



## Lights On! Press Kit

Updated Oct. 19, 2023

### Assets:

- [Logos](#)
- [Voucher image](#)
- [Social media copy + images](#)

**Style direction:** Lights On! should be a capital L and O followed by an exclamation point in all text.

Correct: Lights On!

Incorrect: Lights On, Lights on, Light's On!, Lights out,

### About Lights On!

Lights On! is an award-winning program with the mission to heal police-community relationships. The program was founded after the unnecessary death of Philando Castile who was shot during a traffic stop. The police rationale for the stop was a broken taillight. Participating law enforcement agencies replace equipment violation tickets with Lights On! repair vouchers redeemable for free repairs at partnered auto shops. The vouchers reduce the financial burden that could lead to a potential downward spiral for community members in need as well as creates a positive interaction between drivers and officers. Lights On! is a program of MicroGrants, a non-profit dedicated to providing people of potential with grants that spur economic stability. For more information or to donate, visit [LightsOnUS.org](https://LightsOnUS.org)

### How it Works:

- Participating law enforcement agencies hand out Lights On! repair vouchers instead of equipment violation tickets
- Drivers take the voucher to a participating auto center to have the light replaced, up to \$250, at no cost to the driver. Participating auto centers are found on [LightsOnUs.Org](https://LightsOnUs.Org)
- While the repair is being made, voucher recipients complete a survey
- Auto service providers invoice Lights On! for the repair fees
- Lights On! pays the bills and coordinates all administration & fundraising
- Funding covers the cost of repairs and Lights On! operational fees

### Key Messages

Lights On! is community-driven program with the mission to heal police-community relationships. The program facilitates a more positive, restorative interaction between police and community and avoids penalizing low-income individuals for vehicle conditions.

Cars are repaired at no cost to the driver which means safer cars on the road and lower income drivers avoid the downward spiral of a costly equipment violation ticket, the repair itself, additional fees, fines



and citations if the repair is not made and even potential jail time. Vouchers cannot be obtained on-demand and are only available through participating law enforcement partners.

Traffic stops are often a source of stress, both for officers and drivers. Lights On! turns the dreaded traffic stop into a positive, restorative interaction.

These vouchers are a win-win-win-win: they cover the expense of bulb repair, improve safety, and mitigate what often becomes a downward spiral for lower income drivers, while enhancing local businesses. Lights On! creates a network of law enforcement, small business owners (in the form of auto body repair shops), and people of color and enhances the social fabric of our communities.

To date, over 10,600 vouchers have been redeemed nationally and **99.2% of recipients** say they are satisfied or very satisfied with their interaction with the officer who gave them the Lights On! voucher. **22%** say they would have been unlikely or very unlikely to fix their light without the voucher. These survey results show Lights On! is not only positively impacting police-community relations but also automobile safety and economic disparity.

#### **Lights On! Stats – updated 10.19.23**

- 10,000+ vouchers redeemed to date
- 1 in 3 voucher recipients have HHI below \$30,000
- 160+ law enforcement agencies
- 350+ auto centers
- 42% of voucher recipients identify as BIPOC
- 99% of voucher recipients are satisfied or very satisfied with their interaction with the officer
- 22% of voucher recipients would have been unlikely or very unlikely to fix their light without the voucher
- Lights On! was founded in Minneapolis in 2017 and is now in 21 states and 32 cities outside of Minnesota

#### **Lights On! Team**

##### **Sherman “Sherm” Patterson – Lights On! Vice President**

Sherman leads the Lights On! program outreach efforts and brings a long history of service to his community and country to the Lights On! role. Sherman served 21 years in the U.S. Army before obtaining his master’s degree in public safety administration from Saint Mary’s University in Minnesota. Sherman went on to serve as the Public Safety Policy Liaison to Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak for eight years, and initiated many innovative community service projects including founding the Annual Turkey Giveaway that provided Thanksgiving meals for thousands of families in North Minneapolis. In 2014, he started a social outreach program called Lead by Example, the mission of which is to reduce gun violence by working with young men to become leaders in dismantling the gun culture in their neighborhoods. Patterson received the 2008 Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board’s Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. “Living the Dream” Award, and was awarded a Bush Fellowship in 2014.

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### **John M Harrington – MicroGrants/Lights On! CEO**

John Harrington, the former Commissioner for the Department of Public Safety for Minnesota, was appointed by Governor Tim Walz in January 2019 and served until January 2023. Before becoming the Commissioner of Public Safety, Harrington served as the Chief of the Metro Transit Police from 2012-2019, helping to create the Homeless Action team and increasing diversity from 5-50%. Commissioner Harrington is a former member of the Minnesota Senate who represented District 67, which includes the East area of Saint Paul. Harrington was the 39th Police Chief for St. Paul Police Department, serving from 2004-2010, where he began his police career in 1977. As St. Paul Police Chief, Harrington tackled some of the city's most challenging problems, developing programs that significantly reduced domestic violence and gang involvement. John grew up in Chicago, graduated from Dartmouth College, and earned a master's degree at the University of St. Thomas. He is also a graduate of the FBI National Academy and Harvard Senior Management Institute. He is also a founder of Ujamaa Place, a nonprofit organization in Saint Paul that serves African American men who are economically disadvantaged and have experienced repeated cycles of failure. He is currently working on his doctorate in Administration of Justice, focusing on the George Floyd Riots.

### **Quotes from voucher recipients:**

When I found out my car light was broken, I knew that it would take me a while to get it fixed due to the price. Receiving this voucher allowed me to repair my headlight quickly, making my drive to and from work safer. Thank you so much for relieving my stress!

Great experience! The sheriff was kind & helpful and the staff at the shop was thorough and considerate. Thank you for offering the program!

This was such a great experience for my son. I was driving him home from work when I was pulled over. It gave me a chance to discuss how to respond and where to find the car insurance. He went from very nervous to remarking how the officer was very professional and nice. My son was impressed that the focus was on safety, not on punishment. - voucher recipient, Fridley MN

I was very surprised and thought it turned a stressful situation into a very helpful one. - voucher recipient, Rosemont MN

I'm very pleased with this program. I would like to say THANK YOU! to whoever started this program, along with every shop and law enforcement agency that participates in this program. - voucher recipient, Bloomington MN

My 6 year old African American son was in the car with me, and he was afraid. It really helped to give him a positive experience and interaction for him to see police in a safe helpful positive light. and I also would

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have struggled financially to get the repairs and would have had taken longer before I could have afford it. - Wichita, KS

This initiative is amazing and will hopefully help in bonding cops w/community members again! Exactly what we need in our communities! Sometimes unpaid tickets result in jail time and large expenses. I absolutely love this program and couldn't be more thankful. Thank you all so much! God bless. - voucher recipient, Columbia Heights MN

Very convenient and a great way to meet local auto mechanics. Makes the relationship with the police more possible too. My children were in the back seat and saw the positive interaction. - voucher recipient, Spring Valley MN

I was surprised when the police officer handed me the voucher. I think its a great move by the police to help individuals with these minor repairs on their cars. A big thanks to the police department. voucher recipient, New Brighton MN

This program should be continued. It does not only help in terms of money. It develops the positive relationship between police and the people. I felt more responsible after I got lights on from police. I thank him greatly. voucher recipient, New Brighton MN

I think that this program is a way to build confidence in law enforcement. Being helpful opposed to over bearing or harsh. More programs like this can help build a positive relationship with law enforcement. voucher recipient, Minneapolis MN

This program needs to continue to be funded and needs to expand to surrounding countries and state wide. - Jacksonville, FL

The officer was AMAZING. Honestly the voucher could not have come at a better time. We were strapped because of other things so it was amazing. - Chanhassen, MN

We have both been unemployed and struggling financially. Door Dashing to help meet needs. This came at the right time and actually helped us out. Thank you for being understanding and helping us to continue being safe on the road. Mankato MN

**About MicroGrants:**

MicroGrants provides assistance at just the right time; giving individuals a hand up – not a handout – as they emerge from the margins into the mainstream economy. Partnering with 50 local partner agencies, MicroGrants provides \$1,500 micro grants to low-income people of potential to advance their economic

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stability. MicroGrants has three pillars of focus: creating work, training for work and getting to work. Grants support entrepreneurs and small business owners, jobs skills training, certifications, job supplies, car repairs and used vehicle purchases. MicroGrants works closely with established partner agencies to distribute and manage and the grants. MicroGrants provides mentorship and ongoing support to these people of potential. The partnership allows MicroGrants to serve many different populations with different needs in a culturally competent way. Inspired by Nobel Peace Prize winner, Muhammad Yunus, MicroGrants was founded in 2006 by Joe Selvaggio and has boosted more than 5,000 individuals closer to their self-sufficiency. To learn more or donate, visit [MicroGrants.net](http://MicroGrants.net).