

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

Department of Finance & Administration



MEETING DATE: August 18, 2026
 SUBJECT: Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival: 2026 Arts & Seafood Festival
 PROJECT MANAGER: Jeremy Bullock, Grants Administrator

Summarized below is the application from the Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival for Accommodations Tax grant dollars to support the 2026 Historic Arts & Seafood Festival.

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

Total Budget: \$185,200
Requested Amount: \$80,000
Percentage of Request^: 43.2%

^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	\$72,000	
Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events	12,000	
Public Facilities	6,000	*
Municipality and County Services	6,000	*
Tourist Transportation	7,000	*
Other/Ineligible Project Expenses	82,200	
Total	\$185,200	

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

Budgeted Expenses Summary:

Advertising & Promotion:

Total budget \$72,000

- Print and digital advertising, radio, television, social media, e-blasts, signage and banners, HHI-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce Vacation Planner, online festival listings

Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events:

Total Budget: \$12,000

- Rentals

Public Facilities*:

Total Budget: \$10,500

- Temporary/Portable restrooms, and dumpster rental/trash hauling

Municipality and County Services*:

Total Budget \$6,000

- Security not provided by Bluffton PD (\$6,000)

Tourist Transportation*:

Total Budget \$7,000

- Event Shuttles

Other/Ineligible Project Expenses:

Total budget \$82,200

- Photography, entertainment, 5K Walk/Run, insurance, kids' events, merchandise, soiree dinner, Waddell dinner expenses, other supplies

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
\$80,000	13	5	5	4	5	4	36	

Advertising: Of the requested funds, 90% is anticipated to be spent on marketing the event. Southern Living Magazine, The HHI-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce Vacation Planner and newsletter e-blasts, digital advertising targeting the Atlanta, Asheville, Augusta, Charleston, Charlotte, Columbia and Jacksonville markets and various other magazines and local media are intended for the marketing campaign.

Festival/Event: Nine (9) day event held October 9 - 18, 2026

Bluffton Event: Events held throughout Old Town Bluffton.

Tourism Draw %: 2025 event reported 55% of attendees were tourists.

Benefit to Tourism: The 9-day festival is designed to increase tourism to Bluffton and has been recognized by the Southeast Tourism Society as one of the top 20 events in the southeast.

Self-Sufficiency % (Financial Need): Requesting approximately 43.2% of the total budget. A projected total of \$159,984 is to be collected this year from sponsorships, vendor & registration fees, and merchandise sales. Additionally, an estimated \$20,000 from the Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival Reserve Balance will be used to cover the 2026 anticipated expenses.

Previous Funding Amounts						
Fiscal Year	Requested Amount	% of Budget	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Expended	Comments
2026	\$80,000	35%	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	Final Report Submitted
2025	\$80,000	36%	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	Final Report Submitted
2024	\$80,000	39%	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	Final Report Submitted

Accommodations Tax Committee Recommendations and Comments:

The Committee recommends funding \$80,000 for the 2026 Arts & Seafood Festival.

Bullock, Jeremy

From: noreply@civicplus.com
Sent: Saturday, June 20, 2026 2:24 PM
To: ATax Communications
Subject: Online Form Submittal: Accommodations Tax Grant Application

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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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Application Date	6/20/2026
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Project Name	HISTORIC BLUFFTON ARTS & SEAFOOD FESTIVAL
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Project/Event Location	BLUFFTON
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Is this a new project or event?	No
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Project/Event Start Date:	10/9/2026
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Project/Event End Date	10/18/2026
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Multi-Year Project/Event?	Yes
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Total Project Costs	\$185,200
Total ATAX Funds Requested	\$80,000
Percent of Total Budget	43%
Date the funds are needed:	8/31/2026
Full Legal Organization Name	Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival
Address	32 Spartina Crescent
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	MARY
Last Name	O'Neill
Title	PRESIDENT
Phone Number	843-815-2472
E-mail Address	maryaoneill6@aol.com

(Section Break)

Organization Secondary Point of Contact

First Name	JOHN
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Last Name	ANDERSON
Title	TREASURER
Phone Number	843-422-8780
E-mail Address	janderson@coastalstatesbank.com

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

Project Description:	THE HISTORIC BLUFFTON ARTS & SEAFOOD FESTIVAL WAS CREATED TO HELP FURTHER A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND TO BENEFIT THE CITIZENS, THE LOCAL AREA MERCHANTS AND ARTISTS THROUGH TOURISM. THE WEEKLONG ACTIVITIES CREATE A GREAT DESTINATION VENUE FOR VISITORS AND WAS RECOGNIZED JUST AS THAT BY THE SOUTHEAST TOURISM SOCIETY AS ONE OF THE TOP 20 EVENTS IN THE SOUTHEAST. IT IS TOUTED AS AND TRULY IS THE CELEBRATION "WHERE FINE ART AND THE BOUNTY OF THE SEA COME TOGETHER"! THIS REQUEST IS FOR THE PARTIAL FUNDING OF THE PROMOTION/ADVERTISING/ SECURITY/SHUTTLES/RENTALS, FIREWORKS DISPLAY FOR THE HISTORIC BLUFFTON ARTS & SEAFOOD FESTIVAL. THE ACTIVITIES SCHEDULED THROUGHOUT THE CELEBRATION OFFER SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE AND SHOWCASE THE LOCALLY HARVESTED SEAFOOD, DELICIOUS LOW COUNTRY CUISINE, RICH CULTURE AND HISTORY, GREAT ART AND SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY FOUND ONLY IN BLUFFTON
List any required permits, if applicable. If none, type "N/A":	ABL AND TENT PERMITS
Describe all planned advertising and marketing for this project/event:	REGIONAL & BEYOND • Southern Living Magazine (September ad) \$21, 021 1/2 Vertical Carolina Region South Carolina/North Carolina Circulation: 272,100 1/2 Vertical Southeast Region Georgia/Florida Circulation: 389,200 1/2 Vertical Mid-Atlantic Region DC, DE, MD, NJ, NY, PA, VA Circulation: 398,200 TOTAL Circulation: 1,059,500 Added Value: Listing on Travel Planner page, Listing on BRC card that accompanies the Travel Planner Page, Listing on //SouthernLiving.com/Travel Planner. Leads transmitted weekly

for 12 months from insertion.

From the ads we placed in 2025, we received over 5000 requests for additional information. With the September issue of Southern Living beginning to roll out the second week in August and on the newsstands on 8/24 it is perfect timing to boost the awareness and ticket sales for this year's festival in October!

Bonus: August E Blast by Southern Living – free with ½ page ads

Our newsletter advertising the festival will be sent to the email leads from all previous and current Southern Living ads as well as the leads from the South Carolina Living Magazine ad.

- The Vacation Planner, designed and mailed by the Hilton Head Island- Bluffton Chamber, is mailed out to over 140,000 people. \$5010.00

Hilton Head Island Chamber Newsletter E-Blasts to 144,000 people. \$1000.00

- Our additional Digital Out of Town Advertising is targeted to Atlanta, Asheville, Augusta, Charleston, Charlotte, Columbia and Jacksonville. \$7000

- Carolina Arts \$520

- Sunshine Artist \$900

- Online Festival Listings \$600

- South Carolina Living Magazine \$7175

Includes August & September Eblast to their 30,000 Opt-in travel subscribers

- Savannah Magazine \$2000

- Radio \$1500.00 (\$1500 in kind – Sponsor)

- WTOG \$3000.00

- Post & Courier \$3000.00

Regional Total: \$52,726.00

LOCAL PRINT & ACCOMPANING DIGITAL

- Celebrate Magazine's monthly circulation helps us reach tourists staying in Hilton Head Island vacation spots \$3000 17,000 included in Visitor Check In Packages to Hotels, Short term rentals and Timeshare companies; 15,000 in Magazine Stands located in high traffic areas

- Island Packet/Beaufort Gazette \$3000.00 (\$1000 in kind – sponsor)

- City Sun (23,000 Households) \$3000

- LOCAL LIFE MAGAZINE \$4000

- WHHI NC Sponsor

- Posters \$150

• Festival Guide NC Sponsor

Local Total: \$13,150

SOCIAL MEDIA \$1000.00

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

THE WHOLE PROJECT/FESTIVAL IS DESIGNED TO INCREASE TOURISM TO BLUFFTON WHICH IS PROMOTED TO OUT OF TOWNERS THROUGH VARIOUS VENUES INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO PRINT AND DIGITAL ADVERTISING, RADIO, TV SPOTS, CHAMBER VACATION PLANNER, WEB SITE, E-BLAST, CHAMBER NEWSLETTER, AND OTHER SPECIFIC OUT OF TOWN TARGETED MARKET PIECES (DIRECT MAILING, SUNSHINE ARTIST, SOUTH CAROLINA LIVING, SOUTHERN LIVING, SAVANNAH MAGAZINE, ETC.)

OUR ADVERTISING PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL IN BRINGING NEW VISITORS TO OUR AREA. WE STRIVE TO BRING TOURISTS TO BLUFFTON FOR THE FESTIVAL AND STAY IN BLUFFTON HOTELS. WE OFFER LOCAL HOTEL PACKAGES ON OUR WEB SITE TO ENCOURAGE JUST THAT ALONG WITH LOCAL RESTAURANT DEALS. WE BELIEVE THAT BROADENING OUR MARKET WITH ADVERTISING WILL ENCOURAGE VISITORS TO MAKE BLUFFTON A DESTINATION PLACE AND THAT LOCAL HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS WILL THEREFORE PROFIT DURING THE FESTIVAL CELEBRATION. IN FACT THAT WAS THE VERY RATIONALE BEHIND EXPANDING THE FESTIVAL FROM A ONE DAY EVENT IN 2005 TO A WEEKEND IN 2006 AND

THEN TO THE WEEK LONG EVENT STARTING IN 2007. OUR GOAL IS TO FILL BEDS AND HAVE LOCAL BUSINESSES PROSPER AS WE HIGHLIGHT THE “GEMS OF BLUFFTON” (NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE RIVER COMMUNITY; ITS RICH HISTORY; THE PRISTINE MAY RIVER; THE BOUNTY OF THE LOCAL WATERWAYS; AND THE CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC ASPECT OF THE COMMUNITY). SINCE USCB HOSPITALITY STUDENTS CAN NO LONGER CONDUCT THE IPAD SURVEYS, FIVE YEARS AGO WE ADDED ZIPCODE COLLECTION ON THE SHUTTLES AND WE WILL CONTINUE THIS PRACTICE THIS YEAR. THIS METHOD IS MUCH MORE EFFICIENT SINCE MANY GUESTS DO NOT WANT TO COMPLETE THE LONGER IPAD SURVEY. MEALS ON WHEELS VOLUNTEERS FOR THIS COLLECTION.

“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: *Field not completed.*

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:	2026.02.24 - ATAX Grant Application Line-Item Budget Form 202603101247168067.pdf HBASF.pdf
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Most Recent Fiscal Year [HBASF financials 2025- 2026.pdf](#)
 Balance Sheet and
 Profit and Loss
 Accounting Statement

Financial Guarantee [HBASF minutes 2026.pdf](#)

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 Budget [HBASF 2024 budget and actuals.pdf](#)
 vs. Actual statements
 for prior two years
 events.

Please attach Budget [HBASF 2025 budget and actuals.pdf](#)
 vs. Actual statements
 for prior two years
 events.

(Section Break)

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

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

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 ATAX funds from the Town of Bluffton?	Yes
Project/Event Name	HISTORIC BLUFFTON ARTS & SEAFOOD FESTIVSL
Year Awarded	2025
Amount Awarded	80000
Was a final report submitted?	Yes
What was the total number of tourists?	20,000
What was the percentage of tourists?	55%
(Section Break)	
Please attach a copy of your organization's IRS Designation Letter showing your non-profit status .	HBASF non profit updated.pdf
Please upload a copy of your current Town of Bluffton Business License, which is required of all applicants.	business license HBASF.pdf
Additional Application Documents	HBASF MARKETING 2026.pdf
Additional Application Documents	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Additional Application Documents	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Additional Application Documents	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Additional Comments	<i>Field not completed.</i>

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	MARY A O'NEILL
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Signatory's Title or Position	PRESIDENT
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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

HISTORIC BLUFFTON ARTS & SEAFOOD
 FESTIVAL INC
 PO BOX 2648
 BLUFFTON, SC 29910

Date:
 01/09/2026
Employer ID number:
 20-8455153
Person to contact:
 Name: Julie Chen
 ID number: 0202990
 Telephone: 877-829-5500
Accounting period ending:
 December 31
Form 990/990-EZ/990-N required:
 Yes
Effective date of exemption:
 December 10, 2025
Contribution deductibility:
 No
Addendum applies:
 No

Dear Applicant:

We determined you're exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(4). This letter could help resolve questions on your exempt status.

Donors cannot deduct contributions they make to you under IRC Section 170(c).

If we indicated that you're required to file an annual information return, you must file one of the following:

- Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax
- Form 990-EZ, Short Form Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax
- Form 990-N, Electronic Notice, e-Postcard for Tax-Exempt Organizations Not Required to File Form 990 or Form 990EZ.

If you don't file a required return or notice for three consecutive years, your exempt status will be automatically revoked.

What you should know

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

Where to find more information

For important information about your responsibilities as a tax-exempt organization:

- Visit **IRS.gov/charities**
- Read Publication 4221-NC, Compliance Guide for Tax-Exempt Organizations (Other than 501(c)(3) Public Charities and Private Foundations)

Find tax forms or publications by visiting **IRS.gov/forms** or calling 800-TAX-FORM (800-829-3676).

Keep a copy of this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen A. Martin".

Stephen A. Martin
Director, Exempt Organizations
Rulings and Agreements

TOWN OF BLUFFTON

TOWN OF BLUFFTON -

Expires:04/30/2027

License No.	26-04-5280	Business Name:	Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival, Inc
Date Issued:	04/10/2026		
NAICS Title:	Promoters of Performing Arts, Sports, and Similar Events with Facilities	Business DBA Name:	Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival, Inc
Business Type:	Non Profit - Promoters of Performing Arts, Sports, and Similar Events with Facilities	Physical Address:	32 Spartina Crescent 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.

John Anderson
Rotary Club of Bluffton
PO BOX 142
BLUFFTON, SC 29910

REVENUES

Sponsorships	\$	20,000
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Donations \$

ATAX Grants/Funding from Other Entities* \$

Other Grants (please name): \$

Other Grants (please name):	\$
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Other Grants (please name):	\$
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Vendor Fees	\$	66,000
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Registration Fees	\$	32,100
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Other Fees (please name): \$

Other Fees (please name):	\$
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Merchandise Sales	\$	9,000
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Other Sales (please name): \$

Other Sales (please name):	\$
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Other Revenue (please name): RESERVE FROM 2025	\$	20,000
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Other Revenue (please name):	\$
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Volunteer Hours	\$	884
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Donated Items	\$	4,000
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Donated Services	\$	8,000
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Other (please name): \$

Other (please name):	\$
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Other (please name):	\$
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Total All Revenue Sources: \$ 159,984

TOWN OF BLUFFTON
ACCOMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION BUDGET FORM

EXPENSES

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	\$ 6,000
Regional Newspaper/Digital Advertising	\$ 10,520
National Newspaper/Digital Advertising	\$
Local Magazine/Digital Advertising	\$ 7,000
Regional Magazine/Digital Advertising	\$ 30,196
National Magazine/Digital Advertising	\$
Local Radio Advertising	\$
Regional Radio Advertising	\$ 1,500
National Radio Advertising	\$
Local Television Advertising	\$
Regional Television Advertising	\$ 3,000
National Television Advertising	\$
Billboards	\$
Social Media Advertising	\$ 1,000
E-mail and/or Text Blasts	\$ 1,000
Postcards/Mailers	\$
Posters/Banners/Signage	\$ 150
Graphic Design of Marketing/Writing or Press Releases	\$ 500
Web Hosting for Event (not organization)	\$
Other (please name): HH/B CHAMBER VACATION PLANNER	\$ 5,010
Other (please name): ONLINE FESTIVAL LISTINGS	\$ 600
Other (please name): ARTIST RECRUITING - SUNSHINE ARTIST	\$ 900
Other (please name): ADDITIONAL ADVERTISING TBD	\$ 4,624
Other (please name):	\$
Total Advertising/Promotion Budget:	\$ 72,000
Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events	
Rentals: Venue(s)	\$ 2,000
Rentals: Parking Lots	\$
Rentals: Tables, Chairs, Stages, Tents	\$ 10,000
Rental: Sound, Audio Equipment	\$
Construction/Renovations/Repairs of Buildings/Facilities	\$
Other (please name):	\$
Other (please name):	\$
Other (please name):	\$
Total Facilities Budget:	\$ 12,000

TOWN OF BLUFFTON
ACCOMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION BUDGET FORM

EXPENSES

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: OLD TOWN TROLLEY SAVANNAH	\$ 7,000
Company Name:	\$
Total Transportation Budget:	\$ 7,000
Public Facilities	
Temporary/Portable Restrooms	\$ 5,000
Dumpster Rental/Trash Hauling	\$ 1,000
Construction of Permanent Restrooms	\$
Construction of Parks	\$
Construction of Parking Lots	\$
Other (please name):	\$
Other (please name):	\$
Total Public Facilities Budget:	\$ 6,000
Municipality and County Services	
Security Provided by Bluffton Police Department	\$
Security NOT Provided by Bluffton Police Department	\$ 6,000
Total Municipality/County Services Budget:	\$ 6,000
Operations <i>(only applicable to Visitor Centers and/or Cultural Centers/Museums)</i>	
Marketing/Advertising	\$
Utilities <i>(electric, gas, water, phone service, internet, etc.)</i>	\$
Subscriptions <i>(not related to marketing/advertising services)</i>	\$
Supplies <i>(office, janitorial, etc.)</i>	\$
Facility Maintenance <i>(i.e. cleaning, pest control, landscaping, etc.)</i>	\$
Minor Repairs	\$
Other (please name):	\$
Other (please name):	\$
Other (please name):	\$
Other (please name):	\$
Total Operations Budget:	\$ 0
Total ALL ATAX Eligible Expenses:	\$ 103,000

TOWN OF BLUFFTON
ACCOMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION BUDGET FORM

EXPENSES

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

Other/Ineligible Expenses

Applicants should list all other project/event expenses that are not eligible for ATAX funds and not listed above.

Item	Amount
ART IN THE PARK FO9R CHILDREN	\$ 1,500
WEBSITE	\$ 1,500
PHTOGRAPHY	\$ 500
ENTERTAINMENT	\$ 48,000
5K RUN/HEALTH WALK	\$ 3,000
INSURANCE	\$ 9,000
KIDS FISHING TOURNAMENT	\$ 500
MERCHANDISE	\$ 5,000
MISC SUPPLIES	\$ 1,000
PRINTING	\$ 3,000
SOIREE DINNER AND WADDELL DINNER EXPENSE	\$ 2,000
GENERAL BUSINESS (PHONE, POSTAGE,BANK & CC, FEES, OFFICE SUF	\$ 7,200

Total of Other/Ineligible Expenses: \$ 82,200

Total Project/Event Budget *(all eligible ATAX categories + Ineligible Expenses) :* \$ 185,200

Total Project/Event Profit or Loss *(Total Revenue minus Total Project/Event Budget) :* \$ (25,216)

Historic Bluffton Arts and Seafood Festival

Statement of Activity

May 1, 2025-April 30, 2026

	TOTAL
Revenue	
4000 Sponsorships	\$28,500.00
Kids Fishing Sponsorship	500.00
Total for 4000 Sponsorships	\$29,000.00
4020 Vendor fees	
4030 Food vendors	18,100.00
4040 Artist fees	46,014.99
Total for 4020 Vendor fees	\$64,114.99
4050 Merchandise sales	8,500.00
4080 5K Run/Health Walk	\$8,969.50
4082 Race sponsorships	250.00
Total for 4080 5K Run/Health Walk	\$9,219.50
4095 Author Night Donations	1,260.00
4100 Waddell Fundraiser	630.00
43400 Direct Public Support	80,000.00
Pops in the Park	800.00
Sales of Product Income	1,790.00
Soiree Dinner (Income)	18,870.00
Total for Revenue	\$214,184.49
Gross Profit	\$214,184.49
Expenditures	
5001 Donations	33,000.00
5010 Advertising	71,118.93
5030 Entertainment	41,141.24
5035 Festival Supplies	8,097.32
5036 Waddell Expense	560.00
5040 5K Run/Health Walk expenses	2,624.17
5080 Insurance	8,345.18
5085 Sanitation	5,577.05
5090 Security	4,008.00
5100 Merchandise	4,767.34
5110 Miscellaneous	1,017.39
5115 Subscriptions	195.00
5120 Printing	2,291.47
5125 Office Supplies	317.41
5126 Postage	226.00
5130 Rentals	8,108.27
5140 Transportation	6,591.70
5150 Telephone	822.58
5155 Web Site	734.09
60900 Business Expenses	\$1,500.00
60920 Business Registration Fees	1,300.00
Artist Recruiting	1,456.50
Total for 60900 Business Expenses	\$4,256.50

Historic Bluffton Arts and Seafood Festival

Statement of Activity

May 1, 2025-April 30, 2026

	TOTAL
62100 Contract Services	
62110 Accounting Fees	2,358.60
Total for 62100 Contract Services	\$2,358.60
65000 Operations	
Credit Card Fees	2.97
Penalties - IRS	5,340.00
Total for 65000 Operations	\$5,342.97
65100 Other Types of Expenses	
65120 Insurance - Liability, D and O	698.00
Total for 65100 Other Types of Expenses	\$698.00
Art in the Park	1,200.00
Banner Design	120.00
Hotel Expense	1,410.81
Kids Fishing Tournament	853.71
Soiree Dinner	1,925.24
Square Fees	2,622.17
Unapplied Cash Bill Payment Expense	750.00
Total for Expenditures	\$221,081.14
Net Operating Revenue	-\$6,896.65
Other Expenditures	
Reconciliation Discrepancies-1	0.10
Total for Other Expenditures	\$0.10
Net Other Revenue	-\$0.10
Net Revenue	-\$6,896.75

Historic Bluffton Arts and Seafood Festival

Statement of Financial Position

As of Apr 30, 2026

	TOTAL
Assets	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
1010 CoastalStates Bank	113,498.61
Total for Bank Accounts	\$113,498.61
Other Current Assets	
12000 Undeposited Funds	-30.00
12050 Cash on Hand	0.00
Prepaid Expenses	2,041.77
Total for Other Current Assets	\$2,011.77
Total for Current Assets	\$115,510.38
Total for Assets	\$115,510.38
Liabilities and Equity	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
2580 Prepaid Artist Fees	4,415.59
Total for Other Current Liabilities	\$4,415.59
Total for Current Liabilities	\$4,415.59
Total for Liabilities	\$4,415.59
Equity	
3000 Retained earnings	5,149.15
32000 Unrestricted Net Assets	112,842.39
Net Revenue	-6,896.75
Total for Equity	\$111,094.79
Total for Liabilities and Equity	\$115,510.38

Minutes from Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival Board of Directors Meeting
May 18, 2026

Present: PRESIDENT Mary O'Neill; VICE PRESIDENT Larry Toomer; SECRETARY Mary Miller; TREASURER John Anderson; DIRECTOR Tina Toomer; DIRECTOR Gary Jeger.

Absent: DIRECTOR John Kirkland and DIRECTOR Chris Shoemaker

Call to Order

Mary O'Neill, President, called the meeting to order.

Treasurer's Report

John Anderson presented financial report including 2025 P&L along with the 2026 proposed budget for ATAX Grant.

Board approved.

Discussion

Festival Schedule of Events was reviewed and discussed. Each committee head shared their report.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival 2024 BUDGET

INCOME

SPONSORSHIP	\$ 22,000.00
FUNDING GRANTS (HOSPITALITY TAX, ACCOMMODATIONS TAX, ETC.)	\$ 80,000.00
VENDOR FEES	\$ 57,000.00
FOOD VENDORS \$12,000	
ARTISTS \$45,000	
MERCHANDISE SALES	\$ 9,000.00
5K/10K RUN/HEALTH WALK	\$ 10,000.00
RACE REGISTRANT (150 AT \$40.00)	
SOIREE DINNER	\$18,750.00
(125 ATTENDEES @ \$150PP)	
SYMPHONY TABLES	\$2025.00
(15@ \$135.00)	
WADDELL MARICULTURE TOUR & AUTHOR NIGHT	\$3,000.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 201,775.00

EXPENSES

ADVERTISING	\$ 70,000.00
PRINT	
Ads	
- Newspaper	
Local -The Island Packet/Beaufort Gazette/Savannah Morning News, City Sun, Post & Courier	
- Magazines	
Local	
Out of Town	
Artist Recruiting	
Posters	
Vacation Planner (Chamber)	
DIGITAL	
RADIO	
SOCIAL MEDIA	
TV	
 DONATIONS	 \$27,600.00
 INTERNET/WEBSITE	 \$ 1500.00
 PHOTOGRAPHY	 \$ 500.00
 ENTERTAINMENT	 \$ 48,500.00
MUSIC \$28,000	
OTHER	
Fireworks \$20,500	
 5K RUN/HEALTH WALK	 \$ 4,000.00
 INSURANCE	 \$ 6,000.00
 KIDS FISHING TOURNAMENT	 \$ 500.00
 LABOR (Security)	 \$8,000.00

MERCHANDISE (Hats, T-shirts, Commemorative Posters)	\$ 4,000.00
MISC. SUPPLIES	\$ 2,500.00
PHONE	\$ 950.00
POSTAGE, MAILING SERVICE	\$ 200.00
PRINTING	\$2,500.00
RENTAL <i>EQUIPMENT(TENTS, STAGES, TABLES, CHAIRS, ETC)</i> <i>PORTABLE TOILETS & DUMPSTERS</i> <i>BARGES FOR FIREWORKS</i>	\$30,000.00
SOIREE DINNER MISC	\$1,000.00
SIGNAGE/BANNERS	\$ 4,000.00
TRANSPORTATION (LRTA Shuttles)	\$ 5,000.00
WADDELL EXPENSE	\$1,500.00
BANK CHARGES	\$1,200.00
BUSINESS FEES	\$1,500.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 220,950.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 201,775.00
HBASF RESERVE BALANCE 2023	\$ 25,000.00
BALANCE	\$ 5,825.00

Statement of Activity

Historic Bluffton Arts and Seafood Festival

May 1, 2024-April 30, 2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL
Income	
4000 Sponsorships	\$21,500.00
Kids Fishing Sponsorship	500.00
Total for 4000 Sponsorships	\$22,000.00
4020 Vendor fees	0
4030 Food vendors	15,600.00
4040 Artist fees	43,511.08
Total for 4020 Vendor fees	\$59,111.08
4050 Merchandise sales	12,361.00
4080 5K Run/Health Walk	\$8,436.00
4081 Race registrations	80.00
4082 Race sponsorships	250.00
Total for 4080 5K Run/Health Walk	\$8,766.00
4095 Author Night Donations	1,125.00
4100 Waddell Fundraiser	\$1,755.00
4110 ' Waddell Admission	45.00
Total for 4100 Waddell Fundraiser	\$1,800.00
43400 Direct Public Support	80,000.00
47200 Program Income	0
47230 Membership Dues	-980.00
Total for 47200 Program Income	-\$980.00
Pops in the Park	1,280.00
Sales of Product Income	1,275.00
Soiree Dinner (Income)	19,500.00
Total for Income	\$206,238.08
Cost of Goods Sold	
Gross Profit	\$206,238.08
Expenses	
5001 Donations	19,000.00
5010 Advertising	\$77,811.00
Online Targeted Advertising	193.24
Total for 5010 Advertising	\$78,004.24
5015 Bank Charges	49.95
5030 Entertainment	41,179.95
5035 Festival Supplies	\$999.94
Volunteer Tee-Shirts	905.22
Total for 5035 Festival Supplies	\$1,905.16
5036 Waddell Expense	990.00
5040 5K Run/Health Walk expenses	5,763.49
5080 Insurance	5,682.98

Statement of Activity

Historic Bluffton Arts and Seafood Festival

May 1, 2024-April 30, 2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL
5090 Security	4,980.80
5100 Merchandise	4,374.10
5110 Miscellaneous	2,072.92
5120 Printing	2,939.29
5126 Postage	216.00
5130 Rentals	13,903.88
5140 Transportation	6,394.32
5150 Telephone	848.20
5155 Web Site	638.09
5180 Blessing of the Fleet	100.00
60900 Business Expenses	0
60920 Business Registration Fees	1,516.10
Artist Recruiting	981.30
Total for 60900 Business Expenses	\$2,497.40
62100 Contract Services	0
62110 Accounting Fees	631.30
Total for 62100 Contract Services	\$631.30
65000 Operations	0
Credit Card Fees	359.18
Total for 65000 Operations	\$359.18
65100 Other Types of Expenses	0
65120 Insurance - Liability, D and O	722.43
Total for 65100 Other Types of Expenses	\$722.43
Banner Design	230.58
Hotel Expense	667.52
Kids Fishing Tournament	216.42
Soiree Dinner	390.00
Square Fees	2,177.21
Total for Expenses	\$196,935.41
Net Operating Income	\$9,302.67
Other Income	
Other Expenses	
Net Other Income	0
Net Income	\$9,302.67

Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival 2025 BUDGET

INCOME

SPONSORSHIP	\$ 20,000.00
FUNDING GRANTS (HOSPITALITY TAX, ACCOMMODATIONS TAX, ETC.)	\$ 80,000.00
VENDOR FEES	\$ 70,000.00
FOOD VENDORS \$23,000	
ARTISTS \$47,000	
MERCHANDISE SALES	\$ 12,000.00
5K/10K RUN/HEALTH WALK	\$ 9,000.00
RACE REGISTRANT (150 AT \$40.00)	
SOIREE DINNER	\$18,750.00
(125 ATTENDEES @ \$150PP)	
SYMPHONY TABLES	\$2025.00
(15@ \$135.00)	
WADDELL MARICULTURE TOUR & AUTHOR NIGHT	\$2,000.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 213,775.00

EXPENSES

ADVERTISING	\$ 75,000.00
PRINT	
Ads	
- Newspaper	
Local -The Island Packet/Beaufort Gazette/Savannah Morning News, City Sun, Post & Courier	
- Magazines	
Local	
Out of Town	
Artist Recruiting	
Posters	
Vacation Planner (Chamber)	
DIGITAL	
RADIO	
SOCIAL MEDIA	
TV	
ART IN THE PARK FOR CHILDREN	\$1500.00
DONATIONS	\$19,000.00
INTERNET/WEBSITE	\$ 1500.00
PHOTOGRAPHY	\$ 500.00
ENTERTAINMENT	\$ 48,500.00
MUSIC \$28,000	
OTHER	
Fireworks \$20,500	
5K RUN/HEALTH WALK	\$ 6,000.00
INSURANCE	\$ 7,000.00
KIDS FISHING TOURNAMENT	\$ 500.00

MERCHANDISE (Hats, T-shirts, Commemorative Posters)	\$ 6,000.00
MISC. SUPPLIES	\$ 1,000.00
PHONE	\$ 950.00
POSTAGE, MAILING SERVICE	\$ 250.00
PRINTING	\$3,000.00
RENTAL <i>EQUIPMENT(TENTS, STAGES, TABLES, CHAIRS, ETC)</i> <i>PORTABLE TOILETS & DUMPSTERS</i> <i>BARGES FOR FIREWORKS</i>	\$30,000.00
SECURITY	\$11,000.00
SOIREE DINNER MISC	\$1,000.00
SIGNAGE/BANNERS	\$ 4,000.00
TRANSPORTATION (LRTA Shuttles)	\$ 7,000.00
WADDELL EXPENSE	\$1,000.00
BANK & CC CHARGES	\$3,000.00
BUSINESS FEES	\$2,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 229,700.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 213,775.00
HBASF RESERVE BALANCE 2023	\$ 20,000.00
BALANCE	\$ 4,075.00

Historic Bluffton Arts and Seafood Festival

Statement of Activity

May 1, 2025-April 30, 2026

	TOTAL
Revenue	
4000 Sponsorships	\$28,500.00
Kids Fishing Sponsorship	500.00
Total for 4000 Sponsorships	\$29,000.00
4020 Vendor fees	
4030 Food vendors	18,100.00
4040 Artist fees	46,014.99
Total for 4020 Vendor fees	\$64,114.99
4050 Merchandise sales	8,500.00
4080 5K Run/Health Walk	\$8,969.50
4082 Race sponsorships	250.00
Total for 4080 5K Run/Health Walk	\$9,219.50
4095 Author Night Donations	1,260.00
4100 Waddell Fundraiser	630.00
43400 Direct Public Support	80,000.00
Pops in the Park	800.00
Sales of Product Income	1,790.00
Soiree Dinner (Income)	18,870.00
Total for Revenue	\$214,184.49
Gross Profit	\$214,184.49
Expenditures	
5001 Donations	33,000.00
5010 Advertising	71,118.93
5030 Entertainment	41,141.24
5035 Festival Supplies	8,097.32
5036 Waddell Expense	560.00
5040 5K Run/Health Walk expenses	2,624.17
5080 Insurance	8,345.18
5085 Sanitation	5,577.05
5090 Security	4,008.00
5100 Merchandise	4,767.34
5110 Miscellaneous	1,017.39
5115 Subscriptions	195.00
5120 Printing	2,291.47
5125 Office Supplies	317.41
5126 Postage	226.00
5130 Rentals	8,108.27
5140 Transportation	6,591.70
5150 Telephone	822.58
5155 Web Site	734.09
60900 Business Expenses	\$1,500.00
60920 Business Registration Fees	1,300.00
Artist Recruiting	1,456.50
Total for 60900 Business Expenses	\$4,256.50

Historic Bluffton Arts and Seafood Festival

Statement of Activity

May 1, 2025-April 30, 2026

	TOTAL
62100 Contract Services	
62110 Accounting Fees	2,358.60
Total for 62100 Contract Services	\$2,358.60
65000 Operations	
Credit Card Fees	2.97
Penalties - IRS	5,340.00
Total for 65000 Operations	\$5,342.97
65100 Other Types of Expenses	
65120 Insurance - Liability, D and O	698.00
Total for 65100 Other Types of Expenses	\$698.00
Art in the Park	1,200.00
Banner Design	120.00
Hotel Expense	1,410.81
Kids Fishing Tournament	853.71
Soiree Dinner	1,925.24
Square Fees	2,622.17
Unapplied Cash Bill Payment Expense	750.00
Total for Expenditures	\$221,081.14
Net Operating Revenue	-\$6,896.65
Other Expenditures	
Reconciliation Discrepancies-1	0.10
Total for Other Expenditures	\$0.10
Net Other Revenue	-\$0.10
Net Revenue	-\$6,896.75

HISTORIC BLUFFTON ARTS & SEAFOOD FESTIVAL MARKETING PLAN 2026**ADVERTISING BUDGET 2026****\$72,000.00****REGIONAL & BEYOND**

- **Southern Living Magazine (September ad) \$21, 021.00**

1/2 Vertical Carolina Region

South Carolina/North Carolina Circulation: 272,100

1/2 Vertical Southeast Region

Georgia/Florida Circulation: 389,200

1/2 Vertical Mid-Atlantic Region

DC, DE, MD, NJ, NY, PA, VA Circulation: 398,200

TOTAL Circulation: 1,059,500

Added Value: Listing on Travel Planner page, Listing on BRC card that accompanies the Travel Planner Page, Listing on SouthernLiving.com/Travel Planner. Leads transmitted weekly for 12 months from insertion.

From the ads we placed in 2025, we received over 5000 requests for additional information. With the September issue of Southern Living beginning to roll out the second week in August and on the newsstands on 8/24 it is perfect timing to boost the awareness and ticket sales for this year's festival in October!

Bonus: August E Blast by Southern Living – free with ½ page ads

Our newsletter advertising the festival will be sent to the email leads from all previous and current Southern Living ads as well as the leads from the South Carolina Living Magazine ad.

- **The Vacation Planner**, designed and mailed by the Hilton Head Island- Bluffton Chamber, is mailed out to over 140,000 people. **\$5010.00**
Hilton Head Island Chamber Newsletter E-Blasts to 144,000 people. \$1000.00

- Our additional Digital Out of Town Advertising is targeted to Atlanta, Asheville, Augusta, Charleston, Charlotte, Columbia and Jacksonville. **\$7000**

- **Carolina Arts \$520**
- **Sunshine Artist \$900**
- **Online Festival Listings \$600**

- South Carolina Living Magazine \$7175.00

Includes August & September Eblast to their 30,000 Opt-in travel subscribers

- Savannah Magazine \$2000.00
- Radio \$1500.00 (\$1500 in kind – Sponsor)
- WTOC \$3000.00
- Post & Courier \$3000.00

Regional Total: \$52,726.00

LOCAL PRINT & ACCOMPANING DIGITAL

- **Celebrate Magazine's** monthly circulation helps us reach tourists staying in Hilton Head Island vacation spots \$3000.00

17,000 included in Visitor Check In Packages to Hotels, Short term rentals and Timeshare companies; 15,000 in Magazine Stands located in high traffic areas

- Island Packet/Beaufort Gazette \$3000.00 (\$1000 in kind – sponsor)
- City Sun (23,000 Households) \$3000.00
- LOCAL LIFE MAGAZINE \$4000.00
- WHHI NC Sponsor
- Posters \$150
- Festival Guide NC Sponsor

Local Total: \$13,150

SOCIAL MEDIA \$1000.00

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ATAX GRANT APPLICATION SCORING SHEET

Entity: **Historic Arts & Seafood Festival**

Project: **2026 Arts & Seafood Festival**

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		