



ILLINOIS UTILITIES BUSINESS DIVERSITY COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illinois Utilities Opening Doors to Opportunities for Diverse Suppliers *Diverse supply chain spending up 100 percent in five years*

CHICAGO – (Feb. 25, 2021) – Charter members of the Illinois Utilities Business Diversity Council ([IUBDC](#)) spent a combined total of \$1.8 billion on goods and services provided by minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned businesses in 2019, a 100 percent increase since the coalition was formed in 2015.

“Diverse suppliers are playing a major role in the efforts of Illinois utilities to modernize energy infrastructure and support the transition to clean energy, drive continuous improvement and meet the evolving needs of customers,” said [Joe Dominguez](#), CEO of ComEd and 2021 Chairman of the IUBDC Board of Directors. “Investing in a diverse supply chain also helps us lift up communities in need, which is more important than ever. Many of the equity issues that we face today can be traced back to the lack of jobs and economic opportunities and that’s an area where Illinois utilities are committed to making a positive impact.”

ComEd, along with Ameren Illinois, Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas, Nicor Gas, and Illinois American Water formed IUBDC to increase business opportunities for diverse companies through closer collaboration, technical development, and sharing of best practices. Since 2014, all electric, gas and water companies under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Commerce Commission with at least 100,000 customers report annually in April on their procurement goals and actual spending with diverse suppliers. Final tallies could top \$2 billion for 2020, according to [Charles Matthews](#), president and CEO, Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas, who passed the IUBDC chairman’s gavel to Dominguez in December.

“Our passion for diversity is exemplified not only by our supply chain and our own work forces, but by the formation of the IUBDC,” said Matthews. “We launched this organization not because of a statutory requirement, but because we saw an opportunity to join forces and engage in a systematic effort to expand the opportunities for diverse companies to succeed for the long haul.”

[The Will Group](#), a Chicago-based electrical equipment company established in 1986 by entrepreneur Stephen L. Davis, chairman, works with multiple utilities and is seeing doors open to new business

since becoming involved with the IUBDC. The company is playing a key role in ComEd's deployment of voltage optimization (VO), an energy efficiency solution that controls and lowers the voltage delivered to electric utility customers, reducing energy costs and lowering carbon emissions. The Will Group recently opened a new 60,000-square-foot facility in the North Lawndale neighborhood on Chicago's West Side, where the company will provide 100 jobs. Josh Davis, president of The Will Group, is a recipient of the IUBDC scholarship to attend the Advanced Management Education Program at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, in partnership with the National Minority Supplier Development Council.

Accelerated growth in Illinois utility company spending with diverse suppliers began with the Energy Infrastructure Modernization Act (EIMA) or "Smart Grid Bill" enacted in 2011, and the Natural Gas Consumer, Safety & Reliability Act of 2013. These initiatives created unprecedented opportunities for more diverse suppliers to support utility efforts by implementing massive upgrades to aging energy infrastructure and installing new technologies and equipment to improve reliability and service.

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For more information about the IUBDC, visit iubdc.com.

About the Illinois Utilities Business Diversity Council

The Illinois Utilities Business Diversity Council (IUBDC) members include Ameren Illinois, ComEd, Illinois American Water, Nicor Gas, North Shore Gas and Peoples Gas. The mission of the IUBDC is to serve the Illinois utilities as a forum for best practice sharing and information exchange with the focus on advancing the growth and utilization of utility-based diverse businesses in the state of Illinois.