



Humboldt County Cannabis Micro-Grant Application

Application Coversheet

Date of application: 12/18/2020

Organization/Business Name: Willow Creek Cannabis Alliance (WCCA)

Applicant interest in project/site: 100%

Is the business owned or majority-owned by Humboldt County residents? Yes

Applicant Name and Title: [REDACTED], President

Phone: [REDACTED] **Email:** willowcreekcanna@gmail.com

Address: [REDACTED]

Project Name: *Planting Seeds of Success in Willow Creek*

Amount requested: \$50,000 **Total project cost/funding Needed:** \$76,180

Additional source (s) of funding: Member contributions

Type of project: ___ Planning **X** Implementation **X** Technical Assistance
___ Capital investment ___ Other

Project Location: Willow Creek Area, Humboldt County

Applicant Eligibility

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Are you applying as a Humboldt County based business, cooperative, association, or non-profit organization | <u>X</u> YES |
| Are 75% or more of its operations based in Humboldt County? | <u>X</u> YES |
| Are you currently licensed and registered in Humboldt County? | <u>X</u> YES |
| Are the activities of your business, association, or organization specific to the cultivation, processing, manufacturing, distribution or retail of cannabis, or whose organization provides support and/or services to the cannabis industry? | <u>X</u> YES |

Business or Association Type

\$10,000 Eligibility

- Cultivation
- Retail
- Manufacturing
- Distribution
- Cannabis Support Business

Cultivation Lighting (as defined in Humboldt County Code 719-3)

- Outdoor
- Mixed Lighting
- Indoor

\$50,000 Eligibility

- Cannabis Cooperative (as defined in CA Business and Professions Code 26220 et seq.)
- Road Maintenance (as defined in Humboldt County Code Code Section 314-55.4.12.1.8.4)
- Non-Profit Cooperative Association (as defined in CA Food and Agriculture Code 54001 et seq.)
- Non-Profit Mutual Benefit Corporations (as defined in Corporations Code 7110 et seq; and consisting of 2 or more entities.)
- Agricultural Cooperative (as defined as user owned, user controlled, and user benefitting with Articles of Incorporation as required by the CA Secretary of State)

What amount of the Business is Humboldt Owned?

- 100% Humboldt Owned
- 51-99% Humboldt Owned
- 1-50% Humboldt Owned

Ownership Structure and Owners - Member owners, with a board of directors

Board of Directors:
[redacted] attached bios)



Current Members: Twenty-six (26) Farms. See attached List.

Number of WCCA FTE employees: 0

Summarize the organization’s business and activities:

The Willow Creek Cannabis Alliance is a grassroots Non-Profit Organization, of licensed cannabis cultivators and businesses in the greater Willow Creek Area. WCCA mission is to serve our community and enhance awareness of the exceptional cannabis products crafted in the Willow Creek region and surrounding mountain communities.

Our elected Board of Directors are licensed plant-touching members, with the goal to serve the vast cannabis community of our region by improving county & statewide representation and enhancing the long-term sustainability of our industry and community. We are an open and accessible organization that invites participation and engagement of all interested parties. Many of our members are sun-grown and regenerative farmers, with a focus on environmental sustainability, soil and river health, and reducing our carbon footprint.

The Alliance holds regular gatherings of cannabis operators and interested parties to discuss the ongoing needs of our community. Our membership additionally serves the greater community through cleanups of our main street and public river access points, toy drives, and outreach to the non-cannabis community.

WCCA seeks further regional unification, with the goal of increasing product and regional quality recognition, through our Planting Seeds of Success Sustainable Management Education Program and Regional Marketing strategy. Our long-term goal of appellation development and regional reputation relies on a unified regional industry.

Our region has over 100 independent cannabis farms, and almost 20% of all licenses in the county. Our membership represents over 915,000ft² of cannabis production, and have paid county excise taxes of \$3,074,542.00 (includes projected 2020 payments).

Proposal Request

| | |
|---|---|
| Program / Project Name: | Willow Creek Cannabis Alliance – Planting Seeds of Success |
| Requested Amount | \$50,000 |
| Total Project Cost/ Funding Needed | \$76,180 |
| Additional Funding Sources | Willow Creek Cannabis Alliance Members |
| Type of Project | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implementation |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technical Assistance |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Investment |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| | |
| Project Address | PO Box 465, Willow Creek, CA 95573 |
| | |
| Project Assessor Parcel Number | NA |
| | |
| Project consist of qualified outdoor cultivating operation less than 10,000 sq.ft. | NA |
| | |
| Which License, permits, currently have | <input type="checkbox"/> CDFA Cannabis Cultivation Annual Permit <input type="checkbox"/> CDFA Cannabis Cultivation Provisional Permit <input type="checkbox"/> CDFW LSA Agreement <input type="checkbox"/> Humboldt County Annual Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Humboldt County Provisional Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Jurisdiction Business License <input type="checkbox"/> CA Dept. of Tax and Administration fee permit <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Carrier Permit <input type="checkbox"/> CA Dept. Public Health Manufacture Cannabis License <input type="checkbox"/> CDFA Weighmaster license <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Articles of Incorporation <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Employer ID Number |

Project Overview:

The Willow Creek Cannabis Alliance ***Planting Seeds of Success*** program proposes to develop a successful marketing program for the superb cannabis products of the Willow Creek, Humboldt County region. The marketing idea is inclusive and embraces the river, natural beauty, recreation, camping, inns - to promote the Willow Creek cannabis region. Willow Creek is a premier cannabis growing region in Humboldt County, with great recreation opportunities, plus it hosts a beautiful, clean environment not found in many places in the world. This grant will articulate and build on the Willow Creek, Humboldt County reputation.

The ***Planting Seeds of Success*** program will also invest in quality cannabis production by promoting sustainable and regenerative land management education for members, and the general community, with a thoughtful series of ZOOM talks/workshops.

To achieve these goals, the Willow Creek Cannabis Alliance (WCCA) is planning the following activities:

- 1) Develop a Willow Creek ***Regional Marketing*** effort, working with WCCA members and Willow Creek Chamber of Commerce, to promote the quality of cannabis production in the geographic district, and the beauty and recreation opportunities of the Willow Creek area.
- 2) Present a ***Sustainable Management Educational Series*** of ZOOM workshops to assist cannabis growers to better understand regenerative land management techniques. The WCCA commits to hosting a minimum of four (4) ZOOM workshops, including:
 - Planning your season for Success in the Recreational Market/Choosing genetics for your region
 - Sustainable Regenerative Farming Practices - Soil Building, Composting, Vermiculture, Indigenous Microorganisms
 - Integrated Pest Management for Cannabis
 - Resource Conservation best practices to implement Alternative Energy Sources
 - Water Conservation, Rain Catchment
 - Forests and Fire – Stewardship and Management Techniques
 - Drying and Curing for Terpene Preservation

The ***Regional Marketing*** will promote attention to Willow Creek, Humboldt County, as a premier cannabis growing region through photos and short videos in the geographic district, with emphasis on desirable farming practices, products, beauty of nature, recreation opportunities of the region. The Willow Creek cannabis story will be cultivated. The photos and videos will be released on media platforms, tying the quality

product imagery and beauty of the environment to the region of origin. It will be available to the WCCA website, and future marketing efforts.

The ***Sustainable Management Education Series*** will be a minimum of four ZOOM workshops in 2021, that will be advertised and free to the public, then archived on the WCCA website for members. The workshop subjects are chosen to address necessary skills for future Appellation development and to enhance sustainable environmental and economic management success.

WCCA requests funds for administrative management to further establish the Alliance, get relevant legal advice, provide steady assistance for members, lead workshop production, and assist with media promotion.

The WCCA wants to invest in Sustainable Management skills of growers to enhance environmental stewardship and lay the groundwork for future Appellation development. The Regional Marketing effort in Willow Creek supports the Humboldt County marketing effort by reaching customers and distributors through various media platforms and tying positive cannabis product impressions back to the beauty of Willow Creek, Humboldt County.

Economic Impacts:

The economic impacts of the **Planting Seeds of Success** program are numerous. The **Regional Marketing** will bring Willow Creek cannabis product and the beauty of the region to the greater world through a variety of media. The intent is to hire a photographer/videographer to take photos and short videos on cannabis farms, of their products and practices, and of beautiful areas in the region. Some members can bring tourists to their farms, once safety allows. Humboldt County already has a reputation for great cannabis, and Willow Creek has a high density of licenses. This effort will tell the Willow Creek Cannabis story. As farms grow their business, product line and reputations - the County will benefit directly from Willow Creek area being a notable high-quality cannabis region. It will increase excise tax revenues and job growth is inevitable. While the legal cannabis industry is young, the last few years have shown how well-managed cannabis businesses pay livable wages.

The ***Sustainable Management Education Series*** will assist farmers to better understand the environment they work in, and as farm management improves so will the harvest. A well-managed farm has benefits for both the environment and the economy. Regenerative techniques reduce waste and optimize resource application, which help streamline business budgets and produce more revenue benefits.

Assisting the WCCA with part-time administrative staff and access to professional development allows farms in the region to have a reliable organization to help them build their business, develop their reputation for quality product and offer opportunity to increase their sustainable land management skills. The **Planting Seeds of Success** program will cooperate with other regional marketing efforts, such as the Willow Creek Chamber of Commerce, to market Willow Creek as a premier cannabis growing region,

and as a beautiful destination with world class recreation, a clean environment, quality food and culture.

The Willow Creek Cannabis Alliance (WCCA) is a young organization with 26 member farms and manufacturers. The intent is to use the Trellis grant funding to grow the WCCA by reaching out to farms and businesses in the Willow Creek Region, letting them know about the WCCA. We will inform them of the planned **Sustainable Management Educational Series** and of the **Regional Marketing** efforts and opportunities. The WCCA wants to grow membership and be seen as a local resource. The workshop series will be held as ZOOM meetings, COVID safe, and anyone can listen and participate for free, but the discussion will be archived on the WCCA website and a benefit of membership. Another benefit of membership will be a community of like-minded businesspeople who have educational and marketing events, with regular gatherings for knowledge and resource sharing.

The WCCA has a working relationship with Willow Creek Chamber of Commerce and looks forward to this collaboration. While the WCCA is a young organization, it has 'Community' at its core and has donated to Toys for Tots, Food for People, Willow Creek Schools, Clean-ups at Kimtu Beach; plus founding members have individually contributed to Humboldt County community events and organizations.

Environmental Impacts:

The WCCA board understands the need to reduce environmental impacts of the cannabis industry and has designed the content of the Educational Workshops to address not only best management practices of sustainable agriculture, but to go further to regenerative practices to truly enhance the environment and protect natural resources. The workshops are still being planned and effective teachers being identified.

The first proposed workshop, *Planning for Success - Genetics for Optimum Regional Production* is a thought-provoking subject, especially for the formation of terroir and/or Appellation. Genetics well matched to the local environment can make cultivation easier and reduce pest damage. This ZOOM meeting/discussion will be paid for by the WCCA members, as it will occur early in the season.

The second workshop *Regenerative Techniques for Soil and Nutrient Management, Composting, and Microorganisms* will be invaluable to assist growers to understand soil and develop contained nutrient cycles, improve resource allocation, and pest management techniques. The growers will learn about compost micronutrients, recycling and companion planting for natural pest control. This will have a big impact of reducing nutrient run-off and reducing pest issues.

Integrated Pest Management for Cannabis will be designed to address the specific insect issues with cannabis and discuss on-farm techniques as well as product use for control. WCCA has identified some quality speakers for this session.

Humboldt County is particularly well set to promote alternative energy, and the *Alternative Energy Resources ZOOM* meeting will help WCCA members understand resources available and basic premises in the design and installation of alternative energy for their farms and businesses.

Water Storage and Use Optimization is an important discussion for all Californians, Humboldt County included. Experts in water saving, storage and use will be 'tapped' for their knowledge of water management.

Forests and Fire – Stewardship and Management Techniques addresses the current conditions of living in the mountains with information about safe space defense planning for residences and controlled burning scenarios.

Drying and Curing for Terpene Preservation is an important skill for cannabis processing in Humboldt County. High quality cannabis needs to be managed carefully through the processing stage, and this discussion will increase knowledge and provide resources for successful drying and curing.

The WCCA is committing to a minimum of four (4) workshops in the year but may hold more and/or will combine the above subjects into the workshop series.

Project Process:

The Willow Creek Cannabis Alliance (WCCA) was formed in July 2019, with the shared goal of unifying the regions producers and promoting Willow Creek cannabis products. WCCA developed By-Laws, operates a website - *willowcreekcanna.com* - and has 26 current members plus a Board of Directors. The WCCA currently has no paid employees.

The elected Board of Directors are all licensed cannabis farm members, with the goal to unify and serve the vast cannabis community of the Willow Creek region. WCCA intends to improve county & statewide representation for its members to enhance long-term sustainability of the industry and community.

WCCA has multi-faceted experience with the cannabis industry, and many members are sun-grown and regenerative farmers, with a focus on environmental sustainability, soil health, river health, and reducing our carbon footprint. The Board of Directors are well aware of cannabis cultivation and marketing activities in the region and are associated with skilled teachers educated in the subjects planned for the **Sustainable Management Educational Series**. Board members are currently in contact with potential workshop speakers and are identifying local knowledge and skills available in the region.

WCCA is an open and accessible organization that invites participation and engagement of all interested parties. WCCA holds regular gatherings (via ZOOM, currently) of cannabis operators and interested parties to discuss the ongoing needs of our community.

WCCA has prepared for the **Regional Marketing** effort by opening discussion with the Willow Creek Chamber of Commerce regarding cooperative marketing, getting quotes from photographers / videographers, becoming educated on the definition of Appellations, and following the County effort to market the Humboldt Brand.

How WCCA **Planting Seeds of Success** funding meets Stated Objectives and has Demonstrated Outcomes:

| Objective | Funding | Outcome |
|---|----------|--|
| Provide a Sustainable Regenerative Educational Series for Cannabis businesses to elevate knowledge within the industry of best management practices | \$12,750 | Measurable outcome will be publication numbers, attendance at ZOOM meetings, Website counts of downloaded information. Tracking the quality of the Willow Creek cannabis products is measurable. |
| Develop a Willow Creek Regional Marketing program to promote the Willow Creek region of Humboldt County to the larger Cannabis community, including distributors, retailers, industry leaders, etc. Develop photographic media, articulate the Willow Creek Story. Cooperate with existing marketing organizations in Willow Creek. | \$23,750 | The photographic media and the marketing focused on the Willow Creek story will be deliverables. The number of distributors, retailers, and industry leaders contacted will be tabulated, and kept as a resource. The number of social media followers will be tracked. Visitor numbers are tracked by the Willow Creek Chamber of Commerce. |
| WCCA Administrative Management and Professional Legal Counsel | \$13,500 | It will be measurable to count the WCCA membership and events sponsored, and to track the progress in Appellation development. |

Attachments:

- WCCA *Planting Seeds of Success* Budget
- List of Member Farms
- 2020 Officer Bios
- Articles of Incorporation
- Executive Director Job Description
- Letters of Support