

# Community-Oriented Digital Engagement Scholars



# Community Partnership Toolkit

- 2025 / 2027 -

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# CODES Community Coordinator



The role of the CODES Community Coordinator (CC) is to act as a liaison between the community partner and CODES Faculty and Staff. Updates, questions, or concerns must be reported to the CODES CC to maintain effective communication between both parties. During the first and second semester (Fall '25/Spring '26), the CODES CC will share key dates and public or private events with partners in a timely manner, along with documents (if applicable). During the third and fourth semester (Fall '26/Spring '27), the CODES CC will only serve as a line of communication for both parties to introduce new CODES Faculty and deliver outreach if projects during the implementation stage are unable to meet deadlines. All public communications and public relations activities related to the work undertaken as part of this agreement will be agreed upon in advance.

## Contact Information

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Coordinator



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# Introduction

This Community Partnership Toolkit Agreement is made between The Community-Oriented Digital Engagement Scholars program (“CODES”) of Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville (SIUE) and the City of Alton's partnership with UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI), a framework through which communities prioritize the needs of children and young people, combat discrimination, and advocate child and youth voices in local governance and decision making.



## City of Alton's CFCI Mission

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The mission of City of Alton Child Friendly Cities Initiative is “building communities for every child through the child friendly cities initiative with guidance from UNICEF USA, communities in the United States are adopting child-centered local governance strategies and prioritizing the rights, voices, and best interests of children and youth.”



## CODES Collaboration

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CODES is a collaboration of faculty and students from multiple academic disciplines focused on enhanced student learning through an examination of real-world issues facing local communities; CODES seeks to promote research, education, service, and public outreach to gain a critical understanding of how AI can be applied in community-oriented projects with The Wedge Innovation Center.



# City of Alton

## Child Friendly Cities Initiative

### PROJECT DUTIES

Subject to available resources, the City of Alton CFCI will collaborate with 2 faculty leading a CODES group of 25 students over the course of 2 years. This includes mentorship feedback spaces each semester, planning visits with CODES Community Coordinator and faculty partners, participation in CAB, participation in student orientation, and attendance of twice-a-year showcases. The City of Alton CFCI will work with CODES faculty, and students to develop a Scope of Work ("SOW") related to specific projects that will be undertaken in areas related to this Community Partnership Toolkit Agreement. City of Alton CFCI will provide mentorship assistance and relevant information in support of the projects, including but not limited to:



**Existing  
Data  
Sets**



**Community  
Engagement with K-  
12 schools in Alton,  
Illinois**



**CFCI  
program  
awareness**



**Stakeholder or public  
engagement activity  
summaries**

*(Subject to any existing  
institutional confidentiality  
concerns)*

The partner will host an agreed number of student visits in an effort to establish context for the projects. Assigned mentor(s) from partner will also follow through with partnership commitments to provide feedback on student work based on the semester timeline. The party will participate in a yearly feedback forum to assess the program and participate in the CODES program's Community Advisory Board (**CAB**) meeting once per year.

SIUE and the City of Alton CFCI will agree upon a communications plan with the CODES Community Coordinator.



# Community-Oriented Digital Engagement Scholars

## PROJECT DUTIES

The Community-Oriented Digital Engagement Scholars Program will support the City of Alton, CFCI by:

Giving access to data, research, and other products of student work informed by the community partner.

Host community partners at SIUE CODES' Orientation Day to meet the new cohort, talk about their initiative/projects, and begin building mentor to student relationships.

Have CODES Faculty design coursework for scholars to gain more knowledge on rural mental health, digital tools, child development, community building, trauma-informed practices, youth civic engagement models, and evidence-based intervention strategies to engage hands-on work on existing projects.

Prepare CODE Scholars to present their research in collaboration with the City of Alton CFCI at the end of every semester to showcase the development of their projects to public audiences on or off campus.

## GOAL

To support the City of Alton CFCI to increase civic engagement and participation across the city, and to transform data into meaningful and impactful formats.



# Additional Considerations

## Ownership of Work Product

Each party shall retain ownership of its own work product.

## Termination

Either party may terminate this Community Partnership Agreement without liability upon providing the other party with at least thirty (30) days prior written notice.

## Amendments

This Community Partnership Toolkit Agreement may be amended through written, updated agreement or through termination.

## Entire Agreement

This Community Partnership Toolkit Agreement is non-legally binding and sets forth the entire understanding between the parties with respect to the subject matter of this Agreement. The City of Alton's CFCI and the CODES program will collaborate closely to develop adaptive decision-making strategies that respond effectively to unforeseen changes impacting the partnership. This joint approach ensures alignment of goals while maintaining flexibility in the face of evolving community needs.

## Discrimination

The parties agree that in fulfilling the terms of this Agreement, neither will illegally discriminate based on race, religion, national origin, age, color, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status.

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Collaborative partners, faculty, and staff have reviewed this Community Partnership Toolkit Agreement in connection with the CODES Community Coordinator.



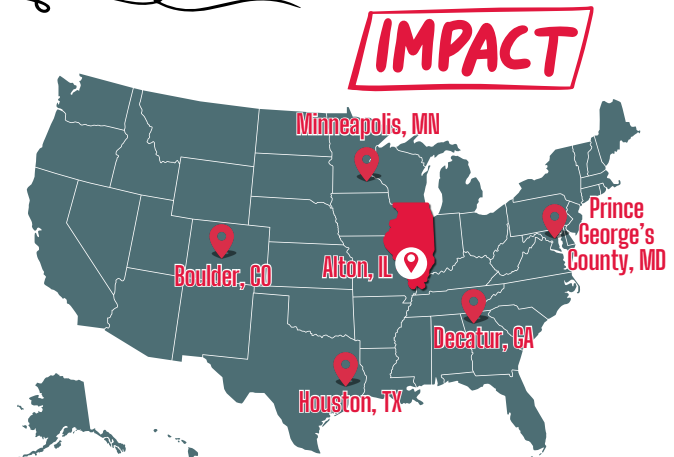
# Youth Personhood

*The 2029 cohort will partner with the City of Alton's UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative to prioritize the needs of children and young people, combat discrimination, and advocate for child and youth voices in local governance and decision making.*

Founded in 1837, Alton is a Mississippi River town, located 25 miles north of St. Louis, Missouri, with an estimated population of 25,430. CFCI represents an initiative from UNICEF dedicated to youth empowerment and advocacy. This initiative asks students about their needs and shares those stories with adults with the primary goal of increasing awareness of the issues important to youth. There are currently six sites working on this initiative: Denver, Colorado, Minneapolis Minnesota, Houston, Texas, Decatur, GA, Prince George's County, MD, and Alton, IL.

Youth in Alton have high rates of mental health challenges and exposure to gun violence. According to Dr. Anne Scheer, a resident and advocate for youth, many children report not expecting to live to the age of 25.

The cohorts working on this project will focus on youth personhood in two ways: increasing youth participation and voice in government and translating data about Alton's children into a format that tells a story about the current experiences of students in this city. Over a two-year period, CODE Scholars will gain familiarity with research on rural mental health, child development, community building, trauma-informed practices, youth civic engagement models, and evidence-based intervention strategies. Scholars will work with Alton's youth at the middle and high schools to learn more about what they would like to see change in their city to support their mental and physical health and help them to thrive.



As an outcome of their two year project, students will create a series of digital stories that address some of the primary issues raised by Alton's youth. The goal is to support the City of Alton to increase civic engagement and participation across the city, and to transform data into meaningful and impactful formats.

**CODES** is a selective program offering full tuition for students who are Pell Eligible, historically underrepresented in their major, or among the first in their families to attend college. CODE Scholars collaborate with community partners with the goal of creating a more socially just world. They study and address the local shape of global problems and share their outcomes using digital humanities methods. CODES apply methods from various fields, including history, literature, anthropology, biology, and sociology, for example.



# Partner Commitments

## PRELIMINARY WORK

Partners and faculty meet to define scope, roles, and responsibilities; meetings continue twice a year to refine plans.

### SEMESTER 1

#### **Study the Problem**

Students learn about problems in local and global contexts.

#### **Partner contact:**

- Presentation at orientation
- One to two on-site field trips
- Two in-class or Teams visits to offer feedback

**Outcome:** Presentation analyzing problem at Showcase on SIUE's campus

### SEMESTER 2

#### **Conduct Research**

Students conduct surveys, interviews, & ethnographies with stakeholders.

#### **Partner contact:**

- Three to four on-site visits for research collection
- Two in-class or Teams visits to offer feedback

**Outcome:** Scrollytelling project outlining research findings and future plans presented on-site

### SEMESTER 3

#### **Implement**

Students develop a detailed implementation plan and begin work on-site.

#### **Partner contact:**

- Eight three-hour contact days
- Students may lead programs, develop interpretive materials, plan a garden, etc.

**Outcome:** Students present the outcomes of their work at IRIS Showcase on SIUE's campus

### SEMESTER 4

#### **Reflect, Produce, Polish, and Share with Audience**

Students reflect upon work, produce and polish products from implementation, and share their findings and research.

#### **Partner contact:**

- Two in-class or Teams visits to offer feedback

**Outcome:** Students share work to relevant audiences and present their finished project at SIUE's Undergraduate Scholar's Showcase

### ASSESSMENT

Partners participate in a community advisory board (CAB) meetings once a year to offer programmatic feedback.

# Key 2025 Fall Dates

Below is a timeline of CODES events for anticipated events, meetings, site visits, presentations, and feedback forums. Please make sure to pencil in these dates on your calendars.

## AUGUST

<b>CODES Welcome Reception (Optional)</b>	<b>Wednesday, August 13, 2025   2:30 PM</b>	<b>Dunham Hall, SIUE Campus</b>
<b>CODES Orientation Session: Meet Your Community Partner</b>	<b>Thursday, August 14, 2025   2:35 PM - 3:20 PM</b>	<b>Science East Building, Room 2232, SIUE Campus</b>

## SEPTEMBER

<b>First Site Visit</b>	<b>Thursday, September 4, 2025   2:45 PM - 4:50 PM</b>	<b>Community Partner Location (Off-Campus)</b>
<b>Windshield Survey (Second Site Visit)</b>	<b>Thursday, September 25, 2025   2:45 PM - 4:50 PM</b>	<b>Community Partner Location (Off Campus)</b>

## OCTOBER

<b>Mentorship Feedback Teams Call</b>	<b>Thursday, October 30, 2025   3:30 PM - 4:00 PM</b>	<b>Virtual, Teams Call</b>
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## NOVEMBER

<b>Mentorship Feedback Teams Call</b>	<b>Thursday, November 13, 2025   3:30 PM - 4:00 PM</b>	<b>Virtual, Teams Call</b>
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## DECEMBER

<b>CODES Final Presentations</b>	<b>Tuesday, December 9, 2025   4:30 PM - 6:30 PM</b>	<b>Lovejoy Library, SIUE Campus</b>
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