

- **Grant funds must be used for tourism marketing. See the FUNDING PRIORITIES/ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES section above for more information.**
- Be as detailed as possible in your budget justification. This information will be compared to your payment requests. Items in your payment requests must appear in your application budget.
- Signage and banners used at your event, directional signage, programs, volunteer t-shirts, and other items handed out at your event are not covered through Accommodations Taxes.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

By signing and submitting the A-Tax County Marketing application, your organization is agreeing to the following Statement of Assurances:

- Upon grant application acceptance and funding award, applicant agrees that financial records, support documents, statistical records and all other records pertinent to Accommodations Tax funding shall be retained for a period of three years.
- All procurement transactions, regardless of whether negotiated or advertised and without regard to dollar value, shall be conducted in a manner so as to provide maximum open free competition.
- The funding recipient shall establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that has the appearance of being motivated by a desire for private gain for themselves and others.
- All expenditures must have adequate documentation.
- All accounting records and supporting documentation shall be available for inspection by Aiken County upon request.
- No person, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, should be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under the program or activity funding in whole or in part by Accommodations Tax funds.
- Employment made by or resulting from Accommodations Tax funding shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant on the basis of handicap, age, race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.
- None of the funds, materials, property, or services provided directly or indirectly under Accommodations Tax funding shall be used for any partisan political activity, or to further the election or defeat of any candidate for public office.
- The applicant hereby certifies that the information submitted as part of this application is accurate and reliable.
- Any change and/or variation must be reported immediately, otherwise, funding may be withheld.

APPLICATION EVALUATION

The Committee will use the following evaluation criteria to evaluate applications and proposed projects. The individual factors are important in project evaluation, as they are an indication of the degree to which the proposed project will contribute to the tourism in Aiken County. Please ensure that you review these factors and include the elements in your application. These factors, with their corresponding point values, are:

Project Design and Benefit to Community:

55 points maximum

Benefit to Tourism (20) - Does the project promote tourism in the areas of the County in which Aiken County A-Taxes are collected? Will it promote a positive image for the County? Will it attract visitors, build new audiences and encourage tourism expansion in the areas of the County in which Aiken County A-Taxes are collected? Will it increase awareness of the County's amenities, history, facilities, and natural environment in the areas of the County in which Aiken County A-Taxes are collected?

Reliable Tracking Mechanism and Marketing Plan (15) – How will visitors and tourists would be tracked? (surveys, wristbands, ticketing, and etc.) Are these methods viable? Does the marketing plan describe how the organization will reach tourists? Are at least 70% of the ads or other marketing expenses targeted outside the Columbia/Aiken County area? Is the expected number of tourists in line with the organization's marketing plan?

Benefit to Community (10) - How will this project benefit the citizens of Aiken County? Will the project benefit unincorporated Aiken County? Who will attend the event? How many visitors will the event serve? A visitor is defined by someone who travels at least 50 miles to attend the event.

Community Support and Partnerships (10) - Does the project have broad-based community appeal or support? What is the evidence of need for this project in the County? What kind and degree of partnership does the project exhibit? Does it exhibit volunteer involvement or inter-jurisdictional, corporate, business, and/or civic support?

Economic Impact and Accountability

45 points maximum

Budget (5) – Are all expenses that are to be paid with A-Tax funds eligible expenses? Did the budget and justification provide enough detail to show how funds will be spent? Does the applicant provide 50% in cash or in-kind match?

Expected A-Tax Revenue Generated (15) - What are the projected direct and indirect dollar expenditures by visitors/tourists? What is the estimated number of meals consumed? Are any overnight stays anticipated? Will this program drive business to those businesses that collect and remit Aiken County A-Tax in the unincorporated areas?

Reasonable Cost/Benefit Ratio (15) - Does the benefit of the project (i.e. number of tourists estimated; expected revenue generated) exceed the cost of the project? Is this project “worth” its cost?

Management Capability (10) - Does the applicant organization demonstrate an ability to successfully complete the project through effective business practices in the areas of finance, administration, marketing, and production? If this organization has received County Accommodations Tax funding previously, was the project successful?

APPLICATION PACKAGE

In order to be considered for funding, applicants must submit a **complete** application package for the A-Tax Marketing grant program. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Complete applications include:

- Completed and signed application form. Answer all questions and complete each section. N/A and See Attached are not valid responses.
- If your organization does not have an Executive Director, please note this in the signature area.
- Required Attachments:
 - Letter from IRS confirming tax exempt status and/or proof of registration and good standing with the SC Secretary of State’s Office
 - List of the organization’s current Board Members/Directors
 - Additional one (1) page project description (**OPTIONAL**)
 - Additional one (1) page budget justification (**OPTIONAL**)

Attachments MUST be submitted along with the proposal. Incomplete applications will not be evaluated. Applicants must provide 9 copies of the complete application package plus one (1) original (**10 packages total**). Please submit only the required elements secured with a binder clip. Folders, report covers and binders will be discarded.

Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on March 27, 2023 . Emailed or faxed applications will not be accepted. Due dates are not post mark dates. For us to proof your application, in order to advise the organization of errors or missing information, you must turn it in by March 17, 2023. **Applications delivered after 3-27-23 will not be considered for funding. Mail or hand deliver application to:**

Aiken County Visitors Center
Attn: Ashley Havird, Tourism Program Coordinator
133 Laurens St. NW
Aiken, SC 29801

AWARD NOTIFICATION

Applicant organizations will be notified of the funding outcome in **writing by August 2023**. Awards will be available for reimbursement. Final reports for the previous fiscal year, if applicable, as well as the current year, must be received before payments are released.

REPORTING AND GRANT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Grantees must acknowledge the receipt of A-Tax County Marketing funding by including the Aiken County logo, or by stating funding assistance provided through “Aiken County Accommodations Tax” on all program/project advertising, marketing and promotional materials. Examples must be included in your final report.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT NOTICE

Please be advised that all materials submitted for A-Tax County Marketing grant funding are subject to disclosure based on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

CONTACT

Ashley Havird, Aiken County Visitors Center, 133 Laurens St. NW, Aiken SC 29801, ahavird@aikencountysc.gov



A representative of the organization must be available for a Question/Answer session on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at the

Aiken County Government Building, 1930 University Parkway, Aiken, SC at 3:00pm. You may have only one other person present during the Q & A session. The amount of available grant funds will not be known until July 2023. The approximate amount of available funds is \$10,000. All attachments for your project must be included with this application. *We will not accept handouts during the meeting.*

AIKEN COUNTY ACCOMMODATIONS TAX
STATE MARKETING GRANT APPLICATION
 Funding for FY2023 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)
 Do not alter this application form. **DEADLINE: March 24, 2023**
COURTESY CORRECTION EARLY DEADLINE: March 17, 2023
We will notify you of errors or missing information if you turn your application in by March 17, 2023.
After March 24, 2023 incomplete applications will not be evaluated.

INCORPORATION DATE:

FEDERAL ID:

ORGANIZATION:

ORGANIZATION ADDRESS:

CONTACT:

TITLE:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

MISSION STATEMENT:

PROJECT TITLE:

TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED: \$

TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$

PROJECT START DATE:

PROJECT END DATE:

ESTIMATED TOTAL ATTENDANCE:

ESTIMATED TOURISTS:

ESTIMATED ROOM NIGHTS:

ESTIMATED MEALS:

DESCRIBE HOW YOUR ORGANIZATION DETERMINED THE NUMBERS ABOVE (Please indicate the numbers of meals and room nights estimated in the **unincorporated areas of Aiken County**):

PROGRAM/PROJECT LOCATION(s):

DOES YOUR PROJECT REQUIRE PERMITS? _____ LIST THOSE REQUIRED:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Add up to one additional sheet, if needed):

BENEFIT TO TOURISM:

BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:

MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY TO MAKE THIS PROJECT SUCCESSFUL:

OUTLINE PROJECT MARKETING PLAN (Include how you plan to reach tourists. What tracking mechanism do you use to determine tourist attendance?):

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT BUDGET

List the expenses for your project. If needed, add additional expense categories in the blank lines provided. **NOTE: Advertising & Marketing are the only expenses allowed through this marketing grant. A minimum of three official quotes must be provided for advertising/marketing services.**

Expense Category	County A-Tax Request	Other Sources	Total
Advertising/Marketing			
Municipal Services/Security			
Entertainment/Speakers/Guest Artists/Instructors			
Other Event Expenses			
Supplies			
Consultants/Contractors			
Venue/Equipment Rental			
Total			

List the income sources for your program or project below. Include the amount requested in this application.

Income Source	Amount	Write "Pending" or "Received"
FY24 Aiken County A-Tax Marketing Grant Request		

If applicable, you must list prior year information here on the PRIOR YEAR DETAIL FORM. **Also include a brief summary of the project from the previous year.**

EVENT NAME(S) Some organizations have more than one event	Total Budget PREVIOUS YEAR	# of Visitors outside a 50 mile radius PREVIOUS YEAR

Brief summary of project from previous year if applicable.

Budget Narrative/Justification: Add one additional sheet, if needed. Provide details on how you will spend Aiken County Atax Marketing Grant funds if awarded. See guideline for instructions.

MAKE SURE YOU KEEP A COPY OF YOUR GRANT- ESPECIALLY THIS SHEET.

IF AWARDED YOU MUST AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:

1. Unspent funding must be returned to Aiken County Accommodations Tax Funds. If your organization is found to have spent funding in any other way than as described and approved per your application, funding must be returned to Aiken County Accommodation Tax Funds.
2. Any revenue generated by the event or attraction **must be to benefit a community or organization within the limits of Aiken County.** (Profits cannot go to other division of the organization, if that division is outside of Aiken County, SC.)
3. The sponsoring agency shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or handicapped status in employment or provision of services.
4. Promotional material such as brochures, rack cards, etc., a statement must be added that states "Funding assistance provided by Aiken County through Accommodations Tax Funds". At least fifty (50) copies of any brochures must be submitted to the Aiken County Visitors Center for distribution.
5. Projects that continue past May 17, 2024 must provide two reports. The first will be an "Update Report" on May 17, 2024, on the status of your progress. Include all expenses thus far, cancelled checks, all pertinent information concerning your project. The second, a final "Accountability Report" (see #5 for details) must be delivered by July 19, 2024. Both reports must be delivered to Aiken County Visitors Center, C/O Ashley Havird, 133 Laurens St. NW, Aiken SC 29801.
6. Projects that are finished by May 17, 2024 will deliver one report, a final "Accountability Report" on or before May 17, 2024 to Aiken County Visitors Center, C/O Ashley Havird, 133 Laurens St. NW, Aiken SC 29801.

Accountability Report must include:

1. A written summary of the project.
2. A budget, noting the expenses that were outlined on your application.
 - a. A written account of income associated with this project.
 - b. A written account of expenditures associated with the project.
3. Copies of your cancelled checks and invoices pertaining to the funds we award you.
 - a. Receipts and invoices **must lie within the dates of the grant cycle**, which are July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024.
4. A marketing plan of how you will promote the project.
5. Any advertisements or promotional material
6. Photographs (5 or more) of the project and one additional photo exhibiting your acknowledgment of Aiken County through receipt of Aiken County Accommodations Taxes. (i.e. plaques, signs, etc.)
7. Survey results from event/attraction associated with this project.
 - a. Total number of attendees.
 - b. Number of attendees from out of town.
 - c. Accommodations out of town guests plan to use or did use.
7. Agree to allow a representative of the County and/or its appointed representative to examine the financial records of my organization insofar as they pertain to this project.
8. I hereby declare that this organization carries liability insurance in the amount of \$ _____ and agree to include Aiken County as a named insured for purposes of this project. This organization assumes full legal responsibility for any suit or action at law or equity, and any or all claims arising from this project/activity, and do hereby indemnify and hold harmless the County of Aiken and its Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee from any liability in any action at law or equity associated with its support for this project/activity.
9. I have received a copy of the 2023 Aiken County Marketing Grant Requirements and agree to abide by those and the above stated requirements.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIGNATURE/DATE:

BOARD CHAIRMAN SIGNATURE/DATE:

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

This sheet is not part of the application, but a tool to assist you in preparing your application.

Required Elements:

- Completed each section of the Marketing Grant Application. Incomplete applications will not be evaluated. Answers such as N/A or See Attached are not appropriate. Please do not use font sizes lower than 10 point.
- Answer each question and make sure each point in the guidelines is addressed.
- Board Chair signed and dated the application
- Executive Director signed and dated the application – please note in the signature line if your organization does not have an executive director (all volunteer organization).
- Fill out the budget form and make sure your budget narrative/justification has enough detail for each item that will be purchased with A-Tax grant funds.

Required Attachments

- Letter from IRS confirming tax exempt status **AND/OR**
- Proof of registration and good standing with the SC Secretary of State's Office as a nonprofit
- Attach list of current Board of Directors or Governing Board
- Three official quotes

Optional Elements:

- One additional page for the project description
- One additional page for the budget justification (grant expenditures only).

Application Packet

- Made a copy to keep for your files (applicant organization)
- Prepared 10 copies of the application, including the original to send to Aiken County Visitors Center (**total of 10**)
- Secured each application with a staple, paper clip or binder clip. No report folders, please.

REMINDERS

The Application deadline is 5:00 pm Friday, March 24, 2023. If you turn your application in early, by March 17, 2023 we will notify you of any corrections or additional information needed. After March 24, 2023, we will not be able to provide this courtesy. LATE applications will NOT be accepted. Aiken County does NOT accept applications sent via fax or email.

Mail or Hand Deliver Application to:

Aiken County Visitors Center
Attn: Ashley Havird, Tourism Program Coordinator
133 Laurens St. NW
Aiken, SC 29801

QUESTIONS

Call 803.642.7557 or email ahavird@aikencountysc.gov if you have any questions concerning the application process or the Aiken County Accommodations Tax Marketing Grant Program.