

Milroy, Shannon

**From:** noreply@civicplus.com  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 30, 2024 6:48 AM  
**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

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

Accommodations Tax Grant Application Instructions	<a href="#">Accommodations Tax Grant Application Instructions</a>
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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	3/22/2024
Full Legal Organization Name	BlacQuity
Project Name	Roots & Rivers Festival
Total Project Costs	55,250
Total ATAX Funds Requested	25,000
Percent of Total Budget	40%
Address	4 Water Tupelo Lane

Street Address Line 2	PO BOX 3132
City	Bluffton
State	SC
Zip Code	29910

Applicant must be designated as a non-profit entity to receive ATAX funds. Please include a copy of your organization's non-profit status, such as your IRS Designation Letter.

[FinalLetter 88-0662577 BLACQUITYSC 02142022 00 \(1\) IRS Determination Letter.tif](#)

Please upload a copy of your current Town of Bluffton Business License, which is required of all applicants.

[Report Permit54649 638458478571304555.pdf](#)

## **TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION**

### Organization Primary Point of Contact

First Name	Gwen
Last Name	Chambers
Title	executive director
Phone Number	8435406292
E-mail Address	<a href="mailto:gwen@blacquitysc.org">gwen@blacquitysc.org</a>

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### Organization Secondary Point of Contact

First Name	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Last Name	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Title	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Phone Number	<i>Field not completed.</i>

E-mail Address *Field not completed.*

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## TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

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**Project Description:** The Roots & Rivers Festival will host its second annual event hosted by BlacQuity, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the Lowcountry region. This vibrant festival celebrates the music, art, food, artisans and traditions of the area, highlighting the contributions of black-owned businesses and artists.

The festival features live performances by local musicians, a marketplace showcasing products from black entrepreneurs, and a variety of food vendors offering traditional and contemporary dishes. Attendees can also participate in interactive workshops, cultural demonstrations, and community discussions focused on promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Roots & Rivers Festival is a family-friendly event that attracts visitors from across the region, offering a unique opportunity to experience the rich cultural tapestry of the Lowcountry. Through engaging artisans, programming and dynamic performances, the festival aims to foster a sense of community pride and celebrate the shared heritage of all residents.

Our advertising materials incorporate the Town of Bluffton's branding standards, including the use of the Town's logo in accordance with the design standards outlined by the Town.

We invite you to join us at the Roots & Rivers Festival as we celebrate the cultural diversity and artistic talent of the Lowcountry region. Together, we can create an inclusive and vibrant community that celebrates our shared heritage and promotes economic growth for all residents.

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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.**

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**Impact on or Benefit to Tourism:** The Roots & Rivers Festival can have a significant impact on tourism in the Town of Bluffton. By showcasing the vibrant culture, music, and cuisine of the region, the festival attracts

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tourists who are interested in experiencing the unique offerings of the area. This influx of visitors not only boosts local businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, and shops, but also helps to promote Bluffton as a destination for cultural tourism. Additionally, the festival can help to enhance the town's reputation as a welcoming and inclusive community, which can attract repeat visitors and encourage positive word-of-mouth recommendations. Overall, the Roots & Rivers Festival has the potential to contribute to the growth and development of tourism in the Town of Bluffton.

Overall, the target audience for the BlacQuity Roots & River Festival is a diverse group of individuals who appreciate music, art, culture, and community. They seek meaningful experiences, connection with others, and the opportunity to celebrate and explore diverse aspects of life.

BlacQuity Roots & River Festival's focus on celebrating small businesses as the roots of the local economy. The BlacQuity Roots & River Festival is dedicated to showcasing and supporting small businesses, recognizing them as the foundational roots of our local economy. Our target audience consists of individuals who value and actively support small businesses. They are passionate about community development, economic empowerment, and the unique offerings that black small businesses bring to the table.

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**“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.**

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Project/Event Start & End Date:	9/14/2024 - 9/15/2024
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Multi-Year Project/Event?	No
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Permits Required, if any:	alcohol
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Additional Comments:	<i>Field not completed.</i>
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## TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

### FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Project/Event Line Item     [Roots Rivers Budget 2024.pdf](#)  
Budget

Most Recent Fiscal Year     [Balance Sheet - ProfitLoss 2023 BQ.pdf](#)  
Balance Sheet and  
Profit and Loss  
Accounting Statement

Financial Guarantee     [BlacQuity Board Meeting Minutes 3.28.24.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.*

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**Please list all contributions made to the project/event by the sponsoring organization. This shall include both monetary and in-kind goods and/or services, as applicable.**

Contribution	Sponsor
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Amount/Value	10000
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Contribution	Sponsor
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Amount/Value	5000
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Have you requested, received or been awarded funding from other sources or organizations (including additional ATAX funds from other local entities) for this project/event?	No
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If yes, please list all sources and amounts:

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## **TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION**

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### **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. Only the information for the most recent round of funding is required.

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	Roots & Rivers Festival
Year	2023
Amount Awarded	21,800
Was project completed?	Yes
How were the funds used?	Primarily used for marketing expenses. We also used funds to secure logistical necessities - staging, security, additional parking, shuttle services and additional restroom facilities on premise.
What impact did this project/event have on the community or benefit tourism? Describe how the tourism data was measured.	<p>The Roots &amp; Rivers Festival of 2023 had a significant impact on the community and benefited tourism in several ways. The festival showcased the rich cultural heritage of the Lowcountry region, attracting visitors from near and far. The event featured live music, local cuisine, and a marketplace highlighting products from black-owned businesses.</p> <p>To measure the impact on tourism, data was collected through various methods, including:</p> <p>Attendance: The number of attendees at the festival was tracked to assess the event's popularity and its ability to draw visitors to the area.</p> <p>Media Coverage: The festival's media coverage, both locally and regionally, was assessed to determine its reach and influence in attracting tourists to the area.</p>

This being the first year, the Roots & Rivers Festival of 2023 had a positive impact on the community by celebrating its cultural heritage, supporting local businesses, and attracting tourists to the area, thereby benefiting the local economy and promoting tourism in the Town of Bluffton. We hope to increase our impact for this year.

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Please provide the project/event budgets for the previous two (2) years.

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Additional Comments

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## **TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION**

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**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.**

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**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.**

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Signature	Gwendolyn Chambers
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Signatory's Title or Position	Executive Director
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**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](http://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: 04/30/2025**

<b>License No.</b>	24-03-0250	<b>Business Name:</b>	BlacQuity SC
	03/12/2024		
<b>NAICS Title:</b>	Other Similar Organizations (except Business, Professional, Labor, and Political	<b>Business DBA Name:</b>	BlacQuity SC
<b>Business Type:</b>	Economic Development Center	<b>Physical Address:</b>	4 WATER TUPELO LN 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.

<b>Expenses</b>		
Logistics		
	Dumpter (Dump & Haul)	\$500
	Orange fencing barricade	\$1,000
	Shuttle Services	\$1,200
	Rentals (Stage, Tents, etc.)	\$1,900
	Royal Restrooms	\$1,800
	Police/Security (town will use)	\$850
	Entertainment	\$7,500
	Admin fees (ticket sales, wristbands)	\$500
	Insurance, permits	\$500
	Venue Town of Bluffton	\$600
Marketing		
	Merchandise (tshirts, cinch bags, koozies)	\$7,000
	Print Paid Media	\$9,500
	Radio Paid Media	\$5,000
	Digital Paid Media	\$8,500
	Social Paid Marketing	\$2,500
	Influencer partnerships	\$3,000
	Print materials (banners, signs, posters, flyers)	\$5,000
	Design materials (banners, signs, posters, flyers)	\$2,000
	Public Relations	\$4,000
	Videography & Photography	\$1,500
	Photo Booth	\$1,500
	Photo Booth Backdrop Installations	\$1,300
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$67,150</b>



## BlacQuity

## Balance Sheet

As of December 31, 2023

	TOTAL
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
SMALL BUSINESS CHECKING (3861) - 4	87,832.28
zAdjustment	0.00
<b>Total Bank Accounts</b>	<b>\$87,832.28</b>
Other Current Assets	
Payments to deposit	0.00
<b>Total Other Current Assets</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$87,832.28</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$87,832.28</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
Direct Deposit Payable	0.00
Payroll Liabilities	
Federal Taxes (941/944)	710.83
SC Income Tax	111.71
SC Unemployment Tax	288.40
<b>Total Payroll Liabilities</b>	<b>1,110.94</b>
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$1,110.94</b>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$1,110.94</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$1,110.94</b>
Equity	
Retained Earnings	27,155.82
Net Revenue	59,565.52
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$86,721.34</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>\$87,832.28</b>

# BlacQuity

## Statement of Activity

January - December 2023

	TOTAL
Revenue	
Contributed income	
Donations	147,086.00
Roots & Rivers Festival - Sponsorship 250.00	250.00
Roots and Rivers Festival	35,825.00
<b>Total Contributed income</b>	<b>183,161.00</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$183,161.00</b>
GROSS PROFIT	<b>\$183,161.00</b>
Expenditures	<b>\$118,463.48</b>
NET OPERATING REVENUE	<b>\$64,697.52</b>
Other Revenue	<b>\$4,648.25</b>
Other Expenditures	
Business Meeting	592.57
Business membership	75.00
Fundraising event - entertainment	2,300.00
Program - BEU Class	6,754.86
Vehicle expenses	57.82
<b>Total Other Expenditures</b>	<b>\$9,780.25</b>
NET OTHER REVENUE	<b>\$ -5,132.00</b>
NET REVENUE	<b>\$59,565.52</b>



# MEETING MINUTES

**DATE: MARCH 28 2024 - 4PM**

## Attendees

Board members present:

Billy Watterson  
Derek Jenkins  
Courtney O'Connor  
Chris Forster  
Carl Statham  
Scott Beebe  
Jacquelyn Brown  
Serena Miles

- Staff: Gwen Chambers
- Staff: Natasha Aiken
- Staff: Sherri Todd

## Minutes

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 4:50 pm by Board President Billy Watterson.

Approval of Minutes

- The minutes from the February 29, 2024 meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report

- Chris Forster presented the financial report. Serena Miles was appointed as the new Treasurer to replace Chris Forster.

Marketing Report

- Request board approval for a \$25,000 budget for the 2024 Roots & Rivers Festival marketing and operations. The board voted to approve the \$25,000 festival budget.

Executive Director's Report

- Gwen Chambers provided an update on the entrepreneurship program and her transitioning the new program coordinator into her role

New Business

- Chris Forster discussed an upcoming childcare facility and business incubator space opportunity in the town.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

## Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Marketing Report
5. Development Report
6. Executive Director's Report
7. Committee Reports
  - - Governance
  - - Finance
  - - Marketing
  - - Strategic
8. New Business
9. Announcements
10. Adjournment

## Action Items

- Submit the ATAX funding request for \$25,000 to the Town of Bluffton for the Roots & Rivers Festival marketing and operations due March 31st
- Recruit a new Board member with small business development experience.
- Send the details of the RFP for a new childcare facility to the entrepreneur interested in applying
- Fill the 2 open Board seats and send recommendations to the Governance committee
- Set up check-ins with the new program coordinator as part of the onboarding process.

## Final Announcements

- April 29th - Entrepreneur Denice Brown - Hair By Denice/ Grand Opening 10am HHI 19 Dunnagan Alley
- April 4th 5:30pm Island Rec Center - Town of HHI Small & Minority Business Service Information - BlacQuity would have an information table
- Roots & Rivers Festival on September 14th
- Birdies for Charity golf tournament fundraiser where BlacQuity could receive a 20% increase for each donations.