REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

UNIVERCITY YEAR 2018 - 2021
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The UniverCity Alliance (UCA) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is looking for a new local government partner for the UniverCity Year (UCY) program for the period of 2018-2021. Could this be your community?

WHAT’S THE UNIVERCITY ALLIANCE? HOW DOES THIS WORK?

The concept is simple:

• The local government partner identifies a set of issues or questions it needs help with (for example: affordable housing, safe routes to schools, park design, etc.)

• UCY matches those priorities with courses taught by UW-Madison faculty

• Students in these courses work on the issues and questions over the course of the school year

• The local government partner receives research, reports, designs, solutions and new ideas – and help in implementing them

The UCY Partnership happens in three phases (roughly over 3 years): (1) identify priorities, project scoping, and course matching; (2) year-long, intensive year where courses work on stated priorities; and (3) follow-up and implementation support.

UCY is applicable to any community. Cities, counties, towns, villages, or any agency or department within a local government are all eligible to apply. Dozens of other local governments have already partnered with universities around the U.S. to engage in joint problem-solving. Learn more here: www.epicn.org.

WHAT DOES UCY BRING TO YOU?

We have brought communities high-quality deliverables that have produced park trail master plans, engineering upgrades to city parks, an examination of safe routes to schools, a cost-benefit analysis of a city-wide WiFi system, a strategic affordable housing update along with a financing plan, a Native American cultural preservation plan, health impact assessments for housing and parks, and the list could go on (resident engagement, turf management, wastewater issues). Learn more about other partnerships on our website (univercity.wisc.edu).

WHAT’S EXPECTED OF YOU?

We do want to prepare you: This will require some work and staffing on your end. To ensure the project runs smoothly, we expect that you identify a partnership lead, usually a senior staff person directly accountable to the local government’s executive. This person takes responsibility for supervising and coordinating on your end of the partnership. This person also oversees the process of identifying broad problem/issue areas, or “project clusters”, and (if you think it’s necessary) matching government staff to be responsible for individual projects. We will do everything possible to make this a positive experience and provide you with high-quality deliverables. However, this is a two-way street. Dedicated staff is important for success.
WHAT WILL THIS COST YOU?
UCY costs about $200,000 annually, and we ask that partner governments cover some of this cost—ideally half. This figure is negotiable based on availability of resources and how many projects you’d like to tackle. UCY receives some funding and in-kind support from university and private sources, but your financial contribution is an important part of covering remaining UCY costs. When compared to rates that you might pay to a consultant for initial consultations (upwards of $100 per hour), this overall project is an incredible value. Don’t take our word for it. Read what our partners from the City of Monona had to say:

“Our return was definitely worth far more than our initial investment. The completed projects will save Monona tax dollars in the future because we will be able to go to consultants with refined project ideas, avoiding the time and expense of going through the initial development process.”
— Mayor Mary O’Connor
City of Monona

“When the partnership has provided a kick-start to city projects that are stuck due to lack of staff time, resources or other priorities. City committee members, elected officials and staff have already had conversations and new ideas crop up around the UniverCity Year projects that we otherwise would not have had.”
— Sonja Kruesel, City Planner & Economic Development Director, City of Monona

WHEN WILL THIS HAPPEN?
Late Summer 2018: UCY and government leaders agree on the partnership content (at least in thematic project clusters) and staffing and draft a work plan for eventual Memorandum of Understanding.
Fall 2018: UCY staff begin matching projects to courses from a robust project list.
Spring 2019: Matching continues. UCY faculty, staff and government partners collaborate on scope-of-work documents for each course. Finalize MOU/execute contract.
Summer 2019: UCY staff organize and host August kick-off event. Finalize scopes for courses. Final MOU and contract signed.
Fall 2019: Fall-semester classes work on UCY projects. Scope spring projects as needed.
Spring 2020: Spring-semester classes work on UCY projects. Host end-of-year celebration.
Summer 2020: UCY publishes final report.
Fall 2020–Summer 2021: UCY staff provide follow-up assistance for project implementation.

READY TO APPLY?
Applicants are encouraged to contact UCY staff while drafting your proposal. We find a conversation helpful in identifying projects that can find plausible matches with UW-Madison expertise.
**PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT**

1. Community information: Provide your website address and contact information for your community leadership and the person who will serve as your UniverCity Year partnership lead.

2. Proposal development: Describe the process by which your proposal was developed.

3. Demonstration of support: Include a support letter from one or more of following: manager/administrator, mayor, elected governing body, or department heads.

4. Financial contribution: Identify how much you can contribute. The amount is negotiable.

5. Proposed projects: Describe four to five project clusters. Each area should be described in one to two paragraphs. What are the issues? What value-add are you expecting? Reference existing plans, reports or other documents that are relevant to the project (web links acceptable).

**PROPOSAL TIMELINE**

- **May 2018:** UCY issues request for proposals for the 2018-2021 partnership.
- **May–July 2018:** Applicants contact UCY staff to learn more about the program, and to discuss their proposals and potential projects. UCY staff make presentations to community staff, elected officials, and partner organizations and agencies as requested.
- **Friday, July 27, 2018, 5:00 p.m.:** Proposal submission deadline.
- **August 2018:** UCY notifies applicants about the selected 2018-2021 community partner. UCY and the selected community partner coordinate media to announce the partnership.

**HOW WILL MY PROPOSAL BE EVALUATED?**

UCY staff and faculty will evaluate applications based on the following criteria:

1. **Top-level support and administrative capacity:** The city/county manager or administrator, mayor, elected officials, and/or department managers indicate a willingness to involve staff in the UCY and provide resources and time to identified projects. The community has sufficient staff capacity to engage successfully in a year-long partnership across multiple projects and to carry work forward at the conclusion of the partnership.

2. **Project relevance:** Projects directly relates to the community’s short-term and long-term strategic goals, as embodied in a strategic plan, work plan, sustainability plan, policies, programs, etc.

3. **Community engagement:** The application demonstrates a commitment to engage residents and other organizations in the project.

4. **Likelihood of match with courses:** Projects are within the capability of UW-Madison faculty and students and involve appropriate research and/or technical assistance needs, not menial tasks or low-level administrative work.

5. **Financial contribution:** The financial contribution indicates that the community is committed to the project and values the partnership.

**HOW DO YOU SUBMIT THE APPLICATION?**

By Friday, July 27, 2018, 5:00 p.m., e-mail your completed proposal in PDF format to:

Gavin Luter, UniverCity Year program director, gavin@cows.org, 608-261-1141

Kelly Conforti Rupp, UniverCity Year program manager, kelly.rupp@wisc.edu, 608-890-0330

Please feel free to contact us with any questions as you work on your proposal.