



**2023-2024
ACCOMMODATIONS/HOSPITALITY TAX GRANT
GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION**

These general guidelines are written to provide assistance to those preparing grant applications and for those evaluating grant applications.

A 3% Tourism Development Fee (Accommodations Tax) is collected upon the rental of hotels, motels, and other lodging establishments in the County that offer accommodations to tourists and travelers.

A 2% Hospitality Tax is collected on the sale of prepared meals and beverages sold in establishments in the County.

From revenues collected, Fairfield County offers funding through the Accommodations/Hospitality Tax Grant program. These funds may be used for organizations/events/programs that promote the attraction of tourism within the County. Grant applications are considered eligible when they meet South Carolina State Law restrictions on the use of Accommodations Tax funds and when they meet Fairfield County Guidelines.

Accommodations/Hospitality Tax Grant Application Program Opens SEPTEMBER 1 and closes OCTOBER 31.

1. Eligible Applicants:

- Non-profit organizations providing services in Fairfield County;
- Destination marketing organizations which are recognized non-profit organizations charged with the responsibility of marketing tourism for Fairfield County;
- Organization must be in existence for at least one (1) year prior to requesting funds;
- The County will not sponsor nor provide financial support to a religious organization in a manner that would actively involve it in a religious activity;
- Funds must be solely used for secular purposes and the principal/primary goal of the sponsored activity cannot promote the advancement of religion;
- Fairfield County will not award A/H-Tax funds to individuals, fraternal organizations, or groups that endorse/support political campaigns.

All Applicants must provide an Internal Revenue Service tax exempt determination letter. Grantee organizations must be in good standing and without outstanding debt to Fairfield County.

2. Project Criteria: (Projects must meet one or more of these criteria.)

- a. The project attracts visitors through advertising, marketing and promotion. The organization must show that a portion of the marketing expenses must be paid to advertise outside of Fairfield County;
- b. Generate additional tourism-related tax dollars within Fairfield County;

- c. Promote dining at restaurants and other eating and drinking establishments within Fairfield County;
- d. Generate overnight stays in Fairfield County;
- e. Construct or enhance existing recreation facilities to include amenities and trails;
- f. Promote and highlight Fairfield County's historic and cultural venues, recreational facilities, trails and events, and the uniqueness of the local community;
- g. Promote arts and cultural events.

3. Grant Use:

As stated in S. C. Code of Laws **Section 6-1-530**, the revenue generated by a local **Accommodations Tax** must be used exclusively for the following purposes:

- 1) Tourism-related buildings including, but not limited to, civic centers, coliseums, and aquariums
- 2) Tourism-related cultural, recreational or historic facilities
- 3) Beach access, renourishment or other tourism-related lands and water access
- 4) Highway, roads, streets and bridges providing access to tourist destinations
- 5) Advertisements and promotions related to tourism development
- 6) Water and sewer infrastructure to serve tourism-related demand

As stated in S. C. Code of Laws **Section 6-1-730**, the revenue generated by a local **Hospitality Tax** must be used exclusively for the following purposes:

- 1) Tourism-related buildings including, but not limited to, civic centers, coliseums, and aquariums
- 2) Tourism-related cultural, recreational or historic facilities
- 3) Beach access, renourishment or other tourism-related lands and water access
- 4) Highway, roads, streets and bridges providing access to tourist destinations
- 5) Advertisements and promotions related to tourism development
- 6) Water and sewer infrastructure to serve tourism-related demand
- 7) Control and repair of flooding and drainage within or on tourism-related lands or areas
- 8) Site preparation for items in this section including, but not limited to, demolition, repair, or construction

- a. All projects and/or events must occur within Fairfield County (unless identified as marketing/advertising outside of Fairfield County with the intent to promote tourism). If funding is provided for an event, the event must be marketed and open to the public. Grantee organizations may not reallocate funds to other organizations. All funds must be spent on the project or event specified in the grant application by the organization that is awarded the funds.
- b. For the purposes of this grant application, Fairfield County is only considering tourism advertising and promotion expenses such as: print media, billboards, radio, television, and web-based media.
- c. Marketing projects should identify the target audience and geographic location of the target audience.

- d. Grants cannot be requested to cover costs that other grants are covering.
- e. Generally, grants will not cover the following:
 - Regular operating activities and expenses of an organization
 - Fundraising expenses
 - Equipment purchase and rental
 - Food and Beverage
 - Items for resale
 - Prizes, trophies, etc.
 - Travel Expenses

4. Project Benefits

- a. Projects should aim to have a measurable tourism impact that can be supported by evidence. This tourism impact should be measured in the form of visitors to Fairfield County, meals sold, and/or additional hotel stays generated.
- b. Estimates for these metrics are a required part of the grant application.
- c. These estimates can be achieved through comparison to similar tourism projects.

5. Cost Effectiveness

- a. The applicant must demonstrate that proposed costs are reasonable in terms of the benefits to be obtained from the promotion or event.
- b. Applicants must provide a project budget that indicates all income and expense related to the project and indicates which categories of that total project budget the Accommodations/Hospitality Tax funds are requested to cover.
- c. The project must have a viable and realistic budget.

6. Accommodations/Hospitality Tax Funding Application Procedures

Applicants should read and be familiar with the guidelines before submitting an application to the County. All applications must be post-marked no later than **OCTOBER 31** for the project year under consideration. The following information is **required** to be included in your application:

- 1. Name of the project: Give the project a concise title that aptly describes its scope.
- 2. Organization: Give the name of the organization, mailing address, phone number
- 3. Project Director and Telephone Number: The project director is responsible for administering the project.
- 4. Date of Project: Actual date(s) of event being promoted (if applicable)
- 5. Location of Project: Where project will occur or the distribution area
- 6. Line-Item Budget:
- 7. Type of Organization
 - a. Government agency, board, commission
 - b. Not-for-profit organization

8. Description of project: As detailed as possible, describe the total project, and what is intended to be accomplished.
 - a. Benefit to Tourism– As stated under Eligibility, the funds are to be expended for tourism related activities. It is important in this section to relate the project's benefit to tourism.

7. Project Approval

Applications will be reviewed by Fairfield County Administration, with assistance from staff in Finance, Procurement, and any other department(s) with expertise in areas related to a grant request. Recommendations for funding will be made to the Fairfield County Council.

In approving applications, consideration will be given to projects meeting the eligibility requirements. Once County Council has acted, applicants will be notified in writing of their approval/denial no later than **December 31**. Applicants will be notified of conditions, if any, relative to the project.

Please be aware that any incomplete applications (refer to section 6) will be automatically denied.