

2024

Accommodations Tax Funds Request Application

Organization Name: Lowcountry Gullah

Project/Event Name: Lowcountry Gullah

Executive Summary

Lowcountry Gullah was developed to promote and more importantly document the richly significant Gullah culture and its contributions to the United States. As a historical resource and cultural tourism influencer, Lowcountry Gullah provides a necessary and central link to the cultural elements that have been woven into the fabric of our society. With a primary focus on the traditional cultural strengths on Hilton Head Island, Lowcountry Gullah is the bridge between all of the Gullah/Geechee communities throughout the designated Gullah/Geechee Corridor, which includes the Sea Islands that span along the eastern seaboard to 35 miles inland from Wilmington, NC to St. Augustine, FL.

With a targeted focus on delivering educational information while stimulating interest in cultural and heritage tourism, the site www.lowcountrygullah.com serves as an interconnected resource between all Gullah/Geechee cultural assets. As a web based platform, it affords us with significant flexibility and creativity in the types of mediums, platforms and or vehicles used to distribute our cultural message.

Formed through the stories and history of the Gullah culture, the information comes from the community. Therefore, the sole purpose of Lowcountry Gullah, is giving back to the community. Lowcountry Gullah and the Lowcountry Gullah Foundation utilize a non-profit approach, so that any financial resources earned go directly back to the community in the form of historic land preservation, heirs property protection, cultural information and education.

The Gullah community and culture has been, in a lot of cases, dismissed and ignored, even though it's a significant part of America's historical story. Many Gullah are living disadvantaged lives, without some of the basic residential needs that many people take for granted, like sewer connections, fire hydrants and drainage. In addition, heirs property and resort development has caused the unique issue of a consistent loss of generational property. These issues are critically significant, causing gentrification and destroying the culture. As a result, our mission(s) are to preserve and document the culture, protect the culture's greatest asset, historic Gullah land for future generations, and provide a consistent voice for the community in conjunction with other Gullah cultural partners throughout the Gullah/Geechee Corridor.

The promotion and preservation of the culture is the primary focus of Lowcountry Gullah. In order to promote the culture, providing information, as well as educating people through creating genealogical connections to the Gullah is an important component to our success. Lowcountry Gullah provides genealogy resources, research assistance and guidance for individuals who are searching their ancestral roots, as well as looking for a cultural foundation.

Lowcountry Gullah fills a necessary and significant void as a central source and online location for Gullah information. People are starving for historic and cultural information, as well as a genealogic connection to their heritage on a local and global level. For the Black community, especially, having a tangible connection to the Gullah culture provides a priceless sense of identity. In a time where ancestry research and identifying

one's "self" is a significant part of our society, it's the perfect time to promote the Gullah culture and its relevance to our society to a broader audience.

In addition to being a source of information and promotion for all things Gullah, Lowcountry Gullah provides a direct connection to the culture by offering individuals and groups planning assistance for day and overnight tours throughout the community's cultural assets in Savannah, Hilton Head, St. Helena and Charleston.

Lowcountry Gullah continues to increase its local, national and international audience and has grown substantially in every state; including being accessed by 97% of the world. The worldwide audience clearly demonstrates a significant interest in Hilton Head and the island's Gullah culture.

Content creation is offered and delivered in several different ways (blog articles and newsletter - online, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn Threads, and Twitter; audio podcasts - available through top platforms (eg. Apple, Spotify, Amazon, Google, iHeart, Audible, TuneIn); video shorts and documentaries (TV, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok), so that it can reach a large and varied audience in whatever way they prefer to receive content. The podcast receives 2,000+ downloads a month, ranking it in the top 5% of all podcasts. The newsletter reaches 3,600+ subscribers with a monthly open rate of 36%, which is higher than the national average.

The audience is active and engaged in the content, spending an average of 5 minutes on 5 pages online per visit. The data and the site's growth clearly demonstrates that the audience has a significant interest in Hilton Head and the island's Gullah culture.

The website enhances and specifically drives tourism by highlighting and promoting the significant contributions that the culture and its people have made to our community and American society. By providing a window, as well as an informational resource into the culture, Lowcountry Gullah enables Hilton Head to be seen as a cultural, heritage and genealogical tourism destination with the backdrop of a great location to vacation that has great historic and cultural assets. By offering stories and information that describe various cultural locations, such as Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park, is intriguing, which in turn sparks a desire for travel. On a regular basis, viewers and followers ask for recommendations of specific places to see and stay, or they are excited about sharing their personal experiences from their own visit(s).

The specific type of tourism that Lowcountry Gullah focuses on can be described in several different terms or subcategories: Cultural Tourism, Heritage Tourism, Genealogical Tourism and DNA Tourism. Regardless of the category, they're described as people who are traveling to discover exactly who they are; they're searching for self-identification, authenticity, experiences (sometimes deeply personal) and to uncover a specific place that connects them directly to their lineage.

Heritage or cultural tourism is a \$171 Billion dollar industry and 81% of US tourists consider themselves as such. When cultural tourists travel, 56% of them include a cultural, historic, or heritage activity or event in their vacation. Millennials drive this type of tourism, with 76% desiring vacations that offer more engagement to authentic travel destinations. A cultural tourist is well educated and affluent 41%, travels and spends more 60%, stays longer overnight 77%, is curious and is interested in growing in their knowledge of diverse histories and cultures.

As interest and curiosity about genealogy and "where I come from" expands, more and more, people are realizing how entrenched the Gullah culture is into the fabric of our society. The attention and awareness that the culture has garnered has made heritage and cultural tourism become a popular influencer for vacation selection for affluent, active, informed and frequent travelers who are looking for authentic educational experiences. By tapping into an audience that's craving broader travel experiences and richer cultural

adventures, Lowcountry Gullah reaches a different type of tourist who has cultural needs and curiosity.

As a cultural influencer and through the promotion of the culture, Lowcountry Gullah is the bridge that connects all of the island's historical preservation and cultural assets. Site visitors receive a virtual tour of the area, including pictures that encourage further investigation and a sample of what one could expect upon visiting. Through articles, images and stories, Lowcountry Gullah highlights, cross-promotes and collaborates with the Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park, the Gullah Museum, the Heritage Library, the Coastal Discovery Museum, Ft. Howell, Lean Ensemble and the Gullah Heritage Tours. The success of Lowcountry Gullah is directly tied to the success and sustainability of the island's Gullah culture.

Since its inception, Lowcountry Gullah and the Lowcountry Gullah Foundation have continuously evolved based on expressed needs of site visitors and more importantly, the culture. As a valuable asset that's not only expanding its cultural identity and exposing its relevance, Lowcountry Gullah is redefining the culture for new generations and information seekers, while strengthening Gullah Geechee families and communities, so that they can discover sustainable generational support and generation

2024 Accommodations Tax Funds Request Application

Date Received: 09/01/2023

Time Received: 01:00 PM

By: Online Submittal

Applications will not be accepted if submitted after 4 pm on September 1, 2023

A. SUMMARY OF GRANT REQUEST:

ORGANIZATION NAME: Lowcountry Gullah

Project/Event Name: Lowcountry Gullah

Contact Name: Luana Graves Sellars

Title: Founder

Address: 21382 William Hilton Parkway, Hilton Head Island, SC 29925

Email Address: lowcountrygullah@gmail.com

Contact Phone: 843-715-3506

Event Date:

Event Location: www.lowcountrygullah.com

Total Budget: \$ 0.00

Grant Requested: \$100,000.00

Provide a brief summary on the intended use of the grant and how the money would be used. (100 words or less)

Lowcountry Gullah promotes Hilton Head and the Gullah culture using an online platform. With funding, Lowcountry Gullah can significantly increase its marketing and advertising reach in its social media presence, through events and other mediums. Expanded promotion of the island's rich history and valuable cultural assets through a variety of creative advertorial models that reach a wide ranging audience in several different ways. Lowcountry Gullah produces culturally focused articles, podcasts, short videos, informational snippets and documentaries that reach people through their preferred method(s) of obtaining information on several web-based outlets, which peaks interest and directly increases our tourism numbers.

How does the organization/event either drive tourism to Hilton Head Island or enhance the visitor experience on Hilton Head Island? How is this impact being measured? (100 words or less)

Lowcountry Gullah highlights and promotes the contributions that the Gullah culture and its people have made to our community and society. The website serves as an educational driver for all of the island's Gullah cultural assets, and an informational enhancer that informs tourists, including while on the island, about Hilton Head and its location in the heart of the Gullah/Geechee Corridor. As a resource, Lowcountry Gullah markets Hilton Head as a

cultural tourism destination while prompting visitors to include the Gullah culture as part of their vacation agenda.

Lowcountry Gullah's website reaches over 20,000+ visitors monthly and 30,000+ on social media.

A. Total Number of Physical Tourists Served: 43,628

A Tourist is considered a non-resident, traveling more than 50 miles to the Town of Hilton Head Island.

B. Total Number of Physical Visitors Served: 6,936

A Visitor is considered a non-resident, who travels 50 miles or less to visit the Town of Hilton Head Island.

C. Total Number of Physical Residents Served: 4,397

A Resident is considered any person who claims their property address within the limits of the Town of Hilton Head Island as their primary residence.

D. Total Number of Physical Patrons Served (A+B+C=D): 54,961

How was the Number of Visitors/Tourists Documented? (250 words or less)

This year, Lowcountry Gullah expanded its reach with direct contact to current and potential tourists through online, TV and documentary screenings, speaking engagements, and participating in island partnered events (Sankofa Nights, Mitchelville Play & TOHHI Anniversary), festivals (Gullah Celebration, Taste of Gullah, Fish & Grits Festival, Crescendo, Historic Holidays and Gullah Market) and Juneteenth(s) (Charlotte and Greenville), Gullah Festivals (Jacksonville, Wilmington and Beaufort), the Jubilee Festival of Black History & Culture (Columbia) and the African American Tourism Conference. Event participation of 11,333 calculated by clicker with 1,837 zipcodes captured.

By accessing physical tourists on and off island, several varieties of data, including demographic information, site visitors and users based on location, pageviews, interests, trends, searchable keywords and length of time spent on content, and email addresses are obtained.

MailChimp, Google Analytics, Jetpack, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn and Threads data statistics on content interest and viewership are monitored. Numbers demonstrate a highly interested and actively engaged audience, who comments & shares informational finds, while they explore new learning opportunities and an exciting cultural vacation destination.

In addition to numerical and demographic data, as an interactive platform, a significant amount of visitor comments are received. Comments regarding tourism interests and requests for suggestions on areas or attractions to visit are also compiled. Based on the interest expressed by the audience, information shared is utilized to create new content that is directly targeted towards popular interests.

Through participation in culturally focused events, we are afforded personal one on one interaction in a targeted environment with people who have an expressed interest. Website growth continues with 43,628 users, 109,126 pageviews with 15,000+ being specific HHI focused articles and information.

245 people attended the theatrical premiere of our documentary, Harriet Tubman | From the Railroad to a Spy as a Gullah Celebration event. The broadcast premiered in April on three different SC-ECTV channels. The story, tells of her time on Hilton Head, was seen by 24,876 SC households and continues streaming through the PBS websites SC and Michigan.

The Lowcountry Gullah Podcast has had over 10,000+ downloads to date. The YouTube Channel houses productions of cultural video shorts and documentaries to compliment the social media pages on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter and LinkedIn. Social media exposure and increased cross promotional vehicles, greatly expands the site's audience and reach, and establishes a diversified, savvy and engaged audience from its growing media footprint. Each platform reaches: Facebook 21,000+, Instagram 5,000+, YouTube 274,641+ video views/814 subscribers, LinkedIn 350 and 400 with Threads, Twitter, and TikTok combined.

The monthly newsletter has over 3,900+ actively engaged subscribers with 95% organic captures and only 2% unsubscribing. The average open rate is 36% and a click rate of 30% compared to national averages of 21%/10%.

Our active and engaged audience, of which 79% is under 54 years old, is very detailed. It includes age/gender, location (95% from the US), hobby/interest categories, new vs. returning visitors, mobile (81%) vs desktop/tablet (19%) use, and how the site's delivered, whether through social media, newsletter, organically accessed or searched.

B. DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS:

1. For state reporting purposes, give a brief description of the organization. (250 words or less)

Lowcountry Gullah was developed to promote and more importantly document the richly significant Gullah culture and its contributions to the US. As a historical resource and cultural tourism influencer, Lowcountry Gullah provides a necessary and central link to the cultural elements that have been woven into the fabric of our society. With a primary focus on the traditional cultural strengths on Hilton Head, Lowcountry Gullah is the bridge between all Gullah communities throughout the designated Gullah / Geechee Corridor, which includes all of the Sea Islands along the eastern seaboard.

With a focus on providing information and stimulating cultural tourism, the site www.lowcountrygullah.com serves as an interconnected resource between all Gullah cultural assets by highlighting the Gullah culture and its people through articles, podcasts, and documentaries that focus on the history and culture. As a result, the incredible amount of interest generated, has translated into a large national and international following, which has an ongoing demand for information, including requests for speaking engagements. Lowcountry Gullah fills the void as a vital online source for Gullah

information, which significantly fueled the expansion of its audience, in addition to creating a space for an online community and cultural dialogue.

At Lowcountry Gullah's core and through support and education of community-based issues, such as the preservation of culture and historic Gullah land, which is the culture's greatest asset. Through raising funds to protect, preserve and prevent the growing critical state that the land faces from being lost through delinquent taxes and heirs property issues.

2. Describe in detail how the requested grant funding would be used? *(250 words or less)*

Lowcountry Gullah is more than just a website. It's become a strong cultural influencer whose sole purpose is to bring the Gullah culture into a greater awareness worldwide. The site receives significant national and international exposure, which, with the addition of ATAX dollars, has been able to demonstrably improve its reach, international audience and ability to be a cultural influencer and promoter for HHI's culture.

Lowcountry Gullah plans to use ATAX dollars to strengthen and maintain its overall presence; including maintaining the site and design adding fresh imagery; the ability to develop new and relevant content; increase its Search Engine Optimization through GOOGLE Bing, advertising (podcast, traditional forms and social media) as well as the promotion of the site and content.

Offering descriptive printed information at events on the culture, website, podcast and visual mediums through documentaries and videos have proven to be a strong drivers for the site and social media.

ATAX dollars enable the site to not only stay updated and relevant, but improve its overall SEO placement. Adding dollars towards GOOGLE/BING enables Lowcountry Gullah to achieve higher advertising frequency and broader social media advertising on Facebook and Instagram, which in turn would continue to extend its worldwide audience and reach. In turn, specific HH focused information receives targeted attention.

The dollars would allow for the design and printing of collateral materials, which would be used to promote the site and culture at a variety of events and travel conferences, such as the African American Tourism Conference and other relevant organizations.

3. What impact would partial funding have on the activities, if full funding were not received? What would the organization change to account for partial funding? *(100 words or less)*

Partial ATAX funding would lessen the amount of national and international exposure and promotional advertising that Lowcountry Gullah could place, as well as its ability to

maintain itself as a Gullah resource that educates and empowers people across the country and around the world. Full ATAX funding would enable the site to expand its SEO by providing priority placement, as well as to broaden its overall social media marketing/advertising presence. The greater placement priority that the site is afforded, translates directly into a higher amount of searchable access that the site achieves, thus delivering greater exposure to Hilton Head.

4. What is expected economic impact and benefit to the Island's tourism? (100 words or less)

Lowcountry Gullah's strong presence and following is recognized and shared internationally. As interest and curiosity about genealogy and "where I come from" expands, learning how entrenched the Gullah culture is into the fabric of our society, sometimes affects people personally. The attention and awareness that the culture has garnered makes heritage and cultural tourism a popular influencer for vacation selection by affluent, active, informed and frequent travelers who are looking for deeper and authentic educational and historical knowledge. Tapping into an audience that's craving broader travel experiences and richer cultural adventures, Lowcountry Gullah reaches that different and sought after tourist.

5. In order to comply with the State's Tourism Expenditure Review Committee annual reporting requirements, **please classify your current grant request into the following authorized categories:**

<p>1 - Destination Advertising/Promotion <i>Advertising and promotion of tourism so as to develop and increase tourist attendance through the generation of publicity.</i></p>	<p>100 %</p>
<p>2 - Tourism-Related Events <i>Promotion of the arts and cultural events.</i></p>	<p>0 %</p>
<p>3 - Tourism-Related Facilities <i>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.</i></p>	<p>0 %</p>
<p>4 - Tourism-Related Public Services <i>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 tourist. Also includes public facilities such as restrooms, dressing rooms, parks and parking lots.</i></p>	<p>0 %</p>
<p>5 - Tourist Public Transportation <i>Tourist shuttle transportation.</i></p>	<p>0 %</p>
<p>6 - Waterfront Erosion/Control/Repair <i>Control and repair of waterfront erosion.</i></p>	<p>0 %</p>

7 - Operation of Visitor Information Centers
Operating visitor information centers.

0 %

Total: 100 %

6. If not covered elsewhere in the application, please describe (a) how the organization will collaborate with other organizations to enhance tourism efforts, and (b) provide a venue or service not otherwise available to visitors to the Town of Hilton Head Island. (250 words or less)

As a cultural influencer and through the promotion of Hilton Head's Gullah culture, Lowcountry Gullah is the bridge that connects all of the island's cultural and historic preservation assets.

Through an online platform, site visitors and social media followers receive a varied virtual tour of the area, including pictures that encourage further investigation and a sample of what one could expect/do upon visiting. The curiosity that the information develops frequently prompts tourists to seek recommendations for lodging and/or places to go and experience. Utilizing the instantaneous dialogue that Social Media provides plays a significant part in enabling tourists to quickly see and experience cultural assets that interest them.

By continuously sharing information through the podcast, articles, imagery, informational videos, documentaries, and events, Lowcountry Gullah highlights, cross-promotes and collaborates with the: Lean Ensemble, Land Trust, Mitchelville Freedom Park, the Gullah Museum, NIBCAA, the Gullah Heritage Tours, Coastal Discovery, and the Heritage Library by providing visitors a unique and trendy view into the culture that had not existed previously. Collaborating on cultural projects, videos and documentaries, providing speaking engagements and classes, as well as promotion and participation in local cultural events, are just a few of the ways that we have been able to further our common goals.

With our broad exposure, we've created an active online community that offers the culture a specifically targeted space and voice. As such, the growth and ultimately our success, is directly tied to the sustainability of the island's Gullah culture and cross promoting with other organizations.

7. Additional comments. (250 words or less)

Lowcountry Gullah's primary mission is preserving and protecting Gullah culture. In order to be a catalyst of a sustained Gullah culture, educating and informing is at our core. Through documentation, education and information, the richness of the culture is being

preserved and promoted, however, in addition to preservation, there needs to be protection. A significant element in ensuring the survival of the culture includes protecting its greatest asset, historic generational land might have been originally purchased by the formally enslaved or the first generation after the civil war.

At one point, 3,500 acres on Hilton Head was Gullah owned. Today, that number is around 700 acres. The status of Gullah land is at a critical state, because it has been quietly eroding as a result of increasing development and annual tax sales. By providing informational and educational exposure to heirs' property issues and its legal and financial complications, through fundraising, Lowcountry Gullah's goal is to be beneficial to the community as a whole.

Structurally, Lowcountry Gullah's sister Foundation provides a funding source for the community to draw upon to support its critical issues such as: unravelling heirs' property issues, maintaining Gullah land ownership by preventing loss through property taxes, as well as being a relevant source of cultural communication and connection throughout the community. There are a significant number of needs and we address them as they develop and evolve. Through this work, Lowcountry Gullah and the Foundation, not only highlight and promote the culture, but protect, strengthen and preserve it.

C. FUNDING:

1. Please describe how the organization is currently funded. (100 words or less)

Lowcountry Gullah's popularity has led to interests/requests for Gullah art and cultural products, which provides a revenue stream, through our online store, the Lowcountry Gullah Market. In addition to online, we offer cultural products at our event and festival booths. With the addition of ATAX dollars, Lowcountry Gullah has significantly increased its marketing and advertising reach and exposure online and on social media.

Continuous efforts seeking local, state, and national grants, and other sponsorship opportunities are an ongoing priority. The financial support that they afford assists in keeping Lowcountry Gullah viable operationally and able to expand its reach and exposure.

2. Please also estimate, as a percentage, the source of the organization's total annual funding.

Government Sources

Private Contributions, Donations
50 and Grants

10	Corporate Support, Sponsors	5	Membership, Dues, Subscriptions
	Ticket Sales, or Sales		Other
35	and Services		

3. Has the organization requested other ATAX or any other funding from other public sources or organizations?

Yes No

If so, please list top 3 sources and amounts.

D. FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Fiscal Year Disclosure: Start Month: **January** End Month: **December**

Financial Statement Requirements:

1. The upcoming fiscal year's operating budget for the organization.

Budget Provided: **Yes**

2. The previous two fiscal years and current year-to-date profit and loss reports for the organization.

Current fiscal year Profit Loss Report Provided: **Yes**

Previous fiscal year Profit Loss Reports Provided:

2022- Previous FY 1

2021- Previous FY 2

3. The previous two fiscal years and current year-to-date balance sheets.

Current fiscal year Balance Sheet Provided: **Yes**

Previous fiscal year Balance Sheets Provided:

2023 - Previous FY 1

4. The previous two years and current year IRS Form 990 or 990T.

Current year IRS Form 990 or 990T Provided: **Yes**

Previous IRS Form 990 or 990T Years Provided:

2021 - Previous FY 2

2021 - Previous FY 1

E. FINANCIAL GUARANTEES AND PROCEDURES:

1. Provide a copy of the **official minutes** wherein the organization approves the submission of this application.

An official set of minutes have been attached to this application.

2. Indicate whether your organization follows Town procurement guidelines or has its own procurement guidelines which are utilized and followed in the expenditure of ATAX grant funds.

- Follow Town procurement guidelines
- Utilize and follow organization's own procurement guidelines
- Our organization does not have or follow procurement guidelines

F. MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS:

If you received 2022 or 2023 HHI ATAX funds

1. List any ATAX award amounts received in 2022 and/or 2023.

2021	\$75,000.00
2022	\$75,000.00

2. How were the ATAX funds used? To what extent were the objectives achieved? The ATAX Effectiveness Measurement spreadsheet available in the application portal will show the numerics. Use the space below for verbal comments. (200 words or less)

2023 ATAX funds were used to advertise and promote HH and the Gullah culture through a variety of very successful online options and in person opportunities that not only grew the audience, but established a clear focus on island culture and specific and targeted information, like stories about Historic Neighborhoods. Consistent fresh content creation includes written articles, a podcast, stories, snippets of information (short informative pieces that inform and tease the reader to discover more, leading them to the site), and the production of video shorts and documentaries (i.e. writing, research, voiceovers, editing and storyline development).

With the website as its foundation, each element contains HH cultural information and images that are produced and shared with followers. Contents are shared during face to face interactions, posted online, the newsletter, and advertised to an audience larger than our core and shared through their contacts.

To date, in addition to high monthly website traffic, broadcasting to 27,636 TV households, 3,700 YouTube watch hours & 274,617 video plays, social media received

2,631,786 impressions, 993,952+ people reached, 300,000+ post engagements, 8,333 video plays and 51,168+ link click throughs, 36,922 post reactions, 17,345 facebook direct to website landing pageviews, 1,008 comments and 5,094 post shares.

3. What impact did this have on the success of the organization/event and how did it benefit the community? (200 words or less)

ATAX dollars has a tremendous impact on the accelerated and continuous growth of Lowcountry Gullah. The funding enables us to maintain a consistent online presence and produce and deliver fresh content for a very active and engaged audience who responds, shares and discusses the content. The funding is clearly attributed to an overall increase in new users and in online sessions.

The site continues to maintain national coverage and rose from 140 to 149 countries. Local and national visitors have increased annually and the average viewer reads 5 pages/session.

Social Media also experienced tremendous success. Facebook followers increased to 22,000+ to date; Instagram 5,000+. Additional social media platforms (LinkedIn, Twitter, Threads, TikTok and YouTube) grew, broadened and diversified our audience's reach with additional subscribers, viewers and followers.

Currently, in production is a documentary on the US Colored Troops in collaboration with the Heritage Library. Offering content like this tells untold perspectives of the Hilton Head story, delivering it in a uniquely different way that significantly enhances the historic value of the island for residents and current and potential tourists.

The written, oral and visual content that Lowcountry Gullah provides is trendy alternative to traditional methods of receiving travel and island cultural information.

4. How does the organization measure the effectiveness of both the overall activity and of individual programs? (200 words or less)

Lowcountry Gullah measures its effectiveness through the awareness, levels of interest and incredible growth that it generates. Utilizing the data services: Google Analytics, Jetpack, Instagram and Facebook Audience Data, we track content interest, growth and audience usage weekly. As a result, we're able to understand which post or video

receives greater attention, feedback and focus; and based on that, we can tailor and target the specific audience segments and topics that have the highest interest or amount of engagement.

Based on the data, the site delivers an audience of Adults 18-65+ and specifically 7%-18-24; 10%-25-34, 16%-35-44; 19%-45-54; 24%-54-64, 22%-65+, with a gender split of 37% Men/63% Women.

87% of the viewers are in the US with the top 10 states being: NC, SC, FL, GA, TX, CA, NY, VA, WA, and PA. The top 10 US cities: New York, Charlotte, Washington DC, Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, Raleigh, Dallas and Houston.

13% of users are from 149 countries, counting the top 10 as: Canada, United Kingdom, France, Ireland, India, Sweden, Germany, Australia, China and Indonesia.

In comparing the previous year(s) data, the states and international growth increased, demonstrating significant international tourist interest in Gullah cultural programming and information.

G. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Provide an executive summary using the "ATAX Effectiveness Measurement" form provided via the link on the left, or by utilizing the text area provided below to report uses of the organization's prior ATAX grant, if applicable. If creating your own format, please refer to the "ATAX Effectiveness Measurement" form and use the criteria as a guideline in developing your executive summary below. (1300 words or less)

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Lowcountry Gullah and the Lowcountry Gullah Foundation utilize a non-profit approach, so that any financial resources earned go directly back to the community in the form of historic land preservation, heirs property protection, cultural information and education.

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In addition to being a source of information and promotion for all things Gullah, Lowcountry Gullah provides a direct connection to the culture by offering individuals and groups planning assistance for day and overnight tours throughout the community's cultural assets in Savannah, Hilton Head, St. Helena and Charleston.

Lowcountry Gullah continues to increase its local, national and international audience and has grown substantially in every state; including being accessed by 97% of the world. The worldwide audience clearly demonstrates a significant interest in Hilton Head and the island's Gullah culture.

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The audience is active and engaged in the content, spending an average of 5 minutes on 5 pages online per visit. The data and the site's growth clearly demonstrates that the audience has a significant interest in Hilton Head and the island's Gullah culture.

The website enhances and specifically drives tourism by highlighting and promoting the significant contributions that the culture and its people have made to our community and American society. By providing a window, as well as an informational resource into the culture, Lowcountry Gullah enables Hilton Head to be seen as a cultural, heritage and genealogical tourism destination with the backdrop of a great location to vacation that has great historic and cultural assets. By offering stories and information that describe various cultural locations, such as Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park, is intriguing, which in turn sparks a desire for travel. On a regular basis, viewers and followers ask for recommendations of specific places to see and stay, or they are excited about sharing their personal experiences from their own visit(s).

The specific type of tourism that Lowcountry Gullah focuses on can be described in several different terms or subcategories: Cultural Tourism, Heritage Tourism, Genealogical Tourism and DNA Tourism. Regardless of the category, they're described as people who are traveling to discover exactly who they are; they're searching for self-identification, authenticity, experiences (sometimes deeply personal) and to uncover a specific place that connects them directly to their lineage.

Heritage or cultural tourism is a \$171 Billion dollar industry and 81% of US tourists consider themselves as such. When cultural tourists travel, 56% of them include a cultural, historic, or heritage activity or event in their vacation. Millennials drive this type of tourism, with 76% desiring vacations that offer more engagement to authentic travel destinations. A cultural tourist is well educated and affluent 41%, travels and spends more 60%, stays longer overnight 77%, is curious and is interested in growing in their knowledge of diverse histories and cultures.

As interest and curiosity about genealogy and "where I come from" expands, more and more, people are realizing how entrenched the Gullah culture is into the fabric of our society. The attention and awareness that the culture has garnered has made heritage and cultural tourism become a popular influencer for vacation selection for affluent, active, informed and frequent travelers who are looking for authentic educational experiences. By tapping into an audience that's craving broader travel experiences and richer cultural adventures, Lowcountry Gullah reaches a different type of tourist who has cultural needs and curiosity.

As a cultural influencer and through the promotion of the culture, Lowcountry Gullah is the bridge that connects all of the island's historical preservation and cultural assets. Site visitors receive a virtual tour of the area, including pictures that encourage further investigation and a sample of what one could expect upon visiting. Through articles, images and stories, Lowcountry Gullah highlights, cross-promotes and collaborates with the Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park, the Gullah Museum, the Heritage Library, the Coastal Discovery Museum, Ft. Howell, Lean Ensemble and the Gullah Heritage Tours. The success of Lowcountry Gullah is directly tied to the success and sustainability of the island's Gullah culture.

Since its inception, Lowcountry Gullah and the Lowcountry Gullah Foundation have continuously evolved based on expressed needs of site visitors and more importantly, the culture. As a valuable asset that's not only expanding its cultural identity and exposing its relevance, Lowcountry Gullah is redefining the culture for new generations and information seekers, while strengthening Gullah Geechee families and communities, so that they can discover sustainable generational support and generation

Signature: Luana Graves Sellars

Title/Position: Founder

Mailing Address: 21832 WILLIAM HILTON PKWY, HILTON HEAD, SC 29925

Email Address: lowcountrygullah@gmail.com

Office Phone Number: 843-715-3506

Home Phone Number: 954-770-5826

Lowcountry Gullah Operational Budget - 2023

	<u>Annual</u> <u>Itemized Cost</u>	<u>Annual</u> <u>Expense</u>
Operational Costs		\$8,100.00
Office Supplies	\$200.00	
South State Banking Fees - Merchant	\$500.00	
Merchant Account Fees - Square	\$500.00	
Utilities		
Electric	\$2,000.00	
Water	\$1,200.00	
Landline / Internet	\$2,500.00	
Cellphone	\$1,200.00	
Advertising		\$55,000.00
Bing	\$5,000.00	
Google	\$15,000.00	
Overcast	\$5,000.00	
Facebook/Instagram/YouTube/Twitter	\$30,000.00	
Content Design		\$80,000.00
Snippets/Social Media/Newsletter	\$25,000.00	
Long/Short - Video Production	\$25,000.00	
Artwork	\$5,000.00	
Site Content / Writing / Images	\$25,000.00	
Marketing		\$25,000.00
Social Media	\$15,000.00	
Pull Up Posters	\$500.00	
Collateral Material Design/Printing	\$5,000.00	
Website		\$7,000.00
Domain Hosting - Go Daddy	\$1,000.00	
Monthly Upload / Site Maintenance	\$6,000.00	
Newsletter		\$1,200.00
MailChimp	\$1,200.00	
Events		\$10,000.00
Booths	\$5,000.00	
Travel & Expenses	\$5,000.00	
Outreach		\$1,000.00
Miscellaneous	\$1,000.00	
Total 2023 Budget		\$187,300.00

Lowcountry Gullah
Profit & Loss
January 1 through August 29, 2023

	<u>Jan 1 - Aug 29, 23</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Direct Public Support	105,899.00
Donations	28.00
Lowcountry Gullah Market	20,925.39
Newsletter Subscriptions	1,257.89
Other Types of Income	3,028.02
Program Income	1,548.54
Uncategorized Income	215.40
	<hr/>
Total Income	132,902.24
Expense	
Advertising & Promotion	6,710.69
Business Expenses	2,551.60
Contract Services	11,830.99
Event Booths	4,018.39
LCG Market Inventory	4,367.36
Lowcountry Gullah Market Oper	1,187.40
Marketing	0.00
Newsletter	511.56
Operations	6,655.50
Other Types of Expenses	19,117.12
Production Expense	10,323.19
Research	108.00
Social Media Advertising	5,107.19
Travel and Meetings	3,776.57
Uncategorized Expenses	183.84
Venue Rental	654.72
Website Maintenece	818.54
	<hr/>
Total Expense	77,922.66
	<hr/>
Net Ordinary Income	54,979.58
	<hr/>
Net Income	<u><u>54,979.58</u></u>

Lowcountry Gullah
Profit & Loss
January 1 through August 29, 2022

	<u>Jan 1 - Aug 29, 22</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Direct Public Grants	76,310.56
Direct Public Support	1,000.00
Donations	200.00
Lowcountry Gullah Market	13,090.45
Other Types of Income	1,837.58
Program Income	75.17
	<hr/>
Total Income	92,513.76
Expense	
Advertising & Promotion	12,176.92
Business Expenses	6,896.14
Contract Services	7,442.40
Event Booths	3,042.97
LCG Market Inventory	8,065.02
Lowcountry Gullah Market Oper	3,711.47
Marketing	4,715.00
Newsletter	108.12
Operations	2,852.74
Production Expense	7,083.58
Research	230.30
Social Media Advertising	6,724.77
Travel and Meetings	4,506.07
Uncategorized Expenses	3,044.24
Venue Rental	1,250.00
Website Maintenece	665.64
	<hr/>
Total Expense	72,515.38
	<hr/>
Net Ordinary Income	19,998.38
	<hr/>
Net Income	19,998.38

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08/28/21

Accrual Basis

Lowcountry Gullah
Profit & Loss
January 1 through August 28, 2021

	<u>Jan 1 - Aug 28, 21</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Direct Public Support	93,289.68
Lowcountry Gullah Market	2,856.63
Other Types of Income	8,105.21
Total Income	<u>104,251.52</u>
Expense	
Business Expenses	2,261.13
Contract Services	23,416.12
Marketing	2,000.00
Operations	-383.29
Production Expense	6,350.00
Reconciliation Discrepancies	262.46
Social Media Advertising	19,800.15
Website Maintenece	836.40
Total Expense	<u>54,542.97</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>49,708.55</u>
Net Income	<u><u>49,708.55</u></u>

12:41 PM
08/29/22
Accrual Basis

Lowcountry Gullah
Balance Sheet
As of August 29, 2022

	<u>Aug 29, 22</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	212,542.32
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>212,542.32</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	7,564.08
Equity	204,978.24
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>212,542.32</u>

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08/29/23
Accrual Basis

Lowcountry Gullah
Balance Sheet
As of August 29, 2023

	<u>Aug 29, 23</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	285,427.50
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>285,427.50</u></u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	29,707.48
Equity	255,720.02
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u><u>285,427.50</u></u>

Under section 501(c), 527, or 4947(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code (except private foundations)

Do not enter social security numbers on this form, as it may be made public.

Go to www.irs.gov/Form990EZ for instructions and the latest information.

Open to Public Inspection

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

A For the 2022 calendar year, or tax year beginning 01/01/2022 **and ending** 12/31/2022

B Check if applicable:
 Address change
 Name change
 Initial return
 Final return/terminated
 Amended return
 Application pending

C Name of organization
LOWCOUNTRY GULLAH

Number and street (or P.O. box if mail is not delivered to street address) Room/suite
21832 William Hilton Parkway

City or town, state or province, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code
Hilton Head, SC 29925

D Employer identification number
84-2343316

E Telephone number
843-715-3506

F Group Exemption Number

G Accounting Method: Cash Accrual Other (specify): _____

H Check if the organization is not required to attach Schedule B (Form 990).

I Website: www.lowcountrygullah.com

J Tax-exempt status (check only one) - 501(c)(3) 501(c) (4) (insert no.) 4947(a)(1) or 527

K Form of organization: Corporation Trust Association Other: _____

L Add lines 5b, 6c, and 7b to line 9 to determine gross receipts. If gross receipts are \$200,000 or more, or if total assets (Part II, column (B)) are \$500,000 or more, file Form 990 instead of Form 990-EZ \$ **111,983**

Part I Revenue, Expenses, and Changes in Net Assets or Fund Balances (see the instructions for Part I)
 Check if the organization used Schedule O to respond to any question in this Part I

		1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6a	6b	6c	6d	7a	7b	7c	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		
Revenue	1 Contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts received																													75,000	
	2 Program service revenue including government fees and contracts																													0	
	3 Membership dues and assessments																														0
	4 Investment income																													0	
	5a Gross amount from sale of assets other than inventory						0																								0
	b Less: cost or other basis and sales expenses						0																								0
	c Gain or (loss) from sale of assets other than inventory (subtract line 5b from line 5a)								0																						0
	6 Gaming and fundraising events:																														
	a Gross income from gaming (attach Schedule G if greater than \$15,000)									0																					0
	b Gross income from fundraising events (not including \$ <u>0</u> of contributions from fundraising events reported on line 1) (attach Schedule G if the sum of such gross income and contributions exceeds \$15,000)										4,420																				4,420
c Less: direct expenses from gaming and fundraising events											1,250																			1,250	
d Net income or (loss) from gaming and fundraising events (add lines 6a and 6b and subtract line 6c)																														3,170	
7a Gross sales of inventory, less returns and allowances																														32,563	
b Less: cost of goods sold																														14,065	
c Gross profit or (loss) from sales of inventory (subtract line 7b from line 7a)																														18,498	
8 Other revenue (describe in Schedule O)																														0	
9 Total revenue. Add lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5c, 6d, 7c, and 8																														96,668	
Expenses	10 Grants and similar amounts paid (list in Schedule O)																													0	
	11 Benefits paid to or for members																													0	
	12 Salaries, other compensation, and employee benefits																													0	
	13 Professional fees and other payments to independent contractors																														25,991
	14 Occupancy, rent, utilities, and maintenance																														354
	15 Printing, publications, postage, and shipping																														2,028
	16 Other expenses (describe in Schedule O)																														0
17 Total expenses. Add lines 10 through 16																														28,373	
Net Assets	18 Excess or (deficit) for the year (subtract line 17 from line 9)																													68,295	
	19 Net assets or fund balances at beginning of year (from line 27, column (A)) (must agree with end-of-year figure reported on prior year's return)																													104,217	
	20 Other changes in net assets or fund balances (explain in Schedule O)																													5,760	
21 Net assets or fund balances at end of year. Combine lines 18 through 20																														178,272	

Part II Balance Sheets (see the instructions for Part II)

Check if the organization used Schedule O to respond to any question in this Part II

	(A) Beginning of year	(B) End of year
22 Cash, savings, and investments	7,801	22 17,295
23 Land and buildings	0	23 0
24 Other assets (describe in Schedule O)	105,315	24 231,179
25 Total assets	113,116	25 248,474
26 Total liabilities (describe in Schedule O)	8,899	26 70,202
27 Net assets or fund balances (line 27 of column (B) must agree with line 21)	104,217	27 178,272

Part III Statement of Program Service Accomplishments (see the instructions for Part III)

Check if the organization used Schedule O to respond to any question in this Part III

What is the organization's primary exempt purpose? See Schedule O, Statement 2

Expenses
(Required for section 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations; optional for others.)

Describe the organization's program service accomplishments for each of its three largest program services, as measured by expenses. In a clear and concise manner, describe the services provided, the number of persons benefited, and other relevant information for each program title.

28 <u>Lowcountry Gullah is a website based nonprofit that documents the rich history, culture and traditions of Gullah Geechee people. Through articles, documentaries and a podcast, Lowcountry Gullah educates and</u> <u>(Continued on Schedule O, Statement 3)</u> (Grants \$ <u>0</u>) If this amount includes foreign grants, check here <input type="checkbox"/>	28a	130,779
29 _____ _____ (Grants \$ _____) If this amount includes foreign grants, check here <input type="checkbox"/>	29a	
30 _____ _____ (Grants \$ _____) If this amount includes foreign grants, check here <input type="checkbox"/>	30a	
31 Other program services (describe in Schedule O) _____ (Grants \$ <u>0</u>) If this amount includes foreign grants, check here <input type="checkbox"/>	31a	0
32 Total program service expenses (add lines 28a through 31a)	32	130,779

Part IV List of Officers, Directors, Trustees, and Key Employees (list each one even if not compensated—see the instructions for Part IV)

Check if the organization used Schedule O to respond to any question in this Part IV

(a) Name and title	(b) Average hours per week devoted to position	(c) Reportable compensation (Forms W-2/1099-MISC/1099-NEC) (if not paid, enter -0-)	(d) Health benefits, contributions to employee benefit plans, and deferred compensation	(e) Estimated amount of other compensation
<u>Herbert Ford</u> <u>Member</u>	2.00	0	0	0
<u>Fred Hamilton</u> <u>Member</u>	2.00	0	0	0
<u>Melvin Campbell</u> <u>Member</u>	2.00	0	0	0
<u>Luana Graves Sellars</u> <u>Founder Member</u>	50.00	29,874	0	0

Part V Other Information (Note the Schedule A and personal benefit contract statement requirements in the instructions for Part V.) Check if the organization used Schedule O to respond to any question in this Part V

33 Did the organization engage in any significant activity not previously reported to the IRS? If "Yes," provide a detailed description of each activity in Schedule O
34 Were any significant changes made to the organizing or governing documents? If "Yes," attach a conformed copy of the amended documents if they reflect a change to the organization's name. Otherwise, explain the change on Schedule O. See instructions
35a Did the organization have unrelated business gross income of \$1,000 or more during the year from business activities (such as those reported on lines 2, 6a, and 7a, among others)?
35b If "Yes" to line 35a, has the organization filed a Form 990-T for the year? If "No," provide an explanation in Schedule O
35c Was the organization a section 501(c)(4), 501(c)(5), or 501(c)(6) organization subject to section 6033(e) notice, reporting, and proxy tax requirements during the year? If "Yes," complete Schedule C, Part III
36 Did the organization undergo a liquidation, dissolution, termination, or significant disposition of net assets during the year? If "Yes," complete applicable parts of Schedule N
37a Enter amount of political expenditures, direct or indirect, as described in the instructions
37b Did the organization file Form 1120-POL for this year?
38a Did the organization borrow from, or make any loans to, any officer, director, trustee, or key employee; or were any such loans made in a prior year and still outstanding at the end of the tax year covered by this return?
38b If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part II, and enter the total amount involved
39 Section 501(c)(7) organizations. Enter:
39a Initiation fees and capital contributions included on line 9
39b Gross receipts, included on line 9, for public use of club facilities
40a Section 501(c)(3) organizations. Enter amount of tax imposed on the organization during the year under:
40a section 4911; section 4912; section 4955:
40b Section 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and 501(c)(29) organizations. Did the organization engage in any section 4958 excess benefit transaction during the year, or did it engage in an excess benefit transaction in a prior year that has not been reported on any of its prior Forms 990 or 990-EZ? If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part I
40c Section 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and 501(c)(29) organizations. Enter amount of tax imposed on organization managers or disqualified persons during the year under sections 4912, 4955, and 4958
40d Section 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and 501(c)(29) organizations. Enter amount of tax on line 40c reimbursed by the organization
40e All organizations. At any time during the tax year, was the organization a party to a prohibited tax shelter transaction? If "Yes," complete Form 8886-T
41 List the states with which a copy of this return is filed: SC
42a The organization's books are in care of: Luana Graves Sellars Telephone no. 843-715-3506
Located at: 21832 William Hilton Parkway, Hilton Head, SC 29925 ZIP + 4 29925
42b At any time during the calendar year, did the organization have an interest in or a signature or other authority over a financial account in a foreign country (such as a bank account, securities account, or other financial account)? If "Yes," enter the name of the foreign country: See the instructions for exceptions and filing requirements for FinCEN Form 114, Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR).
42c At any time during the calendar year, did the organization maintain an office outside the United States? If "Yes," enter the name of the foreign country:
43 Section 4947(a)(1) nonexempt charitable trusts filing Form 990-EZ in lieu of Form 1041 - Check here and enter the amount of tax-exempt interest received or accrued during the tax year 43
44a Did the organization maintain any donor advised funds during the year? If "Yes," Form 990 must be completed instead of Form 990-EZ
44b Did the organization operate one or more hospital facilities during the year? If "Yes," Form 990 must be completed instead of Form 990-EZ
44c Did the organization receive any payments for indoor tanning services during the year?
44d If "Yes" to line 44c, has the organization filed a Form 720 to report these payments? If "No," provide an explanation in Schedule O
45a Did the organization have a controlled entity within the meaning of section 512(b)(13)?
45b Did the organization receive any payment from or engage in any transaction with a controlled entity within the meaning of section 512(b)(13)? If "Yes," Form 990 and Schedule R may need to be completed instead of Form 990-EZ. See instructions

	Yes	No
46 Did the organization engage, directly or indirectly, in political campaign activities on behalf of or in opposition to candidates for public office? If "Yes," complete Schedule C, Part I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Part VI Section 501(c)(3) Organizations Only

All section 501(c)(3) organizations must answer questions 47–49b and 52, and complete the tables for lines 50 and 51.

Check if the organization used Schedule O to respond to any question in this Part VI

	Yes	No
47 Did the organization engage in lobbying activities or have a section 501(h) election in effect during the tax year? If "Yes," complete Schedule C, Part II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48 Is the organization a school as described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(ii)? If "Yes," complete Schedule E	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49a Did the organization make any transfers to an exempt non-charitable related organization?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b If "Yes," was the related organization a section 527 organization?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

50 Complete this table for the organization's five highest compensated employees (other than officers, directors, trustees, and key employees) who each received more than \$100,000 of compensation from the organization. If there is none, enter "None."

(a) Name and title of each employee	(b) Average hours per week devoted to position	(c) Reportable compensation (Forms W-2/1099-MISC/1099-NEC)	(d) Health benefits, contributions to employee benefit plans, and deferred compensation	(e) Estimated amount of other compensation
None				

f Total number of other employees paid over \$100,000 _____

51 Complete this table for the organization's five highest compensated independent contractors who each received more than \$100,000 of compensation from the organization. If there is none, enter "None."

(a) Name and business address of each independent contractor	(b) Type of service	(c) Compensation
None		

d Total number of other independent contractors each receiving over \$100,000 _____

52 Did the organization complete Schedule A? **Note:** All section 501(c)(3) organizations must attach a completed Schedule A **Yes** **No**

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this return, including accompanying schedules and statements, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete. Declaration of preparer (other than officer) is based on all information of which preparer has any knowledge.

Sign Here	Signature of officer	Date			
	Luana Graves Sellars, Founder				
	Type or print name and title				
Paid Preparer Use Only	Print/Type preparer's name	Preparer's signature	Date	Check <input type="checkbox"/> if self-employed	PTIN
	Firm's name		Firm's EIN		
	Firm's address		Phone no.		

May the IRS discuss this return with the preparer shown above? See instructions **Yes** **No**

**SCHEDULE O
(Form 990)**

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Supplemental Information to Form 990 or 990-EZ

Complete to provide information for responses to specific questions on
Form 990 or 990-EZ or to provide any additional information.

Attach to Form 990 or Form 990-EZ.

Go to www.irs.gov/Form990 for the latest information.

OMB No. 1545-0047

2022

**Open to Public
Inspection**

Name of the organization

LOWCOUNTRY GULLAH

Employer identification number

84-2343316

Form 990-EZ, Part I, Line 20 - Rollover amount

Form 990-EZ, Part II, Line 24 - Intellectual Property - articles, documentaries

Form 990-EZ, Part II, Line 26 - Production expenses

Reasonable Cause Explanations

Explanation

Extension approved

Primary Exempt Purpose

Primary Exempt Purpose

Cultural resource that documents and informs individuals about Gullah Geechee traditions, history and culture.

First Program Service Accomplishments Description

Description

informs about the significant contributions that the people and culture have made to the founding of the United States.

Under section 501(c), 527, or 4947(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code (except private foundations)

- ▶ Do not enter social security numbers on this form, as it may be made public.
- ▶ Go to www.irs.gov/Form990EZ for instructions and the latest information.

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

A For the 2021 calendar year, or tax year beginning 01/01/2021 **and ending** 12/31/2021

B Check if applicable: <input type="checkbox"/> Address change <input type="checkbox"/> Name change <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initial return <input type="checkbox"/> Final return/terminated <input type="checkbox"/> Amended return <input type="checkbox"/> Application pending	C Name of organization LOWCOUNTRY GULLAH		D Employer identification number 84-2343316
	Number and street (or P.O. box if mail is not delivered to street address)	Room/suite	E Telephone number 843-715-3506
	90 Gloucester Road 1204 City or town, state or province, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code Hilton Head, SC 29928		F Group Exemption Number ▶

G Accounting Method: Cash Accrual Other (specify) ▶ _____

I Website: ▶ www.lowcountrygullah.com

J Tax-exempt status (check only one) – 501(c)(3) 501(c) (4) ◀ (insert no.) 4947(a)(1) or 527

K Form of organization: Corporation Trust Association Other _____

L Add lines 5b, 6c, and 7b to line 9 to determine gross receipts. If gross receipts are \$200,000 or more, or if total assets (Part II, column (B)) are \$500,000 or more, file Form 990 instead of Form 990-EZ ▶ \$ **184,679**

Part I Revenue, Expenses, and Changes in Net Assets or Fund Balances (see the instructions for Part I)
 Check if the organization used Schedule O to respond to any question in this Part I

Revenue	1	Contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts received	1	179,935
	2	Program service revenue including government fees and contracts	2	0
	3	Membership dues and assessments	3	0
	4	Investment income	4	0
	5a	Gross amount from sale of assets other than inventory	5a	0
	b	Less: cost or other basis and sales expenses	5b	0
	c	Gain or (loss) from sale of assets other than inventory (subtract line 5b from line 5a)	5c	0
	6	Gaming and fundraising events:		
	a	Gross income from gaming (attach Schedule G if greater than \$15,000)	6a	0
	b	Gross income from fundraising events (not including \$ <u>0</u> of contributions from fundraising events reported on line 1) (attach Schedule G if the sum of such gross income and contributions exceeds \$15,000)	6b	4,744
c	Less: direct expenses from gaming and fundraising events	6c	0	
d	Net income or (loss) from gaming and fundraising events (add lines 6a and 6b and subtract line 6c)	6d	4,744	
7a	Gross sales of inventory, less returns and allowances	7a	0	
b	Less: cost of goods sold	7b	0	
c	Gross profit or (loss) from sales of inventory (subtract line 7b from line 7a)	7c	0	
8	Other revenue (describe in Schedule O)	8	0	
9	Total revenue. Add lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5c, 6d, 7c, and 8 ▶	9	184,679	
Expenses	10	Grants and similar amounts paid (list in Schedule O)	10	3,979
	11	Benefits paid to or for members	11	0
	12	Salaries, other compensation, and employee benefits	12	0
	13	Professional fees and other payments to independent contractors	13	17,700
	14	Occupancy, rent, utilities, and maintenance	14	0
	15	Printing, publications, postage, and shipping	15	150
	16	Other expenses (describe in Schedule O)	16	62,070
17	Total expenses. Add lines 10 through 16 ▶	17	83,899	
Net Assets	18	Excess or (deficit) for the year (subtract line 17 from line 9)	18	100,780
	19	Net assets or fund balances at beginning of year (from line 27, column (A)) (must agree with end-of-year figure reported on prior year's return)	19	3,437
	20	Other changes in net assets or fund balances (explain in Schedule O)	20	0
	21	Net assets or fund balances at end of year. Combine lines 18 through 20 ▶	21	104,217

Part II Balance Sheets (see the instructions for Part II)

Check if the organization used Schedule O to respond to any question in this Part II

	(A) Beginning of year	(B) End of year
22 Cash, savings, and investments	3,999	22 7,801
23 Land and buildings	0	23 0
24 Other assets (describe in Schedule O)	75,000	24 105,315
25 Total assets	78,999	25 113,116
26 Total liabilities (describe in Schedule O)	75,562	26 8,899
27 Net assets or fund balances (line 27 of column (B) must agree with line 21)	3,437	27 104,217

Part III Statement of Program Service Accomplishments (see the instructions for Part III)

Check if the organization used Schedule O to respond to any question in this Part III

What is the organization's primary exempt purpose? See Schedule O, Statement 1

Expenses
(Required for section 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations; optional for others.)

Describe the organization's program service accomplishments for each of its three largest program services, as measured by expenses. In a clear and concise manner, describe the services provided, the number of persons benefited, and other relevant information for each program title.

28 <u>Lowcountry Gullah raises funds through donations to protect historic Gullah land in Hilton Head and Bluffton SC from being sold at the annual Beaufort County Tax Sale of Delinquent Properties. Three local properties/families were protected from going to the sale.</u> (Grants \$ <u>3,979</u>) If this amount includes foreign grants, check here <input type="checkbox"/>	28a	0
29 _____ (Grants \$ _____) If this amount includes foreign grants, check here <input type="checkbox"/>	29a	
30 _____ (Grants \$ _____) If this amount includes foreign grants, check here <input type="checkbox"/>	30a	
31 Other program services (describe in Schedule O) _____ (Grants \$ <u>0</u>) If this amount includes foreign grants, check here <input type="checkbox"/>	31a	0
32 Total program service expenses (add lines 28a through 31a)	32	0

Part IV List of Officers, Directors, Trustees, and Key Employees (list each one even if not compensated—see the instructions for Part IV)

Check if the organization used Schedule O to respond to any question in this Part IV

(a) Name and title	(b) Average hours per week devoted to position	(c) Reportable compensation (Forms W-2/1099-MISC/1099-NEC) (if not paid, enter -0-)	(d) Health benefits, contributions to employee benefit plans, and deferred compensation	(e) Estimated amount of other compensation
<u>Herbert Ford</u> Member	2.00	0	0	0
<u>Fred Hamilton</u> Member	2.00	0	0	0
<u>Melvin Campbell</u> Member	2.00	0	0	0
<u>Jazmin Sellars</u> Member	2.00	0	0	0
<u>Luana Graves Sellars</u> Founder Member	40.00	0	0	0

Part V Other Information (Note the Schedule A and personal benefit contract statement requirements in the instructions for Part V.) Check if the organization used Schedule O to respond to any question in this Part V

		Yes	No
33	Did the organization engage in any significant activity not previously reported to the IRS? If "Yes," provide a detailed description of each activity in Schedule O		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
34	Were any significant changes made to the organizing or governing documents? If "Yes," attach a conformed copy of the amended documents if they reflect a change to the organization's name. Otherwise, explain the change on Schedule O. See instructions		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
35a	Did the organization have unrelated business gross income of \$1,000 or more during the year from business activities (such as those reported on lines 2, 6a, and 7a, among others)?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b	If "Yes" to line 35a, has the organization filed a Form 990-T for the year? If "No," provide an explanation in Schedule O		
c	Was the organization a section 501(c)(4), 501(c)(5), or 501(c)(6) organization subject to section 6033(e) notice, reporting, and proxy tax requirements during the year? If "Yes," complete Schedule C, Part III		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
36	Did the organization undergo a liquidation, dissolution, termination, or significant disposition of net assets during the year? If "Yes," complete applicable parts of Schedule N		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
37a	Enter amount of political expenditures, direct or indirect, as described in the instructions ▶ 37a <u>0</u>		
b	Did the organization file Form 1120-POL for this year?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
38a	Did the organization borrow from, or make any loans to, any officer, director, trustee, or key employee; or were any such loans made in a prior year and still outstanding at the end of the tax year covered by this return?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b	If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part II, and enter the total amount involved 38b		
39	Section 501(c)(7) organizations. Enter:		
a	Initiation fees and capital contributions included on line 9 39a		
b	Gross receipts, included on line 9, for public use of club facilities 39b		
40a	Section 501(c)(3) organizations. Enter amount of tax imposed on the organization during the year under: section 4911 ▶ _____; section 4912 ▶ _____; section 4955 ▶ _____		
b	Section 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and 501(c)(29) organizations. Did the organization engage in any section 4958 excess benefit transaction during the year, or did it engage in an excess benefit transaction in a prior year that has not been reported on any of its prior Forms 990 or 990-EZ? If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part I		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c	Section 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and 501(c)(29) organizations. Enter amount of tax imposed on organization managers or disqualified persons during the year under sections 4912, 4955, and 4958 ▶ <u>0</u>		
d	Section 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and 501(c)(29) organizations. Enter amount of tax on line 40c reimbursed by the organization ▶ <u>0</u>		
e	All organizations. At any time during the tax year, was the organization a party to a prohibited tax shelter transaction? If "Yes," complete Form 8886-T		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
41	List the states with which a copy of this return is filed ▶ <u>SC</u>		
42a	The organization's books are in care of ▶ <u>Luana Graves Sellars</u> Telephone no. ▶ <u>843-715-3506</u> Located at ▶ <u>90 Gloucester Road 1204, Hilton Head, SC 29928</u> ZIP + 4 ▶ <u>29928</u>		
b	At any time during the calendar year, did the organization have an interest in or a signature or other authority over a financial account in a foreign country (such as a bank account, securities account, or other financial account)? If "Yes," enter the name of the foreign country ▶ _____ See the instructions for exceptions and filing requirements for FinCEN Form 114, Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR).	Yes	No
42b			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c	At any time during the calendar year, did the organization maintain an office outside the United States? If "Yes," enter the name of the foreign country ▶ _____		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
42c			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
43	Section 4947(a)(1) nonexempt charitable trusts filing Form 990-EZ in lieu of Form 1041 —Check here <input type="checkbox"/> and enter the amount of tax-exempt interest received or accrued during the tax year ▶ 43 <u>0</u>		
44a	Did the organization maintain any donor advised funds during the year? If "Yes," Form 990 must be completed instead of Form 990-EZ		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b	Did the organization operate one or more hospital facilities during the year? If "Yes," Form 990 must be completed instead of Form 990-EZ		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c	Did the organization receive any payments for indoor tanning services during the year?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d	If "Yes" to line 44c, has the organization filed a Form 720 to report these payments? If "No," provide an explanation in Schedule O		
44d			
45a	Did the organization have a controlled entity within the meaning of section 512(b)(13)?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b	Did the organization receive any payment from or engage in any transaction with a controlled entity within the meaning of section 512(b)(13)? If "Yes," Form 990 and Schedule R may need to be completed instead of Form 990-EZ. See instructions		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
45b			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
46 Did the organization engage, directly or indirectly, in political campaign activities on behalf of or in opposition to candidates for public office? If "Yes," complete Schedule C, Part I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Part VI Section 501(c)(3) Organizations Only

All section 501(c)(3) organizations must answer questions 47-49b and 52, and complete the tables for lines 50 and 51.

Check if the organization used Schedule O to respond to any question in this Part VI

	Yes	No
47 Did the organization engage in lobbying activities or have a section 501(h) election in effect during the tax year? If "Yes," complete Schedule C, Part II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48 Is the organization a school as described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(ii)? If "Yes," complete Schedule E	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49a Did the organization make any transfers to an exempt non-charitable related organization?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b If "Yes," was the related organization a section 527 organization?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

50 Complete this table for the organization's five highest compensated employees (other than officers, directors, trustees, and key employees) who each received more than \$100,000 of compensation from the organization. If there is none, enter "None."

(a) Name and title of each employee	(b) Average hours per week devoted to position	(c) Reportable compensation (Forms W-2/1099-MISC/1099-NEC)	(d) Health benefits, contributions to employee benefit plans, and deferred compensation	(e) Estimated amount of other compensation
None				

f Total number of other employees paid over \$100,000 ▶ _____

51 Complete this table for the organization's five highest compensated independent contractors who each received more than \$100,000 of compensation from the organization. If there is none, enter "None."

(a) Name and business address of each independent contractor	(b) Type of service	(c) Compensation
None		

d Total number of other independent contractors each receiving over \$100,000 ▶ _____

52 Did the organization complete Schedule A? **Note:** All section 501(c)(3) organizations must attach a completed Schedule A ▶ Yes No

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this return, including accompanying schedules and statements, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete. Declaration of preparer (other than officer) is based on all information of which preparer has any knowledge.

Sign Here	 Signature of officer	Date
	Luana Graves Sellars, Founder Type or print name and title	

Paid Preparer Use Only	Print/Type preparer's name	Preparer's signature	Date	Check <input type="checkbox"/> if self-employed	PTIN
	Firm's name ▶			Firm's EIN ▶	
	Firm's address ▶			Phone no.	

May the IRS discuss this return with the preparer shown above? See instructions ▶ Yes No

SCHEDULE O
(Form 990 or 990-EZ)

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Supplemental Information to Form 990 or 990-EZ

Complete to provide information for responses to specific questions on
Form 990 or 990-EZ or to provide any additional information.

▶ Attach to Form 990 or Form 990-EZ.

▶ Go to www.irs.gov/Form990 for the latest information.

OMB No. 1545-0047

2021

**Open to Public
Inspection**

Name of the organization

LOWCOUNTRY GULLAH

Employer identification number

84-2343316

Form 990-EZ, Part I, Line 10 - Paid Beaufort County Property Taxes on the behalf of Gullah families in jeopardy of losing their historic land

Form 990-EZ, Part I, Line 16 - Advertising and Promotional support from the Town of Hilton Head Island ATAX dollars

Form 990-EZ, Part II, Line 24 - Online store inventory \$5,315 Intellectual Property Asset \$100,000

Form 990-EZ, Part II, Line 26 - Online merchandise \$8455

Primary Exempt Purpose

Primary Exempt Purpose

Cultural resource and information to document the Gullah culture and save historic Gullah land.

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

for Tax-Exempt Organization not Required to File Form 990 or 990-EZ

2020

Open to Public Inspection

A For the 2020 Calendar year, or tax year beginning 2020-01-01 and ending 2020-12-31

B Check if available

 Terminated for Business Gross receipts are normally \$50,000 or lessC Name of Organization: LOWCOUNTRY GULLAH90 Gloucester Road 1204,
Hilton Head, SC, US, 29928

D Employee Identification

Number 84-2343316

E Website:

www.lowcountrygullah.comF Name of Principal Officer: Luana Graves Sellars90 Gloucester Road 1204,
Hilton Head, SC, US, 29928

Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice: We ask for the information on this form to carry out the Internal Revenue laws of the United States. You are required to give us the information. We need it to ensure that you are complying with these laws.

The organization is not required to provide information requested on a form that is subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act unless the form displays a valid OMB control number. Books or records relating to a form or its instructions must be retained as long as their contents may become material in the administration of any Internal Revenue law. The rules governing the confidentiality of the Form 990-N is covered in code section 6104.

The time needed to complete and file this form and related schedules will vary depending on the individual circumstances. The estimated average times is 15 minutes.

Note: This image is provided for your records only. Do Not mail this page to the IRS. The IRS will not accept this filing via paper. You must file your Form 990-N (e-Postcard) electronically.



Board of Directors Meeting

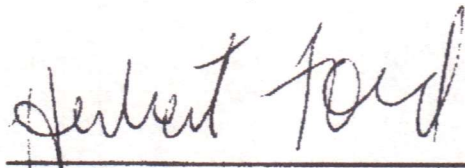
July 29, 2023

In Attendance: Fred Hamilton, Herbert Ford, Melvin Campbell, Luana Graves Sellars

Resolved: The application request of \$100,000 for the promotion and marketing of Lowcountry Gullah through the website and social media presence. Lowcountry Gullah's proposed ATAX application is approved as submitted.

Voting In Favor: Unanimous


Luana M. Graves Sellars Founding Member 7/29/23
July 29, 2023


Herbert Ford Member 7/29/23
July 29, 2023



Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service
Tax Exempt and Government Entities
P.O. Box 2508, Room 4024
Cincinnati, OH 45021

Date: August 19, 2019
Person to Contact: Customer Services
Contact telephone number: 877-829-5500

Lowcountry Gullah
90 Gloucester Road
1204 Harbourmaster
Hilton Head Island, South Carolina 29928

We received your Form 8976, *Notice of Intent to Operate Under 501(c)(4)*, you filed on August 13, 2019. This acknowledgement is not a determination by the IRS that you qualify as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code (Code) Section 501(a) as an organization described in Code Section 501(c)(4).

For important information about your responsibilities, including recordkeeping, reporting, and disclosure requirements, go to www.irs.gov/charities.

If you have questions, you can call Customer Services at 1-877-829-5500.