

VILLAGE OF LOMBARD
REQUEST FOR BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACTION
For Inclusion on Board Agenda

Resolution or Ordinance (Blue) _____ *Waiver of First Requested*
 X Recommendations of Boards, Commissions & Committees (Green)
Other Business (Pink)

TO: PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FROM: Scott Niehaus, Village Manager

DATE: February 24, 2026 (B of T) Date: March 5, 2026

TITLE: Local Tourism Grant Recommendation
Lombard Junior Women’s Club – Lilac Princess Program

SUBMITTED BY: Nicole Aranas, Deputy Village Manager

BACKGROUND/POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

Attached please find information regarding a recommendation from the Community Promotion and Tourism Committee for approval of funding to the Lombard Junior Women’s Club towards the 2026 Lilac Princess Program. The Committee is recommending approval of a grant of \$7,500 through the Local Tourism grant program.

Please place this item on the consent agenda for the March 5, 2026, Board of Trustees meeting.

Review (as necessary):

Village Attorney X _____ Date _____
Finance Director X _____ Date _____
Village Manager X _____ Date _____

NOTE: All materials must be submitted to and approved by the Village Manager's Office by 12:00 noon, Wednesday, prior to the Agenda Distribution.



Memorandum

TO: Scott Niehaus
Village Manager

FROM: Nicole P. Aranas
Deputy Village Manager

DATE: February 24, 2026

SUBJECT: Community Promotion & Tourism Committee Recommendation
Lombard Junior Women's Club – Lilac Princess Program

The following is a recommendation from the Community Promotion & Tourism Committee for funding through the Local Tourism Grant Program for the Lombard Junior Women's Club in an amount of \$7,500 for the 2026 Lilac Princess Program.

Grant Request: \$7,500

The Lombard Junior Women's Club (LJWC) has requested a grant in the amount of \$7,500 to be used towards the 2026 Lilac Princess Program. The requested grant funds to the LJWC will be used to provide (5) \$1,500 scholarships to individual princesses.

The grant request from the Lombard Junior Women's Club and event budget are attached for your review.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Community Promotion & Tourism Committee recommends a grant in the amount of \$7,500 to the Lombard Junior Women's Club to be used towards the 2026 Lilac Princess Program.

**VILLAGE OF LOMBARD
LOCAL TOURISM GRANT PROGRAM 2026 APPLICATION FORM**

GENERAL INFORMATION

Organization:	Lombard Junior Women's Club (LJWC)		
Name of event:	Lilac Princess Program		
Date of event:	6/24/2026	Event location:	Village, Park District, and Chamber sponsored events at multiple Lombard venues throughout Lilac Time in Lombard, including events at Lombard businesses, in addition to a virtual presence via livestream.
Contact person:	Brittney Conway	Title:	Chairperson, Lilac Princess Program
Business address:	PO Box 512	City & Zip	Lombard, IL 60148
Telephone:	217-649-7180	Email:	lilacprincessprogram@gmail.com

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Total cost of the project:	\$ 11,725
Cost of city services requested in this application (if any):	\$0.00
Grant funding requested in this application (excluding city services)	\$ 7,500
Total funding requested in this application (grant including services):	\$ 7,500
Percent of total project cost being requested:	0% of project costs over the \$7,500 Princess scholarships
Anticipated attendance:	Tiara Presentation – 50 in-person, 200+ virtual; Lombard Park District Easter Egg Hunt – 100; Village Blood Drive – 100; Little Lady Lilac Ball – 100; Coronation – 100 in-person, 100+ virtual; Lilac Ball – 225; Lilac Day Parade – 2,500; TLC Camp Carnival – 100;

	Princess Dining Out Fundraisers – 100;
Anticipated number of overnight hotel stays:	Limited number of overnight hotel stays will be associated with the 2026 Lilac Princesses and their families. However, we anticipate numerous other hotel stays that will occur that are associated with Lilac Time events in which the Princesses participate.

Briefly describe the project for which are funds are being requested:

The Lilac Queen and her Court have been a cornerstone of the Lilac Festival in Lombard since 1930. The Lilac Princesses and the Queen serve as ambassadors for the Village of Lombard during Lilac Time, making many community appearances including the Park District Easter Egg Hunt, Little Lady Lilac Ball, Lilac Ball, and the Lilac Parade. They serve as positive role models, volunteering at various community events throughout the spring and summer, including the Village Spring Blood Drive and TLC Camp, a camp for children with cancer held annually in Lombard. Each Princess (4) and the Queen receives a \$1,500 scholarship, which was established by the Village in 2001, at the time the Lombard Junior Women’s Club was asked by the Park District to run the program. The scholarship had traditionally been \$1,000 until 2023, at which time, the Community Promotion and Tourism Committee suggested the scholarships be increased to \$1,500 per person, funded through the Local Tourism Grant Program.

The grant funds requested in this application would be used to provide the five (5) \$1,500 scholarships that have been awarded by the Village of Lombard since 2001. All other expenses to support the selection of the Lilac Queen and her Court, and the expenses associated with their participation in numerous Lilac Time Events, will be covered by the Lombard Junior Women’s Club.

ORGANIZATION

Number of years that the organization has been in existence:	95
Number of years that the project or event has been in existence:	95
Number of years the project has been supported by Village of Lombard funds:	25 years (the Village has supported the scholarships for the past 25 years and has provided funding for a portion of other expenses for 9 of those years).

How many years does the organization anticipate it will request grant funding?	Undetermined for scholarship funds. Funding beyond the cost of the scholarships has decreased to 0% of overall program expenses as of 2024.
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1) Describe the organization (include brief history, mission, and ability to carry out this project):

The Lombard Junior Women’s Club (LJWC) was established in 1930 by members of the Lombard Woman’s Club. LJWC is part of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, an international women’s organization dedicated to community service. LJWC embraces this mission and participates in many local service projects with organizations such as, The Outreach House, Tri-Town YMCA, SCARCE, Northern Illinois Food Bank, Feed My Starving Children, cooking and providing food for DuPage PADS, providing Christmas gifts for low-income families in York Township, providing Thanksgiving baskets through York Center, and organizing the Pumpkin Smash in the Village of Lombard, to name a few.

The LJWC has successfully run the Lilac Princess Program for the past 25 years in addition to TLC Camp, our day camp for children with cancer and a sibling, which is in its 44th year. These programs require dedication, leadership, management, fundraising, organizational, and collaboration skills. We take great pride in the countless hours our members have worked to improve our community through service and philanthropy, and we have built strong relationships with community organizations through this program throughout the years. We remain confident in our ability to carry out the Lilac Princess Program in 2026.

2) Please describe how the program and any proceeds from the event support the goals and objectives of the organization, other local groups or initiatives, and the community at large:

Lombard has been called the Lilac Village since the late 1920s, and the first Lilac Festival was held in 1930. The Lilac Queen and her Court have reigned over Lilac Time since this first festival and their presence at these events continues to be an exciting tradition for the Lombard community. By supporting Lilac Time, the Lilac Princess Program supports the Village of Lombard's brand, a priority identified by the community, as well as the Village's vision of creating a distinctive sense of spirit and an outstanding quality of life for its residents. The Lilac Queen and her Court also support Lombard Park District and Lombard Chamber of Commerce events during Lilac Time. In addition, the Princess Program supports the LJWC's goals of service to the community and developing leadership, organizational, and management skills in our members.

In 2021, we added a professional development workshop for the Lilac Court, sponsored by Weselak & Associates, a local Lombard business. The Lilac Court learns skills on presentation, communication, and media interviews. Adding this opportunity to the program supports the development of young women in the Lombard community by providing them invaluable life skills.

The Lilac Princess Program brings in very little direct proceeds. The Lilac Princesses support the Park District at events including the Little Lady Lilac Ball and the Easter Egg Hunt and the Chamber of Commerce at the Lilac Ball and Arts & Crafts Fair where funds are raised. However, these funds do not directly benefit the Lilac Princess Program or the LJWC. In 2021, we started 'dining out' fundraisers in the month of April and support Lombard restaurants with these events. These fundraisers have nearly doubled in income over the last 4 years. While the amount raised is still limited compared to program costs, the secondary goal of the dining out fundraisers is to bring exposure to Lombard restaurants.

3) What is the organization's plan to make the project self-sustaining?

The LJWC financially supported the Lilac Princess Program expenses from 2001-2014 at a cost of \$4,500 per year. This figure does not include the \$5,000 in scholarships that were provided by the Village of Lombard or the float for the Lilac Parade provided by the Park District at a cost of \$650 (due to inflation, the float now costs over \$1,000).

Since 2015, LJWC has received a grant from the Village to support a portion of program expenses plus funding for the scholarships. Each year, the LJWC has requested less grant funding for program expenses and has increased its own fundraising directly related to the program. In 2021, we introduced 'dining out' fundraising events where a portion of the proceeds from local restaurants are donated back to the program (Lilac Princesses make appearances at each restaurant during the fundraising nights). We continue to host these events in conjunction with the program. In 2024, the LJWC funded 100% of expenses outside of the scholarships and plans to do the same in 2026. Additional funding from the Village (\$2,500) was requested to support a Lilac Court Reunion event.

In addition to fundraising specifically for the Lilac Princess Program, the LJWC appropriates philanthropic funds raised to support its other projects, like TLC Camp and donations to local community organizations, to the Lilac Princess Program. The last several years have been very strong for the organization with successful fundraisers, such as the Lombard Brew Fest, Cocktails & Candy Canes Pub Crawl, Bunco, and Egg My Yard, to name a few.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Is the event open to the general public? Yes No
- Do you intend to apply for a liquor license for this project? Yes No
- Will any revenues from this event be returned to the community? Yes No
- Have you requested grant funding in the past? Yes No

If yes, provide grant awards for past 5 years:

2021: \$6,000	2022: \$6,000	2023: \$7,500 (scholarships only)	2024: \$7,500
(scholarships only) 2025: \$10,000 (included \$2,500 for Lilac Court Reunion)			

1) Provide a full detailed description of the proposed project or event.

A detailed (tentative) timeline of events has been attached to this application and reflects several months of planning and preparation prior to January 2026 and the selection of the Lilac Court at Preliminary Interviews on March 1, 2026. From mid-March through mid-May, the Lilac Queen and her Court, along with their LJWC sponsors, will be actively involved in numerous community events as outlined, and additional events will be considered and accepted as time allows. During the month of June, the Queen and her Court will volunteer with TLC Camp, making this program a nearly year-long commitment for the LJWC.

2) If your application is accepted, how will the tourism grant funds be used?

Grant funds will be used to provide five (5) \$1,500 scholarships to the Lilac Court members (\$1,500 per eligible Princess*). A detailed budget is included at the bottom of this application. This is an increase from the \$1,000 scholarships that were previously awarded as a result from a suggestion by the Community Promotion and Tourism Committee that the scholarships be increased to \$1,500 per eligible Princess.

*The LJWC understands that Village grant funds cannot be used to provide a scholarship for a Village employee's child. If necessary, we will address this as our financial situation allows.

3) What modifications to the event or other steps will be taken to increase event attendance over previous years (not applicable to first time events)?

Based on previous experience, we plan to continue to review local school calendars to avoid conflicts with Preliminary Interviews and will continue to work to increase advertising for potential Princesses via local newspapers and social media. We plan to increase our social media presence even further, as that seems to be the primary way potential applicants engage with the program.

We have also created roles on our Lilac Princess Program committee aimed at increasing communication with community partners with the goal of increasing visitor attendance at Lilac Time events. We plan to continue to leverage social media to draw former residents back to Lombard and Lilac Time, including past Princesses, their friends and families. Our Lilac Court database has grown to over 75 past Princesses.

In addition to the abovementioned tactics, we plan to continue to livestream events where the Lilac Court is in attendance. Livestreaming events was new for the program in 2020 and we found that it increased exposure both of the Lilac Princess Program and of Lombard in general. Over 1,000 people view our livestreams of the Tiara Presentation and Coronation each year.

LOCATION

Provide the location of the event or project. If a location has not been secured, list the venue(s) being proposed or considered.

Preliminary Interviews – Sunset Knoll Recreation Center
Parent & Princess Orientation – TBD
Lilac Court Communication Skills Workshop – TBD
Tiara Presentation – Maple Street Chapel (First Church of Lombard)
Mother-Princess Tea – Local Lombard restaurant (typically Rosemary & Jeans)
Easter Egg Hunt – Lombard Common
Princess Dining Out Fundraising Nights – TBD Lombard restaurants
Final Interviews – Westin hotel in Lombard
Village Blood Drive – First Church of Lombard
Little Lady Lilac Ball – Lombard Common
Coronation – Lilacia Park (in case of inclement weather, Lombard Historical Society Carriage House)
Arts & Crafts Fair – Downtown Lombard (potentially lunch at downtown restaurant prior to event)
Lilac Ball – TBD (the Carlisle or Westin)
Lilac Day Parade – Main St. Lombard
TLC Camp – Sunset Knoll Recreation Center

*All events and locations are subject to change and/or cancellation.

MILESTONES AND TIMETABLES

Describe the milestones that will mark the progress towards implementing the project and provide a timetable for the completion of each milestone.

IMPACT

1) Please describe how the event or program will promote overnight stays and/or tourism within the Village of Lombard. If a returning event, detail the number of overnight stays generated and share details regarding the tourism impact of the event.

The Lilac Court serves as community ambassadors throughout Lilac Time in Lombard at numerous events. Indirectly, Lilac Time events supported by the Lilac Court, account for many more overnight stays as well as visitors to local merchants and restaurants.

- 2) Please describe the economic benefit to local businesses and the Lombard community. How will your event draw more people from outside the local market (50 miles or more) or attract a new visitor audience?

We continue to work with other community organizations to promote Lilac Time to new potential visitor groups. We will continue to invite former Lilac Court members to Lilac Time events (we have a database of over 75 former Lilac Court members). Many of these women live outside of the area and would travel over 50 miles with their friends and/or families to attend Lilac Time events. We will also continue to encourage Princess families to invite their own out of town guests to attend Lilac Time events.

We also hope that by offering sponsorship opportunities to local businesses it will encourage patronage by out-of-town visitors. We plan to include a listing of sponsors on event programs (e.g., Tiara Presentation, Coronation, etc.) and in social media postings related to program events. We expect this would encourage out of town guests to visit these businesses while they are in town for Princess Program events.

We also expect that livestreaming events related to the Lilac Princess Program and their appearance at Lilac Time events would entice out of town visitors to come to Lombard. In addition, we hold Lilac Princess Dining Out fundraising nights at local restaurants that we promote on social media. We expect out of town visitors to support the program through these events.

- 3) Who is the target audience for your event or project? What is your anticipated attendance?

The target audience for this program is primarily Lombard residents. We take pride in this program and giving young adults an opportunity to celebrate their personal accomplishments. They serve as positive role models, dedicating their time to many community events throughout the year. The Lilac Princess Program has become a staple to our community through the years, and we believe that every Lombard resident, past, present, and future, could be identified as a target audience.

- 4) Please identify and detail the estimated cost of any Village of Lombard services anticipated as part of the event (e.g., Police, Public Works, Fire, barricades, etc.). For each cost, confirm whether the costs for such services be covered by the host organization and reimbursed to the Village or are whether the services are requested to be covered under this grant. Any services not specifically requested below and approved as part of this grant, will be the responsibility of the applicant organization.

We do not anticipate any Village of Lombard services being required as part of the Lilac Princess Program.

- 5) Please describe any collaborative arrangements developed or anticipated with other organizations to fund or otherwise implement the project (including in-kind donations).

The Lombard Service League purchases the tiaras for the Princesses to be gifted at the Tiara Presentation.

The Lombard Park District provides the float for the Lilac Parade up to \$1,000 value. They also provide venues as a nominal cost for the Lilac Princess Preliminary Interviews.

Glenbard East Music Department student musicians donate their time to provide music at the Tiara Presentation and Coronation. We donate \$100 to the GE Music Department for each event.

Maple Street Chapel allows us to use the chapel for the Tiara Presentation. We donate \$100 for their contribution.

The Lombard Chamber of Commerce provides 10 tickets to the Lilac Ball for the Lilac Court and their escorts.

Prairie Honey Floral Studio provides flowers for the Lilac Court at several of the program events.

Many local organizations and business present gifts to the Lilac Court at the Tiara Presentation. Past presenters have included the Park District, Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce, Lombard Garden Club, Maple Street Chapel Preservation Society, and the Helen Plum Library. We anticipate many of these same organizations to contribute to the event in 2026

- 6) Please describe your marketing plan. Detail the strategies your organization will use to promote the event or project (e.g., advertising, public relations, marketing, print materials, promotional pieces).

We plan to market to potential Princesses via the Park District Spring Activity brochure, the Lombardian newspaper, on the Village electronic sign, announcement via high school scholarship opportunities, and social media. We work jointly with the Park District, the Village, the Chamber of Commerce, and other community organizations as needed to promote Lilac Time events prior to and during the events via appearances and participation. We also promote the program through our website, www.lombardjrs.com.

- 7) Funding for the Local Tourism Grant Program for 2026 is constrained. What have you done to reduce the amount of funds your organization is requesting under this grant? If you do not receive the full funding you requested for 2026, how will your organization adjust? What modifications can/will you make to your budget or event if full grant funding is not made available?

We are requesting \$2,500 less in grant funding than in 2025. The funds requested will be used to cover the five (5) \$1,500 scholarships that are awarded. All other program expenses will be covered by the LJWC.

If we do not receive the full funding requested for 2026, we will need to reevaluate the budget and may need to cut or reduce the amount of the scholarship award and/or cut some of the events planned. However, Lilac Court appearances at Lilac Time events are the foundation of this program. If we do not offer a scholarship in conjunction with the program, we are concerned for the longevity of this program. Our main concern is being able to provide each Lilac Court member with the \$1,500 scholarship and to provide opportunities for community interaction.

FINANCES

- Please include a detailed itemized budget for your entire event on the attached budget form (2 years of past actuals and estimates for upcoming event).
- Attach a copy of the most recently completed agency audit and Federal Form 990. If these documents are not available, please explain why they are not available.

CHECKLIST

- Completed Local Tourism Grant Program Application Form.
- Completed detailed budget form.
- Promotional materials from past events (not applicable to first time events).
- Post event summary from past event (not applicable to first time events).
- Copy of the most recently completed agency audit or explanation of why it is not available.
- Copy of the most recent Federal Form 990 for the agency or explanation of why it is not available.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- Applicant agrees to acknowledge Village of Lombard support in all event materials using required attribution language.
- Applicant agrees to submit a post-event summary within 90 days including attendance, hotel stays, marketing materials, and evaluation.
- Applicant understands that grant awards may be less than the requested amount and agrees to proceed with adjusted funding if awarded.
- Applicant confirms that no elected official, Village employee, immediate family member, or owned business entity will benefit from this grant funding.

Additional Notes, Comments or Explanations:

Our organization does not employ an agency to perform an audit. However, we have practices in place to maintain the integrity of our accounts. All payments require a receipt attached to a check voucher that is signed by the requestor, the chair of the committee, and the Vice-President or President of the LJWC. At the end of the year, the Treasurer, along with several board and at-large club members, audit our books.

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that to the best of his or her knowledge and belief that data in this application are true and correct, the application has been duly authorized by the organization and any funds received under this grant will be used for the purposes described in this application.

Name:			
Title or office held:		Date:	

Signature: _____

Estimated value of in-kind contributions (explain)

ACTUAL 2024	ACTUAL 2025	ANTICIPATED 2026
\$3,575.00	\$	
Parade float sponsored by the Lombard Park District, new Queen crown and 5 tiaras provided by Lombard Service League, food and gift donations provided by LJWC members, flowers provided by Prairie Honey Floral Studio, and 10 Lilac Ball tickets provided by Lombard Chamber of Commerce.	Parade float sponsored by the Lombard Park District (price increase), 5 tiaras provided by Lombard Service League, food and gift donations provided by LJWC members, flowers provided by Prairie Honey Floral Studio, and 10 Lilac Ball tickets provided by Lombard Chamber of Commerce.	Parade float sponsored by the Lombard Park District, 5 tiaras provided by Lombard Service League, food and gift donations provided by LJWC members, flowers provided by Prairie Honey Floral Studio, and 10 Lilac Ball tickets provided by Lombard Chamber of Commerce.