

Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Alderperson Candidate Questionnaire

Please tell us about yourself.

Your Name: *

Justin Williams

Aldermanic District: *

District 15

Current Home Address: *

4905 Buckeye Rd., Madison, WI 53716

Email: *

[REDACTED]

Phone: *

[REDACTED]

Campaign website, if any:

www.justinwilliamsformadison.com

Social media (Twitter, Instagram, etc.) handles, if any:

<https://www.facebook.com/justinfordistrict15/>

Past education and work history (question optional; alternately you may send résumé to brett@madisonbiz.com)

2012-Present Community Shares of Wisconsin- Campaign Manager

2011 The Kloppenburg for Justice Committee - Field Director

2010 Hasset for Attorney General - Field Director

2010 Brian Blanchard for Court of Appeals - Volunteer Coordinator

2009 Office of the Governor Jim Doyle - Intern

2008-2009 Center for Urban Initiatives and Research - Undergraduate Researcher

2008 Obama Campaign for Change - Intern

2004-2006 Chamberlain Research Consultants, Inc. - Field Studies, Nonprofit Coordinator,
Business Development Intern

2008-2010 University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee - Political Science

2002-2008 Madison College - Liberal Arts

1998-2002 Iowa-Grant High School

Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Alderperson Candidate Questionnaire

Instructions: Please state your position on the following issues. Please limit answers to 100 words. Any answers exceeding the word count limitations will be cut after 100 words.

If you have filled out this questionnaire before, you may skip starred** questions or modify previous answers to those questions. If you skip starred answers on this questionnaire, we will re-publish your 2017 answers.

****1. Why are you seeking this office?**

I've spent my career working to improve the lives of my community. I've worked for a research department at UW-Milwaukee where we examined the youth homeless and identified the need for LGBTQ+ youth homeless services. I've worked to elect progressive candidates throughout the state. The past seven years I've spent working for Community Shares of Wisconsin, a leading social, environmental, and racial justice organization. I want to bring what I've learned through my career to help the city. I will stand up for the people in the district, champion equity initiatives, and be a careful steward of tax dollars.

****2. What in your background or experiences qualifies you to understand the unique needs facing small businesses?**

My experience serving on the Lake Edge Neighborhood Association has given me a unique perspective of the issues facing District 15, especially the unique problems facing small businesses in our district. Working at Community Shares my job is to partner with businesses locally to gain understanding of issues they want to support. My position has created many meaningful relationships with small business owners across the city. These businesses have been supportive of issues facing the city and as Alder my hope is that I can advocate for small business and the issues facing them.

****3. What are the most important issues the businesses in your district face?**

Areas of District 15 has seen some of the largest property value increases in the city. Several local businesses in the Lake Edge neighborhood have had to close recently due to the increasing cost of rent that did not support a sustainable business model for them. We also have several road projects that will be taking place in the near future that will impact local businesses including Atwood Ave. and Buckeye Rd. Owners are concerned about access to their properties while work is being done and access to the neighborhood through highly traveled streets.

****4. What is your perception of Madison’s business brand? How do you think business in Madison is perceived locally, statewide, and nationally?**

Publications generate rankings of cities based on a number of factors –retirees, raising a family, millennials, tech start-ups, etc. The rankings help attract attention to cities and help define that city when it comes to living, working, and recreation. Madison has appeared, and continues to appear, at or near the top of those rankings. So, I think our brand is strong. City government needs to continue to work collaboratively with other groups to make sure we continue to improve the business climate and shore up in areas – inclusion and equity for example – where we can do better.

****5. How can the City of Madison best attract and retain a diverse and talented workforce?**

Diversity in the tech industry must be improved both nationally and locally. The Chamber has had programs about these issues to discuss and solicit ideas which is a great thing. Collaborate with nonprofits, schools, government, etc. to remove barriers for women and people of color to become entrepreneurs or work in tech. Access to computers and broadening computer literacy across racial and socio-economic lines. Work on issues including housing affordability, quality public schools, and public transportation. These are among the strongest reasons companies cite for choosing where to locate and that employees say draw them to particular cities.

6. How can the City of Madison build an inclusive economy and ensure the advanced industries accelerating here provide opportunity for all?

The City of Madison, along with the University, Technical College, and nonprofit programs have the expertise to develop training programs that can help remove obstacles for marginalized communities to gain access to industries that they have traditionally had issues accessing. The City also can invest in infrastructure to strengthen our current public transportation system that will provide sustainable, reliable, and quick access to businesses across the city. Paratransit services have been cut due to changes on the State level. I will work with the disabilities community to explore ways to mitigate those reductions.

7. With Madison's economic momentum, a continued focus must be placed on infrastructure improvements. What strategies would you recommend for the city to meet the diverse needs of worker mobility and housing?

I support the creation of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) which Madison Metro describes as "a high-frequency limited-stop transit system that offers faster more direct service using larger vehicles to increase capacity." We need to collaborate with the State and County to make BRT a reality. Public transportation is also an equity issue: we must make sure routes reach areas that are underserved. We also need to focus on redevelopment projects that have an emphasis on providing access to affordable housing throughout the city and provide opportunities for economic development.

8. How do you define economic development? Please elaborate.

Economic development is the creation and retention of jobs and the generation of new revenue for a geographic area. It is more than just creating new businesses for individuals to use, it is the creation of businesses that in return generate additional revenue to the tax base that provide funding for additional governmental resources that our city needs. Economic development is vital to the success of our city and will help provide for additional resources that can support programming that tackles tough issues like affordable housing, eliminating food deserts, etc.

9. The 115th Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard is an important driver of the Madison economy, providing an annual economic impact of over \$100 million, emergency and fire services for the Dane County Regional Airport, and over \$1 million in tuition assistance to area student guardsmen. Do you support the Wing as it seeks to continue its mission by acquiring next-generation F-35A jets? Please explain your answer.

Truax Field is just north of the District I seek to represent – the 15th – so this is an issue about which constituents in the district have strong views. While I understand and appreciate their concerns, on balance I support continuing the program because as an economic driver. The financial benefit it provides to city services could allow us to provide more services (housing, social services, etc) to the community. Some of those dollars should be used to provide additional/extended services to communities that need them and are most affected by the fighter-wing program such as the Darbo and Hawthorne neighborhoods.

10. If offered an endorsement from the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce, would you accept it? *

Yes

No

By submitting this candidate questionnaire, you agree that the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce may publish it with the intent of sharing it with its membership and the general public. *

I acknowledge that the Chamber will publish my answers to this questionnaire

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms