



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 5/19/2026

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): County Executive's Office

Staff Name and Phone Number: McCall Miller, (707) 565-2431

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Fifth

Title:

FY 25-26 Tourism Impact Fund Grant Awards

Recommended Action:

- A) Authorize the County Executive, or designee, to execute an agreement with the following grantees: Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management, \$6,000; Redwood Trails Alliance, \$20,000; and The Wildlands Conservancy, \$10,000.
- B) Authorize the County Executive, or designee, to amend these agreements to lengthen the time schedules and make minor modifications to the allowed uses that do not increase the amount awarded under the agreements.
- C) Make a finding that the proposed expenditures are necessary to meet the social needs of the population of the County pursuant to Government Code Section 26227.
(Fifth District)

Executive Summary:

The Tourism Impact Fund was established to meet the unique and urgent needs of unincorporated Sonoma County and may be used for activities such as safety improvements, environmental impact mitigation, public safety, and other tourism mitigation activities. Funds may also be used for projects that benefit the community, or to support organizations that coordinate community improvements, such as the Municipal Advisory Councils.

Staff recommends award of a total of \$36,000 in grants, and requests authorization for the County Executive, or designee, to execute the funding agreements and to make minor modifications that do not increase the amount awarded under the agreements.

Activities performed utilizing the Community Investment Program funds provide public benefit that serve important community needs under Government Code Section 26227.

Discussion:

Transient Occupancy Tax Funding

The Sonoma County Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT or Hotel Bed Tax) was established in 1965 and is authorized under State Revenue and Taxation Code Section 7280. TOT, a general tax, is currently levied at a rate of 12%, a rate established in 2016 by the voter-approved Measure L. TOT revenue is allocated 25% to the General Fund; 50% to the Community Investment Fund; and 25% to the Measure L Fund.

Community Investment Fund Program and Policy

The Community Investment Fund Program, established in 1986 as the Advertising and Promotions Program, allocates a portion of the Transient Occupancy Tax to encourage economic development, community engagement, and culture in the County through a variety of grant award and funding avenues. The program provides grants to community-based organizations for a wide range of activities including economic development, community and countywide events, and advertising and promoting the county as a visitor destination with the goal of advancing economic growth through tourism. Additionally, the program provides grants to address impacts on safety due to tourism and to enhance community services throughout the county. The program provides funding to the Regional Parks Department, the Economic Development Collaborative, and additional county activities. Community Investment Funds are allocated per the Community Investment Fund Policy (Policy) (Community Investment Fund Policy <<https://sonomacounty.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/county-executives-office/communityinvestment-fund-program/community-investment-program-policy>>).

On September 16, 2025, the Board adopted revisions to the Policy, consolidating funding priorities into three funding categories: County Department Funding, District Priorities, and Community Funding. Staff are working on updating the application process to align with the new funding categories. In order to minimize impacts to the community, applications in process will continue to be processed based on the current Policy.

Revised District Priorities Category

The revised District Priorities funding category provides funds to events, organizations, and Supervisorial District priorities. Funding may be distributed through grants or assigned to County departments. The funds available in this category include \$100,000 for each supervisorial district (\$500,000 total) from the Community Investment Fund and 10% of Measure L revenue to be allocated to each supervisorial district proportionate to the amount of Transient Occupancy Tax collected within the district in the previous fiscal year. Unused funds will be accounted for and available for use in future years. Organizations may make their requests directly to each Supervisorial District.

Funds in this category may be used for activities such as safety improvements, environmental impact mitigation, public safety, and other tourism mitigation activities, such as parking enforcement. Funds may be used for projects that benefit the community, or to support organizations that coordinate community improvements, such as the Municipal Advisory Councils. The Board may award funding to County Departments or to Supervisorial Districts to complete priority projects. Funding may be used to cover salary and benefit costs associated with changed or additional staff, and other costs associated with added staffing such as office space.

Funds will be distributed upon approval of these awards by the Board of Supervisors and execution of the Community Investment Fund grant agreement by the entity. The agreements will be executed by the County Executive, or designee. The agreements require the County seal on promotional materials produced using the grant award.

Because a project may require modification as the work/project may not be completed within the fiscal year, an extension of time or modification of allowed uses for the organization to complete the project may be necessary. Therefore, it is recommended that the County Executive, or designee, be authorized to amend the

contracts to lengthen the time schedules and make minor modifications to the allowed uses that do not increase the amount awarded under the agreement.

Funding Recommendations

Fifth District - Total \$36,000

1. Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management for the continued development, deployment, and evaluation of EmergiNet, a Sonoma State University project creating a decentralized, battery powered emergency communication network, grant award of \$6,000.
2. Redwood Trails Alliance for campground improvements and support for their stewardship program, grant award of \$20,000.
3. The Wildlands Conservancy for public communications for the Estero Working Group, grant award of \$10,000.

Pursuant to Government Code Section 26227, the Board of Supervisors may fund programs deemed by the Board to be necessary to meet the social needs of the population of the county, including but not limited to, the areas of health, law enforcement, public safety, rehabilitation, welfare, education, and legal services. Staff is recommending that the Board find that the activities performed utilizing Community Investment Program Funds provide public benefits that serve important community needs under Government Code Section 26227.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

10/14/2025, 11/7/2025, 12/9/2025, 1/27/2026, 3/3/2026, and 3/24/2026 - Awarded FY 25-26 Tourism Impact Fund Grants

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$36,000		
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$36,000		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$36,000		
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			

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Total Sources	\$36,000		
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Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Tourism Impact Funds are included in the FY 25-26 budget.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Sample Tourism Impact Fund Grant Agreement

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None