



McCleary Bear Festival Ambassador Program 2025 - 2026 Contract, Rules, and Information



Applicants Name: _____ Age: _____ Birthdate: _____
(Please Print)

Parent/Legal Guardian Name(s): _____ (able to make medical decisions)

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ (Cell or Home) Email: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____ (2025-2026 Academic Year)

The McCleary Bear Festival is a community service organization, which is operated entirely by community volunteers, carrying on a tradition that began in 1959. Bear Festival Ambassadors have helped carry on this tradition of community pride and service.

The Ambassadors, Bear Festival Board and committee members, and community volunteers serve as representatives of the McCleary Bear Festival. Bear Festival sponsors, participates in, or co-sponsors community events year-round. All of the events involve a degree of organization and cooperation within Bear Festival and with other host organizations. To ensure a problem free program, everyone must understand and comply with these sets of rules and expectations which are intended to reduce problems and misunderstandings, and ultimately increase the fun and excitement of being an Ambassador.

SECTION 1: AMBASSADORS

The Ambassador program will consist of a maximum:

- (1) Senior Queen and/or King,
- (4) Senior Princess and/or Prince,
- (1) Junior Queen and/or King,
- (2-4) Junior Princess and/or Prince

The Bear Festival Board reserves the right to change the number of members of the Ambassador Program based on number of applications received or the results of the selection process.

SECTION 2: PARTICIPANTS

The program is open to both genders.

Participants must be a resident of Fire District 12 boundaries in Grays Harbor County or attend school in the **McCleary School District** or the **Elma School District**.

Participants must be enrolled in school (be it public in McCleary School District or Elma School District, private, or approved homeschool program).

Junior participants must be between the **ages of 10 to 12 years** of age by January 31, 2026.

Senior participants must be between the **ages of 13 to 15 years** of age by January 31, 2026.

Participants **MUST** maintain a 2.5 grade point average. Ambassadors are required to submit verification of grades at time of application submittal, and at the end of each quarter/semester/trimester (whichever applies) through the end of the school year. If an Ambassador's GPA drops below 2.5, the participant will be dropped from the program to permit more time for schoolwork.

Ambassadors must provide their own transportation to and from Bear Festival public appearances and meetings. If they do not have their own transportation, the Ambassador **MUST** make sure the Bear Festival Board understands this fact **PRIOR** to applying.

SECTION 3: AMBASSADOR SELECTION PROCESS

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Participants must provide the following items **by November 15, 2025** to be reviewed:

1. Completed application.
2. Three (3) professional reference letters (i.e., teacher, coach, pastor, school counselor) mailed or emailed with application.
3. Verification of current GPA.
4. 350-word essay describing why you want to be in the Ambassador Program, and what community service means to you.

Application packets can be mailed to:

McCleary Bear Festival
PO BOX 408
McCleary, WA 98557

Or emailed to:

bearfestival@gmail.com

Selected participants will be notified by **November 29, 2025** of acceptance to program.

SECTION 4: AMBASSADOR RULES & EXPECTATIONS

Ambassador activities involve planning and require the following rules and procedures.

- 1) Grounds for immediate dismissal from the program by the Bear Festival Board are: Public profanity, physical violence, use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs or tobacco products, illegal activity, marriage, cohabitating with a significant other, children or pregnancy, and suspension from school. The dismissal will be recorded with the Bear Festival Board and the decision is final. Dismissal from the program disqualifies the individual from future participation in the program.
- 2) Ambassadors will maintain the **HIGHEST** level of integrity and poise and will avoid even the implications of inappropriate behavior.
- 3) If the Ambassador does not complete the full reign of office, the Ambassador's clothing, crown(s), and all other accessories and items provided must be returned to the Bear Festival Board within one week of leaving the Bear Festival Program. The Ambassador will be responsible for reimbursing Bear Festival if sponsorship money is not received to cover the costs of the Ambassador's clothing.
- 4) Ambassadors must conduct themselves in a manner which brings respect to the participant, Bear Festival and the community at all times.
- 5) Unless specified, the activities permissible while riding on the float are limited to smiling and waving. Small, polite conversation is permissible at the discretion of the Bear Festival Board. All activities done on the float will be in good taste. Only assigned chaperones appointed by the Bear Festival Board are allowed to accompany the float during official parades. Only Ambassadors and float crew accompanying the float are allowed on the float, unless approved by the Bear Festival Board. Parent/legal guardian accompanying Ambassadors to a parade or other community event are responsible for the behavior and well-being of the minor child.
- 6) Ambassadors must provide their own transportation to and from Bear Festival meetings and appearances. If they do not have their own transportation, the Participant **MUST** make sure the Bear Festival Board understands this fact **PRIOR** to applying.
- 7) During any official event, the Ambassador represents Bear Festival and McCleary. For those relatively few and brief times in the public eye, all else must be set aside, including close or intimate friendships (boyfriends/girlfriends and family members). This includes no dating or intimate friendships among the Ambassador members.
- 8) If an Ambassador has or gets any visible tattoos, hennas, or body piercing, gauges (other than ear piercing), they must be concealed during official Bear Festival events or anytime they are representing Bear Festival. All hair color must be preapproved by the Bear Festival Board **PRIOR** to making any changes.
- 9) Any Junior Ambassador crowned Queen/King will automatically receive a place in the Bear Festival Senior Ambassador program as a Princess/Prince.
- 10) Ambassadors and parent/legal guardian must sign and adhere to the Bear Festival Social Media Contract (provided upon acceptance to program).

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- 11) Ambassadors and parent/legal guardian, whose name is signed on the contract, give permission to McCleary Bear Festival and their licenses to use photographs and video for publicity purposes in connection with the festival.
- 12) All disputes between Ambassadors, parents, or Bear Festival Board members must be brought to the attention of the Bear Festival Board immediately. The Bear Festival Board will not tolerate disrespectful or rude behavior between participants or their parents.
- 13) Gossip from members, and/or parents pertaining to Bear Festival, other members, (current or previous years), will not be tolerated and is grounds for disciplinary actions or dismissal. If you have a concern of any issue(s) with Bear Festival or an Ambassador, contact any member of the Bear Festival Board to discuss the issue to avoid the manner being misconstrued or elevated beyond being reconciled.
- 14) As needed, the Ambassador, including parents/legal guardians, will assist with the float preparations, set-up and tear-down at parades. Everyone will help and can only be dismissed by a member of the Bear Festival Board if present, or Float Setup Officials when all work is complete.
- 15) If selected as an Ambassador, the Senior Royalty will be required to be on the float at all scheduled parades, unless specified by the Bear Festival Board. Senior Royalty will prepare routines to float music determined by the Senior Queen and Bear Festival Board. Preparedness will determine if a member will attend that weekend's parade event. The Junior Royalty court will not travel with the float if the Senior Royalty court is full. If the Senior Royalty court is not full, Junior Royalty will travel and participate in all float functions. If Junior Royalty is needed, it will be decided by the Bear Festival Board on a case-by-case basis and Juniors will be on a rotating basis, so all have an opportunity if one is available. All Royalty will participate in the Bear Festival event the second weekend in July.
- 16) Ambassadors must be reliable, on time, well-groomed and dressed appropriately upon arrival for meetings and appearances. All Ambassadors are busy with homework, school activities, their social life, and family activities. However, entering the program, as a Bear Festival participant requires a commitment to place Bear Festivals' activities at the top of the participant's other activities and obligations. Schedules change and availability is especially important. Jobs and other outside activities may need to be put on hold until the end of the season annual commitment. Only serious and unforeseeable events will be acceptable excuses for tardiness or absence. This means that a required scheduled Bear Festival activity that is missed for any other reason, is considered an unexcused absence and will affect the Bear Festival Boards' decision when determining the 2026-2027 Royalty Court. It will be determined by the Bear Festival Board if an absence or lack of attendance is valid for disqualification from program. The Bear Festival Board will provide at least a two-week window for all mandatory appearances being added to the master schedule throughout the season.
- 17) Appearances are documented on a spreadsheet and managed by the Bear Festival Board. The dismissal of any Ambassador will be recorded with the Bear Festival Board and the decision is final. Dismissal from the program disqualifies the individual from future participation in the program.
- 18) If an Ambassador decides to leave the program prior to the end of the Bear Festival year, the Ambassador forfeits scholarship money and the opportunity to rejoin the program at a later date. Ambassador decisions to leave the program are final.
- 19) If an Ambassador has an emergency requiring being late or missing a scheduled Bear Festival event or activity, the member must call a member of the Bear Festival Board as soon as possible (unless otherwise directed to contact another individual prior to a specific event). Late arrival is 15-minutes past arranged time. Ambassadors should not contact another Ambassador or Chaperone of their absence or tardiness. If an Ambassador contacts another Ambassador or Chaperone of their absence or tardiness instead of a member of the Bear Festival Board, this will constitute as an unexcused absence or tardy.
- 20) Using a cell phone/texting during a Bear Festival event or activity is NOT allowed. The Bear Festival Board or Bear Festival Representative carries a cell phone in the event of an emergency. **LEAVE YOUR CELL PHONE IN THE CAR OR AT HOME!** If you bring out the cell phone during an appearance the Bear Festival Representative will hold onto the phone until the end of the appearance. After two notices/requests to put the Ambassadors phone away during an event, the Ambassador will be asked to leave the event and will be documented. If the Ambassador cannot follow this requirement during two events, the Ambassador will be removed from the program.
- 21) Ambassadors must represent Bear Festival with a positive attitude. If the Bear Festival Board receives a complaint about an Ambassador or a parent of an Ambassador's attitude or behavior, the Bear Festival Board reserves the right to take action, up to removal from the program. Poor behavior or poor attitude during events and meetings is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- 22) If the Queen/King should resign, the alternate is at the SOLE DISCRETION of the Bear Festival Board. The same rule follows if another Ambassador should resign.

- 23) Ambassadors crowned Queen/King may not run again. Previous Ambassadors may re-apply, as long as their term was not ended due to a termination recorded by the board.
- 24) Decisions of the Bear Festival Board will be final.

Section 5: APPEARANCES

- 1) Ambassadors and their parent/legal guardians understand that they will be expected to participate and help with functions/events (weekend or otherwise) as requested by the Bear Festival Board. Some examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Monthly meetings which are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm at the Community Center or other location as needed.
 - Fundraising (dates TBD)
 - Various community events
 - Choreography practice (dates TBD pending Queens song selection and choreography)
 - Parades (dates TBD)
 - Bear Festival (July 10-13, 2026)
 - Ambassadors will be asked to spend time during the festival with various activities throughout the **ENTIRE WEEKEND**, beginning with Thursday morning, July 10 and concluding on Sunday, July 13, 2026 in the evening. A complete schedule will be provided prior to festival.

Section 6: SPONSORSHIP

- 1) Ambassadors understand that they are required to obtain a **minimum of \$500.00 for Seniors and \$300.00 for Juniors** in sponsorships from businesses and/or individuals. Sponsorship letters will be provided to each Ambassador.
- 2) Sponsorship minimums must be met **by February 28, 2026** prior to any formal clothing purchases being made for any Ambassador.
- 3) Ambassadors understand that failure to meet sponsorship requirements is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program by the Bear Festival Board.

Section 7: CLOTHING

- 1) Bear Festival will pre-purchase a crown and sash and light day wear for each Ambassador following selection and prior to sponsorship requirements being met. If the Ambassador leaves the program for any reason prior to sponsorship money collected, the Ambassador or parent will be responsible for reimbursing Bear Festival for purchases made for the Ambassador including: day wear, crown, sash, formal wear.
- 2) Ambassadors and parent/legal guardians understand that they are responsible for providing initial temporary attire if needed that are to be utilized for appearances and are to be worn only as directed by the Bear Festival Board (i.e. pair of jeans, t-shirt, shoes). Attire will be discussed prior to event and each Ambassador is expected to dress according to what is decided.
- 3) Senior Queen/King, with the oversight of Bear Festival Board, will choose each Ambassadors official wardrobe and will pay up to and \$500.00 for Seniors and \$300.00 for Juniors of the overall cost of the garments that will be worn on the float and at special public appearances. Attire will be purchased following sponsorship commitments being met **by February 28, 2026**.
- 4) Ambassadors will be responsible to pay the difference of the overall cost or participate in fundraising efforts to cover additional attire expenses voted on by the Ambassadors for that given season. Ambassadors are responsible to keep their garments in clean, undamaged condition. If an Ambassador arrives at an event with dirty or damaged attire, they will be asked to leave until their attire is repaired/cleaned. Any repairs or cleaning fees are the responsibility of the Ambassador and their parent/guardian.
- 5) Official garments (day and formal wear, sash, crown), are to be worn only as directed by the Bear Festival Board.
- 6) Ambassadors are responsible to replace any lost or damaged garments, accessories, or other items provided prior to participating in next appearance. Missed appearances due to lost or damaged garments will count as an unexcused absence.
- 7) If the Ambassador does not complete the full reign of office, the Ambassadors' unpaid clothing, crown(s), and all other accessories and items provided must be returned to the Bear Festival Board within one week of leaving the Bear Festival Program, or you will be billed for the items not returned.

Section 8: BUTTONS

- 1) Ambassadors understand that they are required to **sell a minimum of 250 buttons for Juniors and 400 buttons for Seniors**, with support provided by the Bear Festival Board, as well as additional volunteer sign-up opportunities arranged at local McCleary merchant locations. Buttons will be sold for \$3.00/button. Any buttons unaccounted for will be the responsibility of the Ambassador.
- 2) Ambassadors understand that they are responsible for all buttons signed out to sell. Ambassadors will be responsible to make weekly deposits at Our Community Credit Union (OCCU). Ambassadors will turn in any unsold buttons and all money collected from their button sales prior to Bear Festival Weekend
- 3) Ambassadors understand that they **will receive 10%** of their total button sales at the **end of September 2026**, as long as the Ambassador has fulfilled all obligations of their contract.

SECTION 9: AWARDS

Bear Festival Award (\$75.00): The Bear Festival Board has the option to award the Ambassador member who shows the most improvement and commitment, as well as positive attitude (including attendance to scheduled appearances) to Bear Festival during their reign. This award may be waived if the Bear Festival Board if there are no Ambassadors who meet the criteria. The selected Ambassador will be voted on by the Bear Festival Board members and/or selected panel. Criteria for this award includes, but is not limited to:

- Participating in all assigned appearances
- Hair combed, and away from your face
- Wearing assigned clothing and/or jewelry for the event (clean and wrinkle free)
- Arriving to event on time
- Showing up with a cheerful positive attitude
- Phones left in or car or at home
- Follow directions given by Bear Festival Board at assigned events
- Be prepared to interact with the public at the assigned events

Senior Queens Award (\$100.00): The Ambassador member who embodies the spirit of Bear Festival will receive a special Queens Award. Neither award is required or guaranteed. Awards will be presented at Bear Festival Coronation ceremony.

SECTION 10: SENIOR SCHOLARSHIP

All Senior Royalty **must complete the full reign (12 Months)** of office as Queen/King to receive the scholarship. Resigning or termination of reign will result in no scholarship fund.

- 1) **\$1,000.00 post High School education/training program scholarship** awarded to crowned Senior Queen/King who completes 12-month reign.
- 2) The Senior recipients must be enrolled in a post High School education/training program and request scholarship, in writing, to be issued within three years of high school graduation, or all Scholarship monies will be forfeited.
- 3) Scholarship funds can first be requested following the completion of two quarters or one semester by providing proof of enrollment for third quarter or second semester.
- 4) The Senior recipient's scholarship money will be sent to the education/training program directly upon evidence of enrollment to a post High School education/training program. No funds will be issued directly to an individual.

SECTION 11: JUDGING

Ambassadors understand that the McCleary Bear Festival Senior Queen/King and Junior Queen/King and will be chosen based on the following criteria:

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- 1) Public speaking engagements, community service hours, button sales, sponsorships, attendance and participation effort at functions/events, essay, interview, and academics.
 - **Public speaking:** Scheduled appearances TBD (i.e. Chamber meeting, City Council meeting, etc.). Each speaking engagement is worth a max of 30 points. Results from panel will be placed in a sealed envelope to be opened during final meeting prior to coronation.
 - **Community Service:** Pass/Fail – 100 points for requirement completion. All Ambassadors must complete a minimum of 50-hours of community services. Select Ambassador appearances will count toward community service hours. Community Services hours cannot be combined with other organizations, i.e. Girl Scout hours will not count toward Bear Festival hours, etc.
 - **Button sales:** 1st place – 100 points, 2nd place – 75 points, 3rd place – 50 points.
 - **Attendance:** Includes monthly meetings, events, and scheduled appearances. Each engagement is worth a max of 15 points. Unexcused absences are minus 15 points per occurrence.
 - **Essay:** 500-word essay for Seniors and 250-word essay for Juniors and to be written on a day chosen, prior to festival weekend with one board member and Ambassador Director present. 1st place – 100 points, 2nd place – 75 points, 3rd place – 50 points.
 - **Interview:** All Ambassadors will complete an interview, prior to festival weekend, with a panel of Bear Festival Board members and community members on a chosen day. 1st place – 100 points, 2nd place – 75 points, 3rd place – 50 points.
 - **Academics:** Pass/Fail – 100 points for maintaining a 2.5 GPA. GPA under a 2.5 is a disqualification from crowning eligibility.
- 2) Crowning will take place at coronation ceremony **on Friday, July 10, 2026 at 5:00pm**.
- 3) Ambassadors understand that if they are not crowned Queen/King, they are still obligated to fulfill contract term following coronation. If Ambassador fails to fulfill those obligations **through October 2026**, they automatically forfeit share of button sales and will no longer be eligible to run for program in the future.

Section 12: CONCLUSION

To the Ambassadors parent/legal guardians and family members: Thank you for supporting your daughter and/or son in this endeavor.

Parent/legal guardians, please help the Ambassadors realize that all Bear Festival Board decisions are final, and failure to comply by the rules set forth in this contract can result in immediate dismissal with loss of crown and any scholarship money awarded (this includes the behavior presented by the parent/legal guardian throughout the contracted season).

We are looking forward to an exciting year of making memories and acquiring skills that will last a lifetime. We know you are just as excited as we are to watch your child to grow and develop.

Participant and parent/legal guardian, please **sign below that you have read and understand** the Ambassador Contract, Rules and Information and initial the bottom of each of the previous required pages.

X _____
Participant Signature Date

X _____
Legal Guardian Signature Date

X _____
MBF Board Member Signature Date