

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

Department of Finance & Administration



MEETING DATE: August 19, 2025
 SUBJECT: Coastal Conservation Association: Celebrating Conservation Weekend in Bluffton
 PROJECT MANAGER: Shannon Milroy, Budget & Procurement Manager

Summarized below is the application from the Coastal Conservation Association for Accommodations Tax grant dollars to support the 2024 Celebrating Conservation Weekend in Bluffton event.

Total Budget, per application: \$90,095

Requested Amount: \$10,000

Percentage of Request^: 11%

^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		Budget Items Eligible for ATAX Funds
Advertising & Promotion of Tourism or Arts and Cultural Events	\$10,000		
Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events	20,000		
Public Facilities		*	
Municipality and County Services		*	
Tourist Transportation		*	
Other/Ineligible Project Expenses	60,095		
Total	\$90,095		

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

Budgeted Expenses Summary:

Advertising & Promotion:

Total budget \$10,000

- Print and digital advertising, radio, TV spots, email blasts and social media

Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events:

Total budget \$20,000

- Rentals

Other/Ineligible Project Expenses:

Total budget \$60,095

- Auctioneer, event staff, beverages, food/caterer, raffle/auction items and administrative costs.

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
\$10,000	9	4	4	3	4	4	28	

Advertising: Of the requested funds, 100% is anticipated to be spent on marketing the event, including radio (106.9 and 107.9), print and digital ads in The Bluffton Sun and The Island Packet, direct mailers to CCA database of 900 members, e-blasts/e-newsletter by SC Living, TV spots on WTOG and social media ads on Facebook.

Festival/Event: The banquet is scheduled to take place the weekend of 9/19/2025 - 9/21/2025.

Bluffton Event: The CCA Banquet and Auction will be held in "the heart of the Bluffton Historic District".

Tourism Draw %: Approximately 30% of attendees were from out of town during the 2024 event.

Benefit to Tourism: The Saturday evening banquet will be promoted as an opportunity to plan a weekend getaway in Bluffton where visitors can patron local restaurants, shops, and galleries and take advantage of activities such as My River boat excursions or one of the ECO tours.

Self-Sufficiency % (Financial Need): Amount requested is approximately 11% of the total budget. Other anticipated revenue streams include sponsorships and proceeds from raffles, as well as live and silent auction items.

Previous Funding Amounts						
Fiscal Year	Requested Amount	% of Budget	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Expended	Comments
2025	\$10,000	13%	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$9,259.13	Final Report Submitted
2024	\$10,000	13%	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$8,971.75	Final Report Submitted

Accommodations Tax Committee Recommendations and Comments:

The Committee recommends funding \$_____ for _____.

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ATAX GRANT APPLICATION SCORING SHEET

Attachment 5
AUGUST 19, 2025

Entity: **Coastal Conservation Association** Project: **2025 Conservation Weekend in Bluffton** 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 SUFFICIENCY	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)		
Group Average Percentage		