



## ILLINOIS UTILITIES BUSINESS DIVERSITY COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Illinois Utilities Host Think Tank Forum for Diverse Supplier Businesses**

*Newly Formed Illinois Utility Business Diversity Council Focuses on Increasing Partnerships with Diverse Businesses in Illinois*

**CHICAGO** (Nov. 30, 2015) – The recently formed Illinois Utilities Business Diversity Council (IUBDC) held its inaugural event centered on creating strategies to increase business opportunities for diverse suppliers through closer collaboration, technical development and sharing of best practices.

More than 20 diverse businesses participated in the half-day event that kicked off with a luncheon discussion between the suppliers and Illinois advocacy groups, including Omar Duque, president and CEO, Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Vincent Gilbert, regional V.P., Illinois Black Chamber of Commerce; Georgia Marsh, chief development officer, Women's Business Development Center; Shelia Hill-Morgan, president and CEO, Chicago Minority Supplier Development Council; Jorge Perez, executive director, Hispanic American Construction Industry Association and John Scifers, president, Elite Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business Network, Illinois Chapter.

The day's activities also included panel discussions providing information about best practices, navigating diverse supplier processes and creating awareness of opportunities for suppliers to work together. It concluded with a networking event where the diverse business participants mingled with company representatives, advocacy leaders and panel participants.

"Through our commitment to the IUBDC, we will enhance our individual business diversity efforts, make a greater impact in fueling our state's economy, and honor the core values of each of our companies," said Melvin D. Williams, president of Nicor Gas and chair of the board of directors of the IUBDC. Board members also include: Anne Pramaggiore, president and CEO, ComEd; Bruce Hauk, president of Illinois American Water, Richard Mark, president of Ameren Illinois and Charles Matthews, president of Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas.

The Illinois Utilities Business Diversity Council members include Ameren Illinois, ComEd, Illinois American Water, Nicor Gas, North Shore Gas and Peoples Gas. In 2015, these companies have spent nearly \$830 million with diverse businesses.

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*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.*