The Princeton community and Princeton University share more than a name. The town and the campus intersect in many ways, each supporting the other. For a complete list of Princeton University’s contributions to the town and region, visit www.princeton.edu/community.

Financial Contributions to Princeton

For decades, Princeton University has made voluntary contributions to the Municipality of Princeton. In 2021, the University’s voluntary contribution to the municipality was $3.8 million, including a $150,000 contribution to support Princeton Fire Department expenses. In 2020, the municipality and the University agreed to a two-year extension of the existing 2014 contribution agreement. Under this agreement, in 2021 and 2022 the University will contribute a total of nearly $8.5 million to the municipality.

The University is the largest property taxpayer in the municipality, paying $11.3 million in 2021 property and sewer taxes. This includes about $6.2 million in voluntary tax payments for properties that are eligible for tax exemption. In addition, Princeton University is the largest single contributor to the Princeton Public Schools and paid $4.8 million in school taxes in 2021.

In addition to providing substantial tax and voluntary payments, Princeton University is an engine of commerce and contributes significantly to the overall local economy as the largest employer and purchaser of goods and services. Visitors to the University pay hotel taxes and parking meter fees that accrue to the municipal budget. During COVID-19 the University provided additional economic stability in the community by continuing employment for all University staff.

University initiatives in innovation and entrepreneurship have drawn business investment to Princeton. Moody’s AAA rating of the municipality cites the University’s “stabilizing presence,” noting that “Princeton University contributes to the municipality’s strong local economy.” This reduces the town’s borrowing costs below those of many other municipalities.

Building Community Capacity

Launched in response to COVID-19 in 2020, Campus Dining’s Summer Food and Nutrition Program addresses food insecurity in the Mercer County region. In 2021 the program provided more than 15,000 meals to three non-profit groups that distribute to at-risk families, children and individuals.

In another effort to support the health and well-being of the community, in 2021 the University hosted 51 COVID-19 vaccine clinics. Clinics were open to the public and administered 16,673 of the Pfizer, Moderna and Janssen vaccines, including booster shots.

The University has long committed to supporting initiatives that enrich the quality of life in Princeton. The University has contributed to an array of local projects and non-profit organizations, ranging from the construction and endowment of the Princeton Public Library and building of new Princeton Public Schools facilities, to the renovation of community resources such as the Princeton Community Pool, Princeton Battle Monument and the YMCA/YWCA. Through its ownership of the Princeton Garden Theatre, the University ensures that Princeton enjoys a movie theater in town.

Strengthening Community Infrastructure

The University operates the TigerTransit bus system, which is free and open to the public, providing more than 500,000 passenger rides per year.

TigerTransit resumed full service in September 2021 after modifying service in 2020 due the COVID-19 pandemic.

The University owns approximately five miles of local roads, such as Faculty Road and College Road, which are open to the public. In addition to paying relevant taxes, the University maintains these roads at its own expense.
Excellence in Education
Princeton University extends its education and research mission to community members through numerous initiatives. Students at local high schools, including Princeton High School, can take coursework at the University. Various University programs provide tutoring to public school students, and Princeton runs a rigorous college preparatory program for economically disadvantaged students in the area. Almost 40% of Community Auditing program participants are Princeton residents, who enroll in University classes for a modest fee, and thousands more attend hundreds of free public lectures each year on campus. The Cotsen Children’s Library is also open to the public at no cost. In 2020 and 2021, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the lectures and programs transitioned to a virtual format that was open to the public.

Civic Engagement
Princeton’s teaching and research mission has service at its core, and students, faculty and staff volunteer with many community organizations. This local engagement begins for many students before they even take their first class, through the Community Action program during Orientation. The University has long worked with the Princeton Nursery School, Arts Council of Princeton and numerous other organizations that meet the needs of local residents and create a fully inclusive and supportive community. Initiatives developed in direct response to COVID-19 range from alleviating food insecurity to educational support to addressing racial injustice.

Additionally, through TigerChallenge, Princeton students engage with local officials and organizations to tackle some of the community’s most difficult issues.

Cultural and Athletic Resources
A new Princeton University Art Museum (PUAM) is under construction and is slated to open in late 2024. However, PUAM continues to operate two public gallery spaces in town, Art@Bainbridge and Art on Hulfish, along with the popular Museum Store on Palmer Square. PUAM also continues to offer a robust lineup of community programs and educational events.

In addition, the University Chapel, Music Department, Lewis Center for the Arts, Princeton University Concerts and McCarter Theatre Center provide a wide variety of arts and cultural performances.

Athletic events provide another opportunity for community members to connect with the University. Lake Carnegie is a popular community recreation area for rowing, fishing, canoeing and ice skating.

Promoting Public Safety
The University’s Public Safety Department has a staff of 111, including sworn police officers, non-sworn security officers and fire marshals, and operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in close collaboration with the Princeton Police Department to foster campus and community safety.

The University supports the Princeton Fire Department with annual financial contributions and major capital gifts. In 2020-2021, the University contributed a total of $700,000 to support the hiring of career personnel. University employees respond to fire calls during their workday as associate members of the fire department.

Likewise, the University supports the Princeton First Aid and Rescue Squad (PFARS) through annual contributions and in-kind services such as housing and telecommunications support. University students are counted among the squad’s top responders.

The University collaborates regularly with the municipality and Mercer County to support emergency communications systems and training exercises.

DID YOU KNOW?
When students returned to campus in spring 2021, the Tigers in Town program provided funds for students to safely socialize off-campus and simultaneously support the local business district. In spring 2021, $171,401 was paid to more than 40 local businesses participating in Tigers in Town.