

Community Tourism Proj... ▾

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Organization Name

McKinleyville Chamber of Commerce

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Project Overview

Project/Event Title

Come Early, Stay Longer: Thursday Nights in McKinleyville

Dates or Duration

Music in the Park - Every Thursday 6-8pm from June 18th-August 20th, 2026

Amount of Funding Requested

Entry   

Entry Id: 2528

Submitted on: 2026/04/29 at 7:42 pm

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\$15,000.00

What is the Return on Investment?

The return on investment for this project is creating additional overnight stays in Humboldt County by encouraging visitors to arrive earlier, stay longer, and choose McKinleyville as their home base for the weekend.

Overnight bookings will be tied to the project through simple partnerships with local hotels, motels, RV parks, and vacation rentals. Promotions may include:

Thursday night stay + weekend getaway offers
Music in the Park weekend packages
Lodging partner listings in marketing materials
Hotel links on event webpages and social media
"Stay in McKinleyville and explore Humboldt" messaging

This project uses the existing Music in the Park series as the reason to visit, then encourages guests to stay overnight and enjoy beaches, Redwoods, dining, and other local attractions.

Tourist participation will be measured through:

Number of lodging partners participating
Referral clicks to lodging partners from chamber website
Visitor surveys asking where guests are from and where they stayed
Estimated room nights tied to promotions
Social media reach and website traffic
Attendance growth during the series

Even a small number of added overnight stays each week creates a positive return by increasing lodging revenue and visitor spending at restaurants, shops, and attractions.

Seasonal Impact

This project fills an important early summer tourism opportunity in June while building long-term visitation for future shoulder-season travel.

June is when many families begin summer vacations and decide where to stay. By promoting McKinleyville as a family-friendly place to arrive early and stay longer, this project can increase overnight stays before peak summer patterns are fully established.

The campaign also builds awareness of McKinleyville as a convenient year-round base for future fall, winter, and spring travel.

Feasibility & Track Record

The McKinleyville Chamber of Commerce has a strong track record of producing successful community events including Music in the Park, Pony Express Days, mixers, and business promotions.

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The Chamber has staff leadership, an active volunteer base, board members, ambassadors, community partnerships, and marketing channels already in place.

This funding would enhance an event that already exists and is proven, making implementation realistic and achievable.

Innovation & Uniqueness

This project turns an existing free community concert series into a tourism driver focused on overnight stays.

Rather than creating a brand-new event, it uses an established and loved weekly gathering to encourage travelers to arrive earlier, stay longer, and choose McKinleyville and surrounding communities lodging.

Its uniqueness comes from combining:

- Free family entertainment
- Lodging promotions
- Airport access
- Beaches, parks, and trails nearby
- A relaxed small-town experience

How will you define success with your project and ensure sustainability?

Success will be measured by:

- Number of lodging partners participating
- Lodging referrals generated
- Visitor surveys showing overnight guests
- Increased attendance at concerts
- Website traffic to lodging links from chamber website
- Social media reach and engagement

This funding will allow us to increase the promotions beyond Humboldt County about this very successful event. Our goal would be to increase sponsorship and partner funding over the next 3 years to cover these costs to be self-supported as it continues to grow and increase longer stays in Humboldt.

Room Night Strategy

Concrete tactics include:

- Promote Thursday arrival / weekend stay messaging
- Create simple lodging partner offers
- Include hotel links in marketing
- Digital ads to Northern California and Oregon travelers
- Promote fly-in visitors using California Redwood Coast-Humboldt County

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Airport & Partnerships with airlines
Collect visitor zip codes and lodging survey data at events
Promote McKinleyville as a family-friendly home base for Humboldt exploration

Has this project or idea been successfully tried elsewhere?

Yes, many destinations use concerts, festivals, and community events to drive overnight stays by packaging entertainment with lodging and weekend travel.

This proposal applies that successful concept in a way tailored specifically to McKinleyville and Humboldt County.

We don't have concrete data about this, but hope to reach out to more organizations that have been doing it successfully to learn more best practices!

Projected Room Nights

Estimated first-year impact: 75 to 150 room nights

How calculated:

10 summer Thursdays
2 to 5 visiting families/couples per event choosing overnight stays
Average stay of 1 to 2 nights

This estimate is conservative and intended as a realistic first-year benchmark while tracking systems are built with lodging partners.

Proposed Budget

Music in the Park is an established community event that typically operates with an annual budget of approximately \$30,000 through sponsorships, beverage sales, vendor participation, and community support. Most of those funds are already used for core event costs including musician fees, sound production, permits, park rental, equipment, supplies, marketing, social media, staff time, and volunteer coordination.

This HLA request would specifically support tourism growth tied to the event by helping attract overnight visitors, build lodging partnerships, and track room night impact.

Tourism Marketing Campaign: \$4,000
Paid digital advertising targeting Northern California, Oregon, and regional drive/fly markets promoting Thursday arrivals and weekend stays.

Staff Time / Tourism Coordination: \$3,000
Coordinate lodging partners, create promotions, manage campaign execution, outreach, and reporting.

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Content Creation: \$2,000

Photo and video content highlighting concerts, families, parks, beaches, and McKinleyville as a visitor basecamp.

Lodging Partner Program Materials: \$1,500

Partner flyers, lodging links, visitor handouts, and collaboration materials.

Visitor Tracking and Surveys: \$1,000

QR code surveys, visitor data collection, room night estimates, and reporting tools.

Onsite Tourism Activation: \$1,500

Visitor welcome booth materials, signage, maps, and stay longer promotions.

Print Promotion and Distribution: \$1,000

Posters, flyers, airport placement, and visitor-facing materials.

Contingency / Campaign Optimization: \$1,000

Additional ad placements or flexible campaign needs during the season.

Total Request: \$15,000

Matching / Existing Investment

The McKinleyville Chamber of Commerce and community already invest approximately \$30,000 annually into producing Music in the Park. HLA funding would allow us to build a tourism conversion strategy on top of an already successful event and help turn attendance into measurable overnight stays.

Certification

- Yes, I certify

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Include Notes

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Notes



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