

Request for Proposals (RFP) to prepare a Custom Career Exploration Website

Columbia County, Georgia

Issued by:



**DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY**

COLUMBIA COUNTY
GEORGIA • USA

RFP Schedule

RFP Issued: March 9, 2022 at noon Eastern Time

Proposals Submittal Deadline: April 13, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

Interviews of Selected Firms: April 18-20, 2022

Contact Information

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Table of Contents

I.	RFP Purpose	-	Page 3
II.	Concept Overview	-	Page 3
III.	Target Audience	-	Page 4
IV.	Development Authority	-	Page 4
V.	Project Objectives	-	Page 4
VI.	Functionality	-	Page 5
VII.	Site Map	-	Page 11
VIII.	Deliverables	-	Page 12
IX.	Submission Requirements	-	Page 12
X.	Submission Notices	-	Page 14

I. RFP Purpose

With your technical assistance, we intend to create a web-based employment exploration platform that educates about real job opportunities and the corresponding employers that exist in Columbia County, Georgia in an intentional and impactful way. The overall scope of the project is to establish a direct avenue for job explorers to research in-demand careers in our community, learn about the employers who hire those positions, and discover the mechanism to pursue that job, all-in-one-suite. **The ultimate purpose of this platform is to empower job seekers with information about one of the greatest tools for change - a career, while supporting job providers through a platform to own their unique stories.**

II. Concept Overview

We do not wish to recreate job boards and career video databases that already exist. What does not exist are resources to educate locals about existing employers and their workplace cultures, nor is there a mechanism to research hyperlocal in-demand jobs. This website is intended to offer details about in-demand careers and the real companies that host them. Job explorers can trust that the information represents actual jobs from actual companies in our actual community - not some website that aggregates national data that is not representative of the culture or community in the Greater Augusta area.

There is a lot of power in telling your local story where you get to own the narrative about the culture and the benefits. Many corporate websites don't accommodate this micro-level of detail. We also believe that if local companies are given a platform where they can own their story about who they are, why they are a great place to work, and how they care for their employees, that they will be able to more effectively recruit and retain their workforce. Our hope is to give companies the space through this new web-based platform that uses short video content and pictures to assist in sharing their local story.

We hope to educate students about local opportunities in an attempt to retain them in our community. We hope to unveil some of the unknown details about the employers in our metro. We hope to relay career information that encourages people to apply for new opportunities, as well as reenter the workforce because they are better equipped with information about employers and working conditions. We also believe that if we do a better job telling the story of our community, we can recruit new residents to the area and increase labor force participation across the metro. Our intent is to make this type of information more accessible to the community by creating a platform that engages the business community and job seekers.

III. Target Audience

This website is a resource for any job explorer who is wanting to better understand real opportunities in the Greater Augusta area. The website will be an educational tool for the widest variety of community members. It is also a mechanism for local employers to showcase to potential candidates differently by telling their own company's story better through this platform. The chosen developer needs to consider the intended audiences during its development process; this includes the following:

- Newly relocated military spouses who need to understand who's in the market;
- Second career individuals who are changing fields and need greater awareness;
- High school students who are immediately bound for the workforce and/or want to understand long-term employment options in their community;
- Individuals who are re-entering the labor force or entering for the first time;
- Teachers who want to share potential career information with the student body;
- Talent looking to locate in the metro because of the quality of life benefits but are unsure of potential employers;
- Technical and university-level students looking for area employers for internships or entry-level positions;
- Employers who need a better way to articulate their culture and opportunities;
- Individuals in the workforce who are currently underemployed and seeking opportunities for advancement/betterment.

IV. The Development Authority of Columbia County

The Development Authority of Columbia County is the economic development organization for Columbia County, Georgia. Our primary objectives involve fostering economic growth, supporting existing businesses, and recruiting new companies to the area. Building and maintaining a robust local workforce is integral to these three objectives. Proactive measures must be taken in order to support job seekers and job providers while we adapt to the current labor conditions. The Development Authority of Columbia County wishes to develop this platform as a way to serve these two populations concurrently.

For more information about the Development Authority of Columbia County, please visit our website at www.developcolumbiacounty.com.

V. Project Objectives

This website is a new product, which means that there are few off-the-shelf solutions. It also means that we are working with new ideas and concepts that will evolve as we further refine its purpose and the way individuals will interact with it. We publicly recognize that as the project needs change, that costs are liable to change as well. We have identified

several objectives that will be necessary for the project. Feedback is welcomed from our development partners on additional features that are well-suited for this project. The identified objectives of this project include:

- Discovery and planning: We ask our developer to be patient partners that work to understand the totality of the project so that we can create a high-quality website;
- Architecture: The developer should help determine an appropriate structure that allows for the scalability of this project as it grows with time;
- Register and publish a new website that includes all of the functionality detailed within this RFP;
- Create a design standard that is attractive and serve the purpose of the platform;
- Information design: Webpage content should be designed in such a way that the data is easily understood by viewers and content appears organized;
- Visual design: Webpages should be designed in a visually pleasing way that appeals to a wide variety of individuals;
- Search engine optimization: Care should be taken to ensure that this website is competitively ranking in online search engines;
- Videography: The developer needs to have the ability or identify a partner who can film and edit short videos that can be used as storytellers for jobs and companies;
- Mobile-first design: A majority of people will interact with this from a mobile device or tablet and need to ensure that it is responsive in that manner;
- Social integration: We want the ability for employers to be able to share content on platforms that include but are not limited to Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn;
- Testing: The website needs to be durable and properly vetted before publishing;
- Analytics integration: Google analytics must be incorporated;
- Media: Large amount of video and pictures need to be stored on the platform without compromising the web pages' speed or performance;
- Data integration: There is a need to integrate interfaces from existing data providers in order to autonomously update statistical information;
- Data storage: The media content to be securely stored;
- Content management: Staff should be able to replace and update text content easily;
- User management: The user management system should accommodate differing permission levels for individuals responsible for uploading content; and
- Relationships: We are looking for an extended partnership for this project. There is the initial development need, as well as continued maintenance and improvements.

VI. Functionality

This website is divided into three major sections: 1) the careers, 2) the companies, and 3) the job board. Each of these sections have different requirements for the users' experience.

There is a fourth smaller section for administrative purposes. This is detailed below with exhibits that intend to provide context from similar products or needed features. **Please note that duplicating existing products is not the intent.**

Website visitors should be greeted by a homepage that invites them to explore the “three sections” of content. The home page should be designed in such a way that it helps explain the purpose of the website and helps direct people’s activity deeper into the pages.

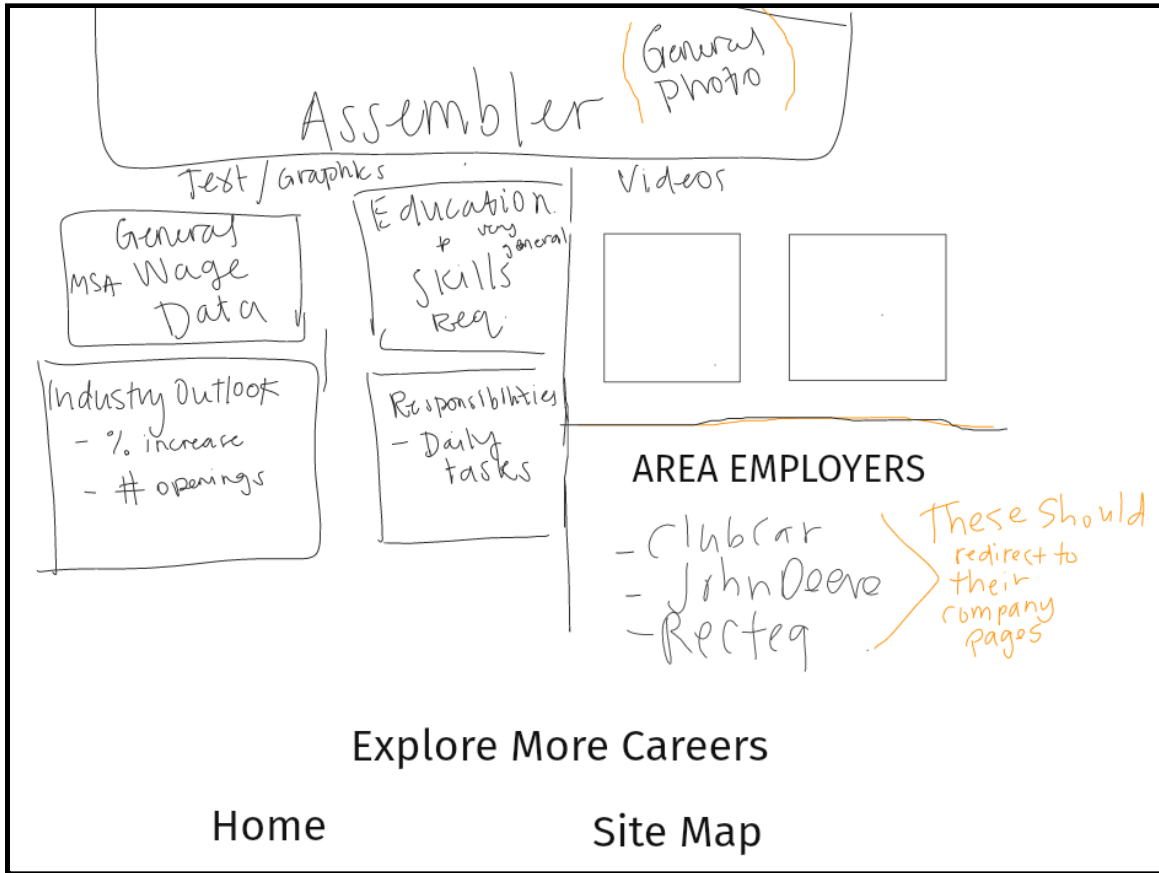
The first section should be a ‘careers’ page. When selected, this section should allow viewers to scroll through job titles and corresponding icons. The content on this page needs to be organized in such a way that viewers can easily navigate; we envision a grid system with picture icons but are open to recommendations. Once a job is selected, each icon will redirect viewers to a new job-specific web page. For an example of the grid format, please visit the link here:

<https://www.candidcareer.com/channels.php?type=career&f=sv2>)

Each job presented in this format will need to redirect to a unique webpage; these webpages can all share the same template. These pages are intended to be a deeper dive into the specifics of the job to really help job seekers understand high-level information. Potential data options include average area wage data, industry growth projections, area employers who offer this type of job, a description of the job, typical duties/responsibilities, fun facts, job growth potential, etc. These types of details are being reviewed amongst our team, but the intent is to provide an accurate account of what an individual could expect in that career. Please see Exhibit 1 for a rough sketch of what is envisioned.

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Exhibit 1. Rough Concept - Job Page



Several metrics are hosted on publicly available websites and/or subscription-based platforms. When possible, the developer should account for possible ways to sync data from possible platforms rather than requiring staff to continuously update these metrics.

The 'career' page needs to be structured so that it can host a short video segment to aid in the storytelling effort. The proposal should account for the filming and publishing of short (<30 seconds) videos that help portray the essence of a career. These videos should visually portray various job duties with an audio overlay. Due to the fact that many employers have similar job types, it may be that there are two or more videos for the same job; the functionality here will need to accommodate for this. We envision viewers having the ability to click between videos. For a similar example of the specific job pages, please see Exhibit 2 and visit here: <https://www.mynextmove.org/profile/summary/33-9032.00>

Exhibit 2. Jobs Page Example

MY NEXT MOVE o-net in-it HOME SEARCH INDUSTRIES INTERESTS

Security Guards
Also called: Safety and Security Officer, Security Agent, Security Guard, Security Officer

Watch Career Video

What they do:
Guard, patrol, or monitor premises to prevent theft, violence, or infractions of rules. May operate x-ray and metal detector equipment.

On the job, you would:

- Lock doors and gates of entrances and exits to secure buildings.
- Answer alarms and investigate disturbances.
- Monitor and authorize entrance and departure of employees, visitors, and other persons to guard against theft and maintain security of premises.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ABILITIES
Safety and Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public safety and security Arts and Humanities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • customer service 	Basic Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listening to others, not interrupting, and asking good questions • keeping track of how well people and/or groups are doing in order to make improvements Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changing what is done based on other people's actions • understanding people's reactions 	Verbal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen and understand what people say • communicate by speaking Attention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay attention to something without being distracted

The second section of the platform should be a 'companies' page that allows visitors to scroll through the list of participating employers. This list of employers should be reconfigurable based on the visitors' selection (see Exhibit 3). This page should allow for alphabetical listings or industry groupings. For an example of this feature, please visit here: <https://www.candidcareer.com/channels.php?f=sv2>

Exhibit 3. Candid Career's Career Organization

Career Exploration expanding multiple Industries

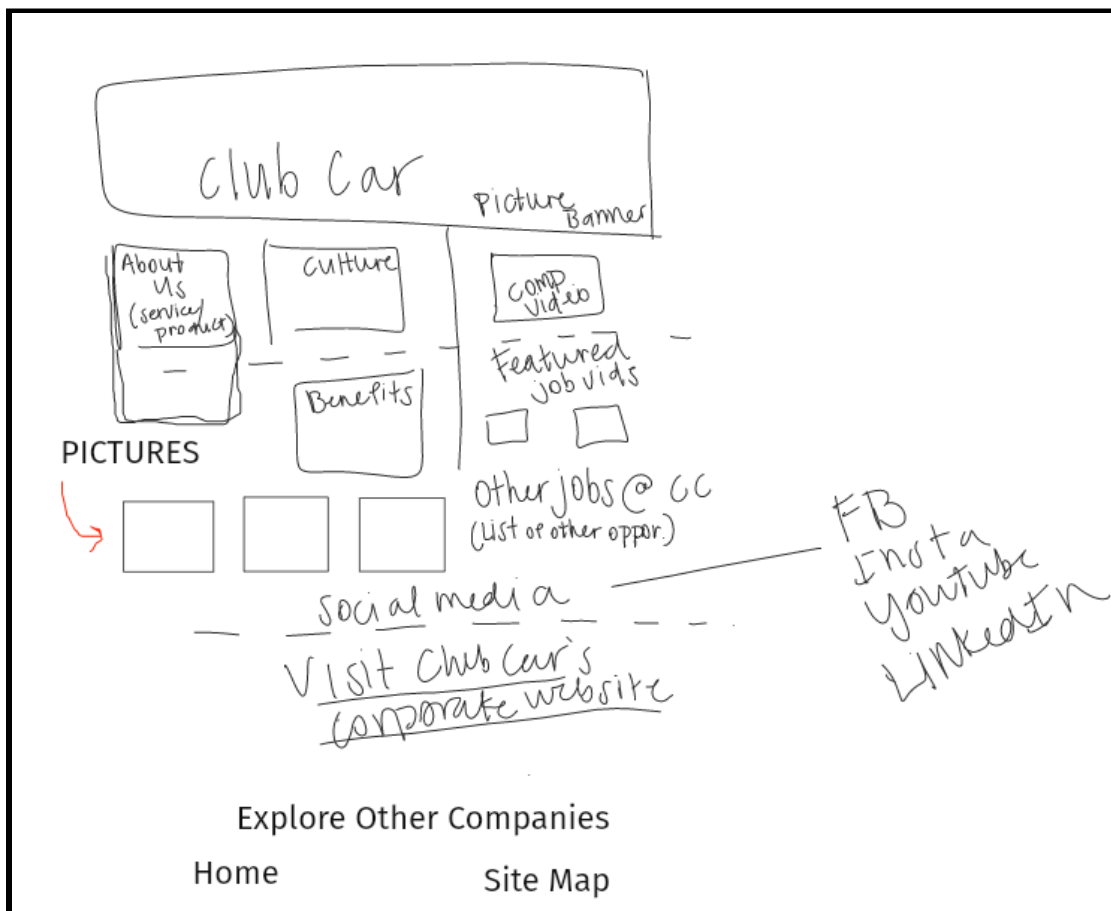
are just graduating from college or contemplating a career change, streamlining the process is critical. While career exploration related to your to start, you don't want to miss out on opportunities that may be outside of your direct work experience or academic curriculum.

Industry Career Title Major Random

				
Art Total: 437	Business Total: 2129	Construction & Real Estate Total: 383	Education Total: 1287	Entertainment Total: 384

Each company listing should serve as a hyperlink that will redirect to a company-specific page. Each company page can share the same template. This page is not a replication of their website but rather serves as a hyper-local web page. In many instances companies who have footprints in our community either have a website aimed at marketing their service/product or the company is grouped under a corporate website that is disassociated with the local presence. The intent of this micro-page is to tell the local story about that local company, with an emphasis on telling the details about their company culture, their benefits packages, why you should consider working for them, and how an employee's life will be made better by joining the company at that specific location. Think of it as a marketing page for the career, rather than the product or service. See Exhibit 4 for a rough sketch of a possible company page.

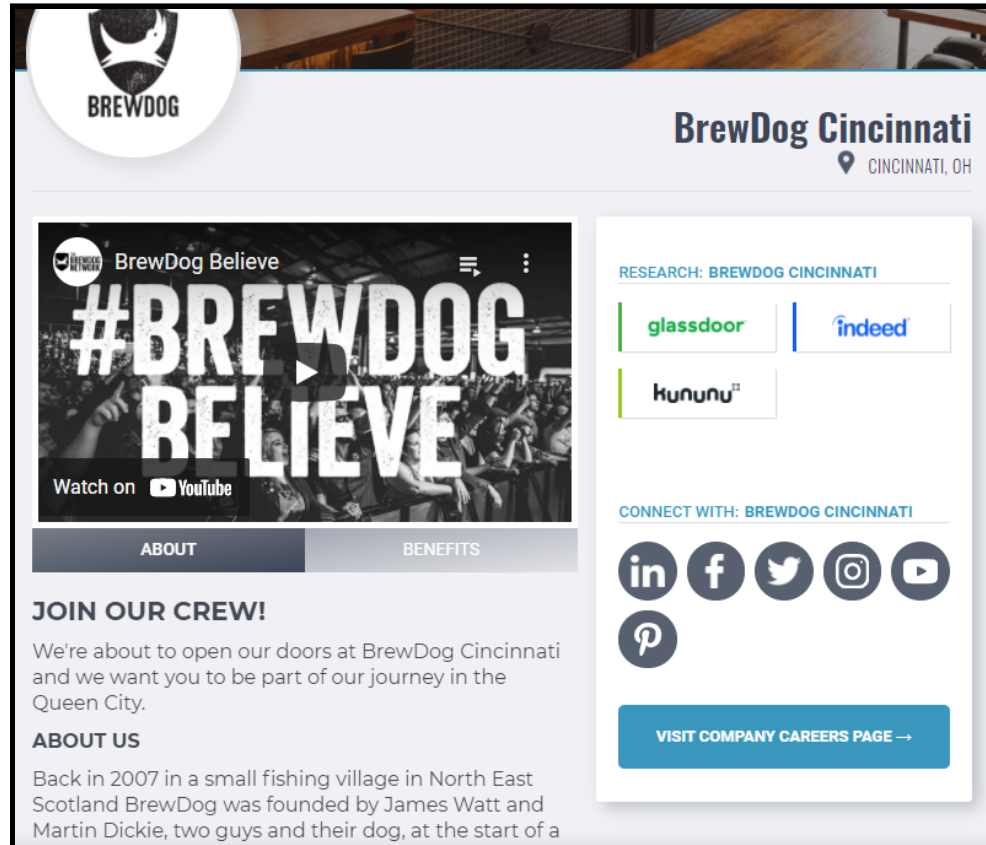
Exhibit 4. Rough Concept- Company Page



This may look and feel like a micro-website where a short video introduces the company and its business function. Additional content for this page possibly includes company service/product, culture, benefits packages, hyperlinks to social media platforms, company

pictures, employee training, information as to why someone might want to work at this company, link to a full company website, hyperlinks to jobs within the company, etc. Content for this page is still under review. We are open to recommendations as to how to effectively structure and communicate some of these details for maximum communication. For an example of the company page concept, please see Exhibit 5 and visit the following webpage: <https://www.jobvu.com/co/brewdog-cincinnati>

Exhibit 5. Second Example of Company Page



The third major section of this platform is a job board. Our intent is for the job board to publish available jobs in our community that can crosswalk or link back to the company and career pages. However, we do not need a job board developed. Instead, the Development Authority of Columbia County has subscribed with a labor market data platform through Chmura Economics (www.chmura.com). Their RTI (Real-Time Intelligence) platform is a module that pulls job listings from 40,000 sources and de-duplicates the listings to show what is available within a 75-mile radius of Columbia County. The public-facing portion of this RTI application is called Jobs Connector.

Jobs Connector requires an API in order for it to be public-facing for general public use. Jobs Connector is widely customizable based on a client's preferred format. We have

included links to other Jobs Connector subscribers that may provide context as to how the platform could possibly be integrated. These links are available at the following locations:

- <https://www.working-solutions.org/#jobsearch>
- <https://biz.loudoun.gov/loudounjobs/>
- <https://makeittampabay.com/jobs/>

For the purpose of this RFP, we are asking the development team to develop the API for the Jobs Connector platform to be integrated into this website. We currently have a subscription available for development purposes and will upgrade the subscription once we are further in the development timeline. The project team is open to recommendations on how to build out the API for Jobs Connector.

The fourth section is for administrative purposes. It will house information about how to get involved with the project, high-level workforce information, and contact information for the partnering agencies on this initiative.

VII. Site Map

Please see Exhibit 6 for a proposed site map. The number of company and career pages will vary based on the level of participation by our local business community. The Development Authority of Columbia County has set a modest goal for the initial launch but hopes that participation will grow over time as additional funds become available. The specific deliverable needs like page counts and videos are detailed later.

Exhibit 6. Example Site Map

Home Page					
Careers		Companies		Job Board	About
Careers by Industry Sector	Careers Alphabetically	Companies Alphabetically	Companies by NAICS	Job Connector	About the Project
Ex. Job 1		Ex. Company 1		Submit a Job (This will likely be a form to capture links to job postings that can be pulled by RTI.)	Regional Workforce Stats
Ex. Job 2		Ex. Company 2			Get Involved
Ex. Job 3		Ex. Company 3			Contact Information
Ex. Job 4		Ex. Company 4			

VIII. Deliverables

This proposal addresses the initial launch of the platform. It is the Development Authority's full intent to scale this platform to accommodate more careers and more companies over time. We will need assistance for ongoing maintenance and support of the site as well. We also hope to need assistance in growing the platform as we add additional content. This may involve adding additional jobs, companies, producing new videos, adding new narratives within the pages, etc. We are looking for a long-term partner that is committed to creating a quality product that serves the community. Vendors should be prepared for such a commitment.

A. Website

- 1) A fully operational custom website that is engineered to support the content within this proposal while also being navigable to all users;
- 2) The website should be "information ready" so that the Development Authority of Columbia County staff can begin migrating information;
- 3) Attractive, custom web page templates that can be replicated as the project grows
- 4) The website should be viable on mobile devices; and
- 5) The vendor will provide complete training on the website.

B. Videos

- 1) Each featured company will have 4 short videos made at each filming location; 1 will showcase the company while the other 3 will highlight three featured jobs;
- 2) Videos need to be catchy and short in length (approximately 20 to 45 seconds);
- 3) We require at least 1.5 minutes of finished footage from each location;
- 4) Videos need to be professionally edited with captions; audio needs to be clear;
- 5) The Development Authority of Columbia County will own and be provided all raw footage and photographs; and
- 6) High production quality is expected.

C. Branding Aesthetic

- 1) Determine a consistent look and feel of the website, including color scheme, graphic elements, navigation tools; and
- 2) Provide design mock-ups of primary website sections.

IX. Submission Requirements

The Development Authority of Columbia County invites respondents to reply to this Request for Proposal while adhering to the following submission requirements:

A. Response Address and Due Date

Each respondent must submit their RFP response by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Wednesday, April 13, 2022 to the Development Authority of Columbia County, as follows:

Taylor Edwards, Project Manager tedwards@developcolumbiacounty.com	Robbie Bennett, Executive Director rbennett@developcolumbiacounty.com
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Respondents must send the submittal to both of the addressees via the provided email addresses. No responses will be accepted after 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on April, 13, 2022. Your submission will be considered delivered and received once the Development Authority of Columbia County responds via e-mail confirming receipt of the submission.

B. Pre-Response Questions

Respondents are allowed to submit any questions no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Wednesday, March 23, 2022, to Taylor Edwards via e-mail at tedwards@developcolumbiacounty.com. To ensure fair consideration for all respondents, any interpretation made to respondents will be published as an addendum if deemed necessary for the preparation of responses. Such addendums, if issued, will be sent from tedwards@developcolumbiacounty.com no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Friday, March 25, 2022.

C. Open Public Records Act

All materials submitted in response to this RFP become the property of the Development Authority of Columbia County, Georgia. The responses may be open for review by the public in accordance with the Open Public Records Act. By submitting a response, the respondent accepts that contents of the response may become available to the public if requested, except items that have been identified as proprietary by the respondent. All information within the proposal that is proprietary must be clearly denoted.

D. Projected Timetable

The Development Authority of Columbia County anticipates adhering to the following schedule shown below. The Development Authority of Columbia County reserves the right to modify this schedule at its own discretion. Any changes in the response due date will be appropriately communicated both on our website (<https://www.developcolumbiacounty.com/media-center/>) and directly with the respondents in the same medium in which the RFP was originally sent.

Event	Date & Time
Release RFP	March 9, 2022 at noon ET
Pre-response Questions Due	March 23, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. EST
Q&A Responses Posted	March 25, 2022 at 12:00 p.m. EST
RFP Due	April 13, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. EST
Interviews	April 18-20, 2022

D. Preferred Response Items

The Development Authority of Columbia County invites respondents to include the following sections in their RFP submission. The information requested represents the minimum information that should be presented in the proposal submission. Respondents are encouraged to provide any additional details that may be beneficial to their submission packet. All information should be both relevant to the project and concise.

1) Company Overview & Interest Statement

Provide a company description that details the firm's capabilities as a quality service provider within their respective industry. A statement of interest as to why you are the most qualified partner is encouraged.

2) Key Team Members & Service Providers

Provide information about key team members assigned to this project and their role within the scope of this project. Some project objectives may require collaborating with additional service providers. Please detail those partnerships, including key tasks, in this section. Define how your firm's process mitigates client changes throughout the life of the project.

3) Project Examples

Provide examples of similarly-complex projects to help us assess your technical capability. Please include government clients if applicable. A minimum of three technical references including all contact information is required.

4) Development Approach & Timeline

Vendors should have a proven development process and flexible timeline structure that favors the availability of the Development Authority. Provide an outline of all project phases and the associated deliverables. Please include detailed requirements for staff involvement. Provide a tentative and flexible timeline that includes details

for discovery, design, and launch of the website. Please suggest other major milestones that should be accounted for in the development timeline.

5) Quality Assurance & Financial Stability Statement

Explain how your solution will differentiate you from other vendors and why we should choose you as our successful vendor. List any unique features or partnerships that give your company a competitive edge in the website design industry. Also, include details that depict financial stability by the company.

6) Pricing Statement

The Development Authority of Columbia County prefers to receive an all-inclusive quote on the totality of the project. We also want to ensure a competitive bid from each potential vendor. The budget should be organized in such a manner so that separate services like video filming/editing, website development, branding are individually stated. Please ensure the pricing statement is detailed and itemized based on the features presented in this request. Make sure to separate the initial development costs from the ongoing costs for hosting, maintenance, and support.

We recognize that the filming and editing part of the project may initially appear vague. We are open to reviewing pricing based on a per-unit basis per video, as well as a time-based retainer. It may be fairer to the vendors to retain a videographer for a period of time with a performance guarantee for a minimum number of videos. We are open to best-in-practice recommendations.

If your firm is unable to comprehensively address all the needs of the project, clearly indicate this. Every effort should be made to identify service providers for collaboration within the proposal.

X. Submission Notices

This RFP has been compiled in good faith. The information is subject to updating, expansion, and/or amendment. The Development Authority of Columbia County reserves the right to change any aspect of the RFP, the RFP process, the project, and notice shall be given in an appropriate manner.

Recipients of this RFP are advised that nothing stated in any form of communication during the evaluation process shall be construed as awarding a contract or an agreement of any kind between the Development Authority of Columbia County and any other party, except when a properly executed contract is signed by both parties. The Development Authority of Columbia County is not responsible for any costs incurred by any vendors for the

preparation and delivery of the RFP responses, nor is the Development Authority of Columbia County liable for any costs incurred prior to the execution of a contractual agreement. The Development Authority of Columbia County reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposal submitted. The proposal should be submitted with the most accurate and favorable terms the vendor can offer.

Vendors may withdraw a proposal that has been submitted at any time up to the proposed closing date and time. To successfully withdraw, please submit a written request via e-mail to the authorized representative stated above. The vendor may submit another proposal at any time up to the proposed closing date and time. The Development Authority of Columbia County will not be liable for any errors in vendor proposals. Vendors will not be allowed to alter proposal documents after the deadline for proposal submission.

The Development Authority of Columbia County reserves the right to determine which offer is in the Development Authority of Columbia County's best interest and to award the contract on that basis, to reject any proposal or portions thereof, or award only portions of the project. The Development Authority of Columbia County will own all the rights to this project, including but not limited to the website, video content, framework, and databases upon completion of this project.