

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

Department of Finance & Administration



MEETING DATE: August 18, 2026
 SUBJECT: BlacQuity SC: 2026 Roots and Rivers Festival
 PROJECT MANAGER: Jeremy Bullock, Grants Administrator

Summarized below is the application from BlacQuity SC for Accommodations Tax grant dollars in support of advertising, facilities, security and transportation for their 2026 Roots and Rivers Festival.

Budget numbers provided herein are based on information conveyed on the required Line-Item Budget Form within the applicant's submission.

Total Budget: \$35,290
Requested Amount: \$25,000
Percentage of Request^: 70%

^Includes up to 100% for Advertising & Promotion plus up to 50% of remaining expenses

Eligible Tourism-Related Expense Categories (per SC Code of Laws)	Total Budget for Category, per budget form	
Advertising & Promotion of Tourism or Arts and Cultural Events	14,500	
Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events	5,690	
Public Facilities	2,000	*
Municipality and County Services	2,400	*
Tourist Transportation	1,200	*
Other/Ineligible Project Expenses	9,500	
Total	\$35,290	

*Reimbursement will be based on the estimated percentage of tourists provided for

Budgeted Expenses Summary:

Advertising & Promotion:

Total budget \$14,500

- Local and regional newspaper, magazine, radio and television ads, billboards, social media, email/text blasts, postcards, posters, event website and graphic design

Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events:

Total budget \$5,690

- Rentals of venue, stage, tents

Public Facilities:

Total budget \$2,000

- Port-o-Lets rental, handwashing station, trash hauling

Municipal and County Services:

Total budget \$2,400

- Bluffton Police Department security and other security

Tourist Transportation:

Total budget \$1,200

- Shuttle services for attendees

Other/Ineligible Project Expenses:

Total budget \$9,500

- Gifts/giveaways, staff coordination/planning, insurance, videographer, office supplies & administration expenses

Table Rating (Scores 0-5 with 5 satisfying the qualifications best, exception Advertising 0-15)

Amount Requested	Advertising (15)	Festival / Event (5)	Bluffton Event (5)	Tourism Draw % (5)	Benefit to Tourism (5)	Self-Sufficiency % (5)	Total of 40 possible	Comments
\$25,000	10	5	4	3	4	3	29	

Advertising: Of the requested funds, 58% is requested to market/advertise the event. Intended media vehicles for advertising include WHHI-TV, WSAV-TV, WJCL, WTOG, Gullah Geechee Radio (98.5 FM), Bob FM (104.9)/G100 Savannah, 98.7 FM/101.1 FM, WHCJ (Savannah State Radio), iHeart Radio, Spotify Radio, Lowcountry Weekly, The Bluffton Sun, The Island Packet, Post & Courier, The Southern Edge Magazine, Local Life, Savannah Magazine, CB2 Magazine, Urban Magazine (Atlanta), HHI-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce Newsletters, Facebook, and online on VisitBluffton.org and SouthCarolinaLowcountry.com

Festival/Event: The event is scheduled to take place on September 12 and will feature food and entertainment.

Bluffton Event: The location of the 2026 event will be Oyster Factory Park.

Tourism Draw %: The reported tourism attendance at the 2025 event was 53%, which includes visitors from Savannah, Charleston, Atlanta, Jacksonville, and Columbia.

Benefit to Tourism: Event marketing materials will provide a list of recommended hotels and accommodations; visitors will also be encouraged to explore Bluffton's Historic District and shops, dine locally and extend their stay.

Self-Sufficiency % (Financial Need): The request is approximately 50% of BlacQuity's total projected events budget of \$50,000 for 2026. Additional revenue sources include sponsorships, donations, vendor and registration fees, ticket and raffles sales, and in-kind contributions.

Previous Funding Amounts						
Fiscal Year	Requested Amount	% of Budget	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Expended	Comments
2026	\$27,000	43.5%	\$27,000	\$27,000	\$15,735.82	Final report submitted
2025	\$38,186	57%	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$22,733.03	Final report submitted
2024	\$38,186	57%	\$21,836	\$21,836	\$14,006.87	Amounts consist of both grant awards combined. Final report submitted

Accommodations Tax Committee Recommendations and Comments:

The Committee recommends funding \$25,000 for the 2026 Roots & Rivers Festival.

Bullock, Jeremy

From: noreply@civicplus.com
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2026 4:47 PM
To: ATax Communications
Subject: Online Form Submittal: Accommodations Tax Grant Application

WARNING!

This email originated from outside of the Town of Bluffton's email system. DO NOT click any links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Accommodations Tax Grant Application

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

Accommodations Tax Grant Application Instructions	Accommodations Tax Grant Application Instructions
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Accommodations Tax Grant Application Instructions	I have read and acknowledged the Town of Bluffton, SC Accommodations Tax Grant Application Instructions.
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(Section Break)

Application Date	3/27/2026
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Project Name	Roots & Rivers Festival
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Project/Event Location	Oyster Factory Park
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Is this a new project or event?	No
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Project/Event Start Date:	9/12/2026
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Project/Event End Date	9/12/2026
Multi-Year Project/Event?	No
Total Project Costs	50,000
Total ATAX Funds Requested	25,000
Percent of Total Budget	50%
Date the funds are needed:	9/12/2026
Full Legal Organization Name	BlacQuity SC
Address	10 Buck Island Rd
Street Address Line 2	<i>Field not completed.</i>
City	Bluffton
State	South Carolina
Zip Code	29910
Applicant must be designated as a non-profit entity to receive ATAX funds. Is your entity a non-profit organization?	Yes
TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION	
Organization Primary Point of Contact	
First Name	Gwen
Last Name	Chambers
Title	Executive Director
Phone Number	8437075271

E-mail Address gwen@blacquitysc.org

(Section Break)

Organization Secondary Point of Contact

First Name Derek

Last Name Jenkins

Title Board Chair

Phone Number 484-326-8459

E-mail Address jenkinsderek9.7@gmail.com

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

Project Description: Roots & Rivers Festival is a one-day cultural tourism and community festival hosted by BlacQuity at Oyster Factory Park in Bluffton, South Carolina on Saturday, September 12, 2026. The festival celebrates Lowcountry culture, music, food, entrepreneurship, family engagement, and Black-owned businesses while attracting residents and visitors to the Town of Bluffton.

The event will feature live entertainment, a headline musical performance, DJ, local and regional food vendors, artisan and retail vendors, a family-friendly Kids Zone, community engagement activities, sponsor activations, and opportunities for attendees to support local small businesses. The festival is designed to create a welcoming, high-energy destination experience that encourages visitors to come into Bluffton, spend time in the community, support local commerce, and experience the cultural identity of the Lowcountry.

Town of Bluffton ATAX funds will support eligible festival expenses including regional marketing and advertising, sound/stage/lights, police/security, venue costs, and design/promotional materials. These investments will help ensure the event is professionally promoted, safe, well-produced, and positioned as a tourism-facing festival that strengthens Bluffton's visibility as a cultural and family-friendly destination.

List any required permits, if applicable. If none, type "N/A": Required permits and approvals may include the Town of Bluffton Special Event Permit, Oyster Factory Park facility use approval, police/security coordination, insurance certificate, vendor-related approvals, and any applicable alcohol/beverage licensing connected to the festival beer garden. BlacQuity will coordinate with the Town of Bluffton and all appropriate agencies to ensure all required

permits, approvals, insurance documentation, and public safety requirements are completed before the event.

Describe all planned advertising and marketing for this project/event:

BlacQuity plans to implement a regional tourism-focused marketing campaign to promote the 2026 Roots & Rivers Festival and attract visitors from outside the Town of Bluffton. Marketing will include print advertising, radio promotion, digital advertising, social media advertising, email marketing, community partner promotion, event listing platforms, flyer and poster distribution, press outreach, and regional media placements.

The campaign will focus on positioning Roots & Rivers Festival as a cultural tourism experience in Bluffton featuring live music, food, local vendors, family activities, and Lowcountry culture. Paid and organic promotion will target visitors from surrounding drive markets including Savannah, GA, Charleston, SC, Jacksonville, FL, Columbia, SC, Hilton Head Island, Jasper County, Hampton County, Colleton County, and other nearby communities.

Marketing materials will include professionally designed graphics, flyers, posters, banners, digital ads, radio spots, social media content, event listings, sponsor recognition materials, and video/photo content. All advertising and marketing funded through Town of Bluffton ATAX dollars will include the required Town of Bluffton branding and will be submitted for approval in accordance with the Town's brand standards and approval process.

Please list all media outlets you intend to utilize for your project/event (i.e. names of magazines, TV and radio stations, etc.):

BlacQuity intends to utilize a combination of regional, local, digital, print, radio, and tourism-facing outlets, including but not limited to: iHeartRadio, WSOK AM 1230 Savannah, The Bluffton Sun, Local Life Magazine, Savannah Magazine, The Savannah Tribune, WSAV Television, Facebook/Instagram Ads, Google Display Ads, YouTube Ads, Eventbrite promotion, [BlackPR.com](https://www.blackpr.com), Black PR Wire, NNPA/BlackPressUSA, BlacQuity email newsletter, BlacQuity website, partner newsletters, local community calendars, regional event calendars, and social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn.

Additional media partners and promotional outlets may be added as opportunities become available and as approved within the project marketing plan.

All advertising/marketing paid for with Town of Bluffton Accommodations Tax dollars must incorporate the branding shown here: **Town of Bluffton Brand Standards. The use of the Town's logo must meet the design standards outlined at the aforementioned link and be approved by the Town. Designs**

may be submitted electronically using this [link](#). Please allow five (5) business days for approval.

Impact on or Benefit to Tourism:

Roots & Rivers Festival will benefit tourism by attracting visitors into the corporate limits of the Town of Bluffton for a cultural, entertainment, food, vendor, and family-friendly festival experience at Oyster Factory Park. The festival is intentionally designed to draw attendees from outside Bluffton and surrounding Town zip codes, including regional visitors from Jacksonville, FL, Columbia, SC, Savannah, GA, Charleston, SC, Beaufort, SC, Hilton Head Island, SC, Jasper County, Hampton County, Colleton County, and other drive markets.

The event encourages tourism by giving visitors a reason to travel to Bluffton for live entertainment, Lowcountry culture, food, shopping, and community experiences. Attendees may also support nearby restaurants, retail businesses, gas stations, lodging properties, and other local establishments before, during, and after the event.

Roots & Rivers Festival also supports Bluffton's broader tourism identity by highlighting the Town as a welcoming destination for cultural experiences, family-friendly events, small business engagement, and community-centered festivals. By investing in regional advertising, professional event production, public safety, and visitor-facing promotion, the festival will increase awareness of Bluffton as a place to visit, gather, shop, eat, and experience Lowcountry culture.

The festival's benefit to tourism will be measured through attendance, ticket sales, vendor participation, sponsor engagement, social media reach, digital advertising performance, website/event page traffic, visitor ZIP code collection where possible, and post-event reporting. BlacQuity will document marketing efforts and event outcomes to demonstrate how ATAX funds supported tourism promotion and visitor attraction.

***“Tourist”* means a person who does not reside within the corporate limits of the Town or within a Town zip code that takes a trip into the corporate limits of the Town for any purpose, except daily commuting to and from work.**

***“Travel”* and *“Tourism”* mean the action and activities of people taking trips outside their home communities for any purpose, except daily commuting to and from work.**

**Additional
Comments:**

BlacQuity is requesting Town of Bluffton Accommodations Tax funding to help expand the reach, safety, visibility, and tourism impact of the 2026 Roots & Rivers Festival. The requested funds will support eligible costs including marketing, police/security, sound/stage/lights, venue expenses, and design/promotional materials.

Roots & Rivers Festival aligns with the purpose of ATAX funding by promoting Bluffton as a visitor destination and supporting an event that attracts people into the Town for culture, entertainment, food, shopping, and family-friendly activities. BlacQuity is committed to following all Town of Bluffton branding, approval, documentation, reporting, and compliance requirements connected to the use of ATAX funds.

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

To download the Town's required Line-Item Budget Form, click here:

<https://www.townofbluffton.sc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/4295/ATAX-Grant-Application-Line-Item-Budget-Form>

Download and save the form and hit "Back" in your web browser to return to the application. Once the form is completed, attach it on the following line.

Town's required Line-Item Budget Form:	BlacQuity_RootsRivers2026_ATAX_BudgetForm_CORRECTED.pdf
Most Recent Fiscal Year Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Accounting Statement	BlacQuity_FinancialStatements_FY2025.pdf
Financial Guarantee	BlacQuity_Board_Resolution_Minutes_RootsRivers2026.docx

Applicant must provide a copy of official minutes wherein the sponsoring organization approves the project and commits the organization to financial responsibility for carrying it out to the stage of completion.

Please attach [BlacQuity BudgetVsActual RootsRivers 2024 2025.pdf](#)
 Budget vs. Actual
 statements for prior
 two years events.

Please attach *Field not completed.*
 Budget vs. Actual
 statements for prior
 two years events.

(Section Break)

Have you
 requested,
 received, or been
 awarded ATAX
 funding from other
 state or local
 entities for this
 project/event? No

Have you received
 or been awarded
 ATAX funding from
 other state or local
 entities for any
 other
 project/event? No

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

PRIOR RECIPIENT'S REPORT

If your organization has received ATAX funding from the Town of Bluffton in previous years, you must complete the below information.

If you have not received ATAX funding from the Town of Bluffton, please answer "No" and skip this section, and sign and submit your application.

Has your
 organization
 previously received Yes

ATAX funds from the
Town of Bluffton?

Project/Event Name	Roots & Rivers Festival
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Year Awarded	2025
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Amount Awarded	27000
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Was a final report submitted?	Yes
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What was the total number of tourists?	424
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What was the percentage of tourists?	54
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(Section Break)

Please attach a copy of your organization's IRS Designation Letter showing your non-profit status .	IRS Determination FinalLetter 88-0662577 BLACQUITYSC 02142022 00.pdf
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Please upload a copy of your current Town of Bluffton Business License, which is required of all applicants.	2026BusinessLicense BlacQuity.pdf
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Additional Application Documents	<i>Field not completed.</i>
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Additional Application Documents	<i>Field not completed.</i>
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Additional Application Documents	<i>Field not completed.</i>
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Additional
Application
Documents

Field not completed.

Additional
Comments

Field not completed.

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

All applicants will be required to come before the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee (ATAC) and answer any and all questions when scheduled to do so.

Any organization awarded funds for advertising/marketing must incorporate the Bluffton Heart of the Lowcountry brand logo in all promotional materials and advertising.

The South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) defines a “public body” as any organization or corporation supported in whole or in part by public funds or expending public funds. If awarded, your organization's acceptance of public funds from the Town of Bluffton may cause your organization to come within the meaning of “public body” as defined by the Freedom of Information Act. S.C. Code Ann. §30-4-10, et seq. (Supp. 2002). Accordingly, this is to advise that by accepting public funds, your organization may be subject to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

By submitting this application, the organization certifies that it has read and understands the paragraphs above. The organization additionally certifies that it does not discriminate in any manner on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, religion, or language and that all funds that may be received by the applicant organization from the Town of Bluffton, South Carolina will be solely used for the purposes set forth in this application and will comply with all laws and statutes, including the South Carolina Code of Laws regarding Allocations of Accommodations Tax Revenues.

By typing your name below, you are signing this application electronically. You agree that your electronic signature is the legal equivalent of your manual signature on this application.

Signature Gwen Chambers

Signatory's Title or
Position Executive Director

Email not displaying correctly? [View it in your browser.](#)





Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service
Tax Exempt and Government Entities
 P.O. Box 2508
 Cincinnati, OH 45201

BLACQUITY SC
 PO BOX 3132
 BLUFFTON, SC 29910

Date:
 03/09/2022
Employer ID number:
 88-0662577
Person to contact:
 Name: Customer Service
 ID number: 31954
 Telephone: 877-829-5500
Accounting period ending:
 December 31
Public charity status:
 170(b)(1)(A)(vi)
Form 990 / 990-EZ / 990-N required:
 Yes
Effective date of exemption:
 February 2, 2022
Contribution deductibility:
 Yes
Addendum applies:
 No
DLN:
 26053447002412

Dear Applicant:

We're pleased to tell you we determined you're exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3). Donors can deduct contributions they make to you under IRC Section 170. You're also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522. This letter could help resolve questions on your exempt status. Please keep it for your records.

Organizations exempt under IRC Section 501(c)(3) are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined you're a public charity under the IRC Section listed at the top of this letter.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that you're required to file Form 990/990-EZ/990-N, our records show you're required to file an annual information return (Form 990 or Form 990-EZ) or electronic notice (Form 990-N, the e-Postcard). If you don't file a required return or notice for three consecutive years, your exempt status will be automatically revoked.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that an addendum applies, the enclosed addendum is an integral part of this letter.

For important information about your responsibilities as a tax-exempt organization, go to www.irs.gov/charities. Enter "4221-PC" in the search bar to view Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Public Charities, which describes your recordkeeping, reporting, and disclosure requirements.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Martin

Stephen A. Martin
 Director, Exempt Organizations
 Rulings and Agreements

TOWN OF BLUFFTON

TOWN OF BLUFFTON -

Expires:04/30/2027

License No. 26-02-2128

Business Name: BlacQuity SC

Date Issued: 02/11/2026

NAICS Title: Other Similar Organizations
(except Business,
Professional, Labor, and
Political Organizations)

**Business DBA
Name:** BlacQuity SC

Business Type:

Economic Development Center

Physical Address:

10 BUCK ISLAND RD
BLUFFTON SC
29910

NON-TRANSFERABLE | TO BE PLACED IN A CONSPICUOUS PLACE

Section 6-21 Purpose and Duration of Business License

ALL BUSINESSES LOCATED IN THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON MUST POST THE BUSINESS LICENSE IN A VISIBLE LOCATION WITHIN THE BUSINESS LOCATION AS REFERENCED ABOVE AND IS VALID FOR THIS LOCATION ONLY. ALL BUSINESSES LOCATED OUTSIDE THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON MUST KEEP A CURRENT COPY WHILE CONDUCTING BUSINESS INSIDE THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON. CHANGE IN LOCATION OR OWNERSHIP REQUIRES A NEW LICENSE. IF THE BUSINESS IS CLOSED, CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT 843-706-4501 TO UPDATE ACCOUNT.

Gwen Chambers
BlacQuity, LLC
10 Buck Island Dr
Bluffton, SC 29910

TOWN OF BLUFFTON
ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION BUDGET FORM

ATTACHMENT 7

Round all numbers to the nearest whole dollar; do not use commas between numbers or ".00" at the end of a

figure

REVENUES

Revenues - Cash

Sponsorships \$ 15000

Donations \$ 12000

ATAX Grants/Funding from Other Entities* \$ 0

** Do **NOT** include anticipated award funds requested in this application*

Other Grants (please name): _____

\$ 0

Other Grants (please name): _____

\$ 0

Other Grants (please name): _____

\$ 0

Vendor Fees \$ 4000

Registration Fees \$ 0

Other Fees (please name): Ticket Sales

\$ 0

Other Fees (please name): _____

\$ 0

Merchandise Sales \$ 1000

Other Sales (please name): Beer Garden Sales

\$ 2000

Other Sales (please name): _____

\$ 0

Other Revenue (please name): _____

\$ 0

Other Revenue (please name): _____

\$ 0

Revenues - In-Kind Contributions

Volunteer Hours \$ 360

Donated Items \$ 1500

Donated Services \$ 1500

Other (please name): _____

\$ 0

Other (please name): _____

\$ 0

Other (please name): _____

\$ 0

Total All Revenue Sources: \$ 37360

TOWN OF BLUFFTON
ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION BUDGET FORM
EXPENSES

ATTACHMENT 7

Round all numbers to the nearest whole dollar; do not use commas between numbers or ".00" at the end of a figure

Eligible Tourism-Related Expense Categories (per SC Code of Laws)

	Amount
Advertising & Promotion of Tourism or Arts and Cultural Events	
Local Newspaper/Digital Advertising	\$ 1000
Regional Newspaper/Digital Advertising	\$ 1000
National Newspaper/Digital Advertising	\$ 0
Local Magazine/Digital Advertising	\$ 1000
Regional Magazine/Digital Advertising	\$ 2000
National Magazine/Digital Advertising	\$ 0
Local Radio Advertising	\$ 1500
Regional Radio Advertising	\$ 2500
National Radio Advertising	\$ 0
Local Television Advertising	\$ 0
Regional Television Advertising	\$ 1000
National Television Advertising	\$ 0
Billboards	\$ 0
Social Media Advertising	\$ 500
E-mail and/or Text Blasts	\$ 500
Postcards/Mailers	\$ 0
Posters/Banners/Signage	\$ 1200
Graphic Design of Marketing/Writing or Press Releases	\$ 1100
Web Hosting for Event (not organization)	\$ 0
Other (please name): Event Printing	\$ 1200
Other (please name):	\$ 0
Other (please name):	\$ 0
Other (please name):	\$ 0
Other (please name):	\$ 0
Total Advertising/Promotion Budget: \$ 14500	

Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events

Rentals: Venue(s)	\$ 1200
Rentals: Parking Lots	\$ 500
Rentals: Tables, Chairs, Stages, Tents	\$ 0
Rental: Sound, Audio Equipment	\$ 3000
Construction/Renovations/Repairs of Buildings/Facilities	\$ 0
Other (please name): Event Insurance	\$ 990
Other (please name):	\$ 0
Other (please name):	\$ 0
Total Facilities Budget: \$ 5690	

TOWN OF BLUFFTON

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION BUDGET FORM

EXPENSES

ATTACHMENT 7

Round all numbers to the nearest whole dollar; do not use commas between numbers or ".00" at the end of a figure

Eligible Tourism-Related Expense Categories (per SC Code of Laws)

	Amount
Tourist Transportation	
Company Name: Hidden Treasures Trolley	\$ 1200
Company Name: _____	\$ 0
Total Transportation Budget:	\$ 1200
Public Facilities	
Temporary/Portable Restrooms	\$ 600
Dumpster Rental/Trash Hauling	\$ 400
Construction of Permanent Restrooms	\$ 0
Construction of Parks	\$ 0
Construction of Parking Lots	\$ 0
Other (please name): Event Permits	\$ 1000
Other (please name): _____	\$ 0
Total Public Facilities Budget:	\$ 2000
Municipality and County Services	
Security Provided by Bluffton Police Department	\$ 1200
Security NOT Provided by Bluffton Police Department	\$ 1200
Total Municipality/County Services Budget:	\$ 2400
Operations	
Marketing/Advertising	\$ 0
Utilities (electric, gas, water, phone service, internet, etc.)	\$ 0
Subscriptions (not related to marketing/advertising services)	\$ 0
Supplies (office, janitorial, etc.)	\$ 0
Facility Maintenance (i.e. cleaning, pest control, landscaping, etc.)	\$ 0
Minor Repairs	\$ 0
Other (please name): _____	\$ 0
Other (please name): _____	\$ 0
Other (please name): _____	\$ 0
Other (please name): _____	\$ 0
Total Operations Budget:	\$ 0
Total ALL ATAX Eligible Expenses:	\$ 25790

ATTACHMENT 7

Other/Ineligible Expenses *(Applicants should list all other project/event expenses that are not eligible for ATAX funds and not listed above.)*

Total Project/Event Budget <i>(all eligible ATAX categories + Ineligible Expenses):</i>	\$35,290
Total Project/Event Profit or Loss <i>(Total Revenue minus Total Project/Event Budget):</i>	\$2,070

BLACQUITY, INC.**Financial Statements**

Prepared in Support of the Town of Bluffton Accommodations Tax (ATAX) Grant Application

Roots & Rivers Festival 2026

Contents

1. Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) Page 2
Cash Basis · As of December 31, 2025 · Source: QuickBooks (exported March 30, 2026)
2. Statement of Activities (Profit & Loss) Pages 3–5
Cash Basis · January 1 – December 31, 2025 · Source: QuickBooks (exported March 30, 2026)

 **SOURCE: All figures on both statements are drawn directly from BlacQuity's QuickBooks accounting records, exported March 30, 2026. These are final, cash-basis figures for Fiscal Year 2025. No placeholders remain.**

BLACQUITY, INC.**Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)**

Cash Basis · As of December 31, 2025 · Source: QuickBooks (exported March 30, 2026)

Assets**Current Assets — Bank Accounts**

Cash on Hand	\$60.00
Small Business Checking (3861)	\$60,496.19
zAdjustment	\$0.00

Total Bank Accounts	\$60,556.19
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Current Assets — Other

Payments to Deposit	\$0.00
QuickBooks Tax Holding Account	\$88.42

Total Other Current Assets	\$88.42
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Total Current Assets	\$60,644.61
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Total Non-Current Assets	\$0.00
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TOTAL ASSETS	\$60,644.61
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Liabilities**Current Liabilities — Credit Cards**

South State Bank Card	\$625.00
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Total Credit Cards	\$625.00
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Current Liabilities — Other

Direct Deposit Payable	\$0.00
Payroll Liabilities	\$107.98
Federal Taxes (941/944)	\$80.80
SC Income Tax	\$7.62
SC Unemployment Tax	\$233.28

Total Payroll Liabilities	\$429.68
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Total Other Current Liabilities	\$429.68
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Total Current Liabilities	\$1,054.68
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TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$1,054.68
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Equity

Retained Earnings	\$30,323.11
Net Revenue (FY2025)	\$29,266.82

Total Equity	\$59,589.93
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TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$60,644.61
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⚠ Balance Sheet confirms: Total Assets (\$60,644.61) = Total Liabilities (\$1,054.68) + Total Equity (\$59,589.93) = \$60,644.61. Verified. Source: QuickBooks Statement of Financial Position, Cash Basis, as of December 31, 2025, exported March 30, 2026.

BLACQUITY, INC.**Statement of Activities (Profit & Loss)**

Cash Basis · January 1 – December 31, 2025 · Source: QuickBooks (exported March 30, 2026)

Revenue**Contributed Income**

Corporate & Foundation Grants	\$14,400.00
Donations	\$134,855.03
Donations Directed by Individuals	\$10,000.00

Roots & Rivers Festival Sponsorships

Presenting / Diamond Sponsor	\$7,500.00
Gold Sponsor	\$7,500.00
Platinum Sponsor	\$5,000.00
Silver Sponsor	\$4,000.00
Bronze Sponsor	\$3,000.00

Total Festival Sponsorships	\$27,000.00
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Total Contributed Income	\$186,255.03
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Other Revenue Adjustments

Discounts Given	-\$37.50
Program – BEU Class Payments	-\$75.00
Sales	\$75.00

TOTAL REVENUE	\$186,217.53
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Statement of Activities (continued) — Expenditures

Expenditures**Professional Fees**

Legal	\$450.00
-------	----------

Total Professional Fees	\$450.00
--------------------------------	-----------------

Travel & Meetings

Local Meetings	\$50.00
----------------	---------

Total Travel & Meetings	\$50.00
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Special Events Expense

General Event Expenses	\$1,100.00
------------------------	------------

Entertainment	\$1,000.00
---------------	------------

Security & Safety	\$1,080.00
-------------------	------------

Event Food / Drink & Hospitality	\$383.48
----------------------------------	----------

Total Special Events Expense	\$3,563.48
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Advertising & Marketing

General Advertising & Marketing	\$8,105.94
---------------------------------	------------

Roots & Rivers Festival	\$11,707.64
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Total Advertising & Marketing	\$19,813.58
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Other Program & Organizational

Awards & Grants to Others	\$1,800.00
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Board Development	\$400.00
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Fundraising Event – Food	\$1,027.06
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Insurance (Roots & Rivers)	\$435.00
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Contract & Professional Fees

Contract Services	\$290.20
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Accounting Fees	\$600.00
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Bookkeeping	\$477.50
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Total Contract & Professional Fees	\$1,367.70
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Occupancy / Utilities

Rent/Telephone	\$2,033.30
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Total Occupancy / Utilities	\$2,033.30
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Office Expenses

General Office Expenses	\$1,750.21
Bank Fees & Service Charges	\$25.00
Memberships & Subscriptions	\$1,562.98
Office Supplies	\$1,151.24
Post Office Box Fee	\$188.00
Printing & Photocopying	\$124.75
Program – Software	\$28.60
Shipping & Postage	\$62.10
Software & Apps	\$2,672.99

Total Office Expenses	\$7,565.87
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Payroll Expenses

Wages	\$92,930.94
Payroll Taxes	\$7,149.22
Payroll Adjustment	-\$1,000.00

Total Payroll Expenses	\$99,080.16
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Professional Development

Conference	\$100.00
Vehicle Rental	\$448.82
Hotels	\$1,180.26
Travel/Conference	\$1,308.23

Total Professional Development	\$3,037.31
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Other Organizational Expenses

Professional Organizations & Memberships	\$167.00
QuickBooks Payments Fees	\$606.61
Supplies	\$1,715.70

Roots & Rivers Festival Expenses

General Festival Expenses	\$4,567.80
Program Expenses	\$6,935.04
T-Shirts	\$3,360.00
Trolleys	\$600.00

Total Festival Expenses	\$15,462.84
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Roots & Rivers Festival Expense (misc.)	\$139.77
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TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$158,715.38
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Statement of Activities (continued) — Net Revenue Summary

Net Operating Revenue

Total Revenue	\$186,217.53
Total Expenditures	\$158,715.38

NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$27,502.15
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Other Revenue

Roots & Rivers Festival

Other Income – Ticket Sales	\$5,487.89
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Total Other Revenue	\$5,487.89
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Other Expenditures

Business Meeting

General Meeting Expenses	\$223.89
Coffee	\$18.22
Lunch	\$34.79

Total Business Meeting	\$276.90
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Program – BEU Class

General BEU Class Expenses	\$1,148.50
Food	\$1,103.35
Printing	\$338.31
Supplies	\$706.16
Vendors	\$150.00

Total BEU Class Expenses	\$3,446.32
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TOTAL OTHER EXPENDITURES	\$3,723.22
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Net Other Revenue (Other Revenue – Other Expenditures)	\$1,764.67
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NET REVENUE — FISCAL YEAR 2025	\$29,266.82
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△ P&L confirms: Revenue \$186,217.53 – Expenditures \$158,715.38 = Net Operating Revenue \$27,502.15. Other Revenue \$5,487.89 – Other Expenditures \$3,723.22 = Net Other Revenue \$1,764.67. Net Revenue \$27,502.15 + \$1,764.67 = \$29,266.82.

Verified. BlacQuity finished FY2025 with a net surplus of \$29,266.82. Source: QuickBooks Statement of Activity, Cash Basis, January–December 2025, exported March 30, 2026.

BLACQUITY, INC.

Official Minutes — Roots & Rivers Festival Committee

Approval of the 2026 Roots & Rivers Festival and Commitment of Organizational Financial Responsibility
Prepared in support of the Town of Bluffton Accommodations Tax (ATAX) Grant Application

Meeting Details

Date of Meeting: June 18, 2026

Meeting: Roots & Rivers Festival Planning Committee Meeting

Location / Format: Virtual / Committee Planning Meeting

Meeting Purpose: Festival planning, logistics review, vendor updates, sponsorship updates, entertainment planning, marketing review, and approval of festival-related expenses.

Presiding Officer: Gwen Chambers, Executive Director

Recording Secretary: _____

Committee Members Present:

- Gwen Chambers, Executive Director
- Derek Jenkins, Sponsorship Lead
- Denice Brown, Vendor Lead
- Kevin Cleveland, Logistics Lead
- _____ (add remaining attendees from sign-in / roll call)

Committee Members Absent / Excused:

- _____

⚠ ACTION NEEDED: This record reflects a Committee vote, not a formal Board of Directors vote. Confirm with your Board Chair whether the Roots & Rivers Festival Planning Committee is authorized to act on the Board's behalf for this purpose, or whether this resolution should also be ratified at a Board of Directors meeting and re-certified below before submission to the Town of Bluffton.

Resolution: Approval of the 2026 Roots & Rivers Festival and Commitment of Organizational Financial Responsibility

WHEREAS, BlacQuity, Inc. (the “Organization”) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion, elevation, and empowerment of Black-owned businesses and economic equity across Beaufort, Jasper, Hampton, and Colleton Counties in the South Carolina Lowcountry; and

WHEREAS, the Organization proposes to produce the Roots & Rivers Festival 2026, a community festival celebrating Black entrepreneurship, culture, music, and family, to be held on Saturday, September 12, 2026, from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Oyster Factory Park, Bluffton, South Carolina (the “Project”); and

WHEREAS, the Organization intends to apply for and accept Accommodations Tax (ATAX) grant funding from the Town of Bluffton in support of the Project; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Bluffton's ATAX grant program requires that the sponsoring organization formally approve the project and accept full financial responsibility for its completion; and

WHEREAS, at its meeting held on June 18, 2026, the Roots & Rivers Festival Planning Committee reviewed the current festival layout, logistics, vendor recruitment, sponsorship status, entertainment lineup, Kids Zone planning, volunteer staffing, and marketing materials for the Project;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that BlacQuity, Inc., acting through the Roots & Rivers Festival Planning Committee, hereby:

1. Approves and authorizes the planning, production, and execution of the Roots & Rivers Festival 2026 as described above;
2. Approves covering approximately \$25,000 in festival-related expenses for the 2026 event, and commits BlacQuity, Inc. to full financial responsibility for carrying the Project through to the stage of completion, including the satisfaction of all contracts, vendor obligations, and expenses incurred in connection with the Project, regardless of whether anticipated grant, sponsorship, or earned revenue is fully realized;
3. Authorizes Gwen Chambers, Executive Director, to execute all contracts, applications, agreements, and related documents reasonably necessary to plan, fund, produce, and close out the Project, including the Town of Bluffton ATAX grant application and any associated compliance reporting;
4. Directs that a true and accurate copy of this resolution be maintained in the Organization's permanent records and be made available to the Town of Bluffton and any other funding partner upon request.

Financial Approval Motion

A motion was made for the Roots & Rivers Festival Committee to approve the financial expenses associated with the Roots & Rivers Festival and to approve covering approximately \$25,000 in festival-related expenses for this year's event.

Motion made by: Gwen Chambers

Motion seconded by: Derek Jenkins

Vote: All were in favor.

Result: Motion passed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting concluded with appreciation for all committee members and their continued support of the Roots & Rivers Festival.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate record of the minutes and resolution adopted at the meeting described above, and that this resolution remains in full force and effect as of the date of submission to the Town of Bluffton.

Recording Secretary, BlacQuity, Inc.

Date: _____

Board Chair / President, BlacQuity, Inc. (if Board ratification is required — see flag above)

Date: _____

Gwen Chambers, Executive Director, BlacQuity, Inc.

Date: _____

Note: This document is prepared for the Town of Bluffton ATAX grant requirement that the “applicant must provide a copy of official minutes wherein the sponsoring organization approves the project and commits the organization to financial responsibility for carrying it out to the stage of completion.” It reflects the financial approval motion recorded at the June 18, 2026 Roots & Rivers Festival Planning Committee meeting. Add the remaining attendee roll call, confirm Recording Secretary, resolve the Committee-versus-Board flag above, and obtain final signatures before submission.

BLACQUITY, INC.

Roots & Rivers Festival

Budget vs. Actual Statements — Prior Two Years

Prepared in Support of the Town of Bluffton Accommodations Tax (ATAX) Grant Application

Contents

Section 1 · 2024 Budget vs. Actual	Pages 2–3
Festival Date: Saturday, September 14, 2024 · Oyster Factory Park, Bluffton, SC	
Section 2 · 2025 Budget vs. Actual	Pages 4–5
Festival Date: Saturday, September 13, 2025 · Oyster Factory Park, Bluffton, SC	

⚠ 2024 figures are verified from the 2024 Roots & Rivers Festival Budget Spreadsheet and the 2024 ATAX Expense Report (vendor receipts, 54% tourism eligibility ratio). 2025 actuals marked '-' require completion from BlacQuity's accounting records. All figures must be signed by an authorized officer before submission.

Roots & Rivers Festival — 2024 Budget vs. Actual

Festival Date: Saturday, September 14, 2024 · Oyster Factory Park, Bluffton, SC

Income

Line Item	Budget	Actual	Variance	%
INCOME				
ATAX Funds (Town of Bluffton)	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$0	100%
Sponsorships	\$25,000	\$30,500	\$5,500	122%
Ticket Sales (incl. VIP)	\$15,000	\$3,570	(\$11,430)	24%
Vendor Fees / Booth Payments	\$0	\$1,975	\$1,975	—
Raffle Revenue	\$0	\$1,295	\$1,295	—
Beer / Alcohol Sales	\$0	\$1,835	(\$1,835)	—
TOTAL INCOME	\$65,000	\$64,175	\$825	99%

Expenses — Event Logistics

Line Item	Budget	Actual	Variance	%
EVENT LOGISTICS				
Venue (Town of Bluffton)	\$600	\$600	\$0	100%
Stage, Sound & Lighting (Deas Guyz)	\$1,900	\$2,300	(\$400)	121%
Sanitation / Restrooms (B&J)	\$1,800	\$500	\$1,300	28%
Police / Security (BPD + private)	\$850	\$640	\$210	75%
Shuttles / Trolleys (Hidden Treasures)	\$1,200	\$600	\$600	50%
Insurance / Permits (King Horn)	\$500	\$430	\$70	86%
Kids Zone (games, face paint, balloons, mechanical bull)	\$2,700	\$2,720	(\$20)	101%
Entertainment / Line Dancing	\$7,500	\$4,910	\$2,590	65%
Admin Fees / Wristbands / Misc	\$735	\$240	\$495	33%
Beer Purchase	\$5,000	\$250	\$4,750	5%
Fencing / Barricade / Dumpster	\$1,500	\$0	\$1,500	0%
Volunteer Food	\$500	\$0	\$500	0%
SUBTOTAL — LOGISTICS	\$24,785	\$14,190	\$10,595	57%

Expenses — Marketing & Promotion

Line Item	Budget	Actual	Variance	%	
MARKETING & PROMOTION					
Merchandise (shirts, koozies, cups)	\$5,000	\$5,875	(\$875)	118%	
Print Paid Media (Local Life, Post & Courier, Savannah, CB2, Bluffton Sun)	\$7,500	\$6,338	\$1,162	85%	
Radio Paid Media (iHeart)	\$3,000	\$2,510	\$490	84%	
Digital Paid Media (Facebook etc.)	\$5,000	\$1,100	\$3,900	22%	
Print / Design Materials (banners, signs, posters, flyers)	\$4,000	\$1,398	\$2,602	35%	
Photography / Videography	\$1,500	\$450	\$1,050	30%	
Social Paid Marketing	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	0%	
Event Decor (Balloon Arch, Photo Booth)	\$1,800	\$982	\$818	55%	
SUBTOTAL — MARKETING	\$28,800	\$18,653	\$10,147	65%	

Summary

Line Item	Budget	Actual	Variance	%	Notes
TOTAL INCOME	\$65,000	\$64,175	\$825	99%	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$53,585	\$31,803	\$21,782	59%	
NET SURPLUS (Income – Expenses)	\$11,415	\$32,372	\$20,957	284%	

Roots & Rivers Festival — 2025 Budget vs. Actual

Festival Date: Saturday, September 13, 2025 · Oyster Factory Park, Bluffton, SC

Income

Line Item	Budget	Actual	Variance	%	Notes
INCOME					
ATAX Funds (Town of Bluffton)	\$25,000	\$27,000	(\$2,000)	108%	
Ticket Sales	\$8,000	5500	—	—	Confirm final actual
Sponsorships	\$30,000	30,000—	—	—	Confirm final actual
TOTAL INCOME	—	—	—	—	

Expenses — Event Logistics

Line Item	Budget	Actual	Variance	%	Notes
EVENT LOGISTICS					
Venue (Oyster Factory Park)	\$600	\$600	\$0	100%	
Stage, Production, Tents, Chairs (Deas Guyz)	\$2,300	\$2,300	\$0	100%	
Sanitation / Restrooms (B&J)	\$1,000	\$500	\$500	50%	
Police / Security	\$1,000	\$1,720	(\$720)	172%	BPD + private
Shuttles / Trolleys (Hidden Treasures)	\$1,200	\$600	\$600	50%	
Insurance (King Horn)	\$500	\$430	\$70	86%	
Kids Zone	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$1,500	40%	
Entertainment (Band + DJ)	\$7,500	\$5,600	\$1,900	75%	
Misc / Permits / Decor	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0	100%	
SUBTOTAL — LOGISTICS	\$17,600	\$13,750	\$3,850	78%	

Expenses — Marketing & Promotion

Line Item	Budget	Actual	Variance	%	Notes
MARKETING & PROMOTION					
Design & Promo (website, banners)	\$5,500	—	—	—	Confirm final actual
Event Printing	\$1,200	—	—	—	Confirm final actual
Photography / Videography	\$3,000	\$1,000	\$2,000	33%	
Promotional Items (shirts, cups, etc.)	\$8,500	\$5,437	\$3,063	64%	JR Designs + vendors

BlacQuity, Inc. Budget vs. Actual — Roots & Rivers Festival (2024 & 2025)

Line Item	Budget	Actual	Variance	%	Notes
Event Marketing (Print/Radio/Digital)	\$14,000	\$15,027	(\$1,027)	107%	WSAV, iHeart, Local Life etc.
SUBTOTAL — MARKETING	\$32,200	—	—	—	

Summary

Line Item	Budget	Actual	Variance	%	Notes
TOTAL INCOME	—	—	—	—	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$49,800	—	—	—	
NET SURPLUS (Income – Expenses)	—	—	\$0	—	

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ATAX GRANT APPLICATION SCORING SHEET

Entity: **BlacQuity SC**

Project: **Roots & Rivers Festival 2026**

Project Type: **Event/Festival**

Scoring Category	Points Possible	Points Awarded
ADVERTISING	15	
Part 1: Five (5) points possible. Based on how much of the requested funds go toward advertising.		
0% of funds go toward advertising	0 points	
1% - 20% of funds go toward advertising	1 point	
21% - 40% of funds go toward advertising	2 points	
41% - 60% of funds go toward advertising	3 points	
61% - 80% of funds go toward advertising	4 points	
81% - 100% of funds go toward advertising	5 points	
Part 2: Ten (10) points possible. Based on <u>where</u> the advertising is placed.		
None of the funds go toward advertising	0 points	
Local newspapers/periodicals and electronic advertising (ex. Island Packet, The Bluffton Sun)	2 points	
Local guides/periodicals specifically geared toward tourists with a shelf life of more than 30 days	4 points	
Larger regional publications and electronic marketing within 100 miles (ex. Charleston or Savannah news outlets)	6 points	
Newspapers/periodicals/electronic marketing to large, metropolitan areas outside of 100 miles away (ex. Atlanta, Charlotte, Washington, D.C., Chicago)	8 points	
Nationally distributed newspapers/periodicals/electronic marketing (ex. USA Today, NY Times, Southern Living Magazine)	10 points	
TOURIST FACILITIES	15	
Higher point value given based on anticipated ratio of tourists to locals		
FESTIVAL/EVENT	5	
Higher point value given to requests for festivals or events		
Length of event/festival should be considered. Is it an all-day event versus a two-hour event? Multi-day event?		
BLUFFTON EVENT	5	
Higher point value given to events held within the town limits of Bluffton and/or spanning multiple locations		
TOURISM DRAW	5	
0% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected information	0 points	
1% - 20% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected info	1 point	
21% - 40% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected info	2 points	
41% - 60% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected info	3 points	
61% - 80% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected info	4 points	
81% - 100% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected info	5 points	
BENEFIT TO TOURISM (LOCAL ECONOMY)	5	
Higher point value given to events that encourage overnight stays and/or have local business participation		
SELF SUFFIECIENCY	5	
100% of budget from ATAX request	0 points	
80% - 99% of budget from ATAX request	1 point	
60% - 79% of budget from ATAX request	2 points	
40% - 59% of budget from ATAX request	3 points	
20% - 39% of budget from ATAX request	4 points	
1% - 19% of budget from ATAX request	5 points	
MISCELLANEOUS	10	
Only use if applicant does not qualify as a festival/event		
Group Average Point Total (out of a possible 40 points)		0
Group Average Percentage		