



CITY OF GARY

Mayor Eddie D. Melton

Recovery Action Plan

This comprehensive set of priorities and proposed actions was given to NIPSCO to ensure the City of Gary recovers from the August 11th storm and becomes more resilient moving forward.

We are awaiting their detailed response.

AUGUST 2026

RECOVERY ACTION PLAN

August 2026

01 | Customer Relief

These requests provide immediate financial and service protections to Gary residents directly affected by the prolonged outage.

- **60-Day Disconnection Moratorium:** Suspend residential disconnections for nonpayment for at least 60 days following full restoration of service citywide and cease pending disconnection and collection notices during that period.
- **Waiver of Fees and Penalties:** Waive late fees, reconnection charges, deposits, and similar penalties incurred during the storm and recovery period.
- **Automatic Outage Bill Credits:** Provide every affected Gary customer an automatic pro-rata credit for the entire period electric service was unavailable, without requiring a claim.
- **Enhanced Prolonged-Outage Credits:** Provide additional fixed-dollar credits that increase based on outage duration, with thresholds such as 48 hours, 72 hours, 96 hours, and one week.
- **Emergency Household Loss Reimbursement:** Establish a simplified reimbursement program for reasonable documented losses, including spoiled food and medication, generator/fuel expenses, emergency lodging, and similar expenses.
- **Vulnerable Resident Assistance:** Provide enhanced assistance and protections for seniors, low-income households, medically vulnerable residents, residents dependent upon electrically powered medical equipment, and senior/multifamily housing residents.
- **Extended Payment Arrangements:** Offer interest-free extended payment plans for customers experiencing financial hardship related to the storm, without additional deposits, fees, or penalties.

02 | Community Recovery

These requests recognize that the prolonged outage created costs extending beyond individual utility bills and require a direct NIPSCO contribution to Gary's recovery.

- **Weatherhead & Residential Electrical Repair Fund:** Fund or substantially contribute to repairs of weatherheads, meter bases, service masts, and other customer-owned electrical infrastructure necessary to restore residential service.
- **Private-Property Tree Removal Assistance:** Fund removal of storm-damaged trees and limbs on residential property when necessary to restore service or eliminate continuing safety hazards.
- **Food Security Funding:** Make direct contributions to local food banks, pantries, community organizations, and emergency food-distribution programs to replace food lost during the outage and address resulting food insecurity.
- **Gary Storm Recovery Fund:** Make a substantial direct contribution to the Greater Gary Storm Recovery and Relief Fund administered by the Legacy Foundation for documented storm-related needs and costs
- **Emergency Siren & Communications Upgrades:** Fund or co-fund improvements to Gary's emergency warning, siren, and communications systems, including backup-power capabilities.
- **Public Infrastructure Repairs:** Contribute toward storm-related repairs to City infrastructure, particularly infrastructure damaged by utility equipment, downed trees/lines, or restoration activities.
- **Critical Facility Backup Power:** Partner with the City to provide generators, battery storage, redundant electrical feeds, or other backup systems for critical municipal and community facilities.

Importantly, these community-recovery contributions should be expressly separate from individual customer credits and reimbursements.

03 | Accountability & Emergency Response

These requests give the City the information necessary to understand why restoration took as long as it did and establish better procedures for the next emergency.

- **30-Day After-Action Report:** Provide a comprehensive report detailing outage causes, affected customers, outage duration by area, damaged equipment, restoration sequencing, staffing, mutual-aid deployment, and other significant aspects of the response.
- **Neighborhood-Level Outage Analysis:** Identify areas of Gary experiencing outages exceeding 24, 48, 72, 96 hours, and one week, and explain material disparities in restoration times.
- **Infrastructure & Maintenance Assessment:** Provide relevant information regarding pole and line conditions, substations/feeders, equipment failures, deferred maintenance, vegetation management, and infrastructure previously identified for replacement.
- **Vegetation Management Review:** Identify outages attributable to trees/vegetation and evaluate whether existing trimming and hazardous-tree-removal practices were adequate.
- **Preservation of Storm Records:** Preserve outage-management data, work orders, maintenance records, staffing information, mutual-aid requests, restoration-priority information, customer complaints, and relevant internal storm-response records.
- **City–NIPSCO Emergency Response Protocol:** Establish a formal emergency coordination procedure between NIPSCO and Gary.
- **Senior Executive Liaison:** Designate a senior NIPSCO executive with responsibility for direct communication with the Mayor and senior City leadership during major outages.
- **Scheduled Emergency Briefings:** Require regular situation reports during significant outages containing neighborhood-level outage counts, restoration progress, resource deployment, and estimated restoration times.
- **Critical-Facility Escalation Protocol:** Establish a direct process through which the City can identify and escalate outages affecting police, fire, emergency management, water/sewer, senior housing, shelters, traffic signals, and other critical infrastructure.
- **Customer Communication Improvements:** Review and improve outage maps, estimated restoration times, text/email alerts, call-center communications, and other public information systems.

04 | Long-Term Grid Reliability & Resiliency Investment

The City seeks to secure a **specific Gary investment commitment** with NIPSCO that will improve reliability.

- **3–5 Year Gary Grid Investment Plan:** Develop a Gary-specific capital plan identifying projects, estimated costs, locations, and implementation schedules.
- **Distribution-System Hardening:** Accelerate replacement or reinforcement of vulnerable poles, conductors, transformers, and other distribution infrastructure.
- **Selective Undergrounding:** Identify high-risk corridors and critical-service areas where undergrounding electrical infrastructure is technically and economically appropriate.
- **Substation and Feeder Improvements:** Address substations, feeders, and circuits destroyed by the storm to represent significant reliability vulnerabilities.
- **Automated Switching & Sectionalization:** Increase deployment of technology capable of isolating damaged portions of the system and restoring affected customers more rapidly.
- **Redundant Service to Critical Facilities:** Evaluate secondary feeds and other redundancy for police, fire, water/sewer, emergency management, hospitals, senior facilities, shelters, and other critical infrastructure.
- **Comprehensive Redundancy Assessment:** Evaluate redundancies in Gary relative to newer systems in service area. Determine pathways to create parity.
- **Accelerated Vegetation Management:** Establish enhanced trimming and hazardous-tree-removal cycles in areas demonstrated to be particularly vulnerable.
- **Measurable Reliability Standards:** Establish Gary-specific goals for reducing outages exceeding 24, 48, 72, 96 hours, and one week.
- **Annual Gary Reliability Report:** Provide the City with annual reporting on reliability performance, capital expenditures, completed improvements, planned projects, vegetation management, and progress toward agreed performance standards.
- **Customer Generation and Grid Export:** Establish and maintain a program that allows customers to utilize approved customer generation facilities (i.e. solar); to interconnect such facilities with NIPSCO's electric distribution system and to be compensated for exported energy.