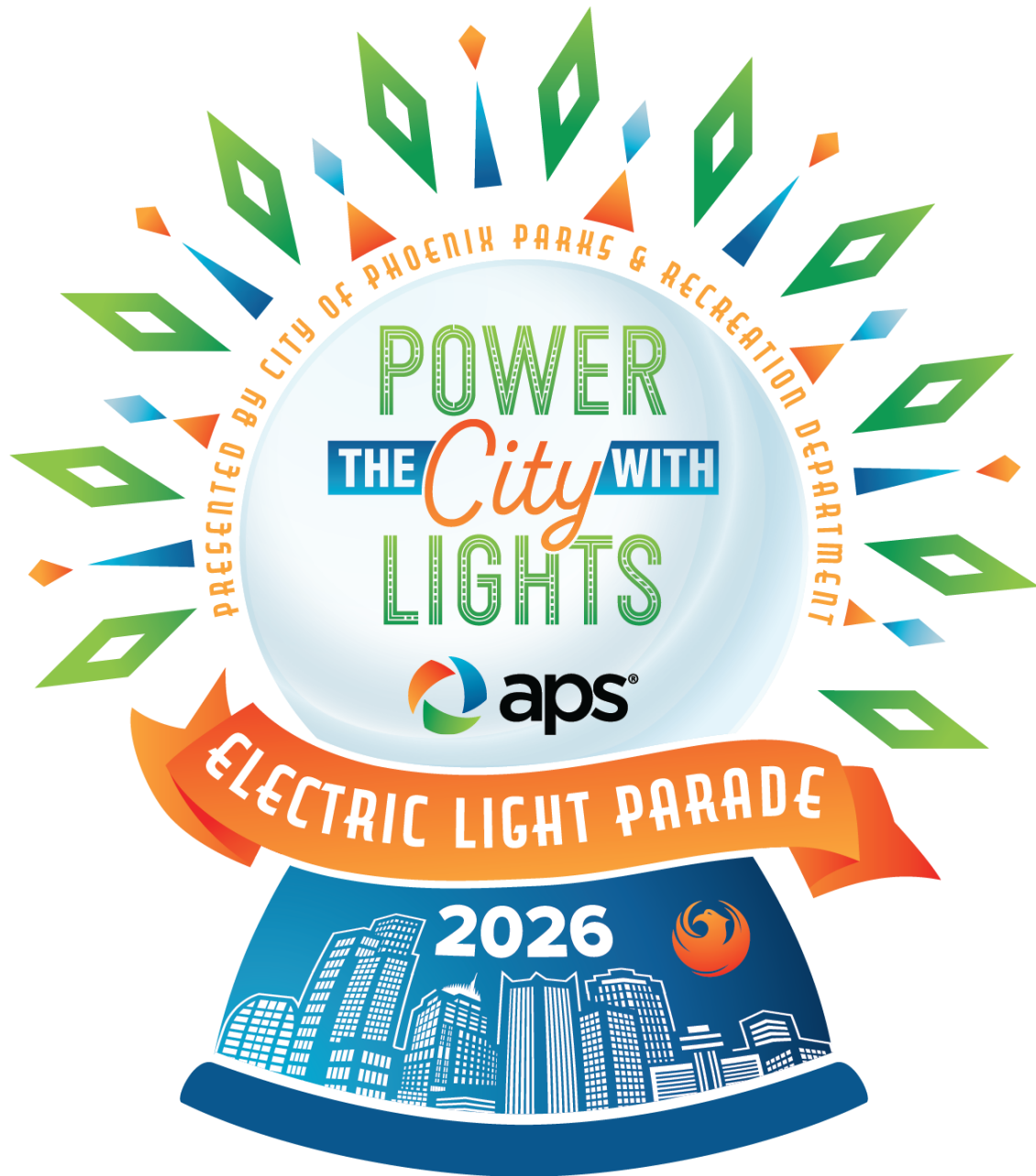


2026 APS ELECTRIC LIGHT PARADE ENTRY PARTICIPATION INFORMATION



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APS ELECTRIC LIGHT PARADE

The APS Electric Light Parade has long been an event where families, neighborhood groups and businesses from across the city come together to provide an outstanding, family friendly, holiday themed special event that is enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of families each year. Coming into its 39th year, the APS Electric Light Parade continues to grow, continues to bring the magic and remains the sensation it was ever since that very first time. The parade engenders a feeling of belonging through a shared experience; it connects friends and neighbors; it builds and enriches the community; improves the quality of life for residents; brings people together; inspires a positive image of the city where attendees have a shared pride in their community; brings vitality to the community; and promotes economic impact and tourism. The 2026 event is no different; we invite each of you to make this a tradition for your family, organization, or business by participating in this year's parade. Please read through this guide and if you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact us.

This year's parade will be held Saturday, December 5, 2026, at 7 pm.

PARADE COORDINATION

APS Electric Light Parade is produced and coordinated by the City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department. The event has many partners and sponsors which includes our amazing title sponsor Arizona Public Service (APS) as well as North Phoenix Baptist Church, our parade staging site host and ABC15 our TV Broadcast sponsor. Please see the event website for a full list of sponsors and partners.



2026 is a very special year for APS as they celebrate 140 years of service to Arizona.



PARADE THEME

The 2026 APS Electric Light Parade theme is **“Power the City with Lights”**.

PARADE GRAND MARSHAL

The 2026 APS Electric Light Parade Grand Marshal has not been finalized, please watch the event webpage and social media for the official announcement as we approach the parade.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

If you or your organization wants to be part of the parade, registration opens on September 8, 2026, at 8:00 am. Entry registration is ongoing through 10:00 pm on October 16, 2026. Entry categories will fill before open registration ends but there is an opportunity to get on a waiting list.

1. Registration for the APS Electric Light Parade is accepted through our online registration system at <https://apm.activecommunities.com/phoenix> or by walk-in at Parks and Recreation Department community centers or division offices.
2. If you do not already have one, you will need to create an online account prior to registering.
3. A registration code for each entry category can be found below in the entry category and fee schedule section of this document.
4. Registering for a category you don't qualify for because the correct one is full will result in a withdrawal of the entry.
5. Registration is payable by cash, credit card, debit card or by check (checks shall be payable to the City of Phoenix) depending on whether you register online or in person.
6. Carefully review the ELP Guidelines, Safety & Operations document available on the event webpage prior to registering to ensure you understand all the participation requirements.

Withdrawal requests shall be presented in writing. Withdrawals will receive partial refunds (80%) until October 30, 2026; there are no refunds on withdrawals after October 30, 2026. There are no refunds for entries withdrawn by organizers.

ENTRY CATEGORIES

Interested in registering for the APS Electric Light Parade? Review the entry category descriptions listed below to determine which one of the seven categories your entry fits and go to the event website to find a link to registration (www.phoenix.gov/parks/elp). If you are unsure which category your entry qualifies, please contact the Parade Entry Liaison through the event email address (elp@phoenix.gov). There are a limited number of entry spots assigned to each category and all categories will fill up so register early. All City of Phoenix, sponsor and dignitary entries must register directly through the Parade Coordinator.

Parade leadership reserves the right to make the final decision on participation and category qualification.

Marching Band Entry

A Marching Band Entry is an ensemble of musicians that play and march in time and in formation to the music. A marching band consists of instrumental musicians that play brass, woodwinds, and percussion instruments. A band may include visual teams such as majorettes, baton twirlers or a color guard to enhance the performance with flags, dance and choreography. To qualify for this category, APS Electric Light Parade marching band entries must contain at least two of the instrument categories listed previously.

1. To perform in the APS Electric Light Parade, all band members, instruments, handheld accessories: headpieces, etc., must be lit, outlined or accented by light products.
2. The first six bands registered will receive a \$200 honorarium. Honorariums are issued to and mailed to the school approximately three weeks following APS Electric Light Parade.
3. All bands are required to play holiday music on the route.
4. Bands may NOT stop or perform reverse marches or stunts on the APS Electric Light Parade route; these activities cause gaps in the parade which negatively affect the attendee experience.
5. Each marching band will be limited to 125 participants. Bands must be able to proceed on the route utilizing approximately 20 feet in width.
6. The chaperone ratio is 1:30 and may have no more than 5 in all. All chaperones are required to dress in all black or unit uniform. Chaperone participation greater than the allowable number will be asked to move off the route.
7. A marching band may have 1 support vehicle (or tow vehicle which may include a towed float) as part of the entry which must be lit according to lighting standards.
8. The chaperone ratio is 1:30 and may have no more than 5 in all. All chaperones are required to dress in all black or unit uniform. Chaperone participation greater than the allowable number will be asked to move off the route.

9. In order to receive a stipend and be judged for an award, a W9 must be on file prior to the parade.

Performance Group Entry

This entry category is for walking groups that are performing while they march (forward motion only). Examples include but are not limited to dancers, twirling groups, drill teams, drum corps, etc.

1. A performance entry may have up to 50 participants.
2. To perform in the APS Electric Light Parade, all members, handheld accessories, headpieces, etc., must be lit, outlined, or accented by light products.
3. A performance entry may have 1 support vehicle which may include a tow vehicle (float) as part of the entry which must be lit according to the lighting standards.
4. The chaperone ratio is 1:30 so performance groups may have no more than 2 in all. All chaperones are required to dress in all black or unit uniform. Chaperone participation greater than the allowable number will be asked to move off the route.
5. Because this is a performance group, commentary must focus on the performance rather than promotion of the business.

There is a prize awarded for the top entry in this category.

Community Entry A & B

Community Entry A can be an individual, family, organization, club or neighborhood group, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, bicycle clubs, etc. Community Entry B are clubs made up of motorized entries that include automobile clubs, off road vehicles, quads, or car groups.

1. Community entries may not advertise sponsors or corporate supporters' names; signage must reflect only the name of the entry.
2. A community entry (A) may have up to 50 participants and may have 1 support vehicle which may include a tow vehicle (float) as part of the entry which must be lit according to the lighting standards.
3. A community entry (B) cannot have more than 20 vehicles and up to 10 walkers. Vehicle entries must go down the route side by side (2 by 2).
4. *There is a prize awarded for the top two entries in this category.*

Non-Profit Organization Entry

A Non-Profit Organization Entry is an organization certified as a 501-C3 organization. A 501-C3 determination or affirmation letter must be submitted following your registration. Groups that are not certified 501-C3 must register in the community category.

1. You may have the non-profit name on the float, but you cannot have a commercial sponsor name with your entry.
2. A non-profit entry may be a walking entry or a vehicle entry (described below). A non-profit walking entry may have up to 50 walking participants and may have 1 support

vehicle which may include a tow vehicle (float) as part of the entry which must be lit according to the lighting standards OR the non-profit may be a vehicle entry which may have up to 20 walkers and up to 2 vehicles (both vehicles may include a towed float).

3. *There is a prize awarded for the top two entries in this category.*

Commercial Entry

Commercial entries are broken into 2 registration categories: large commercial or small commercial. A small commercial business is one that has 24 or fewer employees while a large commercial business is one with 25 or more employees.

1. The commercial entry may display their company logo however, it must be lit according to the standards provided in these guidelines.
2. A commercial entry may have up to 60 participants and 4 vehicles (vehicle and tow (float) count as 1).

Government Entry

A Government Entry will be supported and constructed by a government agency. This includes organizations such as schools, federal, state, city, county and local municipal agencies, etc. that do not qualify in one of the other entry categories.

1. Government entries may have up to 50 participants and 3 vehicles (vehicle and tow (float) count as 1).

City of Phoenix Entry

City of Phoenix Departments and agencies require a different registration process. To participate, reach out to the Parade Coordinator for additional information.

Entry Registration Restrictions

1. Due to existing parade agreements and contracts with our media partners, we are unable to allow other media agencies to register for the parade.
2. APS and City of Phoenix cannot endorse, or appear to endorse, any political candidates or initiatives. Therefore, no political candidates or entries conducting the promotion of any initiative are allowed to participate in the APS Electric Light Parade. Entries may not show or provide a demonstration of support for any candidate(s).
3. Parade organizers initiate invitations to duly elected political dignitaries approved to participate.

**There are a number of holiday events around the Phoenix area that love to invite the APS Electric Light Parade entries to be a part of their events. Parade staff will provide information on those events as it becomes available.*

REGISTRATION CATEGORY, REGISTRATION CODE AND FEE

Entry Category	Registration Code	Fee
Marching Band Entry	60067	No charge
Performance Entry	60068	\$100
Community Entry A	60069	\$75
Community Entry B	60070	\$75
Non-Profit Entry	60071	\$100
Commercial Entry - Large – a large commercial has 25 employees or more	60072	\$400
Commercial Entry - Small – a small commercial has up to 24 employees	60073	\$300
Government Entry	60074	\$100

There are a limited number of entry spots available in each category so register early. If you register for the wrong category, you will be removed and placed in the correct entry category. If that category is already full, you will be refunded and placed on the waiting list

ENTRY DETAIL & COMMENTARY FORM

After registering, each entry will receive an email with a parade entry form which is used to collect entry information and the commentary. The form is a fillable document, so we request that you make every effort to complete it rather than printing and handwriting the information on it. The entry detail form is a critical component to the effective presentation of the event. The entry information form must be complete as the details are important to effective staging/destaging as well as for your placement in the parade. When completing the commentary section, include information that can be used to identify and describe your entry for the televised version (not a live broadcast). Your commentary should be a brief narrative – Use 4-5 dot points with no more than 250 characters. Remember to maintain the spirit of the event; do not over commercialize the text...the script should be fun to hear! Event producers and our broadcast partners reserve the right to edit and use the material as needed and at their discretion. Every entry **MUST** complete and return the document on or before Friday, October 30, 2026. Entries must also submit the W9 provided prior to the event to be included in the entry judging. Late forms will negatively affect entry position. Excessively late or missing entry forms will result in the suspension of registration/participation. Entries suspended will not receive a refund of entry fees.

Commentary Samples

1. Here comes the fabulous Happy Dance Family. This is their 3rd year participating in the parade.
2. Happy Dance Family brings you “Hollywood Christmas” with high energy dancing, stepping and chanting to holiday music.
3. Happy Dance Family took home the award for best performance group in 2024.

SOCIAL MEDIA

FOLLOW. LIKE. SHARE. Lets promote and showcase the APS Electric Light Parade. We’d love for you to engage your friends, family, business partners, etc through the use of social media and also enjoy other great content on the City YouTube channel. Please join the Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department in the promotion and showcasing of the annual APS Electric Light Parade through social media channels like Facebook and Twitter. The City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department takes a proactive approach in posting parade content leading up to, and throughout the event so take a moment to Follow - Like – Share our social media accounts:

- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/phxparks> (@phxparks)
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/phoenixparks/> (facebook.com/phoenixparks)
- X: <https://x.com/PhoenixParks> (@PhoenixParks)
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/cityofphoenixaz>

We invite parade entrants and spectators to tag us directly using the information noted above; additionally, we would like entries to share posts with one another using the hashtag **#PHXLightParade**

Don’t forget to tag our great partners so they can engage as well.

PARADE BROADCAST COVERAGE

The television broadcast partner for the APS Electric Light Parade is ABC15. ABC15 also does an amazing Facebook live feed before and through the parade. In the weeks following the parade, ABC15 runs multiple broadcasts on a number of their networks and media platforms. Details are posted on the event website as they are confirmed.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

For 39 years, the APS Electric Light Parade has been a holiday tradition for Phoenix families. Please help us compile an event history by sharing pictures, videos or stories about the event, of entries you've been a part of, special memorable moments you've had while attending or from being a part of the parade, and more. Please send your memories to **elp@phoenix.gov**. Please note, by submitting, the Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to utilize those images, videos and stories in any way necessary for, but not limited to, event promotion, the web site, for fliers and other printed parade materials, social media, tv broadcast, award applications, etc.

PARADE ROUTE

The APS Electric Light Parade entries are staged at North Phoenix Baptist Church (larger units may be moved out of the staging area and onto Central Avenue at 3 pm parade day). Entries head out of the church southbound on Central Avenue (the actual route begins at Montebello). Entries head south on Central until they reach Camelback Road at which point, they turn east and head up to 7th Street. At 7th Street, entries turn south and continue down 7th Street until they reach Indian School Road which is the end of the route. The route is approximately 2.3 miles long and takes about 60 minutes to reach the end. A route map can be found on the event webpage.

PICTURES AND VIDEO

There is a variety of photographs and video taken during staging, judging and during the parade; participation in the parade shall constitute permission for organizers (at their discretion) to utilize photographs and video in any way necessary for, but not limited to promotion, advertising, publicity, web site, social media, or any other medium (now known or later developed) as well as for fliers and other printed parade materials, award applications, etc. There are no restrictions on the video and pictures entries can take but for security reasons, drones must not be used on Saturday, December 5, 2026.

VENDING

There is **NO VENDING** authorized or permitted at the event staging site, destaging areas, streets, sidewalks or other event areas December 4 - 5, 2026 per Phoenix City Code, Street Vending, Article II, Section 31-24, Item 6.

IMPORTANT DATES, DEADLINES & DETAILS

IMPORTANT DATES	DETAILS
September 8, 2026 – October 16, 2026	Parade entry registration period (while space is available).
October 21, 2026 (6-7:30 pm)	First-time entry workshop This is an informational meeting for first time participants and/or those interested in an in-depth look at the entry guidelines, the entry inspection process, as well as some decorating tips and tricks. The workshop will be held at Devonshire Senior Center, 2802 E. Devonshire (1 block N. of Indian School Rd. on 28th St.). Return entries are welcome to attend to discuss updates to the APS Electric Light Parade and to share ideas and insight with newcomers.
October 30, 2026	Commentary form, proof of vehicle insurance, and special placement consideration requests due.
December 1, 2026 (5 pm doors open for packets 6-7:30 pm meeting)	Entry Meeting This is a MANDATORY meeting for all entry representatives and walking marshals to review the staging and de-staging plans, receive the APS Electric Light Parade line-up and any last-minute changes and announcements, as well as to pick up parade packets and parking passes. The meeting is held at Steele Indian School Park (Memorial Hall), 300 East Indian School Road.
December 4, 2026	Entry check-in & staging Entry check-in & staging (10 am-5 pm). Entries can arrive, check in and stage their entry at the designated location in the North Phoenix Baptist Church parking lot at Central Avenue & Bethany Home Road.
	Driver, Entry Marshal & Entry Spotter meeting (5:00 pm) This is a MANDATORY meeting conducted by the Phoenix Police Department for all float or towing unit drivers to cover specific regulations. The meeting is held in the chapel at North Phoenix Baptist Church, 5757 N. Central Avenue.
	Entry judging (5:30-8 pm) All float entries must be on site at North Phoenix Baptist Church, 5757 N. Central Avenue, and ready (lit) by 5:30 pm to be judged.
December 5, 2026	Entry check-in & staging (10 am-4 pm) Entries can arrive, check in and stage their entry at the designated location in the North Phoenix Baptist Church parking lot at Central Avenue & Bethany Home Road.

	Parade Go Time Entries should be lit up and ready to go at 6:50 pm. The staging manager will begin to move entries into formation at 6:50 pm. APS Electric Light Parade begins PROMPTLY at 7 pm.
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For additional information, please look at the Entry Judging & Awards document as well as the Guidelines, Safety & Operation Details document on the event web page.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Event Email: ELP@phoenix.gov

DISCLAIMERS

For Parks and Recreation:

This publication can be provided in an alternate format upon request. Call 602-262-6862 (voice) or 602-262-6713 (TTY). 602-534-3787 (FAX).

E-mail: receptionist.PKS@phoenix.gov

Non-Discrimination Notice:

The City of Phoenix prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation, or disability in its services, programs and activities. Anyone who believes he or she has been discriminated against may file a complaint with the City of Phoenix Equal Opportunity Department.