

City of Seneca Local Hospitality Tax Grant Application Guide

Application deadlines are Wednesday before Memorial Weekend & Wednesday before Thanksgiving

The South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 6 - Chapter 4 provides for Accommodations Tax Provisions with oversight functions by the SC Department of Revenue.

The City of Seneca ATAX Advisory Committee serves as the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee and was established to advise City of Seneca Council on the expenditures of revenue generated from accommodations tax.

All acts of the Advisory Committee are subject to review and approval by the City of Seneca Council. The City of Seneca ATAX Advisory Committee does not approve funding for activities/projects retroactively, therefore, a time frame allowing approval by the Committee and City of Seneca Council must be considered when requesting funds.

ELIGIBILITY:

To be eligible, an organization must be organized as a non-profit organization or a government agency and shall demonstrate that it has either an ongoing tourism program or it can develop an effective tourism promotional project.

An organization must substantiate its credibility with financial history. The most recent financial report, IRS tax forms, or financial audit information may be required.

Eligible organizations must show involvement in one or more of the following:

- Destination Advertising Promotion: advertising and promotion of tourism so as to develop and increase tourist attendance through the generation of publicity; (“Travel” and “tourism” mean the action and activities of people taking trips outside their home communities for any purpose, except daily commuting to and from work.)
- Tourism Related Event: promotion of the arts and cultural events;
- Tourism Related Facilities: 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
- Tourism Related Public Services: 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;
- Tourist Public Transportation: tourist shuttle transportation;
- Operating Visitor Information Centers.

Certain Tourism-related grants are awarded on a “percentage of tourism” basis. Applicants must be able to substantiate how much of the total expenditure is related to tourism, and must be able to provide the “percentage of tourism” to the total budget of the project. The grant disbursement must be based exclusively on the estimated percentage of costs directly attributed to attracting or serving tourists. For example: a jazz festival attracts approximately 2500 people to the area for two days. We estimate 30% will be tourists. Overall advertising budget is \$30,000 – we are seeking \$9,000. Remainder of the budget is the responsibility of the applicant!

QUALIFYING CRITERIA:

All projects will be considered based on their ability and their intent to attract tourists from outside the Oconee County area, more specifically overnight accommodations. Documents **must** be provided demonstrating your event/project promotes tourism in the city limits of Seneca. For example: guest logs, phone logs, accommodations contracts, website hits, advertising demographics, photos, and/or letters from local Chambers of Commerce, restaurants, shops or accommodations owners.

A statement **must** be included in your publicity acknowledging funding received from City of Seneca ATAX revenues. Such as **“Funding has been provided by the City of Seneca ATAX Committee through the City of Seneca Council.”**

Bids/Estimates prepared by qualified vendors/contractors for *all* items in the project must be attached to the application. Two written estimates are required for grants up to \$2,500. Three written estimates are required for grants above \$2,500. For single source bids, a document of explanation is required.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

Funds must be requested using the attached form. Funds must be used for the specific purpose requested. Alterations or deviations require an additional request in writing and approval by the City of Seneca ATAX Committee and City of Seneca Council.

All applications must be received by the one of the following dates: Thursday before Memorial Weekend or Wednesday before Thanksgiving. If you or member of your group wishes to make a presentation, please notify the City of Seneca ATAX Committee. If a quorum of the Committee is not present, the request will be tabled until the following scheduled meeting.

After approval from the City of Seneca ATAX Committee, a request will be made at the next scheduled City of Seneca Council Meeting for the approval of the requested funds. The reporting period of the project will begin on the date the funds are disbursed.

ACCOUNTING:

Strict accounting procedures shall be followed.

The City of Seneca ATAX Advisory Committee may disburse funds to unaudited organizations with grants up to \$10,000 and to audited organizations with grants up to \$24,999. Grants for \$25,000 or more must be handled through normal City of Seneca purchasing procedures.

You will then be able to follow your organization's own procurement process once you have received funds. When the project is complete, you **must** submit copies of all receipts to the ATAX Committee with the Final Report. Any funds left over from the project must be returned to the ATAX Committee within 60 days of completion.

FUND DISBURSEMENT, INTERIM AND FINAL REPORTS:

Applications and Forms are available at www.seneca.sc.us

An Interim Project Report is required every 60 days to update the ATAX Committee of the project's progress until it is completed, at which time a Final Project Report is required. Forms are included for this purpose. Funds must be spent within two (2) years after receipt of initial funding.

The ATAX Committee **must** be notified in writing along with a Final Report, an explanation, and funds returned, if the applicant does not complete the project.

The Final Report should include:

- Copies of paid invoices for all expenditures
- Balance Sheets
- Guest logs, phone logs, accommodations contracts, website hits, advertising demographics
- Promotional materials, flyers
- Pictures, news clippings, letters of endorsement
- Other materials that will be helpful in evaluating your project
- Check payable to City of Seneca for unused portion of grant funds

Failure to comply with all reporting provisions could disqualify this grant and may disqualify future applications from your organization and require funds to be returned!

For more information or to submit an application, please contact:

City of Seneca, P O Box 4773, Seneca, SC 29679 864-885-2700

**City of Seneca Local Hospitality Tax Grant Application
Form for Tourism Related Projects**

I. APPLICANT

A. Name of Organization: _____

B. Address: _____

II. FUNDS REQUESTED

A. ATAX Funds Requested \$ _____

B. How will ATAX Funds be used? _____

C. Estimated percentage of costs directly attributed to attracting or serving tourists? _____

D. Funds furnished by your organization _____
Matching Grant _____ Source _____
Matching Grant _____ Source _____
Other Funding _____ Source _____
Other Funding _____ Source _____

Provide an itemized total budget for your event **and** an itemized budget only reflecting how ATAX funds will be spent. **THIS IS REQUIRED, attach on a separate sheet.**

III. NARRATIVE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Project Title: _____

B. Description of project: _____

C. Who will benefit from this project? _____

IV. DATES OF PROJECT

Beginning: _____ Ending: _____

V. APPLICANT CATEGORY

_____ Government Entity: _____

_____ Non-profit Organization: Incorporation date: _____

_____ Eleemosynary Organization under IRS Code: IRS # _____

_____ Date of Determination Letter: _____

VI. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

A. How will the project influence tourism in the city limits of Seneca? _____

- B. How many visitors/participants attended the event last year and are anticipated this year? _____
- C. How many of the visitors/participants were from beyond a 50 mile radius of the city limits of Seneca last year and are anticipated this year?
 Last Year _____
 This Year _____
- D. How many overnight stays were created by this event last year and are anticipated this year?
 Last year : _____
 This Year: _____
- E. How do you plan to advertise this event beyond a 50 mile radius of the city limits of Seneca?

- F. What other documentation can you provide demonstrating this event promotes Tourism in the city limits of Seneca? (i.e. photographs, letters from local chambers of commerce, restaurants, shop or accommodations owners) _____

- G. What records will be kept during this event to obtain the above demographic data? (i.e. guest logs, phone logs, accommodations contracts, website hits, advertising demographics)

VII. AUDIT

Does your organization perform an independent audit? Yes ____ No ____
 Name of the Auditor: _____

- VIII.** Will your project be using any funds from another group that received ATAX funds? _____

I have read the guidelines for the City of Seneca ATAX Grant Request and do hereby agree to comply with all rules and requirements. I understand failure to comply may result in a loss of funding for the project. I will complete interim reports every sixty days and two final reports at completion of project. All information required for final reporting MUST be detailed when project is complete.

- A. Contact Name & Title : _____
 Signature _____ Date _____
 Mailing Address _____
 Email _____ Fax No. _____
 Phone Number (s) _____
- B. Alternate Contact Name & Title: _____
 Signature _____ Date _____
 Mailing Address _____
 Email _____ Fax No. _____
 Phone Number (s) _____

City of Seneca Local Hospitality Grant Interim Project Form

This form is intended for use as a report on the spending of the ATAX funds recently authorized by the City of Seneca ATAX Advisory Committee and the Seneca City Council. *Please note this report is due within 60 days of the disbursement date of ATAX funds, unless you have completed the project and a Final Report has been filed.* Interim reports are required every 60 days if the project has not been completed. Reports submitted must be original no faxed copies will be accepted.

ORGANIZATION: _____

PROJECT NAME: _____

AMOUNT AUTHORIZED \$ _____

DISBURSEMENT DATE _____

AMOUNT SPENT TO DATE \$ _____

STATUS OF PROJECT: _____

CONTACT NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____ **DATE** _____

Report forms are to be submitted to:

City of Seneca, attn.: Josh Riches, P O Box 4773, Seneca, SC 29679

City of Seneca Local Hospitality Grant Accommodations Tax Funding Final Report

This form is to be used as a Final Report on the spending of the ATAX funds recently authorized by the City of Seneca Council. *Please note this report is due within 60 days of the ATAX disbursement date of funds unless the project has not been completed and an Interim Report has been filed.* A Final Report is required when the project has been completed. Reports submitted must be original no faxed copies will be accepted.

I. PROJECT INFO:

Date: _____ Amount: _____ Project : _____

Organization Name: _____

II. PROJECT COMPLETION:

Were you able to complete the project as stated in your original application? _____
If no, state any problems you encountered. _____

III. PROJECT SUCCESS:

Please share any additional comments regarding the project. (e.g., lessons learned, successes, problems encountered, etc.)

IV. PROJECT ATTENDANCE:

Record numbers in table below, as requested by the City of Seneca ATAX Advisory Committee. Numbers are to reflect attendance and funds received for projects for current and previous years.

	Last Year	Current Year
Total budget of event/project		
Amount funded by Oconee County A-tax		
Amount funded by A-tax from all sources		
Total attendance		
Total tourists*		

* Tourists are generally defined as those who travel at least 50 miles to attend; however, the Committee considers every project/event on a case by cases basis.

V. METHODS:

Please describe the methods used to capture the attendance data listed above (license plates, surveys, etc.) _____

VI. PROJECT BUDGET:

Attach report indicating project expenses of Accommodations Tax grant. Please Check Appropriate Boxes and Attach Copies: (This material will become the property of the City of Seneca ATAX Advisory Committee)

- Copies of paid invoices for all expenditures Promotional materials, flyers
- Balance Sheets Pictures, news clippings, letters of endorsement
- Guest logs, phone logs, accommodations contracts, website hits, advertising demographics
- Other materials that will be helpful in evaluating your project

VII. ORGANIZATION SIGNATURE:

Provide signature of official within organization, verifying accuracy of above statements.

Name & Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date _____

Report forms are to be submitted to:

City of Seneca, attn.: Josh Riches, P O Box 4773, Seneca, SC 29679