Human Resources Newsletter

November | 2026 | Issue 10



HR Spotlight: Employee Survey Update

The final report for the 2025 Team City Employee Survey is now available! The report highlights three citywide priorities: safety and belonging, communication and input, and performance management. City agencies are developing action plans to address survey findings and support ongoing improvement. Employees are encouraged to review the final report, explore the Team City Survey website, and connect with agency leadership to learn more about next steps.



What's New:

Director Spotlights
- Employee Survey Update
- Admin Support Study

Benefits
- Flex Spending Open Enrollment
- Retirement Courses
- New ETF System

Employee & Labor Relations
- ELR Specialist
- Drug Training Debrief
- Compensation Study
- Bargaining - IATSE

Organizational Development
- Executive Development Program Update
- Leadership Gathering
- Mentorship Program
- Learning Partners

HR Services
- 2026 Employee Giving Campaign
- Upcoming Outreach Events

Director Spotlights

Employee Survey Update

On October 15, HR Director Erin Stenson released an all-email user introduction to the final report for the 2025 employee survey on the Team City Survey website. A diverse team including a variety of participants from around the City worked hard to produce the final product.

Key citywide themes and actions relate to: (1) culture of safety and belonging, (2) communication and input, (3) performance management. Agencies citywide are acting on their specific Department/Division results through Department Equity Team Action Plans. The HR and DCR Directors along with the Performance Excellence Leadership Team in partnership with the Mayor's Office will support organizational accountability for results ongoing.

Staff are encouraged to review the website and report, share results with their peers (especially those who do not have access to email), talk to leadership in their Agency about accountability for Department/Division actions, and reach out to pe@cityofmadison.com if you would like to support citywide accountability for results. Ongoing report on progress toward results will be published in future HR Quarterly Newsletters.

All staff, especially supervisors, are asked to consider all the resources and interventions created since the 2018 NES survey.

This list of accomplishments is included in Appendix 4 with associated resources on file for use available in: Organization Actions Aligned to Employee Survey since 2018.





Administrative Support Study

Under directive of Common Council (Legistar 90832), HR Director Erin Stenson sponsored the Administrative Support Study to identify associated (1) allocations, (2) issues, and (3) needs. HR made all staff aware of this study in the May Quarterly Newsletter, where an invitation was made to positions included in the study to receive an update and provide feedback. Staff who reached out were presented with findings to date and given time to review and provide feedback. Performance Excellence Specialist, Karalyn Katowicz, incorporated staff feedback as she led the study and authored the soon-to-be-published report.

A preview of the findings:

(1) **Allocations:**199.80 administrative support positions were identified across 32 agencies citywide. Public Safety houses the largest share of those positions (33.3%) with Police alone housing majority of all administrative support positions (30.8%) mainly hired as report typists, records service clerks, and program assistants. This share of administrative support is consistent with Public Safety and Police Department's total share of all positions citywide.

(2) **Issues:** Records management presents the largest issue gap in agency needs for administrative support currently provided across the city.

(3) **Needs:** There continues to be a need for administrative support above and beyond current allocations; however, given current budget constraints and priorities, further assessment is needed before any recommendations are provided.

Please reach out to HR@cityofmadison.com to obtain a copy of the report.

Benefits

Flex Spending Open Enrollment

This year, the Open Enrollment period for 2027 Plan Year Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) will be **Monday, November 9th through Friday, November 20th at 4:30pm.** All Open Enrollment information and resources – including the Flex Spending Open Enrollment memo, details about the new Parking Account Benefit, confirmation of the 2027 Plan Year IRS maximums, and step-by-step enrollment instructions – will be released on the Open Enrollment page **on November 9th.**

Important: If you wish to participate in Flex Spending for the 2027 Plan Year, you must **actively submit a new enrollment** via the Employee Self Service (ESS) portal during the Flex Spending Open Enrollment period!

- **Open Enrollment Full URL:** https://www.cityofmadison.com/human-resources/benefits/open-enrollment
- **ESS Full URL:** https://cityofmadisonwi.munisselfservice.com/ess/login.aspx

Help! I missed the Open Enrollment deadline

If you were on leave of absence (LOA) for the full Open Enrollment period for 2027 Plan Year Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance (October 5th-30th), you will qualify for a special enrollment period within **30 calendar days** after your return-to-work date. If this applies to you, please contact the Benefits Team at benefits@cityofmadison.com **as soon as possible** to get started!

If you missed the deadline for another reason: while it is unfortunately no longer possible to make Open Enrollment changes to dental or vision insurance, the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) **may** allow you to submit a late Open Enrollment change to health insurance. Please note that late Open Enrollment requests are subject to ETF regulations, review, and/or approval, and are not guaranteed. If you wish to try and submit a late Open Enrollment request for health insurance, please contact the Benefits Team at benefits@cityofmadison.com **as soon as possible** with an explanation of your circumstances.



Improved Retirement Estimate Request Form now available from ETF!

Thinking about retiring soon? ETF recently released an improved version of their **Retirement Estimate Request Form.** The online form automatically adjusts data based on your specific responses and situation, and was configured to be more user-friendly than the previous version. The improved design also aims to eliminate common errors that could cause form rejections or processing delays.

To access the form, log on to the My Benefits portal and look under **ETF Web Forms**! From there, select the **B151 Retirement Estimate Request** option and then click the **Go to ETF Web Forms** button at the bottom of the page.

- **My Benefits Full URL:** https://apps.etf.wi.gov/MemberPortalWeb/
- Need help accessing My Benefits? Check out the FAQ!
- **FAQ Full URL:** https://www.cityofmadison.com/benefits/ETF-FAQ

Spotlight: Fidelity's Student Debt Resource Hub

If you are a permanent City employee, you're eligible to participate in a Deferred Compensation 457(b) Plan through the City's Deferred Comp vendors (Fidelity and/or MissionSquare). Deferred Comp Plans let you defer funds from your paycheck on a pre-tax or post-tax basis, as a percentage or a dollar amount, and are a great way to supplement your future retirement income.

In addition to the basic benefit of participating in a Deferred Comp Plan (deferring funds for retirement), our vendors also offer several perks to participating employees. One of these is Fidelity's **Student Debt Resource Hub.** If you have a Deferred Comp account with Fidelity and are paying off student debt, we highly recommend you check out the Hub within your NetBenefits account! The Hub provides detailed and actionable guidance on federal loan repayment, payoff strategies, and paths to forgiveness – including Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) – and also lets you model loan repayment options to see how changes to repayment strategy might impact your plan.

Deferred Comp Full URL:
https://www.cityofmadison.com/human-resources/benefits/deferred-compensation-457b-plan

Employee & Labor Relations

Please welcome our new ELR Specialist, Bill Wick!



This September we welcomed our new Employee and Labor Relations (ELR) specialist Bill Wick. While Bill may be new to the ELR team he is a seasoned veteran with the city, having started his career in 2008.

In nearly 18 years since the start of his career Bill has worked with the Library, Police, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and Human Resources (HR). In his 14 years with HR, Bill has held positions as an Admin Clerk (split between HR and the EAP), Benefits Analyst, Services Analyst, and now ELR Specialist. With HR, Bill has worked closely with numerous departments and City programs. His unique experience and knowledge of City policy will contribute greatly to the ELRs ability to quickly and effectively guide supervisors. Thank you, Bill, for your service to the city and welcome to the ELR team!

Compensation Study

This past month the Final Report of the Baker Tilly Compensation Study was released. This report includes: an analysis of the benefits, analysis of equity, compensation study details, and recommendations for restructuring and implementing an updated compensation structure.

In October the final recommendations were presented to the Mayor's Management Team and City Council as well as the Personnel Board. **In November** the final implementation plan will be shared with employees and submitted for inclusion in the 2027 Operating Budget. Please find the full report and history of the Compensations Study on the City HR website.

Drug Training Debrief

Employees and applicants with commercial driver's licenses (CDL) in the Engineering, Fleet, Parks, Golf, Streets, Forestry, Mobility, and Water Departments are covered under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) drug testing program.

Under FMCSA guidelines there are six types of tests that employers are required to facilitate. The most common of which is the random test. As an employer the City of Madison is required to test 50% of the total number of CDL holders in the city. This means if we have 400 CDL holders we need to conduct 200 random tests in a year.

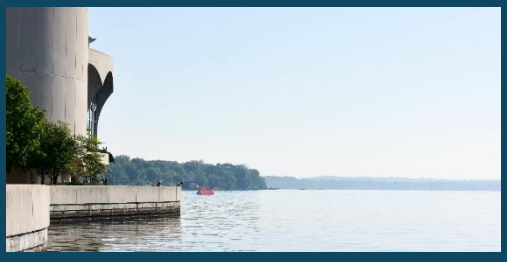
Employees are selected at random by our third-party vendor. Because testing is random, some employees may be selected multiple times in a year, and some employees may not be selected at all in a year. The ERL team coordinates these tests and maintains the records. The Designated Employee Representative (DER) leads two training courses a year for managers and supervisors to better understand the City and Federal requirements around drug testing.

This quarter the training was held on October 28th. Please reach out to Katherine Roe if you'd like to learn more about FMCSA testing. Additionally, keep an eye out for the spring course which will be posted early next year.

Bargaining

October saw the kickoff of bargaining between the City and International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), marking the final stretch of the 2026 bargaining season. IATSE Local 251 represents employees in Madison, Columbia, and Sauk County. As of 10/26/26, IATSE represents 231 part- and full-time employees under nine (9) job titles with the City of Madison. This year's bargaining will be led by Employee and Labor Relations Specialist Bill Wick.

Organizational Development



Executive Team Development Program Update

This year's Executive Team Development Program includes staff from Public Works, Monona Terrace, and EAP.

The program brings executive teams together to focus on leading with self-awareness, leading partnerships and leading accountability. Staff complete assessments, self-reflect on their leadership and engage in group discussions in these interactive sessions. The goal is to help executive teams work together more effectively. Other program elements include:

- Final recommendations and debrief with consultant and HR-OD Manager
- Check ins with HR-OD Manager at 3- and 6-months
- 360 feedback reviews by executive team members
- Comparison and debrief of 360 group report and final recommendation

A total of nine agencies and 90 staff have participated in this program since 2023. To learn more about this program, see the 2025 End of Year Report.



Leadership Gathering

Registration Closing Soon – 2026 Leadership Gathering **Wednesday, December 9, 2026 | 9:00 AM–12:00 PM | Monona Terrace – Madison, WI** Don't miss the chance to join the 2026 Annual Leadership Gathering, *"Leading Through the Muck: Courageous Accountability"*. We're excited to welcome our keynote presenter, Colene Elridge (Coach Colene), a speaker, leadership coach, author, and CEO of Be More Consulting. She believes that better workplaces start with better people, better conversations, and leaders willing to do the work. **Register and reserve your spot today** as registration is nearly full. You don't want to miss out on this awesome opportunity to connect with other city leaders for a day to remember. All are welcome, we look forward to seeing you there!

Mentorship Program

Recruitment for 2027 Cohort is Live

Mentoring remains central to fulfilling our mission to attract, retain, and develop a diverse and engaged workforce. As the 2026 cohort concludes, we remain committed to building on the success of the mentorship program. We invite you to share the 2027 Mentorship Intake Form with your colleagues, teams, staff, or even yourself. Recruitment for next year's cohort is live and we're focused on sustaining momentum and expanding opportunities for our workforce to grow in their leadership.

Learning Partners

2027 Course Planning Information Published October 21! Are you a Learning Partner? You should have received an email from HR-OD on Wednesday, October 21st to help you prepare for 2027 Course Planning. If you missed, this reach out at OrganizationalDevelopment@cityofmadison.com for a copy and check out the Learning Partners Hub for all your planning needs. There are some changes in 2027, check out the "What's New in 2027" section for an overview!

HR-Services

2026 Employee Giving Campaign

The 2026 Employee Giving Campaign is underway! This is an opportunity to support the charitable causes that matter to you and help make a positive difference across Madison and Dane County. Every contribution counts—and together, our generosity can make a meaningful impact in our community.

Explore the campaign:

- Campaign Website
- Impact of Your Gift
- 2026 Campaign Book
- Online Pledge Form

Make your pledge online: Visit the campaign website and select "Give Online." Log in using your 4- or 5-digit employee ID as your username. Your password is "wi" followed by your birthdate in six-digit format (MMDDYY)—for example, March 2, 1989, is wi030289.

A little goes a long way: A recurring gift of just $5 per paycheck from 3,000 City employees over 27 pay periods could generate $405,000 in charitable contributions!

Please note: Printed pledge forms are available through your department coordinator or via the pledge form download. Printed campaign booklets will not be available this year; please use the online campaign book.



Questions or website issues?
publicsector@uwdc.org



Upcoming Outreach Events

We are excited to share a list of upcoming outreach and engagement events scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2026. These events provide valuable opportunities to connect with job seekers, community partners, and local organizations throughout the Madison area.

Please note that the events listed below are confirmed and guaranteed.

Additional outreach events will be continuously added throughout the quarter and are not limited to this list.

- **Caminos Tech Program – Employer panel/networking**
  November 5, 2026 | 4:30 – 7:00 PM
- **Caminos Tech Program – Employer mock interviews**
  November 18, 2026 | 4:30 – 7:30 PM
- **Latino Workforce Academy Career Fair (9)**
  November 19, 2026 | 5:00 – 7:00 PM

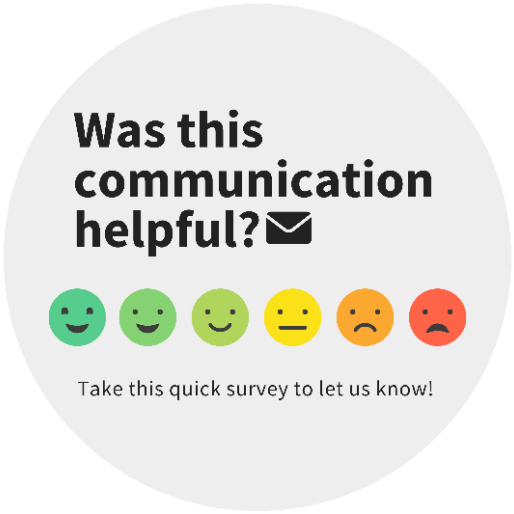
We encourage everyone to stay connected for updates as additional events are confirmed and added to the city-wide webpage throughout the quarter/year.

Contact Information

You can reach out to Human Resources mainline at (608) 266-4615 or at the email addresses listed below.

- **Human Resources –** HR@cityofmadison.com
- **Benefits –** Benefits@cityofmadison.com
- **Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) –** FMLA@cityofmadison.com
- **Accommodations & Access –** Accommodations@cityofmadison.com
- **Organizational Development –** OrganizationalDevelopment@cityofmadison.com
- **Inclusive Workplace** – InclusiveWorkplace@cityofmadison.com
- **HRM Implementation** – HRMS@cityofmadison.com





We want to hear from you!

Take a few minutes to share your thoughts through our SurveyMonkey survey & help us better understand what communications matter most to you.

Common Resources Quick Links:

- Benefits Information
- City of Madison Jobs
- HRM System Implementation
- Human Resources Website
- Internal Job Openings
- Pay & Benefits
- Performance Excellence
- Organizational Development
- Supervisor Resources
- Upcoming Courses