*Please submit this completed application and any relevant supporting documentation by the deadline listed on the SSC website to* *Sustainability-Committee@Illinois.edu**.The Working Group Chairs will be in contact with you regarding any questions about the application. If you have any questions about the application process, please contact the SSC at* *Sustainability-Committee@Illinois.edu**.*

# General Information

**Project Name:** Cupanion Partnership at UIUC

**Total Amount Requested from SSC:** $10,000-$20,000

**Project Topic Area(s):** [ ] Energy [ ] Education [x] Food & Waste

 [ ] Land [ ] Water [ ] Transportation

# Contact Information

Applicant Name: Stephanie Allen

Unit/Department: Independent Study Initiative

Email Address: smallen7@illinois.edu

Phone Number: 6083543602

**Project Team**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Department** | **Email** |
| Name | Department/Organization | Email Address |
| Name | Department/Organization | Email Address |
| Name | Department/Organization | Email Address |
| Name | Department/Organization | Email Address |

# Project Information

Please provide a brief background of the project, the goals, and the desired outcomes:

BACKGROUND: There is an avoidable, high quantity of plastic waste in the world and decomposition rates for some plastic products take longer than an individual’s lifetime. 5.25 trillion pieces of plastic debris were found solely in the ocean surface ([http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news)](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news%29) and there is additional microfibers within the deep sea as well as plastic waste on land. Detectable levels of Bisephonol A (BPA) from plastics have been found in urine of 95% of adults in the United States. Tests indicate the possibility of health risks such as early sexual maturation, deceased male fertility and aggressive behavior (<http://journalistsresource.org)>. Marine Conservancy has estimated that it takes foamed plastic cups approximately 50 years to decompose, plastic beverage holders 400 years to decompose, and plastic bottles 450 years to decompose. (<http://plastic-pollution.org)>.

The University of Illlinois is striving to become a greener university and therefore implemented iSEE in 2013 in leu of becoming a signatory of the ACUPCC in 2008. Acorrding to iSEE, the goal is for this campus to be a model of sustainability that other communities will emulate with one of the categories for evaluated progress being waste and recycling. With the current state of the world’s plastic waste and the University’s desire to be more sustainable, we can need to implement an initiative to reduce plastic waste on campus and that begins by reducing plastic use all together. Every plastic item recycled or disposed of properly means less toxins released into our environment which will effectively help the University achieve its goal stated by iSEE.

GOALS: The goal of this initiative is to reduce plastic waste and help the University of Illinois achieve a higher environmental ranking among other Universities and learning institutions.

DESIRED OUTCOME: The desired outcome for this initiative is to improve/develop recycling mentality and lifelong awareness of plastic waste (i.e. water bottles, soap containers) from our students and have an implementable solution to reduce plastic waste that can be utilized anywhere. We ultimately would like every student and faculty member to participate in the Cupanion program and be using reusable bottles as frequently as possible.

Please provide a brief summary of how students will be involved in the project:

Cupanion has created a business model incentivizing its participants to utilize reusable water bottles. They have an app that allows participants to scan a bar code every time they refill their water bottle and when the participant reaches a points threshold they can redeem a prize based on point value. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to get as many students on campus involved as possible by using their reusable bottles rather than plastic bottles. We can provide students with bottles from Cupanion (and customize a logo) or purchase just the barcode stickers that participants can put on their own reusable water bottles; both methods will accomplish the same goal and provide participants with the same opportunities for point collection. The most effective way to reach this number of students is by providing the water bottle or barcode sticker to students and faculty when they pick up their iCard, this way they will have the opportunity to be involved from the start of their time on campus.

Please provide a brief summary of the project timeline:

Fall 2017 – research problem and campus landscape further, conduct focus groups and guage participant interest

Spring 2018 – begin promoting program, gathering resources and participants

Summer 2018 – product purchase and marketing campaign

Fall 2018 –run pilot semester with incoming students and faculty

Additional comments

Cupanion is ready to launch this initiative at any point in time and say they can be ready as soon as Spring 2018 for a full pilot. Their program is currently implemented on 30 campuses and they are having very successful results learned through conversations with leaders of Cupanion, case studies done by Universities currently implementing the initiative, and conversations with the project leads on these campuses. The goal is to reach every student and faculty member on campus by offering them a Cupanion watter bottle or barcode sticker when they pick up their iCard. By doing this, the initiative not only increases sustainability awareness and practice on campus, but will set the tone for U of I’s stance on sustainability for new students and faculty the moment they become a member of the University of Illinois community. Additionally, being strategic with pricing of the water bottles and bar code stickers, this program has the potential to reach a point of self funding if we choose to build our model accordingly. Cupanion has essentially developed an infrastructure that can be manipulated based on the layout of each campus’ landscape and what will be most successful.