



Mayor John Laesch

2026 Youth Programs Enhancement Grant



City of Aurora
Finance Committee Meeting

June 25, 2026

What is the Youth Enhancement Grant?



Simon Rodriguez

Youth Services Manager



Chris Ragona

Director of Community Services

- **-A 1-time grant opportunity for local non-profits and certain tax bodies that enhance current programming, purchase of equipment, portable soccer fields, and an event sponsorship.**
- **-Funds are a culmination of donations made through the Festival of Lights from 2021-2025.**

■ ■ ■ Various Opportunities

1. After-School Programming Grants
2. Programming Scholarships
3. Portable Soccer Fields
4. Illuminate Pathways event sponsor



*Applicants may only apply for 1 opportunity

■ ■ ■ After-School Programming Grant

- Provides a 1-time grant up to \$20,000 to qualifying non-profit organizations.
- Purpose is to enhance **CURRENT** programming.
- Applicants may also submit for a 1-time purchase of equipment related to their current programming



***Applicants may only apply for 1 opportunity**

■ ■ ■ Scholarship Program

-Provides a 1-time grant between \$5,000-\$20,000 to qualifying non-profit organizations & local units of government.

-Purpose is to assist low-income families with scholarships to CURRENT programming offered after-school/outside of school.

-Special emphasis on programs during school breaks, such as Thanksgiving break, winter break, Spring break, Presidents' Day, etc.



■ ■ ■ Soccer Fields

- Provides a portable soccer field to our local school districts for use during their normal school day and after-school/summer programs.
- Ability to expand this popular program, now under the supervision of the school districts.
- Letter of intent sent to 4 school districts to apply (East Aurora, West Aurora, Indian Prairie, & Oswego)
- 2 total soccer fields will be purchased by the City at a significant discount and awarded to 2 school districts that demonstrate most need/interest.



Illuminate Pathways Event Sponsor

- Continue sponsorship from 2025, in the amount of \$20,000**
- In partnership with the Aurora Education Commission, Waubonsee Community College, and VALEES**
- Over 2,000 Aurora freshmen will explore hundreds of career paths with over 200 partner organizations attending planned for October 23, 2026.**





Budget Breakdown

Amount	Project
\$166,950	After-School Programming Grants & Scholarship Program
\$40,000	Soccer Fields (2 fields at \$20,000 each)
\$20,000	Illuminate Pathways event sponsor
\$43,721.29	Investment into Phillips Park and the Festival of Lights
Total	\$270,671.29





Process/Tentative Schedule

Item	Timeline
Final City Council approval for Funding	July 28, 2026
Launch Application & promote	August 1, 2026 (tentative)
Application Window Closes	August 31, 2026 at 5pm
Application Review & Final Recommendations	September 2026
Finance, COW, & City Council approval of recommended grantees	October 2026 (tentative)



Thank You



QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION?



Simon Rodriguez, YOUTH SERVICES MANAGER

Youth Services Division

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Chris Ragona, Director of Community Services