



Request for Proposal

Visual Branding and Promotion Materials for Durham Convention & Arts Complex

Proposal Due Date: 12:00 p.m. ET September 20, 2021

Refer Inquiries to: rfp@discoverdurham.com

Introduction

Discover Durham (the marketing and tourism agency for Durham city and county) seeks a local agency to brand and produce marketing materials for the Durham Convention & Arts Complex – a new umbrella brand for four historic event venues in Durham’s city center. These four venues are the Durham Convention Center, Durham Arts Council, Durham Armory and Carolina Theatre of Durham. Each venue will retain their own name and brand. The new umbrella brand will package the venues as a united complex that meeting and convention planners can book and host their events at seamlessly while connecting with the creative energy of our Durham community. To support this new brand, we seek an agency that can design and produce promotional materials to assist us in marketing the new complex.

Background

About the Complex Project








Meetings and conventions bring millions of dollars in economic impact to cities that host them. Revenue benefits not only the convention center, but area hotels, restaurants, bars, entertainment districts, attractions, caterers, AV companies, airports, car rental companies, taxis and ride shares, florists, and more. Many of the businesses supported by these events are locally owned hospitality businesses that have been among those hardest hit by the pandemic not only in Durham, but nationwide.

Durham’s Downtown Convention Center is on the small-scale for a city of our population and appeal, dramatically limiting the size of meetings we can host. Meanwhile, downtown Durham has dramatically increased the number of hotel rooms available over the past few years, allowing us to house attendees for much larger events, but without the appropriately-sized individual meeting venues. Durham is often disqualified from participating in convention bidding because we cannot accommodate larger events.

While we’re also beginning to develop a vision for Durham’s long-range meeting space needs, we fortunately have an opportunity to expand our capacity without building additional space. By positioning the co-located Convention Center, Armory, Carolina Theatre, and Arts Council as a singular “complex venue” we can increase our rentable square footage by 100%, and our event capacity by 30%.

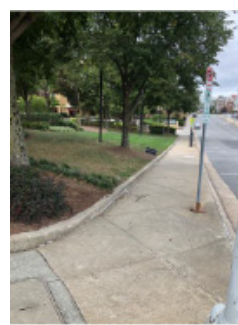
Branding for the Durham Convention & Arts Complex will heighten awareness and appreciation of each of the associated venues without detracting from their individual brands. In fact, these venues lend themselves to branding that celebrates Durham’s creativity and arts community. We understand that the budget for this undertaking is small compared to all the amazing ways we’re sure our local agencies would like to celebrate these storied spaces; however, we seek creative approaches that can visually package these venues together rather than rebranding each one from scratch. This visual branding will also happen in parallel with public art installations that will add to the experiential layers packaging the complex feel as a whole unit. Beyond these visual hallmarks, positioning of this creative arts complex will include the promotion of unique experiences for conference attendees that could include dance and musical performances, art classes, and history and architecture tours, benefitting local artists and related businesses. Durham’s leadership in celebrating diversity and inclusion will also be positioned as an important reason for meeting planners to consider Durham for their next big event.

About the Participating Venues

 	<p><i>Durham Convention Center</i></p> <p>The Durham Convention Center houses a number of meeting spaces, including three grand ball rooms, four junior ball rooms, two boardrooms, and four meeting rooms, providing guests with a number of different options. The ballrooms can also be set up in banquet-, theater-, classroom-, reception-, and exhibit booth-style. The center also includes the Durham Marriott City Center hotel, complete with 190 rooms.</p>
 	<p><i>Durham Arts Council</i></p> <p>The Durham Arts Council is a private nonprofit 501 (c)(3) local arts agency dedicated to supporting the arts in Durham and the entire Triangle region. Its building includes four art galleries, as well as a 200-seat theater, dance studios, art classrooms and a variety of meeting and reception spaces, providing attendees with the chance to experience Durham's impressive arts scene during your event. The historic Durham Arts Council building is Durham's oldest historic building in continuous public service since 1906 and serves as a celebrated home for the arts in downtown Durham.</p>
	<p><i>Durham Armory</i></p> <p>An alternative meeting venue, the Durham Armory is made up of an auditorium, two meeting rooms, and three balconies. It can host theater-, reception-, classroom-, banquet-, and exhibit-style events, and was renovated in 2014 with refinished hardwood floors, an exposed brick wall, and a redesigned lobby.</p>
 	<p><i>Carolina Theatre</i></p> <p>This Beaux Arts-style building includes Fletcher Hall, restored to its original 1926 décor, as well as two adjacent cinemas that screen newly released films and classic works. There are also two ballrooms, and the lobbies are available to host receptions.</p>

Current State of the Complex and Plaza Space

The Durham Convention & Arts Complex consists of the four venues listed above and the convention center plaza. These spaces provide multiple opportunities to brand the complex both within the facilities, on the building exteriors, and in the open-air public plaza space.



RFP Process

Overarching Goals of the Complex Branding

- Drive awareness among meeting and event planners of the Durham Convention & Arts Complex
- Create a uniting umbrella brand of the four participating facilities, while still honoring their individual brand identities
- Capitalize on the history and heritage of the four participating facilities
- Distinguish the complex as a unique, creative convention & arts environment attractive to meeting and event planners
- Find opportunities to inform or complement the Complex public art project happening in parallel (managed by Durham Arts Council), that will visually transform the exterior plaza spaces

Project Budget

Discover Durham has secured a \$40,000.00 budget from the City and County to undertake the visual branding of the complex as it relates to marketing and sales efforts. Additional budget may be available for capturing multimedia content of the rebranded facilities next spring. See Project Deliverables section below for details.

Tentative Schedule

Date	Milestone
Sept 9	RFP issued and distributed to candidate agencies and published on Discover Durham website (https://www.discoverdurham.com/reqs/)
Sept 14, 12:00 p.m. ET	Questions for clarification due to rfp@discoverdurham.com
Sept 15	Selection committee will compile answers to questions and circulate to all candidate agencies
Sept 20, 12:00 p.m. ET	RFP proposals due from bidding agencies
Sept 22	Selection committee will review bids and invite candidates for final interviews/presentations
Sept 23-29	Final interviews
Sept 30	RFP awardee selected and contract discussions initiated

Timeline may shift based on submissions received. Any change in schedule will be communicated out to candidate agencies and posted on <https://www.discoverdurham.com/reqs/>.

Scope of Agency Work

- **Brand Development:** Work with Discover Durham project stakeholders to conceptualize and develop visual brand for the Durham Convention & Arts Complex. Supporting elements will include logo, color palette, style guide, graphical elements and brand mockups.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Attend site tours with participating venue representatives to establish facility signage needs and tasks while keeping Public Art Project stakeholders informed of progress/milestones in visual brand development that may affect/inform the public art process.

- **Project Management:** Internally manage project deadlines and ensure timely communication and handoff of deliverables.
- **Print Collateral Production Management:** Manage quoting, budget, communications and tasks for print collateral vendors to ensure completion and delivery of collateral deliverables.
- **Account & Financial Stewardship:** Prepare periodic reports and a monthly budget recap.
- **Transparency:** Accountability and clear lines of agency communication are paramount.

An agency may subcontract, so long as all relationships are fully disclosed in writing and pre-approved by Discover Durham in writing. The primary branding agency is responsible for the management and timely execution of any subcontract work. Discover Durham may choose to contract and interact with all parties, including subcontractors directly.

Project Deliverables

Core Brand Development & Promotions Design – Budget: \$40,000.00		
Phase/Activity	Details	Est. Timeline
Visual Brand Concepting	Initial Branding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial logo concepts 	Oct 14
Visual Resources Development	Visual Style Guide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalized logo compositions & colors Logo guidelines & usage Brand fonts/typography Color palette (in Pantone, CMYK and RGB) Renderings/mockups showing audiences what the newly branded complex looks and feels like Package of any other graphic components used (photos, vectors, etc.) 	Oct 28
Branded Signage	Signage Design & Production <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production-ready signage designs created to individual facility specs Exterior banner designs Wayfinding Signage Templates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design initial suite of mobile wayfinding signage (parking, check-in, etc.) with editable templates 	Nov 11
Sales & Marketing Materials	Promo Kit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Branded digital ad creative that targets meeting planner audience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Display, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest Graphics sized for Discover Durham-maintained Sales channels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cvent.com, MPI.org, Durham’s Digital Meeting Planners Guide (in development) Print Collateral Piece <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collateral piece about the complex that appeals to meeting/event planners. The ideal piece will be portable enough for our Sales team to distribute at conferences and networking events, yet will still leave an impact about the complex and the Durham market. 	Nov 18

Optional: Multimedia Production – Budget to be finalized late Fall 2021

Note: Discover Durham will also be seeking multimedia production assistance in marketing the newly branded complex. If any of this work is within the scope of your agency or partner vendors and you would like to bid on this phase of the project, an outline of anticipated deliverables is provided below.

Phase/Activity	Details	Estimated Timeline
Multimedia Production	<p>Branded Venue Photography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New hi-res photography after complex development– licensed for Discover Durham and complex stakeholders to re-edit and share as needed• Should capture both the branded facilities and people experiencing the complex• Securing talent/models if needed (and necessary releases) <p>Branded Venue Video</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30 second video targeting meeting/event planner audience that can be used in advertising campaigns and presentations• B-roll sequences of footage of branded complex – licensed for Discover Durham and complex stakeholders to re-edit and share as needed• Securing talent/models if needed (and necessary releases) <p>Virtual Tour Photography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Virtual tour photography of branded facilities (plus individual 360 photospheres to be uploaded to Google Maps)	TBD – we’d expect May or June 2022 once signage is installed and public art is unveiled

Non-Disclosure Agreement

CONFIDENTIALITY. Bidders will keep confidential the nature or subject matter of the Scope of Work until Scope of Work has been publicly published or promoted by Discover Durham. In the case of bids for business, agencies may not disclose in perpetuity any details of the bid/RFP without written permission of Discover Durham.

Questions & Inquiries

All offerors wishing clarification of this RFP must submit questions via email to rfp@discoverdurham.com by the date and time referenced in the Tentative Schedule. Discover Durham will prepare responses to questions to the best of our ability in advance of the proposal closing. Answers to submitted questions will be shared with all participating applicants to ensure equity. Only written information provided to the bidder shall be binding – in-person or virtual conversations or other communications are held without legal effect.

Any attempt by an applicant to contact a member of the evaluation committee outside the RFP process to gain knowledge or an advantage may result in disqualification. Proposers shall not attempt to contact industry stakeholders, contacts at public agencies in Durham, or board members during the proposal period.

Delivery of Proposal

Each bidder is required to email rfp@discoverdurham.com a PDF or link to a finalized proposal. Include 'Durham Convention & Arts Complex RFP' in the subject line and your agency name. Due to the turnaround time, there are no hard copy requirements. Proposals must be received by the date and time referenced in the Tentative Schedule. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Evaluation Process

Discover Durham will form a selection committee to evaluate the submitted proposals. The committee may at any time during the evaluation process seek clarification from bidders regarding any information contained within their proposal.

The top finalists will be asked to participate in a virtual interview with the committee.

Upon completing the selection process under this RFP, Discover Durham will notify the winning agency and all other proposers who were not selected. Discover Durham's deliberations are confidential.

Discover Durham is neither requesting nor seeking any speculative creative work by any respondent, including during finalist interviews. Discover Durham does not commit to pay any costs in preparation of a proposal.

There will be no disclosure of contents of any proposal to competing proposers, and all proposals will be kept confidential during the negotiation process. Except for trade secrets and confidential information, which the offeror must identify as proprietary, all proposals may be open for public inspection after the contract award.

Evaluation Criteria

Emailed proposals will be reviewed, evaluated, and scored by an evaluation committee based on the following criteria:

- Overall experience and philosophy of submitting agency
- Creativity and strategic thought
- Familiarity with Durham, NC as a visitor and meetings destination
- Capabilities and past performance related to branding and print production management
- Cost effectiveness or maximization of services provided in relation to the fees charged and value of the overall project
- Positive reference checks
- Clarity and quality of the proposal as well as completeness of potential subsequent presentations

As part of our commitment to diversity and equity, Discover Durham is committed to developing mutually beneficial relationships with locally owned businesses, with particular consideration given to ensuring those owned by people of color are invited to bid on contracts and market their products to Discover Durham. We are working to have our supplier base mirror the diversity of the community and will be proactive in inviting such businesses to provide proposals whenever possible.

Finalist Interviews

After receipt of all proposals and before the determination of the awarded contract, respondents may be asked to submit additional information. Finalists may be asked to be virtually interviewed by the Discover Durham team and selection committee to clarify their response or further define their offer. Key agency personnel are expected to attend.

Contract Award

The Agency Scope of Work and all tasks involved will be subject to negotiation between Discover Durham and the RFP's awardee for the contract period. The details of submitted proposals will be used to negotiate the contract scope of work, and to evaluate performance.

The successful offeror will enter a contract for services with Discover Durham. Initial contract period for the Agency Scope of Work contained within this RFP will be approximately October 1, 2021, to December 1, 2021 for the core branding scope, with multimedia production spanning to March 30, 2022.

Discover Durham reserves the right to adjust both the budget and related services. Only a fully executed agreement shall bind the parties. Discover Durham is not required to furnish a statement of the reason why a particular proposal or presentation was not deemed to be the most advantageous. At any time during the negotiations, Discover Durham may terminate all negotiations and re-advertise the request for proposal at its sole discretion.

Should there be a change in management after the due date and time, but before the contract is awarded, bidders must notify Discover Durham immediately in writing. This may result in further evaluation – should a change in management occur after the contract is awarded, the contract shall be canceled unless a mutual agreement is reached with the new owner or manager to continue the contract.

Reserved Rights

All proposals submitted shall become the property of Discover Durham. Discover Durham reserves the right to:

- Reject all bids.
- Waive any formality as well as any or all mandatory requirements if no proposers meet one or more of those requirements.
- Cancel this RFP.
- Revise the amount of funds available under this RFP.
- Amend this RFP as needed.
- Not select a vendor or award a contract from this RFP.

Discover Durham disclaims any warranty or accuracy of the information included within this RFP. It is the respondent's sole responsibility to conduct their own appropriate due diligence as they see fit.

RFP Questionnaire

1. **BACKGROUND** – Tell us about your agency, where you are located, and your years of experience. Highlight what sets you apart as a diverse or unique candidate in this space.
2. **DURHAM** – What is your connection to Durham? In a few sentences, how would you describe Durham’s meetings and events scene to an outside viewer?
3. **PROCESS** - Tell us how you work with new clients to reach their objectives. Walk us through your branding methodology. Use an example of a recent client if you wish, or just outline the steps you use so we know how you think.
4. **CASE STUDY** – Show us an example project you are proud of. Briefly describe the project and the brand identity you were trying to develop.
5. **NEEDS** – What do you need from us to ensure success?
6. **BRAG** – Why is your agency a good fit for the branding project? Feel free to share any accolades, testimonials, snippets, etc.
7. **BUDGET** – What do you anticipate the budget and timeframe would be for this venture as described above?
 - a. This is a suggested amount to start working from. A final contract will be negotiated based on further scope discussions.
 - b. If needed, itemize and differentiate between costs you can estimate vs those that will need further scope discussion.

Email your responses by Monday, September 20, 12:00 p.m. ET to rfp@discoverdurham.com. Feel free to use as many attachments and links as you need, but we can’t accept any emails over 10 MB total size.

Questions from Submitting Agencies

The questions below were compiled from inquiring agencies and have been collected and answered here for transparency among all candidate agencies.

Audience & Brand Strategy

Are the meeting planner targets consistent for the different facilities that are part of the Durham Conventions Arts Complex, or are there different targets for each facility? Alternatively, is there one type of meeting planner who might be a prospect for all of the facilities, at one time or another?

They are consistent. We are focused on working with meeting planners that would originally consider the Durham Convention Center as a venue, but may need additional square footage and/or desire unique venues for receptions, breakout sessions, and additional plenary locations. Most of the meetings that will take place in the complex will be corporate, industry-specific, and educational sectors. There is also the possibility that large festivals will take advantage of the complex space.

Are there any conventions and/or art complex brands that you like or dislike? Who do you look to as competitors? I.e. aspirational destinations/organizations?

We compete with similar small- to mid-sized destinations. We are keen to distinguish ourselves and be competitive with similar urban meeting destinations within our region, particularly within the Carolinas. Some examples of complexes that we looked at in naming the DCAC include:

- [Greenville Convention Center Campus](#)
- [Raleigh Convention and Performing Arts Complex](#)
- [Charleston Area Convention Center Campus](#)
- [Washington DC Connected Campus](#)
- [Benton Convention Center and Hotel Complex \(Winston-Salem\)](#)
- [Wilmington's Riverfront Convention District](#)

What does success look like to you with the creation of the new umbrella brand for the four venues?

We desire the final brand/style for the DCAC to be something memorable with meeting planners, event attendees, and residents. The personality of the spaces and Durham's vibe needs to shine through in the brand work. Ultimately, the umbrella brand will entice meeting planners to learn more about the DCAC and Durham, and consider the space for their events.

Process & Timeline

What is your approval process for creative work? Who and how many people will be involved in the decision-making of the project deliverables?

The approval process for the initial brand logo concepts will include the Discover Durham CEO, VP of Marketing & Partnerships, and Creative Director. For all other project deliverables, the Creative Director

will serve as the point of contact, have final approval, and will consult with other relevant stakeholders from the participating venues and the Discover Durham team as needed.

Is there any flexibility within this timeframe, and if so, how? Is there any flexibility in the order of deliverables (e.g., must the style guide be completed before the print collateral)?

The timeline included in the RFP document is tentative and largely outlined to show the scope and interdependencies of the expected deliverables. The most critical deadline within that timeline is November 18, when we plan to publicly announce and start marketing the complex on digital channels. To this end, we need the logo, some early components of the style guide (color palette and brand fonts), and the promo kit graphics (likely using a mockup of the rebranded plaza or another facility) ready for the public launch. We invite candidate agencies to provide alternative timelines within their proposals that address this critical deadline and account for the dependencies within this project.

Budget

The RFP declares that the budget is \$40,000, but on the very last page, under Questionnaire 7a, you mention that this a “suggested amount.” How will you determine the final scope and budget?

The project team has secured \$40,000 of funding for the branding and marketing material development phase of this campaign, which will be the upper limit of cost we can accommodate for those deliverables. However, there is also the multimedia production leg of this project that will take place in late spring once the public art is installed and unveiled. The budget for this phase is to-be-determined, though we invite any interested agencies that feel confident in accomplishing both phases to offer a rough itemized budget that we would expect to be over \$40,000 to account for the additional scope.

Are production costs, including signage, to be part of the budget? Would you please let us know what your \$40K budget is intended to cover? Is it the agency fee? Are production costs separate?

The \$40,000 budget is intended to cover agency fees for the brand and design development work, along with production costs for a collateral piece that advertises the DCAC to a meeting/event planner audience. Currently, we have this piece scoped to a bi-fold or tri-fold piece with 1,000 copies, though we are open to creative approaches from the finalist agency (see more details in the **Deliverables** section below). Production and installation costs of signage are not included within this \$40,000 budget.

Given that the number of exterior banner designs, wayfinding signage, branded digital ad creative, and graphics are not specified, is it safe to assume that we should allocate a lump sum of hours to each task that includes revisions?

This would be accepted as a valid approach. We do expect that later deliverables will benefit from prior foundational work done in earlier phases of this project and will therefore have less back-and-forth and revisions.

Deliverables

Brand mockups: What kind of brand mockups are you envisioning?

The highest priority item would be mockups of exterior signage of the DCAC in the Convention Center / Carolina Theatre Plaza as depicted in the RFP. Such mockups would visually communicate to our audiences that this is a larger cohesive complex and not just one single convention center building, while also highlighting the pedestrian-friendly environment and location in Durham's bustling downtown city center. Our team is gathering additional photography of the plaza that we'll make available to the contracted branding agency to use in their conceptualizations and composites. The agency will also have the opportunity to gather additional photography on to-be-scheduled site tours if they wish.

Style guide: Beyond logos, color palette, typography, and other possible graphical elements, what do you expect to be included?

The only other asset we would like included in the style guide is co-branding treatments for the individual venues (e.g., juxtaposing the Durham Convention & Arts Complex brand mark with the Durham Convention Center mark). Otherwise, we expect the style guide to be limited to the above features. Because each of the participating venues has its own brand and voice that they will still retain and use day-to-day, we expect an all-encompassing brand bible (or similarly engrossing deliverable) is outside of the needed scope for the DCAC umbrella branding.

Collateral: Do you have any idea of the print collateral specs (e.g., is it a one-pager, multiple pages, how many pages/panels, etc.)? Will the project require a single brochure for the Durham Convention & Arts Complex or one for each of the venues as well?

Currently, we have this piece scoped to a bi-fold piece or tri-fold with 1,000 copies, though we are open to recommendations and creative approaches from the finalist agency. We will need only one collateral piece for the entirety of the Durham Convention & Arts Complex. This piece will be primarily used by our Sales team when engaging meeting planners.

What promotional materials have you used in the past? Are there any that you feel worked better than others?

We have a number of past examples of collateral that our Sales team has found success in engaging our meeting planner audience in the past. Though these vary in style based on the branding or campaign they were affiliated with, they all share the attribute of being small enough to stow in a purse or bag that a conference attendee might readily have on them:

- [Meeting planners pitch sheet \(7x7" bi-fold\)](#)
- [Target market pitch sheet \(5.5x8.5" single sheet\)](#)
- [Wedding expo flyer \(8.5x5.5" single sheet\)](#)
- [Holiday cocktail recipe book \(6x6" trifold\)](#)

Venues & Complex Functionality

The Durham Convention Center, Durham Arts Council, and Carolina Theatre all have logos. Does the Durham Armory have one, or is a logo in development?

The Durham Armory does not have a logo of its own. Because it is jointly operated by the City of Durham and Durham County, it does feature those municipal logos on its exterior and official communications.

Aside from a unified brand, how else will the DCAC work to provide a seamless meeting opportunity? For example, will there be a central point-of-contact for all of the facilities so that planners can work with one contact to plan an event?

Meeting planners will have a unified experience in planning their event at the DCAC. There will be a main point of contact through Discover Durham and via the Durham Convention Center that will handle all leads. In addition, the complex will have a central booking system and coordinated contracts / invoicing. There will be shared preferred food and beverage vendors. In addition, the creative component will be threaded throughout the booking process, providing access to additional “experience packages” with the Durham arts and creative community for meetings and events.