

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

### **Rebranding Strategy & Identity Development**

**Issued by: Merged Brookings Economic Development Organization** *(yet to be named, but for purposes of this RFP, identified under the acronym BEDO)*

*(A unified organization encompassing Brookings Economic Development Corporation, Brookings Area Chamber of Commerce, Visit Brookings, and Downtown Brookings)*

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The board of the newly unified **Brookings Economic Development Organization** (BEDO) is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify a qualified branding firm to lead the creation of a comprehensive and compelling brand identity. This rebranding effort will position BEDO as a modern, collaborative, and future-focused organization serving the broader Brookings County economic catchment region, including the city of Brookings and regional partner communities -- Volga, Aurora, Elkton, White, Arlington, Bruce, Bushnell-- and its vital network of business and community stakeholders.

While BEDO is a private nonprofit entity, it works in close partnership with key public-sector institutions—including the City of Brookings, Brookings County, and South Dakota State University—to drive growth, innovation, tourism, entrepreneurship, and community development across the region.

Our organization is an independent, cross-sector coalition that has aligned operations and leadership across four existing legacy organizations: Brookings Economic Development Corporation, the Brookings Area Chamber of Commerce, Visit Brookings, and Downtown Brookings. This rebranding initiative marks a pivotal moment in our evolution and a unique opportunity to communicate our shared story with clarity and impact.

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## **II. ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT**

In 2025, BEDO was formed through the consolidation of four major organizations whose missions often intersected. The goal was to eliminate silos, strengthen service delivery, streamline communications, and build a more agile and cohesive regional economic development organization. This new organization now leads:

- Business and industry recruitment, retention, and expansion
- Workforce development and talent attraction
- Member engagement and advocacy

- Tourism and destination marketing
- Downtown & District development and placemaking

As we define a new identity, it is essential that the brand reflects the **regional nature** of our impact—serving not just the City of Brookings, but also the our regional partners.

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### **III. PROJECT SCOPE**

The selected firm will guide BEDO through a brand development process that includes:

#### **1. Discovery & Research**

- Review existing brand materials, messaging, and data across all four legacy organizations.
- Facilitate stakeholder engagement sessions that include private industry leaders, elected officials, institutional partners (e.g., SDSU), and residents from across the county.
- Benchmark against national best practices in economic development, chamber branding, and tourism/destination marketing.

#### **2. Brand Strategy Development**

- Articulate a cohesive brand narrative and positioning framework, including naming recommendations
- Develop messaging that speaks to both internal stakeholders and external audiences (e.g., investors, site selectors, visitors, and entrepreneurs).
- Define a brand architecture that allows for sub-brand flexibility across functional areas (e.g., Visit Brookings or Chamber events).
- Develop a consumer/customer persona or personality for the merged entity and/or sub-brands

#### **3. Visual Identity Design**

- Design a comprehensive visual identity system, including:
  - Primary logo and alternates
  - Color palette, typography, and iconography, plus photography and videography

- Guidelines for sub-branded programs or departments, and in many cases, branding for those sub-brands.
- Incorporation of the existing Visit Brookings brand, as it already has broad reach and visibility.

#### **4. Messaging Toolkit**

- Provide sample taglines, tone-of-voice guidelines, and ready-to-use messaging for:
  - Social media
  - Event promotions
  - Press releases
  - Website and digital channels

#### **5. Implementation Plan**

- Outline a recommended rollout plan for internal adoption and external launch.
- Include guidance for change management, timeline for adoption, and collateral transition strategies.
- It should be noted that the new organization goes into full operational effect January 1, 2026, and the Board would ideally like to be ready for the primary brand rollout before that date, at a minimum, with a phased plan for rollout of sub-brands afterwards, as necessary for timing.

#### **6. Optional Additional Services** *(please price separately from the primary re-branding scope of work and articulate clear scope for any of the proposed following:)*

- Web design or refresh
- Event and signage branding for launch
- Ongoing brand stewardship or creative services

*\*Please note that the committee reserves the right to include these services or elect to pursue them under a separate RFP at a later date.*

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## **IV. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

Proposals must include the following sections:

1. **Cover Letter** – Addressed to the selection committee, stating your interest and unique qualifications.
  2. **Firm Profile** – Overview of your organization, team, and services.
  3. **Team Bios** – Key staff assigned to the project and their relevant experience.
  4. **Relevant Work Samples** – Minimum of three projects that reflect:
    - Branding for merged or multi-stakeholder entities
    - Experience with regional or rural communities
    - Economic development, tourism, or chamber branding
  5. **Approach & Methodology** – Clear narrative of how you'll approach stakeholder engagement, consensus-building, brand strategy, and design.
  6. **Proposed Timeline** – Estimated schedule with major milestones.
  7. **Budget** – Itemized fee proposal by phase with optional services separated.
  8. **References** – Contact information for 2–3 clients with similar project scope.
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## V. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated on the following basis:

Criteria	Weight
Experience with regional/multi-entity branding	25%
Strength of portfolio and brand storytelling	20%
Proposed methodology and stakeholder engagement approach	20%
Team qualifications and availability	15%
Budget and value	10%
Overall clarity and completeness of proposal	5%
Current Brookings Chamber Membership	5%

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## VI. SELECTION PROCESS

The selection committee will consist of staff and board representatives from the unified BEDO organization. The process will include:

1. **Initial Evaluation** – Review of written proposals.
2. **Shortlisting** – Top 3–5 firms will be invited to present.
3. **Interviews** – Virtual or in-person presentations to a mixed group of BEDO board members and marketing staff. Expect in-depth questions regarding engagement strategies, brand architecture, and regional storytelling.
4. **Final Selection** – Firm selected and notified; contract negotiations and kickoff will follow.

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## VII. ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

Milestone	Date
RFP Released	August 18, 2025
Questions Due	August 26, 2025
Proposals Due	September 12, 2025, 5:00 PM CDT
Shortlist Notified	September 19, 2025
Interviews Held	Week of September 22, 2025
Final Selection	October 1, 2025
Kickoff Meeting	Early October 2025

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## VIII. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Submit your proposal electronically in PDF format to:  
([angelab@id8arc.com](mailto:angelab@id8arc.com))

Use subject line:

**RFP Submission – Brookings Regional EDO Brand – [Your Firm Name]**

Direct questions to:

**Angela Boersma, Project Lead**

Deadline for questions: **August 26, 2025**

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## **IX. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- BEDO is a private nonprofit entity. Proposers should not address submissions to the City of Brookings or assume any municipal affiliation.
- While we work in close partnership with the City of Brookings, Brookings County, SDSU, and other public entities, our brand must reflect BEDO's unique role as a connector, convener, and catalyst for regional economic, community, and destination development.
- All materials submitted in response to this RFP become the property of BEDO and will not be returned.
- BEDO reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, request additional information, or negotiate final scope and fees.