

Print

Measure Z Application for Funding 2026 - Submission #45118

Date Submitted: 2/23/2026

MEASURE Z APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Agency Name*

Fortuna Police Department

Mailing Address*

PO Box 545

City*

Fortuna

Zip*

95540

Contact Person*

Matthew Eberhardt

Title*

Chief of Police

Phone Number*

7077251441

Email*

meberhardt@ci.fortuna.ca.us

Project Title*

Eel River Valley School Resource Officer

Funding Available

The estimated amount of Measure Z funding available for FY 2026-27 is \$1.65 million.

1. Amount of Measure Z Funding Requested For FY 26-27*

249,962.00

Agency Priority

N/A - I am only submitting one application

Agencies are encourage to submit one project per application. If your agency is submitting more than one application, please rank this application in terms of your agency's priority here.

SUMMARY OF REQUESTED EXPENSES

Item	\$ Amount	% of Total
Salaries (wages)		

Salaries Amount*

125,876.00

Salaries %*

50.36

Benefits**Benefits Amount***

101,586.00

Benefits %*

40.64

Overhead and Occupancy(Administrative, Rent, Utilities,
Phones, etc.)**Overhead/Occupancy Amount***

12,500.00

Overhead/Occupancy %*

5

Equipment/Supplies/Services**Equip./Services/Supplies Amount***

5,000.00

Equipment/Services/Supplies %*

2

Transportation/Travel**Transportation/Travel Amount***

5,000.00

Transportation/Travel %*

2

Fixed Assets**Fixed Assets Amount***

0

Fixed Assets %*

0

TOTAL**Total Amount of Application***

249,962.00

TOTAL 100%**2. ENTITY TYPE***

- Humboldt County Department
- Contract Service Provider to Humboldt County
- Local Government Entity
- Private Service Provider
- Non-Profit Service Provider
- Other (please describe)

ENTITY TYPE

If you selected other, please briefly describe the entity you represent.

3. Is this application a renewal or related to a project that has been funded by Measure Z in the past? *

Yes

If you checked "yes" please include the following:

1. a report detailing results from the most recent year the project was funded, and:
2. a completed Staffing Report detailing when the funded positions were filled during the most recent year you received funding for this project.

These documents must be uploaded in the "Required Attachments" section of this application.

4. Please provide a brief description of the proposal for which you are seeking funding.*

The Fortuna Police Department is seeking continued Measure Z funding to sustain the School Resource Officer (SRO) program, a vital safety partnership serving the diverse educational landscape of the Eel River Valley. This proposal covers the essential salary, benefits, equipment, and specialized training necessary for a sworn officer to provide dedicated law enforcement services and mentorship across multiple elementary and high school campuses. A core strength of this program is its broad operational reach, providing consistent security and emergency response to schools located within both the incorporated City of Fortuna and the surrounding unincorporated areas of Humboldt County.

By maintaining a mobile and high-visibility presence across these various jurisdictions, the SRO program ensures that high-quality safety services remain accessible to all students in the region, regardless of their school's municipal status. The officer acts as a specialized first responder, a proactive problem-solver for campus-related issues, and a bridge between law enforcement and the youth community. This integrated approach allows for rapid intervention in critical incidents and fosters a culture of violence prevention through daily engagement and trust-building with students and staff.

Measure Z funding is the essential foundation of this regional safety net, allowing the Fortuna Police Department to provide a level of specialized, cross-jurisdictional service that would otherwise be unattainable through standard municipal budgets. This investment directly supports the shared goal of creating a secure, resilient learning environment for every child in the Eel River Valley, ensuring that consistent public safety resources are distributed equitably across the incorporated and unincorporated communities we serve.

5. Describe how the scope of your proposal fits the intent of Measure Z. Specifically, how will it maintain and improve public safety and essential services?*

The Fortuna Police Department's School Resource Officer (SRO) program serves as a vital safety bridge between incorporated city limits and the surrounding unincorporated areas of the Eel River Valley. By providing a dedicated officer to navigate these multi-jurisdictional campus environments, this proposal directly fulfills the intent of Measure Z to maintain essential public safety services across diverse community bounds. This mobile, specialized presence ensures a rapid, expert response to school-based emergencies that might otherwise be delayed by the logistical challenges of covering rural or unincorporated stretches. Rather than a reactive patrol model, the SRO program provides a consistent law enforcement anchor that stabilizes the safety profile of our entire regional educational network.

Beyond emergency mitigation, the SRO program enhances the efficiency of the broader justice system by employing a "triad model" of law enforcement, informal counseling, and education. By addressing root causes of behavioral issues and chronic absenteeism on both city and county campuses, the officer acts as a preventative force, diverting youth from the legal system before high-cost interventions become necessary. This cross-jurisdictional approach ensures that students in unincorporated areas receive the same high standard of protection and mentorship as those within city limits, creating a unified safety net that reduces the long-term burden on county-wide municipal and social service resources.

Ultimately, funding the SRO program through Measure Z represents a strategic investment in regional stability. The program transforms school safety from a set of fragmented protocols into a dynamic, integrated service that protects our educational institutions while fostering a culture of accountability. By maintaining this essential link between the Fortuna Police Department and the various school districts of the Eel River Valley, we are safeguarding our youth and ensuring that public safety resources are distributed equitably across the incorporated and unincorporated communities we serve.

6. What geographic area(s) and population(s) will be served by this project? Please indicate whether services will be provided countywide or in specific communities.*

The School Resource Officer (SRO) program serves as a comprehensive regional resource for the Eel River Valley, providing a unified law enforcement presence across a diverse geographic footprint. This project serves the incorporated cities of Fortuna, Ferndale, and Rio Dell, while also extending essential coverage to the unincorporated communities of Loleta, Scotia, and Hydesville. By maintaining an operational reach that spans these various municipal and county jurisdictions, the Fortuna Police Department provides 15 different campuses with a consistent level of specialized support. This multi-jurisdictional approach is vital for the region, as it ensures that students in rural and unincorporated stretches have the same access to dedicated school-based resources as those in the city center.

The population directly served by this proposal includes a student body of over 5,000 youth, in addition to the faculty and administrative staff who operate these educational institutions. The SRO provides a specialized level of service that goes far beyond traditional patrol duties by focusing on the unique social and developmental needs of a school environment. The officer is a primary resource for school staff, actively assisting in conflict counseling regarding bullying and complex social issues, while also addressing criminal matters and implementing proactive safety programs. By engaging with this high-density youth population on a daily basis, the officer is able to build the rapport necessary for effective early intervention and violence prevention.

Because the Eel River Valley serves as the primary educational and residential hub for Southern Humboldt County, the impact of this project is truly regional in scope. Measure Z funding allows for the equitable distribution of these services, ensuring that the availability of mentorship and professional safety guidance is not determined by whether a school sits within a city center or a remote county pocket. This program maintains and improves essential services by fostering a resilient learning environment for over 5,000 students, ultimately contributing to the long-term stability of the entire Humboldt County community.

7. How have you developed a plan for sustainability, including diversification of funding sources, for your proposal to carry on without reliance on future Measure Z funds? Please provide detail of your plan for sustainability here.*

The City of Fortuna's sustainability plan for the SRO program is rooted in administrative prioritization and long-term fiscal discipline. While state and federal "hiring grants" often remain out of reach for many rural agencies due to strict requirements regarding full authorized staffing levels, the Fortuna Police Department has remained steadfast in its commitment to this position. Even amidst persistent, industry-wide staffing shortages, the Department has intentionally prioritized the SRO role as a non-negotiable service. By choosing to maintain this presence on campus while other specialized units may be left vacant, the City demonstrates that this program is a top-tier priority within its existing General Fund long-term planning.

To ensure the program remains viable without a total reliance on a single source, the City continues to evaluate and optimize its internal revenue structures. This includes restructuring staff roles for maximum efficiency and fostering a local economic environment that supports a stable sales tax base. By strengthening the city's overall economic foundation, we aim to build a more resilient General Fund capable of absorbing a greater share of essential public safety costs as staffing levels eventually stabilize.

Ultimately, the sustainability of this program is justified by its preventative value. The SRO program functions as a cost-avoidance measure for the entire region; by diverting youth from the criminal justice system and providing immediate intervention in school-based incidents, we reduce the future fiscal burden on county-wide emergency response and social services. We remain dedicated to managing our municipal resources so that this critical link between law enforcement and the approximately 15 campuses in the Eel River Valley remains a permanent fixture of our regional safety infrastructure.

8. If this request is for the continuation or expansion of an existing program/service, what is the current source of funding for that program/service?*

Since its inception in 2017, the School Resource Officer (SRO) program has relied primarily on Measure Z funding to maintain its specialized presence across the Eel River Valley. This funding serves as the essential foundation for the salary, benefits, and specialized training required to sustain a dedicated officer for our regional schools. During a previous one-time funding gap, the program was maintained through municipal funds, though this necessitated a significant reduction in the services provided and narrowed the population of students served. Relying on a municipal budget to carry the full weight of a regional program is not a sustainable long-term solution for the City of Fortuna. However, following that period, the City successfully secured Measure Z funds again, which allowed for the full reinstatement of the position to its current capacity.

Securing continued Measure Z funding is necessary to protect this vital partnership and return it to a stable, appropriate funding model that accurately reflects its geographic reach. Because the SRO serves multiple incorporated cities and various unincorporated county areas, the fiscal responsibility for the position exceeds the capacity of a single municipality. This request seeks to ensure that the SRO can remain fully focused on proactive violence prevention, bullying intervention, and professional guidance for all students in the Eel River Valley without the risk of future service reductions.

9. If you are awarded Measure Z funds, how do you plan to leverage these funds to secure additional grants, contributions or community support? *

The stability provided by Measure Z fosters stronger community and institutional support, which serves as the primary leverage for the SRO program. A consistent, fully funded presence allows the Fortuna Police Department to maintain deep, multi-jurisdictional partnerships with school administrators across the region's 15 campuses. This established trust is the most valuable form of leverage we have, as it creates a unified regional front that can advocate for safety resources and community-backed initiatives to support our student population of over 5,000 youth. This partnership ensures that we are not just providing a law enforcement presence, but are actively integrated into the safety and well-being of the entire Eel River Valley educational community, allowing us to better coordinate regional safety programs and conflict counseling efforts that benefit the county as a whole.

10. Will this proposal require new or expanded activity on the part of another entity to be fully functional and effective? If so, name that entity and describe what that participation would look like. *

No. This proposal does not require any new or expanded activity from outside entities to be fully functional and effective. The Fortuna Police Department has maintained long-standing, collaborative relationships with the various school districts and municipal partners throughout the Eel River Valley, including the communities of Ferndale, Rio Dell, Loleta, Scotia, and Hydesville. Because the infrastructure for this regional partnership is already firmly in place, the SRO program is a turn-key operation that integrates seamlessly into the daily functions of the approximately 15 campuses it serves.

The program is designed to be self-sustaining within the Fortuna Police Department's existing operational framework. While the SRO works closely with school administrators to provide conflict counseling and safety programs for over 5,000 students, these activities fall within the established "triad model" of the SRO's duties and do not impose any additional burdens on the participating school districts. The funding requested through Measure Z is sufficient to maintain the full scope of the program, ensuring it remains an effective, independent, and reliable safety resource for the entire regional community.

11. Are there recurring expenses associated with this application, such as personnel cost? *

If you checked yes, please detail those expenses here.

Please note, the Citizens' Advisory Committee in May, 2023, adopted a stance that it would not recommend funding for new, ongoing county positions.

No

12. If awarded less than the full amount requested, could the proposed project still be implemented? If yes, please identify the minimum funding amount required for the project to remain feasible and describe any changes to scope or outcomes.*

Yes, the project could still be implemented with a reduced funding amount, though it would necessitate a shift in fiscal responsibility that is less than ideal for the City's current budget. The absolute minimum funding required for the project to remain feasible is \$232,462, which represents a \$17,500 reduction from the original request of \$249,962.

To accommodate this reduction, the City of Fortuna would be forced to absorb \$12,500 in overhead and occupancy costs and \$5,000 in specialized training and travel expenses. While the scope of the SRO's work on the 15 regional campuses would remain the same, this reallocation of funds would create an additional financial hardship for the City. Incurring these costs internally, especially while the Department continues to manage significant staffing shortages, which strains the municipal resources required to support a program that serves a broad regional population of over 5,000 youth.

While the City is committed to ensuring this essential service remains fully functional for the Eel River Valley, full funding is requested to ensure the program's long-term sustainability. The requested amount allows the SRO to remain focused on the "triad" of school safety, conflict counseling, and mentorship without the risk of future service limitations caused by municipal budget fluctuations.

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

Be sure to include the following with your application.

Prior Year Results

If your request is a continuation of a program funded with Measure Z in prior fiscal years, please provide the results of implementation. (one page maximum)

Upload Prior Year Results Attachment

Eel River Valley School Resource Officer Position Prior Year Results FY 25-26.pdf

Program Budget

[Download the budget narrative](#), then upload using the button at right.

Upload Program Budget Attachment*

Measure Z Proposed Budget - FY 2026-27 SRO.xlsx

Staffing Report

If your request was previously funded, please [download and complete the staffing report](#), then upload it using the option provided here.

Upload Staffing Report Attachment

Measure Z Staffing Report SRO 25-26 FY.xlsx

Letters of Support

If you have letters of support from members of the community you can upload them here.

Upload Letters of Support

No file chosen

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the above statements and all attachments are true and correct.

Date*

2/23/2026
04:15 PM

Signature*

Matt Eberhardt, Chief of Police

Type Approving Official's Name

Measure Z Agenda Notifications

[Sign up on our website](#) to be notified when Measure Z agendas are posted. The applications are discussed in open session and it is often valuable for applicants to attend in person or virtually to address the committee.

Eel River Valley School Resource Officer Position Summary of Prior Year (FY 25/26 Year-to-Date)

The Fortuna Police Department School Resource Officer (SRO) program is currently eight months into the 2025-2026 fiscal year, maintaining its status as a prioritized essential service for the Eel River Valley. Serving a student population of over 5,000 youth across approximately 15 campuses, the SRO provides a specialized services, law enforcement, mentorship, and counseling that standard patrol units cannot replicate. Despite industry-wide staffing shortages, the Department has remained steadfast in its commitment to this role, ensuring that students in Fortuna, Ferndale, Rio Dell, Loleta, Scotia, and Hydesville have consistent access to a dedicated safety and mentorship resource.

During the first quarter of this year, the SRO focused on building foundational relationships as schools transitioned from summer programs to the start of the academic year. These efforts included hosting department tours, participating in school bike rodeos, and engaging in high-visibility community events to humanize the badge for the region's youth. On the educational front, the SRO recruited new participants for the Police Explorer program and provided guest lectures and ride-alongs for the High School Administration of Justice class. In addition to these proactive mentorship roles, the SRO provided essential safety oversight for large-scale school events like Homecoming and managed a rigorous investigative caseload ranging from juvenile delinquency to sensitive sex crimes.

The second quarter saw an expansion into technical safety training and regional humanitarian outreach. The SRO collaborated with high school administration to lead critical mass casualty and active shooter response training for staff, ensuring a high standard of campus preparedness. Beyond campus safety, the SRO represented the region in the Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) to address truancy and participated in the "Shop with a Cop" event. Furthermore, the SRO helped create the "Christmas with a Cop" program, which secured donations to provide six local families with gifts and essential supplies. Whether coaching JV football in his off-time or assisting school staff with complex conflict counseling regarding bullying and social issues, the SRO remains an indispensable asset to the stability and well-being of the entire Eel River Valley community.

As we progress into the third quarter of the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the Fortuna Police Department remains fully committed to delivering these high-impact services across the Eel River Valley. The SRO continues to provide a daily presence on our campuses, ensuring that the momentum built during the first half of the year translates into long-term safety and stability for our student population. This current quarter is focused on sustaining our proactive counseling efforts and maintaining the vital trust established with students, staff, and families in Fortuna, Ferndale, Rio Dell, Loleta, Scotia, and Hydesville. By securing continued Measure Z funding, we can ensure that this essential regional resource transitions seamlessly into the next year, protecting the well-being of over 5,000 youth without the risk of service interruptions or reductions in our geographic reach.

Exhibit E - Proposed Budget

Agency Name: Fortuna Police Department	Address: PO Box 545 Fortuna, CA 95540
Coordinator/Contact: Matt Eberhardt	Phone:

Descriptions	Requested Budget	Current Quarter Costs	Total of Prior Quarter Costs	Remaining Balance
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A. Personnel Costs

Title: School Resource Officer				
Salary (separate from benefits cost)	125,876.00			125,876.00
Benefits	101,586.00			101,586.00
Duties Description:				

Title:				
Salary (separate from benefits cost)				0.00
Benefits				0.00
Duties Description:				

Title:				
Salary (separate from benefits cost)				0.00
Benefits				0.00
Duties Description:				

<i>Salaries Subtotal</i>	125,876.00	0.00	0.00	125,876.00
<i>Benefits Subtotal</i>	101,586.00	0.00	0.00	101,586.00
Total Personnel:	227,462.00	0.00	0.00	227,462.00

B. Overhead and Occupancy Costs (Rent, Utilities, Phones, Administrative etc.)

Title: School Resource Officer				
Description: Administrative Expenses	12,500.00			
Title:				
Description:				

Total Overhead and Occupancy Costs:	12,500.00	0	0	12500
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C. Equipment/Supplies/Services (Equipment, Supplies and Services should be separate)

Title: Equipment				
Description:				
Title:				
Description:				
<i>Equipment Subtotal:</i>				
	0.00	0	0	0

Title: Supplies				
Description: Fuel, general office supplies, Flyers, Stickers, Etc.	5,000.00			
Title:				
Description:				
<i>Supplies Subtotal:</i>				
	5,000.00	0	0	5000

Title: Services/Other Operational Costs				
(Please be detailed. These expenses are generally professional or				
Description: contracted services, or other expenses that are not equipment or				
Title:				
Description:				
<i>Services/Other Subtotal:</i>				
	0.00	0	0	0

Total Equipment/Supplies/Services:	5,000.00	0	0	5000
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D. Transportation/Travel (Local and Out-of-County should be separate)

Title: Local Travel				
Description: Describe local travel and connection to your project				
Title: Out of County Travel				
Description: POST Training and Travel	5,000.00			

Total Transportation/Travel Costs:	5,000.00	0	0	5000
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E. Fixed Assets (According to your agency's definition of a fixed asset)

Title:				
Description:				
Title:				
Description:				

Total Fixed Asset Costs:	0	0	0	0
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Totals	249,962.00	0.00	0.00	249,962.00
Requested Budget		Current Quarter Costs	Prior Quarter Costs	Remaining Balance

