

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

**CONTACT:**

Ashley Bailey at [abailey@san-diego.gov](mailto:abailey@san-diego.gov)

# **San Diego, Chula Vista, National City Police Announce New Program to Help Drivers Fix Burned Out Lights**

## **AGENCIES WILL JOIN OTHER CITIES NATIONWIDE OFFERING VOUCHERS IN LIEU OF CITATIONS FOR LIGHTING EQUIPMENT VIOLATIONS**

**San Diego** – Bringing innovative solutions to the San Diego region to improve police-community relations and lessen the burden of certain traffic tickets, San Diego, Chula Vista and National City Police Departments announced today that they would be joining agencies nationwide to implement the [Lights On! program](#) in their communities.

Lights On!, a program developed by Minneapolis-based nonprofit MicroGrants, partners with law enforcement and auto service providers to replace traffic tickets with repair vouchers. The vouchers fix the bulbs, improve safety, and mitigate what could become a downward spiral for lower-income residents. SDPD, Chula Vista and National City will be the first agencies in California to offer the program.

The agencies have partnered with the San Diego Padres Foundation and Scripps Health to fund the initiative, and all donations made to Lights On! are matched by MicroGrants. The Padres and Scripps' donations will allow all three agencies to operate the program for approximately three years, depending on the cost of repairs and redemption of vouchers.

Once the vouchers arrive, officers from all three agencies will conduct traffic stops for lighting equipment violations just as they always have, but instead of issuing a citation or "fix-it ticket," they will offer

motorists a Lights On! voucher and explain how they can redeem it. Officers will begin issuing vouchers in the coming weeks.

While officers will be issuing vouchers for the lighting equipment violations, they will still be able to act on other violations that may be present. It does not prohibit them from requesting the person's identification and checking police databases for any outstanding warrants.

Vouchers can be redeemed at participating locations for up to \$250 for burned-out headlights, taillights, brake lights and turn signals. If the repairs total more than \$250, the remaining amount is the sole responsibility of the driver. If the participating auto service provider cannot complete the repairs due to another issue with the vehicle, the repairs will be the responsibility of the driver. The voucher cannot be redeemed for cash value.

Each agency has identified participating auto service providers to complete the repairs in their jurisdictions. Auto repairs are invoiced by the repair shops and reimbursed with the funding provided by Scripps and the Padres. Local auto service providers are invited to join the program. If interested in participating, complete the online registration at [lightsonus.org/auto-shops](https://lightsonus.org/auto-shops) or contact [abailey@sandiego.gov](mailto:abailey@sandiego.gov).

### **ABOUT LIGHTS ON!**

Lights On! is an innovative community-driven program that partners with law enforcement and auto service providers to replace tickets with repair vouchers. We believe that police-community relationships need healing, and that positive interactions with police can restore trust and solve problems. Through the Lights On! vouchers, we create thousands of opportunities for people with authority to foster healing in the community.

### **ABOUT MICROGRANTS: THE PARENT ORGANIZATION OF LIGHTS ON!**

MicroGrants' mission is to give a boost to motivated people on their journey to economic self-sufficiency. Our innovative approach provides cash, not loans, to meet the immediate needs of low-income individuals on their quest to start a business, finish their education, or acquire transportation for their job. We work with over 50 Partner Agencies that refer low-income, high-potential individuals prevented from advancing their careers due to a specific financial barrier. MicroGrants helps grantees overcome that barrier and continue on their path to financial independence.

### **WHAT EVERYONE IS SAYING:**

"The San Diego Police Department is proud to be partnering with the Chula Vista and National City Police Departments to be the first to bring the Lights On! program to California. Lights On! is truly an innovative solution that will make our roads safer and assist lower-income community members. We can't thank enough the Padres Foundation and Scripps Health for their support of the program and look forward to getting these vouchers on the road soon!" – **San Diego Police Chief David Nisleit.**

"I am so happy to have yet another positive way for officers to interact with the community and at the same time helping motorists with their vehicles. The Lights On! program is unique in that it delivers on both keeping the community safe while also allowing for positive interaction with motorists. Our officers can truly help someone who may not have the means to repair their car. Lights On! can have such a

positive impact on so many in our community.” – **Chula Vista Police Department Chief Roxana Kennedy**

“The National City Police Department is excited to partner with the Lights On! program. This voucher program will allow our officers the opportunity to engage our community in a positive manner while helping those struggling financially to get their cars in good working order.” – **National City Police Department Chief Jose Tellez**

“Instead of giving a ticket, when a law enforcement officer stops a motorist, he or she will issue a voucher. And what that does is it starts the communication. It helps them to talk with each other instead of at each other.” – **Lights On! Vice President Sherman Patterson**

“We are pleased to help support our community in this effort. Vehicle violations can sometimes prevent people from going to work or seeking necessary medical care, so we are happy to help our community where we can.” – **President and CEO of Scripps Health, Chris Van Gorder**

“We are happy to support the Lights On! program, and the associated community benefits. This program will help San Diegans get minor equipment infractions repaired while helping to build a more positive relationship between law enforcement and the community. This is another opportunity for the Padres to help San Diegans while supporting our first responders who selflessly serve our community every day.” – **San Diego Padres CEO, Erik Greupner**

###