



**ACCOMMODATIONS TAX
FUNDING PROGRAM
CITY OF CAMDEN, SOUTH CAROLINA**

APPLICATION HANDBOOK
(FOR PROJECTS OCCURING BETWEEN JULY 1, 2024 – JUNE 30, 2025)

1. SOUTH CAROLINA ACCOMMODATIONS TAX LAW

A. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

South Carolina Code Section 6-4-5 and related sections impose a two percent (2%) tax on all accommodations, including campgrounds and short term rentals, 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 (2%) of the total revenues collected in the state is taken off the top and distributed evenly to the eleven tourism districts.

Additionally, municipalities and counties may impose a local accommodations tax of up to 3% that the municipality or county collects directly.

B. HOW FUNDS ARE DISPERSED

General Revenue Expenses

Each unit of local government, (i.e. The City of Camden), receiving 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. The City of Camden), 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).

Tourism Related Activities Special Fund (65%)

65% of the "Balance" is to be used for tourism related expenditures. The distribution of these funds **requires** an application process. The South Carolina Tourism Expenditure Review Commission oversees the operations of the State Accommodations Tax Program and has the authority to extend the time period for holding this special fund.

C. HOW FUNDS CAN BE SPENT

General Fund Special Funds (5%)

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 with ongoing tourism promotion program(s). Examples of allowable expenditures are media advertising, brochures, travel show displays, etc. All allowable expenditures must target a non- local audience.

Tourism Related Activities Special Funds (65%)

- Advertising and promotion of tourism so as to develop and increase tourist attendance through the generation of publicity that brings tourists into the City of Camden and boosts the local economy.
- Promotion of the arts and cultural events that brings tourists into the City of Camden and boosts the local economy.
- Operating visitor information centers (A-tax monies can only be used to pay the salary of a full time employee whose job is to assist tourists).

D. 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.

2. CITY OF CAMDEN ACCOMMODATIONS TAX COMMITTEE

A. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

As stated in the by-laws of the Accommodations Tax Committee, its purpose is “to make recommendations to the City Council on the expenditure of the state’s accommodations tax funds”. This is required by South Carolina Code Section 6-4-5 et seq. The Camden City Council is the agency which oversees the administration of the City Accommodations Tax Fund. The Accommodations Tax Committee advises the Camden City Council on tourism-related activities, strategies, and programs.

B. MISSION STATEMENT

To accomplish its purpose and to assist the City of Camden, the Accommodations Tax Committee has established the following mission statement.

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

C. GOALS

The City of Camden Accommodations Tax Committee has developed goals to accomplish its purpose in conjunction with the application of the Accommodation Tax Revenue Act. The committee will make recommendations annually in the areas of each of these goals.

- *Allocate the Accommodations Tax Funds to projects that directly promote tourism in the City of Camden and which will attract regional, state, and/or national audiences while reflecting unity of the tourism industry in the City of Camden and surrounding area.*
- *Establish the City of Camden as a center recognized for its events, arts, and cultural amenities.*
- *Support the expansion and diversification of tourism opportunities in the City of Camden and surrounding area.*

D. FUNDING PLAN

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

Accommodations Tax funding is a "reimbursement" program. Funding **cannot** be given for the "startup" monies for a project or event.

Formal applications must be submitted before any requests will be considered.

Events **MUST** attract regional, state, and/or national audiences.

Events can be a one time or ongoing project/event.

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

E. ALLOCATION PRIORITIES

The City of Camden Accommodations Tax Committee will use the following priorities in the allocating of the annual Accommodations Tax budget: The City of Camden Accommodations Tax Committee recognizes that the annual receipts are generated within the Camden city limits. For this reason, the Committee's first priority in allocating the funds will be for projects and activities **that directly promote tourism in or near the City of Camden.** Secondly, projects and activities must address/attract **state, regional, and/or national audiences.**

G. INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The City of Camden Accommodations Tax Committee **will not** consider funding projects or activities that contain any of the following criteria:

- Programs or activities that do not address regional tourist audiences.
- Programs or activities that do not promote tourism.
- Projects whose sole purpose is the solicitation of funds for donation to non-tourism related activities.
- Other projects as determined ineligible by the City of Camden Accommodations Tax Committee subject to approval by the Camden City Council.
- Travel costs to projects or activities.
- Certain items within projects that include but are not limited to postage, shipping costs, utility costs, sanitation services, medical services and other services as deemed ineligible by the State of SC Tourism Oversight Review Committee.

H. REIMBURSEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The City of Camden Accommodations Tax funding program is a “reimbursement” program. Funding cannot be given for the “startup” monies for a project or event. **All reimbursement documentation required in the Accommodations Tax Grantee Request for Reimbursement Final Reporting Form must be submitted to the Finance Director, City of Camden no later than June 30.**

3. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applicants should read and be familiar with the guidelines before submitting an application to the City of Camden Accommodations Tax Committee. Applications may be obtained by calling 803-432-2421, or by visiting

<https://experiencecamdensc.com/government/administration-finance/grants-funding/>

APPROVAL PROCESS

1. The City of Camden Accommodations Tax Committee will review applications and make their grant funding recommendations to the Director of Finance for the City of Camden.
2. The Director of Finance will then forward the list of proposed grant funding recommendations to the City of Camden City Manager.
3. The City Manager will then have the proposed funding awards placed on an upcoming Council regular agenda for review by the Camden City Council.
4. Once approved by the Camden City Council, applicants will be notified in writing of approval/denial. The amount of funds awarded to applicants will be determined based upon funds available and merits of the individual projects.