



CITY OF BEAUFORT ACCOMMODATIONS TAX (ATAX) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)

1. What is the Accommodations Tax (ATAX)?

South Carolina established in the 1980's a two percent tax on overnight accommodations in addition to the statewide sales tax. South Carolina Code of Laws Title 6 Chapter 4 Allocations of Accommodations Tax Revenues states how those monies are to be allocated. A small portion of the Accommodations Tax (ATAX) money stays in the local municipality or county where it is collected. The remainder must be used to attract and provide for tourists and must be spent on tourism-related expenditures that promote tourism and attract visitors.

2. Who decides how to spend the money?

State law requires local governments that receive more than \$50,000 annually from the tax, such as the City of Beaufort, to establish an advisory committee to review requests for Accommodations Tax grant awards and to submit recommendations to the local government body for approval. The goal is to reduce political pressures and to increase local accountability. Ultimately, the City Council makes the decision on how to spend the money.

3. What is the Beaufort Tourism Development Advisory Committee (TDAC)?

The TDAC is an advisory body appointed by Beaufort City Council to:

- Conduct interviews as needed
- Recruit appropriate applicants for Accommodations Tax grants
- Screen the requests
- Submit recommendations to the Beaufort City Council.

The Fiscal Year 2024 Tourism Development Advisory Committee includes:

- Henry Brandt (Chair) – Attractions, Recreation
- Vimal Desai - Hospitality, Lodging
- Matthew McAlhaney - Hospitality Lodging
- Mickey Minick – At Large
- Randy Novick – At Large
- Chetan Patel – Hospitality, Lodging

- *Vacant Seat*

4. How did the TDAC decide who to recommend for funding for Fiscal Year 2024?

Applications were made available on the City website and published in the Island News on July 27th. All prospective applicants were required to attend one of three ATAX Workshops that were held on August 8th, 10th and 23rd. The deadline for submittal of applications was September 1st. Committee members reviewed each application and considered how the funding request fits into overall mission to promote tourism according to the state's tax guidelines and the overall direction of City Council. Applicants were then required to make presentations to the committee on September 12th, providing details of their project or event and answering questions from the committee. A priority of the committee is to maximize each grant dollar as far as possible. For instance, marketing materials and promotions that included an Internet component (website, Facebook, other social media, etc.) earn more attention than print-only projects. Projects that demonstrate partnerships with other organizations also earn greater attention.

5. What is the Beaufort City Council's role in this?

The City Council received Tourism Development Advisory Committee (TDAC) recommendations and approved the ATAX grant awards on January 9, 2024.

6. What organizations received ATAX grant awards?

For the fiscal year 2024, the City of Beaufort budgeted \$379,411.00 in accommodations tax funds for grant awards. The grantees and amount are:

- \$146,000 to the Greater Beaufort-Port Royal CVB/DMO Destination Marketing
- \$47,029 to SC Low Country & Resort Islands Tourism Committee for promotion of the City of Beaufort and the Lowcountry
- \$34,500 to the Greater Beaufort-Port Royal CVB/DMO Sales Plan
- \$33,825 to The Original Gullah Festival
- \$25,95 to the Gullah Traveling Theatre
- \$23,875 to the Tabernacle Baptist Church for the Harriet Tubman Monument
- \$18,250 to the Beaufort Area Hospitality Association for the Beaufort Oyster Festival
- \$10,625 to the Freedman Arts District for the Street Chalk Art Festival
- \$10,500 to the Friends of Hunting Island for the Hunting Island Lighthouse Lens Exhibit
- \$8,075 to The Penn Center for the Heritage Days Celebration
- \$6,650 to the Port Royal Sound Foundation for the Reptile Display

- \$6,125 to the Mather School Museum at the Technical College of the Lowcountry for the African American History Program
- \$4,750 to the South Coast Cyber Center for the Southcoast Cyber Summit
- \$3,257 to the Friends of the Spanish Moss Trail for Visitor Marketing