



Improving Lighting for Children with Disabilities



Photo provided by Easterseals

Installing efficient, adjustable lighting has improved the learning environment at Easterseals while saving money and energy for the building.

Easterseals serves over 33,000 clients in programs across Chicagoland and the Rockford Region. Part of Easterseals' operations is Easterseals Academy, a school system that empowers students with disabilities to achieve peak academic performance and acquire functional life skills for independence in the community. Many students at Easterseals are affected by light intensity, and bright lights can lead to a less productive learning environment. The previous light systems at Easterseals were low-efficiency, high-output lights that did not have adjustable settings. Teachers and aides would try to control the light levels by covering lights with curtains, but this was both ineffective and unsafe. Easterseals knew that it needed a lighting upgrade and sent out a bid to lighting contractors.

The contractor they chose, Verde Energy Efficiency Experts, recommended working with Elevate Energy for assistance with the project. The collaboration was effective; Elevate Energy secured \$10,000 in grant assistance for Easterseals in addition to over \$36,000 from the ComEd Small Business Energy Savings program. Combining these funding sources helped to install new LED lighting in all classrooms and hallways of the school, as well as the gym, cafeteria, and parking lots. All the new lighting is fully programmable and adjustable through a smartphone application, so that each classroom can dim the lights as needed by the students. This has created a more productive learning environment while saving money and helping to achieve the mission of Easterseals.

Project Information

- Total Project Cost: **\$78,705**
- ComEd Energy Efficiency Program Incentives: **\$36,279**
- Other Grant Funding: **\$10,000**
- Out-of-Pocket Cost: **\$32,426**
- Estimated Payback: **1.9 years**

- Projected Annual Energy Savings: **158,700 kWh**
- Projected Annual Financial Savings: **\$16,898**

“ Our school has benefited greatly with our new lighting. Not only does it save us much needed money, our student population is very light sensitive and to have fully programmable LED lights ... well, it makes a world of difference. I really enjoyed my time with Elevate Energy. The whole process was as seamless as possible and it never would have happened without them. Thanks again!”

Jeff Tarbell
Facilities Manager-Rockford
Easterseals