

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

Department of Finance & Administration



MEETING DATE: February 20, 2024
 SUBJECT: HHI-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce: 2024 Official Bluffton Vacation Planner
 PROJECT MANAGER: Shannon Milroy, Budget, Grants & Procurement Administrator

Summarized below is the application from the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce for Accommodations Tax grant dollars in support of advertising and promotion for the 2024 Official Bluffton Vacation Planner.

This application was submitted during the previous quarter, but tabled for consideration at this quarter's meeting.

Total Budget: \$138,000

Requested Amount: \$45,000

Percentage of Request^: 32.6%

^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	Budget Items Recommended for ATAX Funds
Advertising & Promotion of Tourism or Arts and Cultural Events	\$138,000	\$45,000
Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events	-	
Public Facilities	-	
Municipality and County Services	-	*
Tourist Transportation	-	*
Other/Ineligible Project Expenses	-	
Total	\$138,000	\$45,000

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

Budgeted Eligible Expenses:

Advertising & Promotion:

Total budget \$138,000

- Includes account management, sales consultation, planning of and creation of the guide including interviewing, writing, editing, designing and publishing. Print production and mail fulfillment is also included in the budget.

Table Rating (Scores 0-5 with 5 satisfying the qualifications best, exception Advertising 0-15)

Amount Recommended	Advertising (15)	Tourism Draw % (5)	Benefit to Tourism (5)	Self-Sufficiency % (5)	Misc. (10)	Total of 40 possible	Comments
\$45,000	14	5	3	4	9	35	

Advertising: This request is 100% related to advertising and promotion. Both a print (30,000 copies planned) and digital version of the guide is included. Specifics regarding where the printed guides are placed or will be mailed was not indicated in the application.

Tourism Draw %: In 2022, the number of visitors to Bluffton was 431,461.

Benefit to Tourism: Based on the 2022 Economic Impact Study, marketing efforts of the Chamber resulted in an economic impact of tourism on Beaufort County of \$206.81 million, tax revenues to the Town of Bluffton specifically were \$6.51 million and the estimated return on tax investment was \$25.24 per \$1 spent. Data from the 2023 Economic Impact Study will be available in February 2024.

Self-Sufficiency % (Financial Need): The request is approximately 33% of the total budget. The remainder will be paid for by Southern Beaufort County ATAX funds. The Chamber is the Town's Designated Marketing Organization (DMO) and, therefore, receives allocated funds from ATAX collections. In FY2023 and FY2022, those amounts were \$466,089 and \$482,459, respectively.

Previous Funding Amounts						
Fiscal Year	Requested Amount	% of Budget	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Expended	Comments
2019	\$25,000		\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	Supplemental Award for TOB Accolate Marketing

Accommodations Tax Committee Recommendations and Comments:

The Committee recommends funding \$45,000 for advertising and promotion expenses.