

# The Powering Safe Communities Grant Program

## 2026 Program Guidelines



The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus is proud to partner with ComEd to administer the Powering Safe Communities grant program. The Powering Safe Communities program will continue to provide grants of up to \$10,000 for local public safety and clean transportation projects. Recognizing that electrification can reduce carbon emissions, improve public health outcomes, and advance community resiliency, this grant will continue to focus on clean transportation and electrification projects.

### Key Dates

Grant Cycle Opens: January 12, 2026, 9:00 a.m. Central Time

Grant application deadline: March 13, 2026, 5:00 p.m. Central Time

## **A. Goals**

The *Powering Safe Communities* grant program seeks to:

- Enhance the quality of life in cities, villages, and towns in the ComEd service area and among Metropolitan Mayors Caucus member communities.
- Enable local governments to provide for the health and safety of their residents and visitors.
- Address unmet public safety needs.
- Advance local sustainability.
- Demonstrate innovation, professionalism, and cost-effective strategies.
- Build community resiliency and enhance preparedness.
- Improve public health outcomes.
- Provide access to electric vehicle charging station(s), electric vehicle infrastructure, and electric vehicles.
- Improve public safety relative to the use and distribution of electricity.

## **B. Eligibility**

Municipalities, townships, counties, and other local governments that provide for the safety of the public 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 are eligible to apply if they partner with at least one municipality.

2024 and 2025 Powering Safe Communities grant recipients are ineligible. However, previous Powering Safe Communities grantees from 2015-2023 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 but are not limited to:

### **1. Public Safety Equipment**

Equipment that enhances the safety of the general public including traffic and pedestrian safety, communications, monitoring, protective and other equipment.

### **2. Emergency Response Equipment and Supplies**

Equipment that enhances the ability of first responders to provide for the safety and welfare of the general or targeted populations including specialized emergency response, emergency transport, communications, and other essential emergency equipment; and specialty emergency response supplies not otherwise available.

### **3. Disaster Preparedness and Resiliency**

Equipment and supplies that improve the ability of the community to prevent and respond to disasters and mitigate resulting threats.

### **4. Public Safety Programs and Plans**

Public education and engagement programs that prepare residents for disaster, reduce threats to vulnerable populations, and foster cooperation and collaboration to improve the long-term safety of the community; training resources and programs for government officials that improve skills, and other programs that meet the *Powering Safe Communities* grant program goals; and public safety plans that optimize a local government's ability to deliver services.

### **5. Electrification Projects (Special Focus area)**

Electrification is the use of electric energy efficient technologies as alternatives to fossil fuels or non-energized processes. Electrification projects that improve public health outcomes, provide for cleaner transportation options, and conserve the usage of energy are eligible. Examples of electrification projects include, but are not limited to:

- Electric vehicle charging station(s)
- Electric vehicle purchase

## **D. 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\*. Grant funds cannot be used to pay private vendors for training or services otherwise offered through professional associations and public agencies, or to purchase routine supplies.

\*The cost of staff time needed to complete the project is eligible as a matching contribution towards the required 50% match.

## **E. Grant Matching and Reimbursement**

### **Match Required**

Recipients should match grant funds awarded with a direct equal expenditure of the organization's own funds, and/ or through in-kind contribution of goods and services of equal or greater value. *Therefore, 50% of the total project costs are paid for by the Powering Safe Communities grant award and 50% of the costs are paid by the grant recipient.*

The source of matching contributions must be identified at the time of application. Direct and matching expenditures must be documented, and documents must be submitted to the Caucus to receive grant reimbursement. Details will be provided at the time of the award. In-kind matching contributions must be documented with employee time and work records.

Contribution of volunteer labor can be applied to matching requirement with adequate documentation.

Applicants unable to make matching contributions may request a reduction or waiver at the time of application.

### **Reimbursement**

All grants are awarded on a reimbursement basis. Successful completion of the project or procurement; documentation of expenditures and expenses; 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. Recipients must submit semi-annual progress reports. Grant recipients must complete their projects at any time prior to March 31, 2027.

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

Retroactive reimbursement for costs accrued between the application deadline and the grant award may be allowed on a case-by-case basis. All requests for such reimbursement must be made in writing to Ben Schnelle at [bschnelle@mayorscaucus.org](mailto:bschnelle@mayorscaucus.org).

Awards are made based on the project presented in the application. Any major changes to the scope of a project must first be approved to avoid forfeiting the grant award. Contact Ben Schnelle at [bschnelle@mayorscaucus.org](mailto:bschnelle@mayorscaucus.org) if you anticipate there will be a major change to your project scope.

## **F. Application information**

The administrator of the Powering Safe Communities 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 March 13, 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 strongly encouraged.
- Applications will be reviewed by a team comprised of professionals in the fields of public safety, transportation, urban planning, and public health. Final decisions on award recipients and amounts are at the discretion of ComEd.
- Decisions on grant awards will be announced by early July 2026.

## **G. Grant Conditions**

- Grants will be for amounts up to \$10,000.
- Failure to submit a final grant report with all of the required attachments by the posted deadline may prohibit applicants from participating in any future grant cycles. If you have questions about the final grant report and its attachments, please reach out to Ben Schnelle at [bschnelle@mayorscaucus.org](mailto:bschnelle@mayorscaucus.org).
- During the grant period, award recipients will agree to participate in the events or media inquiries and to identify ComEd as a funder in any materials produced to explain or promote the funded project.

## **H. Budget Instructions**

Use this guide to develop your project Budget. Then submit the completed Budget form in the Application, (*Application Section C*). Cost must relate to the grant project, be allowable, and align with your Work Plan (*Application Section D*). (No need to submit the Sample Budget.)

Costs are to be divided between those eligible for reimbursement from the grant and those to be paid by your organization as your matching share. Therefore, only budget items in Section I. Purchased Goods and Services, Column B, are to be charged to the grant request. You may propose to spend more on these items than the maximum grant allowed (\$10,000) if you contribute your own agency funds for that purpose. See sample budget.

The proposed Match, Column C, must be 50% or more of the proposed Total Project Cost, Column D.

Download the [Budget Form and Instructions](#). Complete the Budget Form in Microsoft Excel then upload it to your online application. Sample budget below.

<b>Project Title: Automatic External Defibrillators for Anytown Public Buildings</b>			
A	B	C	D
<b>Expense</b>	<b>Grant Share</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Total Project Cost</b>
<b>Purchased Goods &amp; Services</b>			
AED purchase	10,000	5,000	
<i>I. Sub Total Purchase</i>	<i>10,000</i>	<i>5,000</i>	<i>15,000</i>
<b>Matching In-House Services</b>			
AED installation by facility manager		500	
Staff training by Chief		3,500	
<i>II. Sub Total In-House</i>		<i>4,000</i>	<i>4,000</i>
<b>Matching Donated Services</b>			
Training Assistance from Community Hospital		1,000	
<i>III. Sub Total Donated</i>		<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>
<b>Total I, II, III</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>

**Prepare Budget:**

- Assemble cost estimates for all eligible costs related to the grant project.
- Itemize estimated payment for each good and/or service. Enter probable vendor, if known. (i.e., total cost of AED purchase – ACME Medical Supplies: \$15,000).
- Enter the amount of the goods or services that you would like to pay for using grant funds in *Column B, Section I.* to a maximum of \$10,000. (i.e., AEDs, \$10,000).
- Enter the amount of the goods or services (in excess of a \$10,000 grant) that you will contribute as your match in *Column C Section I.* (i.e., AED purchase \$5,000.).
- Enter the amount of in-kind services your agency will contribute as a match in *Column C Section II.* (i.e., AED installation; \$500; staff training provided by officers \$3,500).
- Enter the amount of any volunteer services from partners in *Column C Section III.* (i.e., Training Assistance from Community Hospital \$1,000).
- Briefly describe each item in the Budget Form.
- Total All Columns. **The Total of Column B, Section 1 is your grant request. The Total of Column C is your agency’s Match.** The total in *Column D* should be your total expenditure for all purchases related to your project.
- Explain your Budget in the Workplan Narrative.

## I. Scoring Criteria

- *Cover Letter*: Scored highest if signed by Village Mayor / President, Village Manager, or CEO.
- *Project Description*: Not scored but provides reviewers with a helpful summary of the entire proposal.
- *Budget*: Scored highest if accurate, clear, and cost-effective.
- *Work Plan*: Scored highest if thoroughly planned, well-described, and accomplishes one or more of the grant program goals.
- *Outcomes and Leveraged Benefits*: Scored highest if able to demonstrate positive outcomes expected in public safety, well-being, and local sustainability.
- *Need*: Scored highest if able to clearly demonstrate why the grant is needed.
- *Support Letters*: Scored highest if providing 2+ support letters.

Contact: Ben Schnelle  
Metropolitan Mayors Caucus  
[bschnelle@mayorscaucus.org](mailto:bschnelle@mayorscaucus.org).

## **Proposed Project Outcomes**

The Crest Hill Police Department's Valor Cart project will significantly enhance public safety, community engagement, and officer accessibility. The Valor Cart—a mobile, highly visible, community-policing platform—will allow officers to patrol parks, trails, shopping areas, and special events more effectively. Expected outcomes include increased officer visibility, reduced opportunity for crime, improved response ability in congested or hard-to-reach areas, and deeper engagement with residents through informal, positive interactions. Collectively, these outcomes will strengthen trust, deter criminal activity, and increase the perceived and actual safety of public spaces.

## **Alignment With Powering Safe Communities Program Goals**

This project strongly supports the Powering Safe Communities program's emphasis on proactive safety initiatives, violence prevention, and community-oriented problem solving. The Valor Cart enhances non-traditional policing tools that help prevent incidents before they occur. Its mobility allows officers to be present where vehicles cannot go, increasing early intervention opportunities. It also supports relationship-building by fostering more natural conversations with youth, seniors, and families, which is a core objective of modern community safety strategies. Overall, the project operationalizes the program's goals by expanding community policing, improving safety infrastructure, and reinforcing collaborative engagement.

## **Populations That Will Benefit**

The primary beneficiaries will be residents of Crest Hill, including families, youth who frequently use parks and recreational areas, seniors, and individuals attending community events. Local businesses will benefit from increased foot patrol presence in commercial areas, improving safety and encouraging economic activity. Visitors from surrounding communities who attend festivals, athletic events, or shops within city limits will also gain from enhanced security and officer approachability.

## **Estimated Number of People Impacted**

Crest Hill has a population of approximately 20,000 residents, all of whom stand to benefit from expanded community-policing visibility. Additionally, thousands more visit city parks, shopping districts, and special events throughout the year. The Valor Cart will directly reach an estimated 30,000–35,000 people annually through routine patrol deployments, community outreach events, and seasonal activities.

## **Integration With Community Needs and Goals**

The project directly supports the city's ongoing goals of strengthening community relationships and increasing Officer presence in public gathering places. Residents frequently express interest in greater engagement with officers and improved safety in parks, trails, and high-traffic pedestrian areas. The Valor Cart allows the department to meet these needs in a practical, cost-effective

manner. It also complements broader city objectives involving recreation improvements, youth engagement, and revitalization of community spaces.

### **Partner Engagement**

The project will engage several partners, including the Lockport Parks and Recreation Department, local schools, neighborhood associations, and business owners. These partners will help identify priority patrol areas, schedule community engagement opportunities, and support outreach events where the Valor Cart can serve as a focal point. Collaboration with civic groups will further expand the cart's impact and ensure it remains responsive to evolving community needs.

## **Grant Narrative: Why the Crest Hill Police Department Needs the Valor Cart**

The Crest Hill Police Department is committed to providing the highest level of service, protection, and accessibility to the community. However, as public safety needs evolve, so does the equipment required to meet those demands effectively. The acquisition of a **Valor Cart** represents an essential modernization step that will significantly enhance officer mobility, visibility, and response capability at community events, emergencies, and hard-to-reach locations within Crest Hill. This grant is critical to advancing that capability due to fiscal constraints and existing unmet community needs.

Crest Hill's parks, multi-unit residential complexes, and commercial corridors continue to see growing foot traffic and increased demand for police presence. Many of these areas are spread out over large distances or include terrain not easily navigated by patrol vehicles. During community events—such as festivals, school functions, parades, and neighborhood outreach initiatives, officers are responsible for covering sizable areas on foot. This reduces response speed during medical emergencies, disturbances, or calls for assistance. A Valor Cart would allow officers to move through crowds and across varied terrain quickly, safely, and efficiently, improving both proactive engagement and emergency responsiveness.

Furthermore, the cart provides an invaluable visibility and community-policing advantage. Its compact design and approachable presence create a more positive, accessible interaction point for residents. This is especially important during planned events and unplanned incidents where community reassurance and rapid information flow are critical. The ability to move officers into otherwise inaccessible spaces also enhances safety for vulnerable populations, including children, seniors, and individuals with mobility challenges who may require medical or emergency assistance in crowded or outdoor areas.

While the need for such a tool is clear, **fiscal limitations make this purchase unattainable without grant assistance.** Like many municipalities, Crest Hill faces rising operational costs, including staffing, mandated training, body-worn camera program expenses, technology upgrades, fuel, and vehicle maintenance. These core obligations leave little remaining in the budget for specialized equipment that, while not a traditional patrol necessity, offers significant community-safety benefits. Capital purchases of this nature must often compete with critical needs such as replacing aging squad cars, maintaining communications infrastructure, or supporting officer safety equipment. A dedicated funding source is therefore the only feasible means of acquiring this capability.

In addition to financial limitations, the community faces unmet needs related to public safety and well-being that a Valor Cart directly addresses. Crest Hill continues to experience increased demand for police participation in community events, school partnerships, and neighborhood engagement activities. Officers frequently serve in high-visibility roles at festivals, holiday celebrations, charity events, and outdoor gatherings. Yet current staffing and mobility limitations restrict the department's ability to maximize presence and coverage at these events without incurring overtime or pulling resources away from patrol operations.

The department also encounters accessibility challenges during emergencies within large complexes, parks, and new developments where standard police vehicles cannot maneuver effectively. Medical emergencies, particularly those involving heat exposure, intoxication, or physical injuries—require quick access and transport capability. A Valor Cart can be outfitted for these needs and can navigate areas that are unreachable by traditional vehicles, reducing response time and improving outcomes.

Finally, local sustainability is a growing focus for Crest Hill. A Valor Cart offers an environmentally conscious alternative to deploying additional full-size patrol vehicles for crowd management or event coverage. It reduces fuel consumption, minimizes vehicle wear, and allows the department to use a right-sized solution for situations that do not require a 4,000-pound vehicle.

In summary, the Valor Cart will significantly enhance the Crest Hill Police Department's ability to safeguard the community, improve response efficiency, strengthen public engagement, and address unmet mobility challenges in crowded or restricted areas. However, due to budget limitations and the prioritization of essential operational expenses, the department is unable to pursue this project without grant support. Funding for this equipment will fill a critical gap in local public-safety capabilities and deliver immediate, tangible benefits to the residents of Crest Hill.

Thank you for considering the Crest Hill Police Department for the Powering Safe Communities Grant Program. We appreciate the opportunity to apply and hope to utilize this funding to purchase an electric-powered Valor Cart, which will significantly enhance our community-policing and public-safety capabilities.