



**North
Augusta**
*South Carolina's
Riverfront*

**CITY OF NORTH AUGUSTA
STATE ACCOMMODATIONS TAX
FUNDING PROGRAM**

FY 2023 - 2024

APPLICATION HANDBOOK

(For projects occurring between January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025)

Updated 8-24-2023

1. SOUTH CAROLINA ACCOMMODATIONS TAX LAW

A. WHO CAN APPLY FOR THE 65% FUNDS

- All applicants are asked to provide proof of their federal employer identification number as registered with the Internal Revenue Service. This number must coincide with applicant's organization name.
- To qualify for funding, project applicants **must provide** proof of their non-profit status **and** fall into one of the following categories:
 1. Any governmental agency, board commission, or political subdivision other than those specifically designated as a state agency **OR**
 2. Not-for-profit organizations as registered with the Secretary of State of South Carolina; Your "CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION/EXISTENCE" must accompany your application **even if you have been awarded funding in the past.**

B. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE South Carolina Code Section 6-4-10 (4) (b) (1)

The State of South Carolina imposes a 2% tax on all accommodations, including campgrounds, in the state for the purpose of assisting in the development of innovative and/or effective tourism promotion projects at the local level; enlarging the economic benefits of tourism through advertising; and assisting in developing a strong tourism industry throughout South Carolina.

The State allocates the funds to the government entities based on point of revenue origin. The net proceeds are remitted quarterly to the municipality or county in which the tax was collected. The state's eleven tourism districts also receive a percentage of the accommodations tax. Two percent of the total revenues collected in the state is taken off the top and distributed evenly to the eleven tourism districts.

C. HOW FUNDS ARE DISPERSED South Carolina Code Section 6-4-10 (1) (2) (3)

General Revenue Expenses

Each unit of local government, (i.e. City of North Augusta), receiving State Accommodations Tax Revenue is entitled to expend the first \$ 25,000 on any general revenue expenses. The remaining funds will be referred to as the "Balance" which is distributed on a 5%, 30%, and 65% basis as described below.

General Fund (5%)

5% of the "Balance" is eligible to be used by local government, (i.e. City of North Augusta), for any general fund expense.

Advertising and Promotion Special Fund (30%)

30% of the "Balance" is to be distributed quarterly upon receipt to one or more designated organization(s) with ongoing tourism promotion program(s), (i.e. City of North Augusta or North Augusta Chamber of Commerce).

Tourism Related Activities Special Fund (65%)

65% of the "Balance" is to be used for tourism related activities, (i.e. City of North Augusta State Accommodations Tax Funding Program). The distribution of these funds **requires** an application process. The South Carolina Department of Revenue oversees the operations of the State Accommodations Tax Program and has the authority to extend the time period for holding this special fund.

D. HOW FUNDS CAN BE SPENT

General Fund (5%) Special Funds

This is for any governmental expense. This does not have to be related to tourism, but may if the government so chooses.

Advertising and Promotion Special Funds (30%)

This is for the designated organization, (i.e. City of North Augusta), with ongoing tourism promotion program(s). Examples of allowable expenditures are media advertising, brochures, travel show displays, etc. All items must be used outside a 50-mile radius of North Augusta.

Tourism Related Activities Special Funds (65%)

- Advertising and promotion of tourism so as to develop and increase tourist attendance through the generation of publicity
- Promotion of the arts and cultural events
- Construction, maintenance, and operation of facilities for civic and cultural activities including construction and maintenance of access and other nearby roads and utilities for the facilities
- The criminal justice system, law enforcement, fire protection, solid waste collection, and health facilities when required to serve tourists and tourist facilities. This is based on the estimated percentage of costs directly attributed to tourists.
- Public facilities such as restrooms, dressing rooms, parks, and parking lots
- Tourist shuttle transportation
- Operating visitor information centers

2. CITY OF NORTH AUGUSTA ACCOMMODATIONS TAX COMMITTEE

A. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE South Carolina Code Section 6-4-25 (B)

The Committee's purpose is "to make recommendations to the City Council on the expenditures of the state's accommodations tax funds". This is required by South Carolina Code Section 6-4-5 et seq. The City's Administration Department is the agency which oversees the administration of these accommodations tax funds in the City of North Augusta. The Committee advises the North Augusta City Council on tourism related activities, strategies, and programs.

B. FUNDING PLAN

The purpose of the program is to develop innovative and/or effective tourism promotion projects for the City of North Augusta, enlarging the economic benefits of tourism through advertising, and developing a tourism industry within the city limits.

Funding is for the promotion of tourism-related projects and events in and near the City of North Augusta.

Accommodations Tax funding is a "reimbursement" program. **(50/50 match)** The project sponsor pays for the project up front. Funding **cannot** be given for the "startup" monies for a project or event.

Funding **is not guaranteed** for any project whether that project has received funding in the past or is submitting for the first time.

Formal applications must be submitted before any requests will be considered. Organizations must have a non-profit status or a non-profit sponsor to apply.

Projects/events MUST attract regional, state, and/or national audiences and attract tourists that will stay overnight in local hotels, bed & breakfasts, etc.

Projects/events can be one-time or ongoing.

Funds approved for a specific project must be used for that project **ONLY** and **DO NOT** carry over and **CANNOT BE TRANSFERRED** to another program should the project not use any or all the funds allocated.

The amount of funds awarded to approved applicants will be determined based upon funds available and merits of the individual projects.

3. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applicants should read and be familiar with the funding program guidelines before submitting an application to the City of North Augusta Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee. All applicants that desire to apply may download the application from our website: <http://www.northaugustasc.gov> or request through our City Clerk, Jamie Paul, via email: jpaul@northaugustasc.gov

All application packets* must be received by Tuesday, November 12, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. Application packets can be delivered via mail at PO Box 6400 North Augusta, SC 29861 or in person to Jamie Paul, City Clerk, at City of North Augusta Municipal Center, 100 Georgia Avenue, Third Floor, North Augusta, SC 29841.

***Required Application Packet Information**

- 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
- Prepared 10 copies of the application
- Secured each application with a staple, paper clip or binder clip. No report folders, please.

All applicants will be required to attend a "Question and Answer Session" on **Tuesday, November 19, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.** with the Accommodation Tax Advisory Committee at the City of North Augusta Municipal Center, 100 Georgia Avenue-Third Floor Council Conference Room, North Augusta, SC. After this session, the committee will make the recommendations to City Council. After City Council approves the committee's recommendations, the applicants will be contacted with the final decisions.

REMINDERS

The application deadline is **Tuesday, November 12, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.**
LATE or INCOMPLETE application packets will NOT be considered.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

November 12, 2024	Accommodation Tax Grant Application Deadline
November 19, 2024	“Question and Answer” Session with Committee
December 2, 2024	Resolution to City Council for Approval of Awards
December 6, 2024	Accommodation Tax Grants Award Notifications Emailed

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

At the completion of the grant funded project, the City of North Augusta requires grantees to complete an Accountability Report. **Grantees must acknowledge the receipt of the City of North Augusta Accommodations Tax funds by adding the statement “Funding Assistance provided by the City of North Augusta through Accommodations Tax Funds” on all projects.** For marketing and promotional materials, the City of North Augusta logo should be visible.

Accountability Report must include:

1. 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.

2. Copies of your cancelled checks and/or receipts and invoices pertaining to the funds awarded and matching funds. Receipts and invoices must be within the dates of the grant cycle. *(No in-kind donations will be accepted)*

3. Any advertisements or promotional material with the City of North Augusta logo.

4. Photographs of the project (process and completion, if applicable) with one photo showing your acknowledgment of *"Funding Assistance Provided by City of North Augusta through Accommodations Tax Funds"* (Stickers available at the Municipal Building, Clerk’s Office upon request) or city logo posted at the project location.

5. 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

All documentation for reimbursement must be received no later than December 31 of the project year listed in this handbook, unless a written exception is approved. If not received funding will be forfeited.

**ACCOMMODATIONS TAX COMMITTEE
EVALUATION FACTORS**

As you complete your application please keep the following factors in mind. Our Accommodations Tax committee will use these factors as an evaluation tool when reviewing your application.

Project Eligibility: Does the project allow the committee to effectively award funding according to the mission of the City of North Augusta Accommodations Tax Committee?

Mission: The City of North Augusta Accommodations Tax Committee strives to effectively allocate the State's Accommodations Tax funds in order to increase the recognition of the City of North Augusta as a "Visitors Destination", while closely following the guidelines set forth by the State of South Carolina.

Thoroughness of Proposal: Were the proposal specifications followed? Were responses clear and complete? Are all support documents provided?

PROJECT DESIGN

Description of Project: Will the project attract visitors, build new audiences, and encourage tourism expansion within the City of North Augusta? Will it increase awareness of the City's amenities, history, facilities, and natural environment? Was the target audience identified? Does this audience appear reasonable?

Partnerships: Does the project involve community partnerships? Does it exhibit volunteer involvement or inter-jurisdictional, corporate, business and/or civic support?

Funding: Has this project received previous funding? Has the funding been well utilized? Has the return on investment been beneficial to the North Augusta community? Is the project solely dependent upon ATAX funding? Has the project continued to seek additional sources for funding?

Attendance: If this project occurred previously, did it attract tourists as defined in the handbook and application? Will the upcoming event attract tourists, as defined in the handbook and application, to the City of North Augusta? Is the determining factor as listed by the applicant a legitimate measurable factor?

Economic Impact: Will the event have a positive economic impact on the City of North Augusta? Is there a reliable tracking mechanism planned for use by the committee? Will this event generate overnight stays in the City of North Augusta? Does the benefit of the project (i.e. number of tourists estimated; expected generation of revenue) exceed the cost of the project?