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UniverCity Year seeking new local government partners

*Could this be your community? The deadline to apply for the 2023-26 cohort is Monday, July 31.*

[UniverCity Year](https://univercity.wisc.edu/ucy-snapshot/) (UCY) is seeking new local government partners to collaboratively work on solutions to community-identified challenges during the 2023-26 academic years. The deadline to apply is Monday, July 31.

UCY – the hallmark program of [UniverCity Alliance](https://univercity.wisc.edu/) (UCA) – is a three-year partnership that connects a Wisconsin city, county, municipality, school district, other special purpose local government, or coalition of groups that includes local government with University of Wisconsin-Madison resources to advance local priorities.

Through the process, communities help shape tangible deliverables that they can implement. Additionally, students gain invaluable experience by putting what they learn in the classroom into practice.

“The best part of our program is that both groups benefit,” UCA Managing Director Gavin Luter said. “UW-Madison faculty, staff, and students benefit from learning about what issues look like on-the-ground, and communities who work with our faculty, staff, and students benefit by getting access to new ideas, research, and other information that help communities make progress on issues that they deem as important.”

After applying to UCY, communities identify projects that would benefit from UW-Madison expertise in phase one, and university staff help shape research-to-practice questions that can be tackled by faculty and students. Then, UCY staff outreach to faculty, staff, and students across the university and find opportunities to incorporate projects into courses, independent studies, research projects, internships, or field placements.

Students, including those enrolled in academic courses and completing internships or field placements, work on projects during the third phase. The final phase is dedicated to UCY supporting additional implementation.

“New relationships are built by working on projects that could benefit the community in the long-term,” Luter said. “We make the Wisconsin Idea come to life and make it a two-way street.”

Since its founding in 2015, a [total of 29 communities](https://univercity.wisc.edu/univercity-year-communities/) – 15 counties and 14 cities, towns, and villages – have participated in UCY. These localities have addressed a diverse array of topics, including transportation, housing, health, agriculture, criminal justice, environmental sustainability, childcare, economic development, and the arts.

Student- and faculty-produced deliverables have also included an evidence-based mental health media campaign, policy recommendations to improve childcare affordability and access, designs for an autonomous watercraft that can harvest blue-green algae, affordable housing site plans, and First Nation cultural resources management protocols.

These projects produce tangible results. Several examples of impact include the following:

* [Waunakee’s Village Board unanimously approved a land acknowledgement statement](https://www.vil.waunakee.wi.us/DocumentCenter/View/6378/Village-of-Waunakee-Land-Acknowledgement) on Sept. 20, 2021 after a partnership focusing on relationship building with the Ho-Chunk Nation.
* Green County implemented a [mental health navigator position](https://univercity.wisc.edu/2023/01/04/green-county-helps-residents-navigate-wellness-resources/) to improve access to mental health resources and hired a [public health educator](https://univercity.wisc.edu/2022/08/02/green-county-tracks-influence-of-univercity-year-partnership/).
* [Mosquito Hill Nature Center in Outagamie County](https://univercity.wisc.edu/2022/11/30/uw-madison-students-to-create-buzz-for-mosquito-hill-nature-center-through-univercity-year-partnership/) began using a new payment system following a recommendation from MBA students.
* Wisconsin Rapids used UniverCity Year projects as a launching point to create a [digital public art archive](https://wisconsinrapids.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/attachmentviewer/index.html?appid=8ef1502f447a435da30fbee4acb7a306), a framework for the city to support public art, and the South Wood County Cultural Coalition.

To learn more about the UCY program, please email [UniverCityAlliance@wisc.edu](mailto:UniverCityAlliance@wisc.edu) with any questions.

*Apply today!* [*View the 2023-2026 Request for Partnerships here*](https://univercity.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/109/2023/03/UCY-RFP-2023-to-share.pdf)*.*