   
  
Please note that SSC provides funding on a case by case basis annually and should not be considered as an ongoing source of funding.**

When the project is implemented, there will not be any need for ongoing funding. As our venture is entrepreneurial in nature, we’re aligning a solvable social issue, food insecurity in low-income areas in our community, with our business model to ensure the sustainability of our project and it’s positive outcomes. Our goal is to create value that can be reinvested back into our community through the expansion of our impact. Our project is unique because it sustains itself financially while also solving a community issue. We just need your help getting us off the ground.

**Please include any other sources of funding that have been obtained or applied for. Please attach any relevant letters of support as needed in a separate document.**

We have previously obtained the Robert Wood Johnson student for a Health project grant and the Unilever Bright future grant.

# Environmental, Economic, and Awareness Impacts

*In addition to the below questions, please indicate specific measurable impacts as applicable on the supplemental budget spreadsheet.*

**Which aspects of sustainability does your project address, and how? Does the project fit within any of the iCAP goals? If so, how does the project go beyond the university status quo standards and policies.**

Our project addresses sustainability from a very unique perspective. Our idea of sustainability is a something that creates social good and has the ability to persist even when the current members tasked to the project are no longer around. It aims to do so by creating a model that inherently creates community value, but also financially incentivizes someone to sustain the project. The roadmap to our goals is twofold with affordability and ease in assembly as its key tenets.

The project fits into the iCap goal of education and outreach where it provides immersive sustainability learning opportunities of healthy living and nutrition. By providing healthy meals that are only “some assembly required”, we are bringing wholesome, nutritious back to the homes of low income areas that are often targeted by large manufacturers of unhealthy, convenience food products.

**How will the environmental impacts of your project be measured in the near and long term? What specific monitoring and evaluation processes will you be using to track outcomes and progress?**

The majority of the impact our project is seeking to make is in regards to food insecurity in the Champaign-Urbana community. However, our intended packaging for our meal kits will be biodegradable and compostable, thereby reducing most physical waste produced by our operations.

**What is the plan for publicizing the project on campus? In addition to SSC, where will information about this project be reported?**

We intend to publicize our project on campus in a variety of ways. We intend to jumpstart our project by acquiring consistent users that can begin to subsidize the end goal of our project, which is getting food to low-income areas. To do this, we plan to host on campus events demonstrating our product and the importance of our mission, flyers, promotional codes, social media marketing (Facebook & Instagram), and our website.

Information about this project will also be reported on the project (<http://theleanandgreen.com>) as well as Illinois Enactus website (<https://www.illinoisenactus.com/>).

**What are your specific, measurable outreach goals? How will these be measured?**

Our specific, measurable goals will be the total amount people that we interact with in our on-campus events that demonstrate our project. Additionally, we will tracking and monitoring what our clients are ordering as well as where they are ordering from. This will ensure we’re making an impact in the need areas we’ve identified.

**Do you have any additional comments or relevant information to aid in evaluation of this application?**

We understand that our definition of “sustainable” focuses on issues that are more socioeconomic in nature rather than environmental. We believe very strongly that these two issues are important as well is interconnected. Many studies have shown the relationship between low-income areas and carbon emissions. By providing more people access to the necessities they need to live and operate, they can begin to focus more on larger scale issues like environmental considerations.

The reason our country has had problem solving its food access problem is because there aren’t enough ventures that apply business principles to a social issue to create recurring results. Rather than simply collecting and redistributing donations, our project seeks to both solve this complex problem as well as empower people along the way.