

Bullock, Jeremy

From: noreply@civicplus.com
Sent: Wednesday, December 31, 2025 12:42 PM
To: ATax Communications
Subject: Online Form Submittal: Accommodations Tax Grant Application

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Accommodations Tax Grant Application

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

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Accommodations Tax Grant Application Instructions [Accommodations Tax Grant Application Instructions](#)

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

(Section Break)

Application Date 12/5/2025

Project Name Water Rescue Services & Water Related Event Patrols

Project/Event Location Bluffton district

Is this a new project or event? Yes

If yes, did you or a team member discuss your application with town staff prior to applying? Yes

Project/Event Start Date: 1/1/2026

Project/Event End Date	12/31/2026
Multi-Year Project/Event?	No
Total Project Costs	40,000
Total ATAX Funds Requested	20,000
Percent of Total Budget	50
Date the funds are needed:	4/1/2026
Full Legal Organization Name	Beaufort Water Search And Rescue
Address	817 Paris Ave
Street Address Line 2	<i>Field not completed.</i>
City	Port Royal
State	SC
Zip Code	29935
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	Patrick
Last Name	Canning
Title	Board Member
Phone Number	4847645570
E-mail Address	patrick.canning@bwsar.org

(Section Break)

 Organization Secondary Point of Contact

 First Name Clay

 Last Name Emminger

 Title Chief

 Phone Number 8435251969

 E-mail Address clay.emminger@bwsar.org

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

 Project Description: Beaufort Water Search and Rescue
 Serving Beaufort County Since 1975

2025

As a part of our primary mission and objectives, we conduct on-water search, rescue and recovery operations within the Beaufort County area. Our coverage area includes Port Royal, St Helena, Caliboque sounds, adjacent major and minor waterways, wetlands and marshlands. Also included are the immediate offshore waters and inland rivers. Our efforts are conducted under the direction of the Beaufort County Emergency Management office in conjunction with federal, state, local emergency response and law enforcement within our area of operations including;

US Coast Guard (Tybee & Sector Charleston)

SC Department of Natural Resources / Marine Patrol

Beaufort City Police

Beaufort County Sheriff – Marine Division

Beaufort/Port Royal Fire Department

Bluffton City Police

Burton Fire / Rescue

Beaufort County Office of Emergency Management

 MCAS Search & Rescue / Homeland Defense (NCIS USMCAS
 BEAUFORT)
 Parris Island Fire Rescue / Homeland Defense (NCIS
 USMCRD PISC)

Town of Port Royal Police Department

To act under the direction of the Beaufort County Emergency Management office in the aftermath of a disaster (hurricane landfall, in-water plane crash, cruise ship sinking).

To provide a community service oriented, all-volunteer force,

with experience, equipment, expertise and an intimate knowledge of the local waterways dedicated to the protection of lives and property of the citizens and visitors of Beaufort County, South Carolina.

During the previous 12 months our volunteers had responded to 97 rescue missions in our local waterways totaling 2,249 man hours.

Additionally, we serve the community by providing special event support in the form of river patrols during;

Beaufort Water Festival for 10 days

Dragon Boat races, downtown Beaufort

YMCA Beaufort River Swim

Tybee Island, GA kayak race

Two Kayak races in Beaufort

Water Festival Kayak race

4th of July fireworks for Port Royal and Bluffton

The Sailing Regatta for Beaufort Yacht Club

Blue Angels bi-annual Air Show

In charge of the river closure for the water festival air show

Low Country Boil kayak race in Hilton Head

Christmas Parade of Lights Boat in Beaufort, Hilton Head and Dataw Island

New Year's Eve fireworks downtown Beaufort

Fireworks for Gullah Festival

Paddle Battle Biathlon

Hunting Island Paddlefest

BWSAR is an all-volunteer, water search and rescue organization whose primary mission is to support and assist local, state and federal emergency response agencies in times of need. It has taken years of commitment and hard work by many squad members to build an unprecedented relationship of trust and professional respect with these agencies. Much of BWSAR's support and funding depends on the continued recognition by local and state agencies of this high level of commitment, competence and dedication.

According to South Carolina Code of Laws Title 6 Chapter 4 Allocation of Accommodations Tax Revenues.

Section 6-4-10; (4), (b) "Tourism-related expenditures" include: (iii) construction, maintenance and operation of facilities for civic and cultural activities.

We feel that under the guidelines of this statute we support the community from a tourism and safety standpoint and kindly ask for your consideration in funding our efforts.

In conjunction with the Port Royal Sound Foundation, Junior Service League, USCB, Beaufort Sail & Power Squadron and

community Outreach Programs we provide support for a number of events such as Touch a Truck with area school districts, fire districts and daycare to engage children and boating.

The submission of this application with Bluffton City is so that our organization can purchase a replacement boat in the amount of \$40,000 and to provide for the continued support of the boating community in support of tourism and boating safety.

List any required permits, if applicable. If none, type "N/A":

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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:

No matter the time of day or location our all volunteer forces stationed both North and South of the Broad river are available for 911 water emergencies. Our Bluffton squad is based out of the Bluffton Fire District Station 30 located at 199 Burnt Church Road. Whether the boating emergency involves stranded boaters or injuries we are the first to arrive on scene to lend aid, secure a perimeter and transport boaters to safety.

“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/ATA-X-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: [_ATAX Grant Application Line-Item Budget Form.pdf](#)

Most Recent Fiscal Year Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Accounting Statement [Profit and Loss worksheet.pdf](#)

Financial Guarantee [2025.12.2 Meeting Minutes \(Board\).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.

(Section Break)

Have you requested, received, or been awarded ATAX funding from other state or local No

entities for this project/event?

Have you received or been awarded ATAX funding from other state or local entities for any other project/event?

Yes

Awarding Agency Beaufort City ATAC

Amount 17,500

Project/Event Water Rescue Services & Water Safety Patrol, Bluffton District

Year of Award 2026

Awarding Agency *Field not completed.*

Amount *Field not completed.*

Project/Event *Field not completed.*

Year of Award *Field not completed.*

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? No

(Section Break)

Please attach a copy of your organization's IRS Designation Letter showing your non-profit status . [IRS Letter 947.pdf](#)

Please upload a copy of [exemption.pdf](#)
your current Town of
Bluffton Business
License, which is
required of all
applicants.

Additional Application Documents [CETASC 79108.pdf](#)

Additional Application Documents *Field not completed.*

Additional Application Documents *Field not completed.*

Additional Application Documents *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	Patrick J Canning
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Signatory's Title or Position	Board Member
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INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
P. O. BOX 2508
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

Attachment 4
DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: **NOV 27 2017**

BEAUFORT WATER SEARCH RESCUE
817 PARIS AVENUE
PORT ROYAL, SC 29935-0000

Employer Identification Number:
57-1126299
DLN:
26053706001137
Contact Person:
CUSTOMER SERVICE ID# 31954
Contact Telephone Number:
(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:
May 15, 2017
Contribution Deductibility:
Yes
Addendum Applies:
No

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.

Based on the information you submitted in your application, we approved your request for reinstatement under Revenue Procedure 2014-11. Your effective date of exemption, as listed at the top of this letter, is retroactive to your date of revocation.

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

Beaufort Water Search And Rescue responds at the direction of the Beaufort County Emergency Management office in the event of a water emergency.

We are not a business nor non-profit that charges for services or collects sales taxes, therefore we do not believe we have the need for a business license.



State of South Carolina
Office of the Secretary of State
The Honorable Mark Hammond

Dec 12, 2025

Beaufort Water Search and Rescue
Benjamin Whitmore
817 PARIS AVE
PORT ROYAL, SC 29935-2427

RE: Registration Confirmation

Charity Public ID: P9577

Dear Benjamin Whitmore :

This letter confirms that the Secretary of State's Office has received and accepted your Registration, therefore, your charitable organization is in compliance with the registration requirement of the "South Carolina Solicitation of Charitable Funds Act." The registration of your charitable organization will expire on May 15, 2026.

If any of the information on your Registration form changes throughout the course of the year, please contact our office to make updates. It is important that this information remain updated so that our office can keep you informed of any changes that may affect your charitable organization.

If you have not yet filed your annual financial report or an extension for the annual financial report, the annual financial report is still due 4 ½ months after the close of your fiscal year.

- Annual financial reports must either be submitted on the Internal Revenue Service Form 990 or 990-EZ or the Secretary of State's Annual Financial Report Form.
- If you wish to extend the filing of that form with us, please submit a written request by email or fax to our office using the contact information below. Failure to submit the annual financial report may result in an administrative fine of up to \$2,000.00.

If you have any questions or concerns, please visit our website at www.sos.sc.gov or contact our office using the contact information below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Wickersham", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kimberly S. Wickersham
Director, Division of Public Charities

TOWN OF BLUFFTON
ACCOMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION BUDGET

REVENUES

Revenues - Cash

	Sponsorships	\$	0
	Donations	\$	0
	ATAX Grants/Funding from Other Entities*	\$	0
	<i>* Do NOT include anticipated award funds requested in this application</i>		
Other Grants (please name):		\$	0
	Vendor Fees	\$	0
	Registration Fees	\$	0
Other Fees (please name):		\$	0
Other Fees (please name):		\$	0
	Mercandise Sales	\$	0
Other Sales (please name):		\$	0
Other Sales (please name):		\$	0
Other Revenue (please name): BWSAR fundraising for replacement of R9		\$	20000
Other Revenue (please name):		\$	0

Revenues - In-Kind Contributions

	Volunteer Hours	\$	0
	Donated Items	\$	0
	Donated Services	\$	0
Other (please name):		\$	0
Other (please name):		\$	0
Other (please name):		\$	0

Total All Revenue Sources: \$ 20000

**TOWN OF BLUFFTON
ACCOMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION BUDGET**

EXPENSES

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

Amount

Advertising & Promotion of Tourism or Arts and Cultural Events

Local Newspaper/Digital Advertising	\$ 0
Regional Newspaper/Digital Advertising	\$ 0
National Newspaper/Digital Advertising	\$ 0
Local Magazine/Digital Advertising	\$ 0
Regional Magazine/Digital Advertising	\$ 0
National Magazine/Digital Advertising	\$ 0
Local Radio Advertising	\$ 0
Regional Radio Advertising	\$ 0
National Radio Advertising	\$ 0
Local Television Advertising	\$ 0
Regional Television Advertising	\$ 0
National Television Advertising	\$ 0
Billboards	\$ 0
Social Media Advertising	\$ 0
E-mail and/or Text Blasts	\$ 0
Postcards/Mailers	\$ 0
Posters/Banners/Signage	\$ 0
Graphic Design of Marketing/Writing or Press Releases	\$ 0
Web Hosting for Event (not organization)	\$ 0
Other (please name):	\$ 0
Other (please name):	\$ 0
Other (please name):	\$ 0
Other (please name):	\$ 0
Other (please name):	\$ 0

Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events

Rentals: Tables, Chairs, Stages, Tents	\$ 0
Rental: Sound, Audio Equipment	\$ 0
Construction	\$ 0
Repairs to Facilities	\$ 0
Maintenance of Facilities	\$ 0
Other (please name): BWSAR funds for replacement of R9	\$ 40000
Other (please name):	\$ 0
Other (please name):	\$ 0

TOWN OF BLUFFTON
ACCOMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION BUDGET

EXPENSES

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

Table with columns for Expense Category and Amount. Includes sections for Tourist Transportation, Public Facilities, and Municipality and County Services. Total of ATAX Eligible Expenses: \$ 40000

Other/Ineligible Expenses

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

Table with columns for Item and Amount. Includes a section for Other/Ineligible Expenses and a final Total Project/Event Profit or Loss of \$ -20000.

Statement Of Accounts (2025 fiscal year) July 1, 2024 thru June 30. 2025**Revenues**

Individual Donations	\$3,000.00
fiscal 2024 carry forward	\$22,937.60
Beaufort County Grant	\$40,000.00
Beaufort City Grant	\$20,000.00
County Stipend (\$2,500 quarterly)	\$10,000.00
Asset Sales	\$14,200.00
Fundraising	\$40,562.00
Total	\$150,699.60

Expenses

General Administrative Expense	\$7,691.43
Maintenance	\$11,871.00
Equipment Purchases	\$14,333.30
Fuel Expense	\$1,364.16
Insurance	\$6,074.21
Utilities	\$8,607.86
Purchase of R4	\$35,670.00
Purchase of Rigid Inflatable	\$15,516.00
Total	\$101,127.96

Net \$49,571.64

Statement Of Accounts (2026 fiscal year) July 1, 2025 thru June 30. 2026**Revenues**

Individual Donations	\$3,000.00
fiscal 2024 carry forward	\$49,571.64
County Stipend	\$10,000.00
Asset Sales (anticipated)	\$12,000.00
Fundraising	\$42,000.00
Total	\$116,571.64

Expenses

General Administrative Expense	\$7,500.00
Maintenance	\$10,000.00
Equipment Purchases	\$5,500.00
Fuel Expense	\$3,000.00
Insurance	\$6,250.00
Utilities	\$8,750.00
Purchase of (additional boat) Bluffton	\$35,000.00
(BWSAR funds)	\$17,500.00
City of Beaufort (ATAX funds)	\$17,500.00
Purchase R9 (replacement)	\$40,000.00
(BWSAR funds)	\$20,000.00
Bluffton City (ATAX funds)	\$20,000.00

Total \$116,000.00



Beaufort Water Search & Rescue
Board Meeting Minutes
Date: 02 December 2025
Chief: Clay Emminger

I. Call to order at 1800 hours by board chair Ben Whitmore

II. Roll Call

Present:

- Ben Whitmore
- Will Gill
- John Sutcliff
- Patrick Canning
- Justin Owen

III. New Business

- Discussion over replacement of Bluffton Unit R-9 not to exceed \$40,000 and would require ATAX application for funding by our community liaison Patrick Canning in the upcoming first quarter of the new year.

IV. Old Business;

- Received notice of ATAX grant \$17,500 from Beaufort City on 11/21/25.
- Discussion over finances and replacement of Bluffton Unit R-8.
- Determination for purchase replacement boat not to exceed \$35,000, begin search.

V. Adjournment at 1900 hours;

- Motion approved: B. Whitmore
- Second P. Canning