

**LAURENS COUNTY PARKS, RECREATION AND TOURISM**  
**Accommodation Tax Grant Application**

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

- NAME:** Accommodations Tax Grant Application
- MISSION:** To expand the economic benefits of tourism across the County by providing competitive, matching grant funds to qualified tourism marketing partners for direct tourism promotion expenditures.
- GOAL:** To increase overall interest in visitation and visitor spending across Laurens County.
- OBJECTIVE:** To assist local festivals, events, destinations, and attractions to generate out of county visitors to these attributes that makes Laurens County unique through advertising. Of the potential strategies in the tourism sales and marketing toolbox, advertising is the most efficient and effective paid outreach strategy available for reaching targeted audiences. (The tourism partner controls the message, the creative look and feel, the placement, the schedule, etc. Further, advertising can be directly measured.)
- GRANT CATEGORIES:** The Accommodation Tax Advertising Grant program offers three categories in which qualified partners may apply for grant funding:
- 1.) Festivals and Events                      2.) Attractions;                      3.) Destinations
- ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:** Organizations whose PRIMARY MISSION is tourism marketing – organizations charged with the responsibility of attracting out-of-market visitors to a destination, attraction or festival / event in Laurens County and that:
- 1) Are federal non- profit (501c) organizations;
  - 2) Have a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)

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**APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

**Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)**

- 1) Application questions should be typed on white paper (8 ½ X 11), using 12-point font and should not exceed ten (10) pages. No hand written applications will be accepted.
- 2) Original, plus seven (7) copies of the following must be included to be considered complete:
  - a. Cover Sheet with original signature;
  - b. 501-C Federal (IRS) Exemption Letter;
  - c. Federal Identification Number (FEIN) Letter (if it's not included on the 501-C Exemption Letter) ;
  - d. Application completed with questions and answers.
- 3) All grant application materials must be received at the Laurens County Church Street Office Complex no later than 4 P.M. - Friday - June 5, 2020. Applications shall be mailed and /or hand delivered. Faxed or emailed applications will not be accepted. All applications will be date stamped upon receipt.

**Mailing Address**

Laurens County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Commission  
Andy Howard, Director  
P.O. Box 445  
Laurens, SC 29360

**Physical Address**

Laurens County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Commission  
Andy Howard, Director  
100 Hillcrest Square – Administration Building  
Laurens SC, 29360

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APPLICATION COVER SHEET

**Organization Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Project Director:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Agency Website:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Identify the category for which you are applying (Check one):**

Festival/Event

Attraction

Destination

**Identify the amount you are financially prepared to match:**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ One-to-One Category (Cap for grant funds is \$2,000.00)

Based on the match amount you have selected: tell us how much grant funding support you are applying for?

- My organization is applying for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in Tourism Advertising Grant Funds

**Calculate the amount your organization must expend in qualified expenditures:**

Requested amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ X 2 for a one-to-one request = a total required qualified spend of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. (Example: Requested amount: \$2,000 X 2 for a one-to-one match = a total required qualified spend of \$4,000.)

I hereby certify the information contained herein, and within any attachments, is true and accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Project Director

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**QUESTIONS: Please answer ALL the following questions on a separate sheet of paper (typed).**

- 1) Describe your organization and its mission. (150 words or less).
- 2) For the purpose of the grant funds you are seeking, what is your tourism advertising objective? (What do you want your advertising to accomplish? Be specific!)
- 3) Identify your target audience(s), including geographic, demographic and other relevant criteria? Why is this your target audience(s)?
- 4) What media outlets will you use to best reach this audience (or audiences if more than one target audience?) Explain why the media you plan to use, is the best way to reach your target audience(s).
- 5) Of the above media outlets, when is your advertising running and why did you select these dates?
- 6) How will you measure the effectiveness of your advertising?

**SCORING SYSTEM:** Each and every application will be reviewed and scored by a seven (7) member panel which is made up of an appointed membership set forth by the SC Accommodation Tax guidelines. Each question will be scored on a scale of 0-5 points. The weight factor of each question is below, and the total weight factor is 100.

1. Organization's primary mission is tourism promotion ten percent (10%)
2. Marketing Objective(s) clearly defined twenty percent (20%)
3. Target Audience clearly identified and justified twenty percent (20%)
4. Advertising strategy and tactics provided twenty percent (20%)
5. Strategy/tactics align to achieve stated objective(s) fifteen percent (15%)
6. Cost Benefit Analysis (Will the county receive a return on investment?) ten percent (10%)
7. Required documentation provided five percent (5%) consisting of provided original, plus seven (7) copies – answering of all questions - proof of status paperwork provided

**DEADLINE:** All grant application materials must be received at the Laurens County PRT Office no later than 4 P.M. Friday June 7, 2020. Applications shall be hand delivered; faxed or emailed will not be accepted.

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**REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURE:**

**All projects must be completed, and the reimbursement request sent to Laurens County PRT Office by the completion date on your Project Agreement Form or by June 5, 2020.**

Projects are considered complete when you have provided copies of the following:

- **Reimbursement Request** - Complete form as indicated. Be sure your totals are correct and the Project Director has signed the form.
  
- **Paid Dated Invoices** - Submit legible photocopies of itemized invoice, reflecting date, description and dollar amount. Monthly statements are not acceptable unless they contain the same pertinent information listed on invoices.
  
- **Advertising** - Organizations that use an advertising agency to place advertisements must also provide copies of the media invoices.
  
- **Cancelled Checks** - Attach a legible photocopy of the cancelled check(s) to the appropriate invoice to certify proof of payment. Your cancelled check should reflect payment for items that are strictly related to the project. However, if your check includes non-related expenses, then supporting invoices are required.

**Proof of Performance:**

- Attach original or PDF file of media tear sheets from newspaper/magazine advertisement to the appropriate invoice and cancelled check.
  
- Submit a photograph of each posted billboard and a screenshot of all online advertising.
  
- Include a copy of the broadcast media affidavit for tv and radio commercials.
  
- Delivery report for web-based media including impressions delivered and clicks as well as site engagement if available.

**Audit Report** - An audit report is issued to each grant recipient at the completion of their project. This report summarizes the allowable project costs, the amount of project costs subject to reimbursement and the amount of any funds to be reverted.

- Notification of discrepancy in this audit report must be submitted in writing to Laurens County PRT within 30 days after receipt.
  
- Approved applicants are to keep original invoices and supporting documentation for a period of three years.

For Questions regarding this ATAX Grant Application, feel free to contact Andy Howard  
Office 864-984-5484 E-mail ahoward@co.laurens.sc.us



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**RECIPIENT CORE STIPULATIONS:**

- a. The primary focus of all Accommodations Tax Grant (ATAX) projects must be tourism promotion to sustain tourism related revenue.
- b. ATAX grants may only be used to market festivals, events and attractions that occur at venues that are accessible by the general public on an on-going basis. Festivals or events that occur at private venues (private personal property) are not eligible for a ATAX grant.
- c. In-kind contributions cannot be used as a source of matching funds. Only cash matches are eligible.
- d. Organizations that utilize advertising agencies must provide a copy of media invoice. Organizations will be reimbursed based on net rates only.
- e. Creative and production costs and commission costs are not eligible for reimbursement.
- f. Grant funds are to be used for Out-of-State and/or In-State marketing. **In-State advertising must be conducted in marketing venues that are located outside of Laurens County to qualify for reimbursement.**

**Organizations that are not in compliance with these published Accommodations Tax Grant procedures/ requirements will jeopardize their funding reimbursements.**

**This ATAX grant program criteria will supersede all previous ATAX Grant guidelines.**