

JEFF TATE
Chief of Police
jtate@ShakopeeMN.gov
Direct Dial 952-233-9421

April 15, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

The purpose of this letter is to offer my support in the passage of legislation that would provide financial support for the Lights On! Program. Critics of law enforcement have explored ways to reduce pretextual police contacts and the Lights On! Program provides a tool to help accomplish that.

The Shakopee Police Department has used the program to assist citizens in repairing broken lights on their vehicles in lieu of issuing citations. Our department is one of the highest cities for redemption of vouchers that are issued. Traffic stops for this type of equipment violation allows officers to engage in a positive manner with motorists and offer a solution. The Lights On! Program has had an enormous impact on both safety and relationships with the community.

I offer my full support for the Lights On! Program, ultimately making the roads and Minnesota safer.

Sincerely,

Jeff Tate
Chief of Police/Emergency Management Director

JT:crl



HEALING COMMUNITIES ONE TRAFFIC STOP AT A TIME

An innovative program that replaces tickets with repair vouchers

Impact in the Numbers

Reaching the Marginalized Community with Positive Interactions



10K +
Over 10,200 vouchers redeemed to date.



99%
Voucher recipients were satisfied or very satisfied with their interaction with the officer who gave them the Lights On! voucher

42%
Voucher recipients identify as BIPOC



170+
Participating law enforcement agencies to date
450+
Participating auto shops to date

1 in 3
Voucher recipients have household incomes below \$30,000

22%
Voucher recipients would have been unlikely or very unlikely to fix their light without the voucher

*As of May 31, 2023

The Downward Spiral

Equipment violation tickets inadvertently become a poor tax



Ticket Issued for Broken Car Light

Lights On! stops the downward spiral here



Increased Law Enforcement Interactions & Fines
More likely to be pulled over again

Hurt Instead of Help

Inability to Pay Fines On Broken Car Lights
Driver has to decide between a \$175 fine or to buy groceries for the week ([MINCourts.gov, 2017](#))

Potential Jail Time & Revoked License or Vehicle

\$175 ticket = \$2,500+ in late fees, missed work, court fees, etc. ([Fines & Fees Justice Center](#))

How We Heal Police-Community Relationships

A simple idea with a powerful impact



Law enforcement officer gives a voucher instead of a ticket



Driver redeems voucher at participating auto center



Lights On! coordinates all administration

Lights On! turns dreaded traffic stops into an opportunity to create positive and restorative interactions.

Benefits

It is a win-win-win



Law Enforcement Benefits

- Less law enforcement officer stress
- Law enforcement builds stronger community bonds
- A new approach to societal problems



Voucher Recipient Benefits

- Positive path for low-income drivers
- Restorative interaction with police
- Safer car fixed at no-cost to driver




Community Benefits

- Safer cars on the road
- Local business (auto shop) promotion
- Improved police-community relations
- Better prioritized community resources



The Voucher

Back



LIGHTS ON!
A PROGRAM OF MICROGRANTS

CÓMO FUNCIONA ESE VALE

- La policía le da un vale para reparar las luces de su carro **GRATIS**
- Vamos a reparar su luz delantera, luz trasera, luz de freno, o señal de giro
- Ve a un mecánico que participe en nuestro programa, y él puede reparar la luz **GRATIS**

PUEDO ENCONTRAR UNA LISTA DE MECANICOS QUE PARTICIPAN EN NUESTRO PROGRAMA EN LA RED
www.lightsonus.org

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO FIND THE AUTO CENTER NEAREST YOU!
www.lightsonus.org

HOW THIS VOUCHER WORKS

1. Police hand you a voucher that is good for **FREE** car light repair
2. We will fix your headlight, taillight, brake light or turn signal light
3. Go to any participating auto repair center, and they fix the light for **FREE**


BENEFITS

- Safer cars on the road
- Improved police and community relations
- A positive path for low-income drivers
- Less police officer stress
- A new approach to societal problems

Front


FREE CAR BULB REPLACEMENT
Burned-out light? We can help!

HEADLIGHTS • TAIL LIGHTS • BRAKE LIGHTS • TURN SIGNALS



LIGHTS ON!
A PROGRAM OF MICROGRANTS

PARTNERING WITH



Vehicle Plate # _____ Officer Badge # _____ Date Issued _____

Serial Number: _____

*This voucher expires 14 days after date issued.
\$250 limit on light-related repairs.*

[@lightsonus](https://www.facebook.com/lightsonus) [@lightsonus](https://www.instagram.com/lightsonus) [@lightsonus](https://www.twitter.com/lightsonus) [#lightsonus](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)
Go to www.lightsonus.org/instruction for more information.

To Note:

- Unique serial number printed on every voucher for tracking purposes
- Expires 14 days after date issued
- \$250 limit on light-related repairs
- Spanish & English instructions on back (or languages of your choosing...
you must find someone to translate if we do not yet have that language)

What Healing Looks Like

How our communities are transformed

“I am a mother of three. We were without a vehicle, walking in the snow for two months after our car was totaled. I worked and saved to get a cheap car. Then I got pulled over for having my taillights out. I was so scared I would get a ticket and wouldn't be able to pay. I am so grateful.”

- Ashley, Voucher Recipient



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF



HENNEPIN COUNTY, MN

April 15, 2024

Representative Brad Tabke
543 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Fong Hawj
95 University Avenue W
St. Paul, MN, 55155

Re: Lights On Grant Funding HF5057/SF5117

I am writing to express my support for HF 5057, the bill providing grants to the Lights On program to provide vouchers to replace broken or burned-out headlights. We use Lights On vouchers at the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and have seen the benefits of this program firsthand. Lights On helps to improve road safety in our county while fostering positive police-community relations, particularly among lower-income people who may struggle to afford necessary vehicle repairs.

The program aligns with our efforts in Hennepin County to make contacts with community members that aren't punitive, investigative, or negative in nature. While low police staffing levels across Hennepin County challenge our ability to devote extra resources to community outreach, it is a necessary function of responsible law enforcement to build trust where it does not currently exist. The vouchers given out via the Lights On program provide the additional benefit of improving road safety as well.

In my childhood, I had exclusively negative experiences with law enforcement. I know what a difference a positive contact can make. Thank you for supporting programs that are designed to create these contacts. The benefit does not end with a fixed headlight; a positive experience can lead to someone reporting a crime where they wouldn't have previously, calling for help, or eventually joining law enforcement, like I did after a jail tour.

By investing in proactive solutions like Lights On, we contribute to building police-community trust in places where it has been broken or never existed previously.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dawanna Witt".

Sheriff Dawanna Witt
Hennepin County Sheriff's Office

CC: Representatives Pinto, Novotny, Witte, Xiong, Kraft

CC: Senators Hoffman, Champion, Dibble, Limmer

LIGHTS ON!

Bring this program to your town

**RECRUITING THE
NEXT GENERATION**

Departments hunt for new talent

GOOD COP, GOOD COP

A cop returns to his roots

MINNESOTA Police Chief

Volume 38, No. 4 | Fall 2018

First Call for Help

MCPA provides a new service to better support the health and wellness of the men and women in Minnesota law enforcement

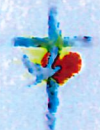
physical
wellness



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wellness



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Fixing Police-Community Relations, One Broken Taillight Stop at a Time

Lights On!

BY SCOTT SEROKA, MINNEAPOLIS POLICE DEPARTMENT

There is no longer a 'routine' traffic stop. The cop walks up to the car and he or she has no idea what they're going to encounter. Often, the driver of the vehicle is also sitting there wondering what they're facing. They might have no idea why they've been

penalized'; we're just talking about a light bulb here," said Microgrants facilitator Mike McCloskey.

It happens dozens of times a day, all across the state. Officers pull over a driver for having a taillight out. Maybe

"You might not be able to fix that light. Or, what do you have to sacrifice to fix that light? Poor people are making decisions like that every day," said Don Samuels, who founded the Lights On! program after the Philando Castile incident. "Do I pay the rent or

“ We can start changing people's thinking about 'you screwed up, you're wrong and you're going to get penalized.' ”

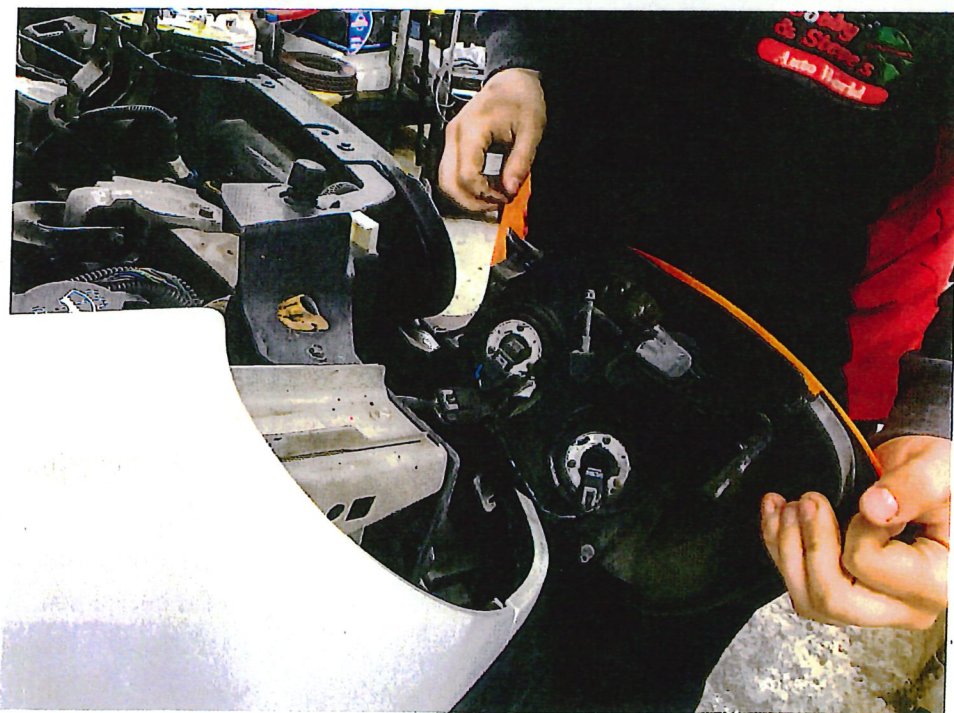
pulled over in the first place. There is a fear of the unknown, and it's a two-way street.

"If we can start changing people's thinking about 'you screwed up, you're wrong and you're going to get

it's a headlight. While it might not seem like a big deal to police, it's a different story for the driver that probably doesn't have a happy ending. Sometimes a new bulb can cost \$40. Sometimes the cost to rewire a light could approach \$300.

do I buy food? This kind of expense -unexpected, one that's not been budgeted for - it could be critical for someone."

Right now, more than 20 Minnesota law enforcement agencies are armed



with a powerful tool. Officers are handing out vouchers instead of tickets. Drivers take those vouchers to a Bobby & Steve's auto body center in the metro area and they get their headlight or taillight fixed for free. Microgrants pays

for the bulb and Bobby and Steve's chips in free labor. It's a partnership built by communities, for community members.

"Because everyone can relate to it, that really fired up our crowd funding,"

Samuels said. "To date, just about all of our vouchers have been funded by "crowd funding" and we have raised about twice that much again! So we have money for another year or two," Samuels would like to see more Minnesota departments join the program.

In 2017, Microgrants kicked off Lights On! where it all began, in Columbia Heights. 16 agencies, including St. Paul, Minneapolis and Brooklyn Park were represented. Between April and December of 2017, Twin Cities cops handed out more than 400 vouchers. The Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) has just requested 500 more vouchers for its patrol officers.

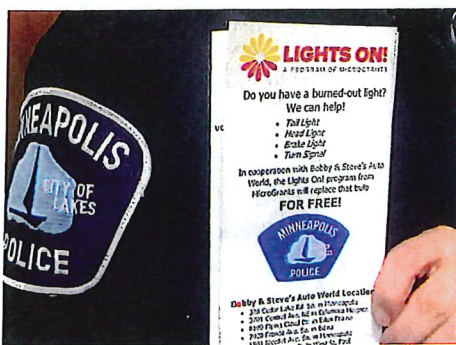
In the month of September of 2018, MPD officers assigned to the Dogwatch shift in the Second Precinct handed out 14 vouchers to thankful drivers.

"You pull somebody over and say 'yeah, I'm pulling you over because you have a headlight out' and you might hear 'I don't have the money to get that fixed,'" said Commander Charlie Adams, who oversees the MPD's Community & Collaborative Advancement Division. "The officer replies 'That's cool. I'm going to give you a voucher and you can get it fixed for free.' Everybody's reaction is just 'Wow, thank you.' The whole communication between the officer and the citizen is positive."

As for Microgrants, a large donation is helping the organization keep up with the increasing demand. In the Twin Cities, if it costs Bobby & Steve's more than \$50 for the fix, the technicians call the folks at Microgrants who approve and fund the extra costs of the repairs. Samuels and McCloskey say local law enforcement agencies can work with their own community philanthropists

Bring this Program to your Community

“ We can all relate to being pulled over. Each voucher has the potential to turn a lose-lose situation – the traffic stop – into a win-win where we’re helping low income drivers and changing how officers are viewed. ”



to set up a funding stream to help low-income drivers out.

Two agencies in Ohio have rolled out Lights On! and Iowa City, Iowa, is also participating. Right now, the calls are coming in from all over the country. Samuels is also engaged in talks to bring a nationwide auto repair chain on board, which may have a stake in the auto body repair store or stores in your community.

“We have the potential to become a national program. Not just on the supply side, but on the demand side,” he said. “We get calls from all over the country, from cities that want to

replicate it and most of the calls are from police departments. But some are from non-profits like us, that want to manage it and lead it and some are from the auto repair business community.”

Commander Adams recently took a call from North Carolina. The officers asked if the MPD has a policy in place for Lights On!

“There is no set policy. This is community engagement. It’s not difficult. You partner with an autobody shop or store, whoever does repairs in your city, and then you find funding,” he said. “We have to be more compassionate when we think about the people we’re pulling over and their financial situations. I issue them this coupon and the person may not get involved in the cycle that leads to driving after revocation or suspension.”

Adams is working on building a tracking mechanism within the Minneapolis Police Department’s

records management system to get a better handle on when and where officers are providing the free vouchers. While it will be nice to put some numbers to the program, it is hard to put a dollar value on how these positive interactions will influence police-community relations overall.

“The beauty of this program is everyone, from police officers to drivers to community leaders, can get behind this effort in your community,” said Lights On! Program Director Sherman Patterson. “We can all relate to being pulled over. Each voucher has the potential to turn a lose-lose situation – the traffic stop – into a win-win where we’re helping low income drivers and changing how officers are viewed.”

The folks at Microgrants don’t like the term “fix-it ticket” but they’re not afraid to point out how the program really helps repair community relationships, one traffic stop at a time.

CHIEFS RESOURCES

Some municipalities already participating in the program include Maplewood, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Columbia Heights, Crystal, Edina, Mounds View, Richfield, Robbinsdale, Roseville, Spring Lake Park, St. Louis Park, West St. Paul and Corcoran.

NEXT STEPS

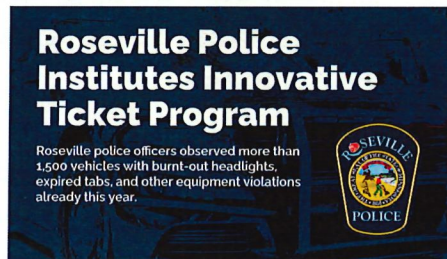
If you’d like to get your community and your department involved, contact Mike McCloskey or Sherman Patterson at info@microgrants.net or call 612-200-8174.



Home

Posted on: August 10, 2023

Roseville Police Institutes Innovative Ticket Program



Roseville police officers observed more than 1,500 vehicles with burnt-out headlights, expired tabs, and other equipment violations already this year.

Rather than initiate traffic stops, the Roseville Police Department mailed letters to the vehicle owners as part of a new pilot program designed to bolster both public safety and community trust.

Since the program launched in January, the city has mailed out 1,569 letters in lieu of traffic stops. The letters notify vehicle owners of equipment violations. The letters

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also share resources to help drivers remedy issues including information on financial assistance to renew license plate tabs and a voucher to fix burnt-out lights courtesy of the Lights On Program.



Roseville Police Chief Erika Scheider said the pilot program is off to a promising start and is part of the department's ongoing effort to ensure an appropriate and equitable law enforcement response.

“Ultimately, we decided to try a different approach with addressing minor equipment violations,” explains Scheider. “We recognize that most vehicle owners are either unaware of minor equipment violations or perhaps they are unable to afford the repair.”

The new program was launched after the Roseville Police Department conducted a review of all policies and procedures and determined that traffic stops based solely on equipment violations disproportionately impacted communities of color, which undermined law enforcement's legitimacy.

It also reflects the evolving community sentiment around policing priorities. Roseville Police began prioritizing moving violations after a series of community listening sessions in 2017, Scheider said.

It takes officers 30 second to log an equipment violation in their computer system compared to a traffic stop, which takes several minutes and may pull officers away from more urgent police work.

The pilot program was created with input and direction from the Roseville Police Department's Multicultural Advisory Committee, a group of citizens who meet regularly to advise police leaders.

Letters in lieu of traffic stops are reserved for vehicles with minor equipment violations, expired registrations, or other non-moving violations that do not create a public safety concern or a dangerous condition.



The letters sent to vehicle owners include information on financial assistance to renew license plate tabs. When the violation is a burnt-out light, the letter includes a voucher to fix it courtesy of a separate Lights On program.

Roseville is a welcoming regional crossroads where Twin Cities residents and visitors come to work, shop and play and traffic patterns illustrate that. About 87 percent of the letters sent have gone to addresses outside of Roseville.

Several drivers have contacted the police department thanking them for the opportunity to address the issue without the stress of a traffic stop. One resident explained that he was driving around his 86-year-old mother on errands when officers spotted his burnt-out light.

“I want to thank the officer for not stopping me even though he or she had a right to. We had an extremely busy morning and a traffic stop would have made my mother quite anxious,” he wrote. “I will take care of this brake light immediately. I thank the officer and Roseville Police Department for their discretion in this matter.”

The program is possible through



support from the Ramsey County Attorney's Office, Lights On, Diversion Solutions, and the Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundation. One of the biggest expenses has been the postage. A group of

volunteers and summer interns are helping prepare the letters for mailing.

Scheider stressed that Roseville officers will continue traffic enforcement efforts that improve roadway safety, with an emphasis on curbing distracted driving, excessive speeding, street racing/exhibition driving, and impaired driving.

“These changes allow our officers to focus their time on driving conduct that impacts the safety of our roadways,” Scheider said. “It allows us to prioritize violent crime over minor equipment violations.”

[Click here to learn more about the Roseville Police Department.](#)

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[Roseville Resident Shines as Sustainable Steward Award Winner](#)

[Next](#) ⇒

[County Road B2 Temporary Closure and Water Shut Off](#)

Other News in Home

["Important Service Reminder" Mailer Not Affiliated with City of Roseville](#)

Posted on: April 5, 2024



[Twin Lakes Reimagined](#)

Posted on: April 4, 2024





EAGAN

POLICE DEPARTMENT

ROGER NEW
Chief of Police

ANDY SPEAKMAN
Deputy Chief of Police

JOHN COLLINS
BRYAN JOHNSON
NATE TENNESSEN
DAN TOCKO
Lieutenants

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MIKE MAGUIRE
Mayor

PAUL BAKKEN
CYNDEE FIELDS
GARY HANSEN
MIKE SUPINA
Council Members

DIANNE MILLER
City Administrator



April 15, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

The purpose for this letter is to offer my support in the passage of legislation that would provide financial support for the Lights On Program. Critics of law enforcement have looked for ways to minimize pretextual police contacts, and the Lights On Program provides a tool to help accomplish that.

The Eagan Police Department has used the program to assist citizens with getting broken lights fixed on their vehicles in lieu of charging, which will eliminate future stops for equipment violations. The Lights On Program also helps promote community relations with police which is an added benefit to everyone.

Once again, I would like to offer my full support for the Lights On Program, which is helping make Minnesota a safer community.

Regards,

Roger New
Chief of Police
Eagan Police Department



MINNESOTA CHIEFS OF POLICE ASSOCIATION

DEDICATED TO THE IDEALS OF PROFESSIONAL POLICING

March 19th, 2024

Department of Public safety
445 Minnesota Street
St. Paul, Minnesota
55101

Regarding: Letter of Support for grant funding for "Lights On" Program

Dear Commissioner Jacobson:

The Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) supports the Lights On program. Currently there are approximately 112 Police Departments and 24 Sheriff's Offices in Minnesota partnering with Lights On. This program takes the enforcement of traffic safety laws on Minnesota roads and transforms it into an opportunity for Law Enforcement Officers to educate motorists about traffic safety and create positive police-community relations.

The MCPA supports the request for grant funding to keep this important program in Minnesota. The MCPA would be happy to testify to its efficacy and benefits if you so desire.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Jeff Potts
Executive Director



MINNESOTA SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

100 Empire Drive, Suite 222, St. Paul, MN 55103
Phone: 651.451.7216 Fax: 651.451.8087
Email: info@mnsheriffs.org

January 22, 2024

Robert Jacobson, Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Public Safety
445 Minnesota Street
Saint Paul MN 55101

Dear Commissioner Jacobson,

I am writing to express the support and endorsement of the Minnesota Sheriffs for the proposed addition of the "*Lights on!*" program of the Office of Traffic Safety and Department of Public Safety. Currently, the *Lights on!* program is utilized by 24 sheriff's offices, and we would like to see that expanded across the state of Minnesota. The *Lights On!* approach is a creative and positive way to address traffic safety concerns while building stronger relationships in our communities. As you know, it transforms traditional traffic enforcement into an educational and helpful means to aid drivers in correcting the safety concern.

The *Minnesota Sheriffs' Association* wishes to encourage you to support the \$250,000 grant request for *Lights on!* This would allow, and support, an expansion of the programs and assist local law enforcement agencies in addressing traffic safety concerns while also building stronger relationships within their communities.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or desire additional information.

Respectfully,

James Stuart
Executive Director

CC: Mike Hanson, Office of Traffic Safety Director

MEMO

To: John Harrington, MicroGrants & LightsOn
From: Chief Bierdeman, Maplewood Police Department
CC:
Date: 04/08/2024
Re: LightsOn Data Request

Lights On Update from Maplewood Police Department 4/4/2024

Partner in the program beginning **January 1, 2024**

Number of letters mailed (as of 4/4/2024): **250**

Total Vouchers: **44**

-Total vouchers mailed out to those who requested (as of 4/4/2024) – **27**

-Total vouchers picked up in person at Maplewood City Hall (as of 4/4/2024) – **17**

- Extremely positive responses from those who have contacted us regarding their voucher. All that have emailed or called on the phone have been sincerely thankful.
- Everyone has been very grateful for the voucher and not having to pay for the light.
- Many were unaware that a headlight, taillight, or brake lights were out. Many thanked our department for bringing this to their attention because they drive their children around and remarked that this is a safety issue they can now address.
- Many have said what a positive and significant program LightsOn is.
- We have not heard about any issues people have had regarding using the voucher.
- One woman who came in for her voucher and stated that she sincerely appreciated the voucher and did not have to pay to replace her headlight. She had been off work due to an injury and would not have been able to afford the cost of having her light replaced.
- Our Officers have commented that this is a great way to interact with the public, and the person coming in for the voucher makes them feel like they are really doing good.

City of Maplewood
Police Department
1830 County Road B East
Maplewood, MN 55109



Office 651-249-2600
Fax 651-249-2699
www.maplewoodmn.gov



SEASIDE POLICE DEPARTMENT

*TRUST: Transparency * Respect * Unity * Service * Training*

Nicholas Borges, Chief of Police

440 Harcourt Avenue
Seaside, CA 93955

Telephone (831) 899-6748
FAX (831) 899-6297
TDD (831) 899-6217

April 4, 2024

Department of Public Safety
445 Minnesota Street
St. Paul, Minnesota
55101

Re: Letter of Support for grant funding for "Lights On" Program

Dear Commissioner,

As one of the first law enforcement organizations that adopted "Lights On" last year I can tell you the relationship with our community and local government has strengthened with a sense of trust and accountability. Our community knows they can rely on us when they are in need and we are here to help, not make people's lives more difficult. More importantly, this program reduces, significantly, the traumas often caused when being stopped by police.

In honor of Philnado Castille, we fully support this program and its roots to Minnesota and the Castille family. I have become friends with Philnado's mother, Valerie Castille. This program reduces police contact for minor violations that will reduce police uses of force, all while helping keep the roadways safer with proper lighting equipment on vehicles.

As a leader in the country by having this program come from Minnesota, I urge you to keep this program alive and fully funded, as it not only represents your state, but the entire country. Minnesota has found a program that actually produced results in nationwide police reform and we ask you continue to serve your state in this critical step forward with community relations.

I thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Respectfully,

Nick Borges

Nick Borges
Police Chief

April 8, 2024

Commissioner Robert Jacobson
Minnesota Department of Public Safety
445 Minnesota Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Commissioner Jacobson,

I am writing to express Rochester Police Department's support for the Lights On! program.

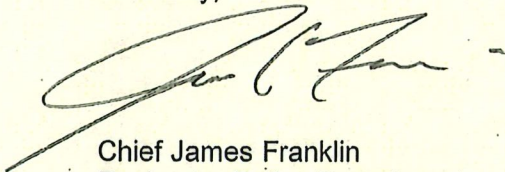
RPD began utilizing Lights On! in 2019 and has since given out more than 250 vouchers. Every time we replace a ticket with a voucher, we not only improve safety on our roads, but also foster positive engagement in our community.

We followed up with one voucher recipient, and here is what he shared: "At first I was shocked that I was pulled over. I didn't know what to think, but the officer approached me with utmost kindness and told me the problem. It really surprised me that he offered to fix [my light] for me for free. So appreciative of that officer and the whole program!"

Interactions like the one described are vital for community-oriented policing, a strategy emphasizing that together, we can create safer communities.

Please give the highest consideration to funding from the State of Minnesota to keep this valuable program free for law enforcement agencies.

Sincerely,



Chief James Franklin
Rochester Police Department

April 8, 2024

Senator Carla Nelson
Minnesota State Senate
95 University Ave W.
Senate Building, Room 2301
St. Paul, MN 55105

Dear Senator Nelson,

I am writing to express Rochester Police Department's support for the Lights On! program.

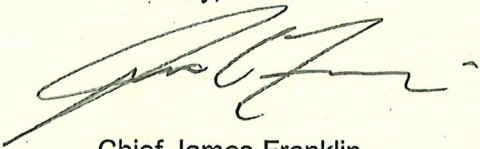
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Sincerely,



Chief James Franklin
Rochester Police Department



Blaine Police Department

10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449-8100
Main 763-785-6168 | BlaineMN.gov

April 5, 2024

Senator Michael E. Kreun
Minnesota State Senate
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 2321
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Letter of Support for grant funding for "Lights On" Program

Dear Senator Kreun:

I am writing in support of the "Lights On" Program (bills SF 5117 and HF 5057). Our agency has a dedicated Traffic Enforcement Unit that works extremely hard and understands the importance of public safety through the enforcement of traffic laws. This program takes the enforcement of traffic safety laws on Minnesota roads and transforms it into an opportunity for law enforcement officers to educate motorists about traffic safety and create positive police interactions with our community.

The Blaine Police Department supports the request for grant funding to keep this important program and we thank you for your commitment to the citizens of Minnesota. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or further information on this matter.

Sincerely,

Brian Podany
Safety Services Director/Chief of Police
Blaine Police Department



Blaine Police Department

10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449-8100
Main 763-785-6168 | BlaineMN.gov

April 5, 2024

Representative Matt Norris
Minnesota House of Representatives
507 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Letter of Support for grant funding for "Lights On" Program

Dear Representative Norris:

I am writing in support of the "Lights On" Program (bills SF 5117 and HF 5057). Our agency has a dedicated Traffic Enforcement Unit that works extremely hard and understands the importance of public safety through the enforcement of traffic laws. This program takes the enforcement of traffic safety laws on Minnesota roads and transforms it into an opportunity for law enforcement officers to educate motorists about traffic safety and create positive police interactions with our community.

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Sincerely,

Brian Podany
Safety Services Director/Chief of Police
Blaine Police Department



Blaine Police Department

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April 5, 2024

Representative Nolan West
Minnesota House of Representatives
287 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Letter of Support for grant funding for "Lights On" Program

Dear Representative West:

I am writing in support of the "Lights On" Program (bills SF 5117 and HF 5057). Our agency has a dedicated Traffic Enforcement Unit that works extremely hard and understands the importance of public safety through the enforcement of traffic laws. This program takes the enforcement of traffic safety laws on Minnesota roads and transforms it into an opportunity for law enforcement officers to educate motorists about traffic safety and create positive police interactions with our community.

The Blaine Police Department supports the request for grant funding to keep this important program and we thank you for your commitment to the citizens of Minnesota. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or further information on this matter.

Sincerely,

Brian Podany
Safety Services Director/Chief of Police
Blaine Police Department

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF



HENNEPIN COUNTY, MN

April 15, 2024

Representative Brad Tabke
543 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Fong Hawj
95 University Avenue W
St. Paul, MN, 55155

Re: Lights On Grant Funding HF5057/SF5117

I am writing to express my support for HF 5057, the bill providing grants to the Lights On program to provide vouchers to replace broken or burned-out headlights. We use Lights On vouchers at the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and have seen the benefits of this program firsthand. Lights On helps to improve road safety in our county while fostering positive police-community relations, particularly among lower-income people who may struggle to afford necessary vehicle repairs.

The program aligns with our efforts in Hennepin County to make contacts with community members that aren't punitive, investigative, or negative in nature. While low police staffing levels across Hennepin County challenge our ability to devote extra resources to community outreach, it is a necessary function of responsible law enforcement to build trust where it does not currently exist. The vouchers given out via the Lights On program provide the additional benefit of improving road safety as well.

In my childhood, I had exclusively negative experiences with law enforcement. I know what a difference a positive contact can make. Thank you for supporting programs that are designed to create these contacts. The benefit does not end with a fixed headlight; a positive experience can lead to someone reporting a crime where they wouldn't have previously, calling for help, or eventually joining law enforcement, like I did after a jail tour.

By investing in proactive solutions like Lights On, we contribute to building police-community trust in places where it has been broken or never existed previously.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dawanna Witt".

Sheriff Dawanna Witt
Hennepin County Sheriff's Office

CC: Representatives Pinto, Novotny, Witte, Xiong, Kraft

CC: Senators Hoffman, Champion, Dibble, Limmer

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