

SCYP Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Sustainable City Year Program?

The Sustainable City Year Program is a one-year partnership between the University of Oregon and a city, county, or special district in Oregon. The partner proposes a set of engaging and challenging sustainability-driven projects and issues, which are then tackled by creative and passionate University of Oregon faculty and students across multiple disciplines.

What happens during the year-long partnership?

In a typical year, SCYP addresses 20-25 city-designated projects, through 25-35 courses with over 500 students across 15 academic disciplines, dedicating 40,000+ hours of work.

Who can submit a proposal?

SCI has worked with cities, transit districts, school districts, counties, utility boards, and park districts. Typically, one independent entity collaborates with other key stakeholders and partners to ensure an effective and multi-disciplinary approach. We highly encourage such partnerships as they ensure that the innovative ideas and proposals by students and generated by the partnership are implemented.

What are people saying about SCYP?

“The Sustainable Cities Initiative is perhaps the most comprehensive effort by a U.S. university to infuse sustainability into its curricula and community outreach.” – *New York Times*

“Programs modeled after the Sustainable City Year from the University of Oregon are being adopted around the country, and are putting the “public” back in public institutions by pairing city projects with existing coursework. Strengthened relationships between cities and universities can be fundamental to rolling out new technologies — and evaluating existing ones — that can help establish Livable Cities across the globe.” – *HuffPost*

“The University of Oregon seems to me to be liberating talent but more importantly empowering capability. We should be celebrating our Universities for doing that for young people, and handing younger people the keys a whole lot earlier. SCY is a model for how to do just that.” – *Forbes*

How do we make it happen?

1. Contact us to let us know you're interested. We're here to help you through the process and answer all your questions. To reach out to us, contact the SCYP Manager, whose email can be found on the "Interest Cities" tab of the SCYP webpage.
2. You'll need to submit a proposal based on the guidelines set out in the current Request for Proposals (RFP). The current RFP, and more detailed instructions about the application process, can be found on the "Interested Cities" tab of the SCYP webpage.
3. Submit your completed proposal as per instructions. Those will be under the "Apply" tab on the SCYP webpage.

SCYP staff can help introduce SCYP to proposal teams, city decision-makers and city partners. We are also available to help brainstorm interdisciplinary project ideas and answer questions about the program. We do this a lot, and have a lot of experience with what has worked well, and what hasn't. We're here to support you, and work together during the proposal process, to make sure you get the most out of the program, and that projects are tailored to give you the best results.

What are the community and agency benefits of SCYP?

New ideas and innovative proposals:

Participating in the Sustainable City Year Program gives you access to hundreds of implementable ideas generated by students who draw on a combination of their training, community interest, and examples of excellence from distinguished faculty and global resources. At the conclusion of each project, students often publicly present their recommendations to the city and the community, and SCYP compiles student ideas into professional reports that can then be used as a resource for community decision-making.

Expanded conversations with a focus on successful public outreach:

Students are able to introduce ideas out into the public domain in politically neutral ways that allow community conversations to advance, and spur the imagination of staff and broader community of what may be possible on a wide range of topics. Because over 500 students are intimately involved in the community over an academic year, many private, neighborhood, and nonprofit stakeholders become engaged in projects alongside city and agency staff. Students are able to help "till the soil" and catalyze future sustainability-guided development projects, policies, and plans.

What kind of projects can SCYP students work on?

Cities are encouraged to propose a wide range of projects and think of “sustainability” very broadly. Past projects have included:

- Designs for public buildings
- Designs for open spaces and parks
- Redevelopment planning
- Waste/storm water management
- Walkability and connectivity analyses
- Business strategy and planning
- Passive heating building analysis
- Sustainable design alternatives
- Municipal budgeting and funding methodologies
- Parks mapping
- Nonprofit assessment and evaluation
- Market analyses
- Civic engagement techniques
- Municipal policy recommendations
- Strategic communications strategies and implementation
- Bicycle transportation analysis and design
- Public art planning
- Transit-oriented development
- Industrial byproduct reuse
- Master plan designs

What departments have usually been involved in past years?

Projects can be generated by a wide variety of city departments:

- Community development
- Planning
- Public works
- Economic development
- Parks and recreation
- Transportation
- Public safety
- Municipal airports
- Public information

Descriptions of all previous SCYP projects are available on the website, and SCYP staff can help you identify what is possible for your city or agency.

How much city/agency staff time does participating in SCYP require?

The success of the SCYP partnership relies on the engagement of the partner city or agency. SCYP dedicates a full-time project manager to coordinator faculty, students, projects, and courses, in addition to acting as the liaison between staff, officials, and university departments. In successful past partnerships, the partner city or agency has dedicated one lead staff member, with approximately a 0.5 FTE commitment, to act as the organizer on the community end. We also connect individual faculty to their city/agency counterpart to ensure project success. This typically involves a few hours each week during the relevant term.

How much does SCYP cost?

The cost of SCYP will vary based on the number of projects and accompanying courses per project. In previous years, partners have funded SCYP through their general fund, urban renewal fund, state and federal grants, local agencies, partnerships involving school district funds, utility district funds, and private business partners. Depending on scope, each project can range between \$5,000 - \$50,000. Previous SCYP partnerships have ranged between \$250,000 - \$350,000 for the entire academic year. This cost estimate includes the previously mentioned 20-25 projects, 25-35 courses, 500+ students, and 40,000 – 80,000 hours of student effort.