

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

Department of Finance & Administration



MEETING DATE: August 19, 2025
 SUBJECT: Campbell Chapel AME Church: 162nd South Carolina Conference of the AME Church
 PROJECT MANAGER: Shannon Milroy, Budget & Procurement Manager

Summarized below is the application from the Historic Bluffton Foundation for Accommodations Tax grant dollars to support marketing and facilities costs for the Fall Tour of Homes event.

Total Budget, per application: \$80,300
Requested Amount: \$10,000
Percentage of Request^: 12.45%

^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	\$9,600		
Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events	-		
Public Facilities	2,000		
Municipality and County Services	6,000	*	
Tourist Transportation	-	*	
Other/Ineligible Project Expenses	62,700		
Total	\$80,300		

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

Budgeted Expenses Summary:

Advertising & Promotion:

Total budget \$9,600

- Includes posters/banners/signage, printing & distribution of materials and printing of a souvenir journal

Public Facilities:

Total budget \$2,000

- Securing parking at three (3) nearby facilities and shuttle transportation via van and golf carts

Municipality and County Services:

Total budget \$6,000

- Security provided by Bluffton PD (\$2,000) and not provided by Bluffton PD (\$4,000)

Other/Ineligible Project Expenses:

Total budget \$62,700

- Administrative expenses, production, entertainment, staff, catering, logistics, decorations

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	7	4	4	4	3	4	26	

Advertising: Of the requested funds, almost 100% is anticipated to be spent on marketing and promotional items for the event. Advertising and marketing will be done through social media, the AME Church network and the website southcarolinaannualconference2025.com.

Festival/Event: The weekend event will be held September 17-20, 2025

Bluffton Event: The conference will be held at the historic Campbell Chapel AME Church

Tourism Draw %: This is an inaugural event and therefore, no tourism statistics exist.

Benefit to Tourism: The event is expected to draw approximately 1,000 participants. Therefore, conference planners have reserved a minimum of 150 hotel rooms across four local hotels. While in Bluffton, attendees will dine, shop and explore Bluffton's rich history.

Self-Sufficiency % (Financial Need): The request is approximately 12% of the conference's total projected event budget. Other revenue sources include sponsorships and donations as well as vendor and registration fees.

Previous Funding Amounts						
Fiscal Year	Requested Amount	% of Budget	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Expended	Comments
n/a						

Accommodations Tax Committee Recommendations and Comments:

The Committee recommends funding \$_____ for _____.

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ATAX GRANT APPLICATION SCORING SHEET

Attachment 13
AUGUST 19, 2025

Entity: **Campbell Chapel AME Church**

Project: **SC Conference of the AME Church**

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		