

Form Name:	Lodging Tax Application
Submission Time:	October 8, 2020 11:52 am
Browser:	Chrome 85.0.4183.121 / Windows
IP Address:	209.34.142.130
Unique ID:	675479653
Location:	46.627101898193, -123.0092010498

ORGANIZATION / PROJECT INFORMATION

Organization name	Lewis County Community Trails Association
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Project name	Ride The Willapa 2021
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Project coordinator	Chris Brewer
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Amount requested from Lewis County	5000
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Total project amount	15000
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APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Name	Lewis County Community Trails Association
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Street address	PO Box 101 Chehalis, WA 98532
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Current home phone	(360) 740-2639
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Current cell phone	(360) 523-3582
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Current email address	ridethewillapa@gmail.com
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Agency Tax ID Number	260620239
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Organization Unified Business Identifier (UBI)	602744472
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UBI expiration date	July 31, 2021
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Type of organization:	501(c)3
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Organization's mission statement or purpose (one or two sentences):	Lewis County Community Trails aims to improve the quality of life in Lewis County by assisting in the creation of venues for our citizens to enjoy healthy outdoor activities. LCCT is working to bring together multiple entities to achieve this goal.
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Year the organization was founded:	2006
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Has your organization received Lewis County lodging tax funding in the past?	Yes
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When did your organization receive Lewis County lodging tax funding?	2016 - 2020
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How much did your organization / project receive?

Started at \$20,000 in 2016 and we have requested less each year afterward in a bid to become more self-sustaining.

For organizations that received funding for fiscal year 2020: How did COVID-19 affect your event(s) / project(s)? (Please include details about any unspent lodging tax grant funding.)

Our event was completely cancelled due to COVID-19 as it was an event that would have put people in close proximity while state and county health guidance did not allow for such.

As a result we spent none of the \$10,000 we were allocated, and our event was cancelled before LCCT would have had to spend money on non-refundable items. We were revenue neutral with no financial gain or loss to show for the cancellation of RTW 2020.

REQUIRED INFORMATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project name

Ride The Willapa 2021

1. Describe how the project promotes tourism in all of Lewis County's unincorporated areas.

RTW partners with sponsors, supporters and entities who hail from many areas across Lewis County, providing a unique opportunity for all involved to promote additional tourism experiences, farm visits, and much more. Visitors are encouraged to continue visiting Lewis County and discover trails, camping and more throughout our county. LCCT is a partner in the Lewis County Trail Guide as well.

2. Describe how the project will enhance tourism and result in "heads in beds."

Ride the Willapa enhances tourism by bringing cyclists to ride the Willapa Hills Trail and camp in Rainbow Falls State Park and other venues. In 2019, more than 350 participants stayed overnight at Rainbow Falls and Willapa Hills Farm. We promote overnight stays at the park and additional venues to accommodate an expected ridership increase.

In 2021 we are planning to utilize the campground at Rainbow Falls State Park, and partner with the Willapa Hills Farm once again for camping space for our event attendees.

3. List the responsible party / parties.

Lewis County Community Trails is the lead entity on the event. We partner with organizations such as Washington State Parks and Lewis County, along with numerous stakeholders, donors and facilities.

4. Describe the area the project will serve, as well as the project's expected impact.

Ride the Willapa is a unique family-friendly event that leverages the beauty and history of West Lewis County by highlighting tourism on the Willapa Hills Trail from Chehalis into far eastern Pacific County. The event is a two-day organized bike ride and campout that in 2019 brought 550 riders to our area. The ride promotes year-round use of the trail and highlights each local community along the trail.

RTW has been and will continue to be a vehicle for LCCT to reach out and partner with trail coalitions and stakeholders in the statewide Cross-State Trail project, of which the Willapa Hills Trail is a vital part.

5. Describe how the project will specifically promote tourism.

RTW consistently brings in an audience that favors a family-friendly experience on a trail away from traffic. RTW is bringing people from outside our local area to experience the trail itself, historic farms offering their products, camping at Rainbow Falls State Park, restaurants and cafes in Pe Ell, and more.

The Willapa Hills Trail is a gem, and RTW has become the number one way to promote it to visitors to our county, as RTW is now the largest cycling event to originate in Lewis County.

RTW will hope to host seasonal group bike rides throughout the year to continue to bring people to the trail.

6. Describe how you have collaborated with other entities throughout Lewis County to promote tourism.

RTW maintains collaborations with tourism-specific entities, businesses and more that included but was not limited to Lewis County, Port of Chehalis, Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce, Sierra Pacific Foundation, Washington State Parks and more. Our collaborators have contributed valuable time, volunteers, additional funding and more. All entities involved believe in promoting the outdoors and a good quality of life for those visiting Lewis County.

7. Describe why your project should receive funding.

Lewis County's investment in RTW 2019 helped our event grow to record numbers, with 550 registered participants (not including friends and family who camped or drove to the area as well). Many of those participants expressed a desire to return to the area on their own time and discover more of Lewis County's trails.

We will need monetary support as we work on becoming self-sustaining through sponsorships and ticket sales in the future. Our ask is \$5,000 this year, a quarter of what we requested two years ago. It is our goal to become self-sustaining, but with COVID-19 impacts this year and attempting to hit a moving target, any contribution from Lewis County's lodging tax will help us greatly.

8. Describe how your organization would respond to potential cancellations or closures, such as those caused by COVID-19 in 2020.

We would do the same as we did in 2020 and cancel the event in time to remain revenue neutral, with no net loss to any entity associated with the ride.

However, the RTW page would still be used to promote visits to Lewis County and trips on the Willapa Hills Trail.

USE OF HOTEL / MOTEL TAX

Please indicate below the types of activities for which the lodging tax monies would be used:

TOURISM PROMOTION
FESTIVAL OR EVENT DESIGNED TO ATTRACT TOURISTS

Describe the expected results (measurable outcomes) of your project, with the dollar amount for each outcome.

\$3,500 - Print, radio, social media marketing and more to reach our target demographics with the intent of registering 750 or more participants.

\$1,500 - Contract services related to the ride that fall outside the volunteer scope of the RTW Committee and Lewis County Community Trails. This includes sanicans, facility rentals, flaggers and more depending on attendance.

Total number of attendees predicted to attend:

550

Describe how receiving lodging tax dollars would increase that number

Lewis County Lodging Tax dollars will be used primarily to market, plan and implement our fifth year of Ride the Willapa, a two-day event designed to target two demographics: active families and trail cycling enthusiasts. Our goal is to attract up to 1,000 paid riders, with lodging tax dollars serving to help us to reach our allowable capacity for the event with our current staffing. Lodging tax dollars will enable us to advertise and promote the ride and trail in urban areas such as Seattle, Tacoma and Portland, where the majority of our 2018 and 2019 riders originated. We will encourage stays in hotels and motels throughout the county, including Centralia and Chehalis, for those especially traveling long distances the day before the event and the day after.

We are tempering our expectations in 2021 due to the reality of momentum having been lost due to cancellation in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but we are hoping to hit our 2019 numbers of 550 riders.

a. Projected number of attendees who will travel fifty (50) miles or more one way from their home or business to attend:

350+

b. Describe how receiving lodging tax dollars would increase that number

We have built a diversified marketing campaign tailored to families and adventure cyclists, especially reaching the Seattle to Portland and Spokane to Yakima markets. Receiving lodging tax dollars will enable us to continue the momentum of our 2019 campaigns and capture interest in the 2021 event, ultimately leading to increased registrations.

In 2019, 480 of our 550 riders were from outside of Lewis County, with the majority of those traveling from 50 miles or more. More than 350 camped overnight, a number that we hope we can match in 2021.

a. Projected number of participants who will travel from another country or state to attend: 100

b. Describe how receiving lodging tax dollars would increase that number

With our marketing campaign in place, we will expand our marketing reach and tailored postings to out-of-state areas such as Idaho and California, as our event had multiple participants from outside the Pacific Northwest for the second year in a row. We hope to use Facebook marketing primarily, with added marketing in regional print media to showcase our ride.

This will be highly dependent on people willing to travel due to the pandemic.

a. Projected number of participants who will stay overnight in paid accommodations: 350+

b. Describe how receiving lodging tax dollars would increase that number

Our 2019 event brought more than 350 campers to Rainbow Falls State Park alone. Paid overnight stays at area bed and breakfasts, Airbnbs, and/or nearby hotels and motels are additional costs to registrants, as has been the case since our ride's inception.

As we maxed out our allowable capacity at the State Park in 2018 and 2019, we are partnering once again with Willapa Hills Farm to help meet our increased demand. We anticipate a steady increase of riders staying overnight once again.

Receiving lodging tax dollars would strengthen and help expand our target demographic marketing, and help us work to set up more camping and overnight stay locations.

a. Projected number of participants who will stay overnight in unpaid accommodations: 150

b. Describe how receiving lodging tax dollars would increase that number

We anticipate around 150 participants who will stay in unpaid lodging or ride in our one-day option. In this case, lodging tax dollars would be used to promote activities at venues along the ride in addition to our event, in the goal of bringing people back to Lewis County to stay overnight, visit trails throughout our area, and partake in offerings from area farms and businesses. We hope to encourage locals and those who would choose the one-day option to consider the overnight option to enjoy the full experience of RTW 2021.

10. Describe how the project provides short-term or long-term economic benefit for Lewis County

RTW consistently promotes one of Washington state's recreational gems right here in Lewis County by bringing increased participation to an event designed to showcase the trail's beauty, nearby farms, friendly communities, and overall quality of life in Lewis County. We support local agriculture, businesses along the trail, and serve to bring people into our communities to explore the trail, benefiting the service industry and retail sectors as visitors eat, shop and stay overnight in our area.

11. Explain what plans exist to allow this project to become self-sustaining. Include any plans for ticket sales, event sponsors, and other cost-recovery models.

Our project is continually working toward a goal of becoming self-sustaining. The Ride the Willapa committee is all-volunteer for 2021 once again, utilizing donated time and services that would otherwise come at a significant cost.

Lodging tax dollars help us generate a base of event participants through marketing; that base continues to grow year-over-year. We also solicit corporate and community sponsors in exchange for promoting them during the ride; while our sponsorship base grows, it is not yet enough to eliminate reliance on LTAC dollars. We hope to bring a title sponsor on for future rides, and increase community support through other small donations and in-kind contributions.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Website address ridethewillapa.com

Facebook user name ridethewillapa

Instagram ridethewillapa

Twitter account name ridethewillapa

Any other social media platforms your organization uses to promote tourism N/A

BUDGET

Amount \$5,000

Source In-kind donations (food donations, labor, etc.)

Confirmed	No
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Date available	March 2021
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Income 2

Amount	\$2,000
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Source	Port of Chehalis
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Confirmed	No
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Date available	March 2021
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Income 3

Amount	\$3,000
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Source	Ticket sales
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Confirmed	No
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Date available	June 2021
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Income 4

Income 5

Income 6

Expense - Personnel

County	0
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Other Funds	0
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Total	0
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Expense - Administration

County	0
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Other Funds	0
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Total	0
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Expense - Marketing/promotion

County	3500
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Other Funds	1000
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Total	4500
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Expense - Direct sales activities

County	0
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Other Funds	0
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Total	0
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Expense - Minor equipment

County	0
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Other Funds	0
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Total	0
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Expense - Travel

County	0
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Other Funds	500
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Total	0
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Expense - Contract services

County	1500
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Other Funds	1000
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Total	2500
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Expense - Other activities

County	0
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Other Funds	5000
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Total	2000
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Total Cost

County	5000
Other Funds	7500
Total	12500
Priority 1	\$5,000
Full Funding Request	\$5,000
Priority 2	\$3,000
Minimum Funding Request	\$3,000
Applicant will / can accept no less than this amount	\$3,000

If partial funding is received, how will that affect the project / activity? Please describe:

If partial funding is received, Lewis County Community Trails will continue to actively fundraise and seek return and new donors, grants and sponsors from a variety of sources. As we are an all-volunteer event, more of us would have to spend time outside our normal jobs to fundraise, get more sponsors, etc.

We would likely have to consider the painful move of increasing the cost to riders, which already is a likelihood due to health protocols we must follow to help minimize COVID-19 spread. Lewis County LTAC funds have proven critical to helping establish a marketing and goods/services budget for our ride.

PROJECT TIMELINE / TOURISM SEASON

What is your anticipated timeline for accomplishing this activity?	We hope to complete all project deliverables by the beginning of the 2022 grant cycle. Most if not all the funds will be spent by the end of June 2021, with final invoicing and billing from event contracted services generally taking place by the end of quarter 3 or beginning of quarter 4.
Year-round	Yes
Year-round Explanation	We are also a year-around promotional brand with the aim of bringing people to the Willapa Hills Trail.
High season	Yes
High season Explanation	The actual event takes place on the first full weekend of summer.
Is it a seasonal activity appropriate to its location? Explain	Yes. Ride the Willapa is a cycling and camping event on the Willapa Hills Trail, with camping offered at Rainbow Falls State Park and other yet-to-be-determined locations as we solidify our 2021 partnerships.

Financial Review

Balance sheet <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9007733233>

Income statement <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9007733234>

Operating budget for 2020 <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9007733235>

Projected budget for 2021 <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9007733236>

Financial review

Financial review <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9007733237>

Nonprofit determination

Nonprofit determination <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9007733238>

Personnel list

Personnel list <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9007733239>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Signature



(Print or type applicant's name) Christopher R. Brewer

Date Oct 08, 2020
