

Raise Program Guarantees Job Interviews for Participants

The Referrals and Interviews for Sustainable Employment (RaISE) program provides an opportunity to obtain employment, regardless of a job seekers' background, gender, race, or ethnicity, overcoming barriers some communities face.

All companies who contract with the City of Madison (and are non-exempt) are required to submit job postings to Department of Civil Rights (DCR) before advertising anywhere else if the job is located within Dane County. They must also guarantee an interview to candidates referred by DCR. Candidates only need to meet the minimum qualifications to get the interview.

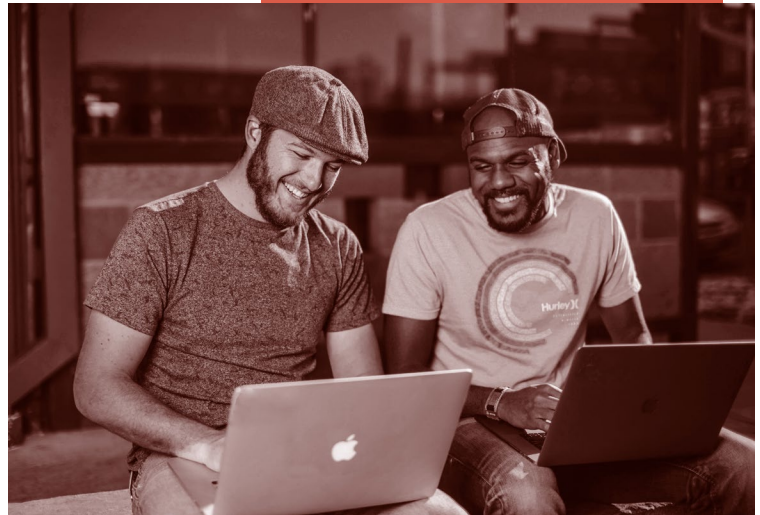
“We work with community partners to help companies fill positions, providing a collaboration that helps the hiring companies and the job seekers alike,” said Jesus Sanchez, Contract Compliance Specialist with the DCR.

The RaISE program is not only helping job seekers but also companies that are looking for qualified workers.

Jesus currently manages the RaISE program and is excited about the impact of the program on the community. He has been working to bring in solid community partners who can help the program grow.

Current community partners include: Employability, Urban League, Catholic Multicultural Center, African Center, and the Department of Workforce Development. More organizations are going through the process of becoming partners. The goal is representation in different geographic areas and being able to serve communities in different languages. The community-based organizations provide these tools, and they also have a deep understanding of community needs.

“Their collaboration is key to the success of this program,” Jesus said.



NEWS & VIEWS

Thanks for reading! We hope you enjoyed this content and we want to hear your feedback for future issues.

We'd like to hear from you regarding racial equity and social justice in your work or your department.

Contact newsletter editor Donna Collingwood at dcollingwood@cityofmadison.com



Racial Equity & Social Justice Initiative

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AASPIRE 2024 intern cohort, Disability Rights and Services interns, and Mayor Rhodes-Conway

Interns Enjoy on the Job Learning, Networking, Skill Building

The Affirmative Action Student Professionals In Residence (AASPIRE) internship has 22 interns this year, up from 15 last year! The word is spreading and more teams are tapping into this program that benefits interns and City departments alike.

“This year it was a pleasure to meet the creator of the AASPIRE program, Kirbie Mack, and share with her how the program has grown and impacted the City of Madison’s workforce,” said Tracy Lomax, Affirmative Action Manager over the AASPIRE program. “We currently have 11 former AASPIRE interns working and leading in City government. In 2024 we saw our largest cohort to date. Each year we match applicants with agencies in positions that interest the applicants and meet the needs of agencies,” she said. The interns work on and complete planned projects that help with the continuous improvement of services provided by the City and add to their skills and resumes. Tracy noted that connecting with the interns and at times receiving updates from them or their parents post-internship brings great joy and inspiration to keep presenting opportunities like these to the community.

The paid internship offers underrepresented groups on-the-job experience with the City of Madison. This internship is available to current college students from an accredited university, a two-year technical college program, or from our Community based organizations.

Interns work on a management-level project. City managers provide guidance, mentoring, and a deeper understanding

AASPIRE Interns: A Supervisor’s Perspective

Eric Olson, the City’s Web Manager, had some thoughts about supervising an AASPIRE intern.

Information Technology has had very successful experiences hiring qualified and talented AASPIRE interns for several summers, according to Eric. The AASPIRE interns have been motivated, passionate, and dedicated team members that have delivered high quality work, while also bringing positive energy and fresh ideas. The Information Technology Department has brought back some AASPIRE interns for multiple summers, and has also hired AASPIRE interns into full-time, permanent positions.

The AASPIRE program has been very valuable to the Information Technology department and the City departments that they serve. “We have used the AASPIRE internship opportunity to build a program of services that other City departments have relied upon as a valuable resource,” Eric said.

Interns are a valuable opportunity to bring new perspectives and fresh ideas to your departments. IT has appreciated the insightful questions and creative solutions that the interns bring to their projects.

The AASPIRE program makes it easy for departments to hire qualified interns, and provides a valuable framework for a summer internship program that simplifies the responsibilities of the departments, while also offering important programming for interns. ■■■

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Community Connectors Take to the Airwaves

Enoch Melgarejo (Spanish Community Connector) and Ze Yang (Hmong Community Connector) have both been reaching out to their communities via the airwaves, specifically, radio.

Ze hosts a show for Hmong residents on WORT 89.9FM, 6am-8am, (date of next shows).

“Two months into my position, I went to volunteer at the 2023 Disability Pride Festival in Madison and found WORT Madison’s booth. I spoke to the volunteers and left my contact information,” Ze Said. She then worked with WORT to get the HMONG radio show.

Ze participated in WORT’S Summer News Collaborative as a fellow. Fellows learn the basics of journalism, storytelling, and audio production. They also participate in field trips and workshops with guest speakers and are introduced to mentors in local media. The series kicked off in May 5, 2024 and will be on the first Sunday of every month. Each episode will highlight the work of different City departments, including available services, challenges, current projects and plans.

Enoch is on La Movida radio 94.5FM, the first Tuesday of each month, 9:00am-10:00am. “Conectando con tu Ciudad” is the newly



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of public service. Interns are eligible for positions limited to City employees for up to six months after completing the internship.

Former AASPIRE interns have gone on to work in major media outlets, like Lily Lownes, a 2022 intern with the City now working for ABC Toledo as a reporter.

Employers under contract with City of Madison as of 9/25/24: 1,171 employers nationwide, covering 119,997 employees

It is the policy of the City of Madison to provide equal employment, promotional opportunities and equal access to public services for all persons from all segments of the Madison community without regard to their race, religion, color, age, marital status, disability, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Spotlight: Saran Ouk

Saran Ouk was an AASPIRE intern with the Department of Civil Rights in 2014.

Saran was subsequently hired by the department as an Contract Compliance

Specialist. She worked for DCR for two years, and then successfully competed for the Manager of the Office of Business Resources position in 2021.



“My AASPIRE internship really made a difference in my career, and helped me get to where I am today.”

—Saran Ouk

Department of Civil Rights: Some New Faces



The DCR Team has grown! With telework and varied schedules, we made a couple of efforts to get the group together. Left photo, clockwise starting upper left: Ana Price, Affirmative Action Division (AAD) Rebecca Hoyt, Equity and Social Justice Division (ESJ) Holly Chen, ESJ, Tracy Lomax, AAD, and Ze Yang, ESJ. Right photo, back row: Byron Bishop, Equal Opportunities Division (EOD) and Norm Davis, Department head, next row: Michealyn Gibson, Administrative Division (AD) Angela Banks, AD, Donna Collingwood, AD, 3rd row: Claudia Bustillo, EOD, Gisselle Roche, AD, Kirsten Donkle, AAD and Ford Blackwell, EOD.



October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

Bottom Dollars Film Screening:
October 17, 2024
Madison Municipal Building,
Room 206, 215 Martin Luther
King Jr. Blvd.
www.cityofmadison.com/civil-rights/events/2024-10-17/bottom-dollars-screening-and-discussion

Indigenous Peoples' Day – October 14

This day honors the culture, contributions, and history of the Native American, Indigenous, and First Nations Peoples.

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launched Spanish radio show dedicated to informing the Spanish-speaking community in Madison of City services and programs.

The show is hosted by Lupita Montoto, a well-respected radio-host figure within the community, and Enoch. Recent topics include: Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway, Madison libraries, Dane County Public Health, Building Inspection, Community Development, and Parks Alive.

Check it out:

- August 2024 Hmong Radio Show on WORT: www.wortfm.org/hmong-radio-show-for-august-2024/
- La Movida: <https://www.lamovidaradio.com/>

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Working with the Department of Workforce Development in particular has the potential to support program involvement from community-based organizations. It will also open the program up statewide. DWD has opened the door to new connections, increasing the reach of this program statewide, serving different communities, ages, and constituencies. “For some candidates, this is a game changer,” according to Norm Davis, Director of the Department of Civil Rights. They may have sent dozens of applications out, but getting that opportunity to meet face to face in an interview is essential.

November 5 is election day. More info:

www.cityofmadison.com/clerk/elections-voting/voting