

ComEd Powering the Holidays Grant Program

2026 Program Guidelines



Recognizing the power that holidays can have on a community, ComEd has partnered with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus to launch the sixth year of the ComEd Powering the Holidays Program. This program awards grants of up to \$2,500 throughout ComEd's service territory for community-based holiday lights events.

Key Dates

- Grant applications open: July 6, 2026, 9:00 a.m. Central Time.
- Grant application deadline: August 21, 2026, 5:00 p.m. Central Time.
- Grant awards announced: Late October 2026.

A. Goals

The ComEd Powering the Holidays Program aims to:

1. Celebrate community identity and culture;
2. Provide an opportunity for intercultural exchange and understanding;
3. Foster respect and open-mindedness for different cultures;
4. Develop an appreciation, understanding and respect for what is important to neighbors and others in their community; and
5. Provide a pathway for people to gain a sense of belonging to their community.

B. Eligibility

Powering the Holidays will provide grants of up to \$2,500 for community-based holiday lights events. Grant recipients must use their funds for any holiday between November 1, 2026 – February 13, 2027.

Municipalities, townships, counties, and other local governments located within ComEd's service territory ([see map](#)) in the following counties are eligible to apply: Boone, Bureau, Carroll, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Ford, Grundy, Henry, Iroquois, Jo Daviess, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, LaSalle, Lee, Livingston, Marshall, McHenry, Ogle, Rock Island, Stephenson, Whiteside, Will, Winnebago and Woodford.

Not-for-profit organizations and cultural institutions are eligible to apply if they partner with at least one municipality. Not-for-profit organizations and cultural institution applications must demonstrate municipal support to be considered for funding. For not-for-profit organizations and cultural

institutions within the City of Chicago, municipal support should be demonstrated through a support letter from the local alderperson. For not-for-profit organizations and cultural institutions in other areas, municipal support should be demonstrated through a support letter from the Mayor / Village President or Village / City Manager.

2024 and 2025 Powering the Holidays grant recipients are ineligible. However, previous Powering the Holidays grantees from 2021-2023 are eligible.

Applicants must be in good standing with ComEd related to provision of utilities.

C. Eligible Activities

The purchase of goods or services that enhance the applicant's ability to achieve the Goals in section A described above are eligible costs. These include:

Holiday Lighting Equipment

Grant funds should primarily be used to purchase or upgrade lighting equipment but may also include decorations or displays that contribute to a public holiday display. Energy-efficient lighting is strongly encouraged. Examples of eligible equipment include tree lighting and decorations; lighting and decorations for lamp posts, parks, and other public areas; a holiday tree; equipment to improve the safety and reliability of holiday lighting; and other displays related to a community-based holiday lighting event. See previous grant awards for more examples.

Services Provided for a Holiday Lighting Event

Grant funds may be used for costs associated with installing or removing the lighting display, as well as event-related services such as entertainment or children's activities. See previous grant awards for more examples.

D. Event Requirements

All events must provide an opportunity for attendance by the general public. Events can be private and have attendance caps, but the general public must be able to attend an event or community-based holiday configuration for free on occasion.

All events must adhere to federal, state, and local policies. All events must be deemed safe by authorities.

Sustainability and efficiency are key values to ComEd and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus; therefore, applicants must demonstrate a reuse case for materials purchased with grant assistance. The grant cannot be used as a "one-off" occasion.

E. Ineligible Expenses

Grant funds may not be used for lobbying activities; activities that are required in connection with regulatory compliance; capital costs; or to pay staff salaries.

F. Grant Matching and Reimbursement

1. Matching Requirement

Applicants must provide a 20% local match for the event. For example, if \$2,500 of grant funding is awarded, a \$500 local match would be provided.

Please contact the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus if your community is facing financial hardship and is unable to provide the 20% match. We reserve the right to waive this match on a case-by-case basis.

Promotion of the holiday lighting event such as print and digital marketing is eligible as a matching contribution towards the required 20% match.

Details on documenting direct and matching expenditures will be provided at the time of the award.

2. Reimbursement

All grants are awarded on a reimbursement basis. Successful completion of the project or procurement; documentation of expenditures and expenses; photos of the event; and a submission of a reimbursement request and report are required for grant recipients to receive payment.

Successful applicants will be notified of a grant award and will enter into a grant agreement with the Metropolitan Mayor Caucus. Grant recipients must complete their projects and submit a final report at any time prior to March 31, 2027.

Reimbursement payments will be made promptly by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.

G. Application Information

The administrator of the Powering the Holidays program is the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. Applications are accepted online at <https://metropolitanmayorscaucus.submittable.com/submit>. Create a free profile to begin the submission process.

- Applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. Central Time on August 21, 2026.
- All communication regarding your application, including grant decision, will be directed to the contact person listed on your application.
- Partial funding is possible for your project.
- Support letters are encouraged.
- Applications will be reviewed by a team comprised of professionals in the fields of event planning, public arts, and civic engagement.
- Successful applicants will be notified of a grant award and will enter into a grant agreement with the Metropolitan Mayor Caucus.
- Decisions on grant awards will be announced by late October 2026.

H. Grant Conditions

During the grant period, award recipients will agree to participate in media or press interactions and to identify ComEd as a funder in any materials produced to explain or promote the funded project.

I. Scoring Criteria

- *Cover Letter*: Scored highest if signed by Mayor / President, Village/City Manager, or CEO. 2 points possible.
- *Support Letters*: Scored well if providing a relevant support letter. 1 point possible.
- *Project Description*: Not scored but provides reviewers with a helpful summary of the entire proposal.
- *Budget*: Scored highest if demonstrating that costs are allowable, the local match is planned for, and expenses are cost effective. 8 points possible.
- *Work Plan*: Scored highest if thoroughly planned and well-described. 8 points possible.
- *Impact*: Scored highest if able to demonstrate positive outcomes expected related to multiple program goals. 10 points possible.
- *Partnerships*: Scored highest if relevant community partners are considered and planned to be engaged in the process. 3 points possible.
- *Need*: Scored highest if able to clearly demonstrate why the grant is needed. 23 points possible.

J. Contact

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