Financial Contributions to Princeton

For decades, the University has made steadily increasing voluntary contributions to the Municipality of Princeton. In January 2024, the University announced its plan to contribute more than $50 million over five years to the municipality, community organizations and lower- and middle-income residents to support mutual community interests, including college access, sustainability and resiliency, socioeconomic diversity and equity, safety and emergency services, mass transit and municipal infrastructure.

The contributions include a total of $39.5 million over five years to the municipality, which includes $28.2 million in unrestricted cash contributions and $11.3 million dedicated to specific municipal projects and programs. The University also expects to provide $10.8 million over five years to local agencies and lower- and middle-income residents.

In 2023, the University announced plans to contribute more than $14.6 million over five years to the Princeton Public School District. The same year, the University made a voluntary unrestricted contribution of about $1.34 million to Mercer County, with plans to provide a gradually increasing annual payment in following years.

The University is the largest taxpayer in Princeton and the second largest taxpayer in Mercer County. In calendar year 2023, the University paid a total of $7.7 million to the municipality of Princeton in property and sewer taxes, which includes $2.8 million in school taxes for the Princeton Public Schools and $1.6 million for Mercer County.

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.

Moody’s AAA rating of the municipality cites the University’s presence noting that Princeton University “anchors the local economy, is the municipality’s largest taxpayer, and makes significant contributions to the municipality’s budget annually.” The AAA rating reduces the town’s borrowing costs below those of many other municipalities.

The planned contributions include support for mutual community interests that further the University’s educational and charitable purposes, including:

- Supporting the municipal budget
- Strengthening emergency services
- Investing in education
- Expanding mass transit
- Supporting socioeconomic diversity
- Improving infrastructure

Strengthening Community Infrastructure through Mobility Initiatives

All of the University’s 17 shuttle buses are now fully electric. TigerTransit is free and open to the public, and each bus can seat 26 passengers. Buses also are fully accessible for riders who use wheelchairs or need similar accommodations. The TripShot app provides shuttle schedules and real-time arrival information.

Campus Access

Most University parking lots are open to the public after 4 p.m. on weekdays, and all day on weekends and on University holidays. The Stadium Drive visitor parking facility offers 1,500 parking spaces, 65 electric vehicle charging stations, transit shelter and TigerTransit shuttle service.

A new wayfinding system helps the community better navigate campus. Map kiosks and pedestrian wayfinding signs make it easier to find buildings and walking paths. The Princeton Campus Map app offers turn-by-turn directions to points on campus. Users can select walking, biking or transit routes, with accessibility features that will generate a route that avoids steps or steep slopes.

Building Community Capacity

The University has long supported initiatives that enrich the quality of life in Princeton. The University has contributed to an array of local projects such as new facilities for the Princeton Public School District and renovations of the community pool and YMCA/YWCA. Recently, the University donated $50,000 to the Princeton Public Library to eliminate late fees on children’s materials. The University’s recent support of community organizations includes donations to the 101: Fund to support scholarships for low-income Princeton High School Students and to Housing Initiatives of Princeton to support rental assistance for residents facing housing insecurity.
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.

Cultural and Athletic Resources
Princeton University offers a wide variety of cultural events to the community at venues across campus. In addition to public lectures, the University Chapel, Music Department, Lewis Center for the Arts, and Princeton University Concerts host arts and cultural performances. McCarter Theatre Center also offers year-round performance arts programming.

The University is proud to support the Princeton Garden Theatre, which is owned by the University and operated by a nonprofit organization, ensuring a movie theater remains in town. 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.

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.

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

Promoting Public Safety
The University’s Public Safety Department has a staff of 164, including sworn police officers, non-sworn security officers and fire marshals, and operates 24 hours a day 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 2024, the University announced plans to contribute $1 million over five years to support career fire department personnel and another $1 million to support the purchase of a new fire department tower truck and high-water rescue vehicle. University employees respond to fire calls during their workday as associate members of the fire department.

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 often 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.

PAY WITH POINTS
Starting in fall 2022, the University partnered with local dining establishments on an initiative that allows students and employees to use their dining plan at 15 restaurants in town. Through the “Pay with Points” program, $397,295 has been spent at local businesses in 2023.

DID YOU KNOW?
Starting in fall 2022, the University partnered with local dining establishments on an initiative that allows students and employees to use their dining plan at 15 restaurants in town. Through the “Pay with Points” program, $397,295 has been spent at local businesses in 2023.