



IMUA 2026 Scholarship Program Student Guidelines & Questions

Program Purposes: To promote and recognize scholastic achievement and to demonstrate the advantages of, and the issues faced by, municipally owned and operated utilities.

Eligibility and Guidelines: Only high school seniors whose parents or legal guardians are residential customers of an IMUA member utility may submit written essays to win a \$1,000 scholarship.

(Note: IMUA scholarships are not available to the employees, staff or immediate family members of the IMUA, IMEA and IPEA, or to the immediate family members of the Board of Directors of these organizations, nor to immediate family members of those individuals who serve on the IMUA Scholarship Judging Panel and Committee.)

1. Students must complete the enclosed application and submit, along with a photocopy of their transcripts, an essay of 500 words or less, typewritten and double-spaced.
2. Essay should **NOT** mention the student's hometown or hometown utility by name.
3. Sources of information regarding municipal utilities and utility-related issues can be found in the reference section of your library, periodicals, the Internet, or individuals employed by your local municipal utility. Search phrases might include: *municipal utility; local ownership; municipalization; public power; public gas system; utility deregulation; Public Utility Holding Company Act (PUHCA); public interest; and, municipal utility rates*. There are many other sources as well. The following websites and sources may also be useful obtaining information helpful in writing your essay:
 - American Public Power Association (www.publicpower.org)
 - American Public Gas Association (www.apga.org)
 - Illinois Municipal Electric Agency (www.imea.org)
 - Illinois Municipal Utilities Association (www.imea.org, then click on the IMUA link)
 - Illinois Public Energy Agency (www.imea.org, then click on the "IPEA link")
 - Energy Information Administration (www.eia.gov)
 - Your local municipal utility superintendent
 - American Water Works Association (AWWA) (www.awwa.org)
 - Illinois Rural Water Association (ILRWA) (www.ilrwa)

4. Essays **MUST** address your choice of any one of the following four (4) issues/questions:

❖ **Benefits of Public Power**

Public power has many distinct characteristics (compared to investor-owned utilities and rural electric cooperatives) that directly and indirectly benefit consumers and contribute to community progress, economic development and growth. What are some of these many benefits, and how do you see them contributing to your community's betterment, including its quality of life?

❖ **Electricity Powering Economic Development**

Energy is tightly linked to economic development. Analyze why electricity use, access, reliability, and affordability are important to growth. What factors threaten the electric grid and readily available inexpensive electricity?

❖ **Data Center Energy Consumption**

Data centers are critical, foundational infrastructure that power everyday digital services for individuals, businesses, and governments but they use a lot of electricity. What are the pros and cons of having a data center in a community? What are the implications of adding data centers to the electric grid?

❖ **Impact of Electrification**

The shift to electrification is happening across various sectors like transportation with the use of electric vehicles; buildings with the use of heat pumps and geothermal; and in industry with the use of electric furnaces. What are the benefits of electrification and how will this impact climate change? Are there concerns with the ability to transition to higher electrification and, if so, what are those concerns?

5. The deadline for submitting written essays is **Friday, March 13, 2026**. Please send your essay, transcripts and completed application to the address listed on the bottom of the application.
6. A total of **four (4) finalists** will be chosen by the IMUA Scholarship Committee. Each finalist will receive a finalist certificate and a \$1,000 award from IMUA. **Winners will be announced sometime in April.**

GOOD LUCK!

IMUA & the City/Village of _____ 2026 Scholarship Application

Student Name: _____

Parent(s) Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Village: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Utility Account Number: _____

Utility Billing Address: _____

High School: _____

Educational Institution you plan to attend: _____

Please list any extracurricular activities or awards (use a separate sheet of paper if needed):

Please attach a copy of transcripts and completed essay of 500 words or less. Mail to:

**Illinois Municipal Utilities Association
Attention: Scholarship Committee
3400 Conifer Drive
Springfield, IL 62711**

Postmark by Friday, March 13, 2026

Or email to dbunch@imea.org (if emailing, please send in .pdf format)

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