



# STAFF REPORT – CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**FROM:** Tabatha Miller, Assistant City Manager/Finance Director

**PREPARER:** Tabatha Miller, Assistant City Manager/Finance Director

**DATE:** October 15, 2025

**TITLE:** **Consider Approving a Memorandum of Understanding for the Fall 2025 to Spring 2027 Choose Humboldt Campaign; and Consider Approving a \$5,000 Contribution to Financially Support the Campaign.**

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## RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Council:

1. Receive a presentation from Humboldt Made on the Fall 2025 to Spring 2027 **Choose Humboldt** Campaign; and
2. Consider approving a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support the Fall 2025 to Spring 2027 **Choose Humboldt** Campaign; and
3. Consider supporting the Campaign financially by contributing \$5,000 or some other amount to the Campaign.

## INTRODUCTION:

**Choose Humboldt** is a county-wide marketing campaign designed to inspire residents and visitors to shop, dine, and explore locally. Relaunching in Fall of 2025 by Humboldt Made, the campaign unites Chambers of Commerce, Main Street organizations, local governments, and small businesses under a shared message: when we choose local, we grow stronger together.

## BACKGROUND:

Humboldt Made was initiated by the County of Humboldt in 2010 to spur the growth of a diverse array of makers and producers. The idea was to bring entrepreneurs together, identify their common strengths and weaknesses and through networking and collaboration overcome obstacles and achieve great things together. Creating brand awareness and increased sales beyond Humboldt's borders was key, the end result being a sustainable, local economy.

Humboldt Made's mission is to provide support to Humboldt County businesses through impactful marketing, advocacy, networking, and resources. Their goal is to promote local artisans, food makers and small businesses, helping them succeed within Humboldt County and beyond.

## DISCUSSION:

Humboldt Made's request for funding is to support Phase One of the **Choose Humboldt** Campaign - the Shop Humboldt Passport, which includes:

- **Refreshed Branding** developed with local designer Jenn McFerrin to modernize the campaign’s look and feel.
- **Collaborative Rollout** coordinated with the region’s Chambers of Commerce, the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, and local municipalities to ensure unified messaging.
- **Shop Humboldt Digital Passport** — an interactive app that rewards residents for supporting local businesses during the holiday season.

Participants will collect digital “stamps” by visiting and engaging with stores, restaurants, service providers and makers across Humboldt County. The passport not only drives holiday spending but also introduces shoppers to new businesses in the community.

### Objectives and Outcomes

Phase One aims to:

1. Increase awareness of local businesses through shared marketing and storytelling.
2. Strengthen the downtown and neighborhood economy by encouraging local purchases.
3. Build the foundation for future campaigns such as *Dine & Stay* and *Experience Humboldt*.

### Use of Funds

The \$5,000 contribution from the City of Arcata will directly support:

- **Digital Passport Setup & Management** – technical onboarding, data dashboard, and business listings.
- **Marketing & Promotion** – social media ads, print materials, and cross-promotion among partner channels.
- **Local Events & Launch Support** – holiday rollout and community engagement activities highlighting Arcata businesses.
- **Brand Development Assets** – design, photography, and materials featuring participating businesses.

#### Timeline Month

#### Milestone

**Oct 2025**

Finalize branding; onboard partners

**Nov 2025**

Launch *Shop Humboldt Passport*

**Dec 2025**

Holiday marketing push; community events

**Jan 2026**

Reporting of results; stakeholder review

### BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACT:

If the City Council takes action to approve the \$5,000 contribution to the Choose Humboldt Campaign, the funding would come from the City Council’s Community Projects account 101-10-01-52108, which has a FY 2025-26 budget of \$269,000. These funds were set aside, when the City Council directed staff to use ARPA funding to support staffing costs from July 1, 2024, to December

31, 2024. These funds have been considered set aside for economic development and as such funds have been allocated for the Friday Night Market (\$13,500), and partial funding of the Economic Strategic Plan (approximately \$40,000). After subtracting these allocations \$215,500 remains available in the current budget.

**RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:**

It is recommended that the Council:

1. Receive a presentation from Humboldt Made on the Fall 2025-Spring 2027 **Choose Humboldt** Campaign; and
2. Consider approving a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support the Fall 2025 to Spring 2027 **Choose Humboldt** Campaign; and
3. Consider supporting the Campaign financially by contributing \$5,000 or some other amount to the Campaign.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Choose Humboldt Funding Proposal
- B. Draft Memorandum of Understanding
- C. Choose Humboldt Campaign Funding Proposal