

## Municipal Utilities- Good for all of us

### 2015 Scholarship Application

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My locally owned municipal utility has been serving the community of Marshall for more than 120 years and currently serves over 6,500 customers. Marshall Municipal Utilities is dedicated to providing our community with clean, safe, reliable electric and water services, which is essential to our way of life. Each Municipal Utility is unique but they all share a common goal of serving their community.

Municipal utilities are beneficial for everyone because they provide necessary services for their communities at a low cost. They represent the American spirit and the heart of federalism. They are comprised of local people working to meet local needs. Community member's work together to achieve what would be impossible alone. Municipal utilities are also tailored to best meet the needs of individual communities, unlike large investor owned utilities that are spread over a large distance. This makes for a much more impactful, responsive, productive, and efficient utility. Locally owned municipal utilities are governed by their city council or appointed utility commission, which allows the control to remain local. Utilities invite public input and try to remain as open and democratic as possible because their decisions directly affect the local community.

Municipal Utilities tend to serve smaller towns, so they have the benefit of getting to know their customers personally. The employees enjoy their jobs because they are able to serve their friends and family, and provide for the next generation. Another unique benefit that comes from municipal utilities being based locally is that the employees live within the community, allowing them to respond to emergencies quickly. Municipal Utilities also have mutual aid agreements, so when one community experiences a disaster, they can count on utilities from neighboring areas to provide materials, equipment, and assistance to restore services. Another valuable resource to municipal utilities is their state wide utility association. The Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association represents the interest of utilities, advocates for their efforts, and provides safety and training services.

Not only are municipal utilities dedicated to providing individualized and trustworthy electric, water, or gas services, they work to protect our environment. They support the efficient use of resources and sustainable energy. Specifically, my utility educates customers, purchases power from environmentally friendly generation sources, and provides many conservation programs such as rebates for energy efficient lighting, heating and cooling, water heating, and appliances. They also offer a custom efficiency program for unique energy efficiency projects.

Municipal utilities also work hard to achieve a diverse mix of energy resources. My locally-owned utility provides a balanced energy resource mix that consists of both renewable and nonrenewable energy sources. They carefully weigh out the challenges of keeping rates affordable and protecting our environment, by considering all energy resources for current and future needs.

Another way Municipal Utilities benefit all of us, is from the contributions they make to the community. Locally Owned Municipal Utilities are non-profit and return money to the city general fund each year. This effectively lowers property taxes and benefits local community

programs. Municipal utilities also contribute to the community by providing materials and equipment for community projects, providing discounted services, volunteering time, and more. Everything they do is to benefit the community, not for profit. Also by keeping their prices low, they create a competitive edge for their customers and keep other electric and water providers accountable and fair in their pricing. Municipal Utilities stimulate local economies by keeping profits, jobs, and business local, which benefits everyone.

I am incredibly grateful to be served by our locally owned municipal utility and have seen firsthand the benefits and values they bring to my community.