



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Marketing and Communications Strategy Development

Downtown Boone Development Association

1. Invitation to Proposers

The Downtown Boone Development Association (DBDA) invites proposals from qualified firms and consultants to develop a comprehensive, long-range Marketing and Communications Strategy. The selected consultant will work with DBDA staff, board leadership, and community stakeholders to produce a practical, implementation-ready plan that strengthens organizational communications and supports downtown economic vitality.

This project is supported by funding awarded to the Downtown Boone Development Association through the Appalachian Regional Commission's READY Nonprofits program. The grant supports organizational capacity-building initiatives designed to strengthen DBDA's long-term effectiveness, including the development of a comprehensive Marketing and Communications Strategy.

Questions and proposals should be directed to:

Lane Moody

Downtown Development Director

567 W. King Street Boone, NC 28607

lane.moody@boonenc.gov

The RFP will be issued October 5, 2026. Written questions must be submitted by October 12, 2026, and proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 23, 2026.

2. Organization Overview and Main Street Background

The Downtown Boone Development Association (DBDA) is a nonprofit organization working in partnership with the Town of Boone to support a vibrant and economically resilient downtown.

Boone has been a designated North Carolina Main Street community since 1993. DBDA serves as Boone's designated Main Street organization, working with downtown businesses, property owners, the Town, Appalachian State University, and community and regional partners to support business vitality, community engagement, downtown investment, and placemaking.

Through the Main Street approach, DBDA brings together public- and private-sector partners around economic vitality, design, promotion, and organization to strengthen downtown as a place to live, work, visit, and do business.

This project is part of a broader organizational capacity-building initiative. The strategy should clarify DBDA's identity and impact, distinguish DBDA's role from related Town and regional partners, and give its small staff and board sustainable tools for consistent communications.

3. Project Objectives

This project is intended to strengthen DBDA's internal organizational capacity through the development of sustainable communications systems and a comprehensive three- to five-year strategy. The focus is on establishing a consistent organizational identity, communicating DBDA's mission and impact, improving stakeholder engagement, and providing practical tools that staff and board leadership can implement and maintain over time, rather than developing short-term promotional campaigns.

4. Scope of Services

The selected consultant will be expected to complete the following tasks.

4.1 Discovery and Assessment

- Review existing DBDA marketing and communications materials.
- Conduct stakeholder interviews with staff, board members, partners, businesses, and other relevant audiences.
- Assess current communications channels and performance.
- Identify gaps, opportunities, and priority audiences.

4.2 Strategy Development

- Develop a comprehensive Marketing and Communications Strategy.
- Define target audiences and key messaging frameworks.
- Recommend communications channels and content strategies.
- Develop core messaging pillars aligned with DBDA's strategic plan.
- Develop audience segmentation and a communications matrix.
- Provide recommendations for website, email marketing and social media integration.
- Provide brand voice and messaging guidance.
- Align recommendations with regional tourism and economic development efforts.

4.3 Implementation Planning

- Develop a 12–24 month implementation roadmap within a longer-range strategy.
- Develop an annual communications calendar framework.
- Recommend practical performance measurement tools to evaluate communications effectiveness.
- Provide templates and tools to support implementation.

5. Required Deliverables

Deliverables are expected to include:

1. Marketing and Communications Assessment Summary
2. Final Marketing and Communications Strategy Document
3. Implementation Roadmap
4. Messaging Framework and Audience Profiles
5. Recommended Performance Metrics
6. Implementation Tools or Templates, as applicable
7. Presentation of the final Marketing and Communications Strategy to the DBDA Board of Directors, including revisions resulting from board feedback and delivery of an implementation-ready strategy for formal board adoption.

The selected consultant is expected to present a draft strategy to the DBDA Board of Directors at its anticipated April 27, 2027 meeting. The consultant shall incorporate board feedback and deliver the final, implementation-ready strategy for formal adoption before the required project completion date.

6. Anticipated Schedule

DBDA anticipates the following schedule:

Milestone	Date
RFP Issued	October 5, 2026
Deadline for Written Questions	October 12, 2026
Proposals Due	October 23, 2026
Target Proposal Selection	December 1, 2026
Anticipated Project Start	January 1, 2027
Draft Strategy Presentation	April 27, 2027
Required Project Completion	June 30, 2027

DBDA anticipates beginning this project on January 1, 2027. Proposers shall provide a detailed project schedule identifying major milestones, including stakeholder engagement, draft deliverables, board review, and final strategy delivery. All grant-funded work and final deliverables must be completed and accepted no later than June 30, 2027.

7. Instructions to Proposers

Proposals should be organized in the following order and provide sufficient detail for DBDA to evaluate the proposed approach and cost:

1. Executive summary and firm or consultant overview.
2. Relevant experience, preferably with downtown development, Main Street programs, tourism, economic development, or nonprofit capacity-building.
3. Project approach and methodology, including proposed stakeholder engagement.
4. Proposed work plan, milestones, and timeline.
5. Project team and key personnel, if applicable.
6. Two to three references for comparable work.
7. Complete cost proposal, as a lump sum or detailed cost breakdown.
8. Any proposed exceptions or assumptions.

All questions must be submitted in writing by email no later than October 9, 2026. Responses to substantive questions and any RFP addenda will be made publicly available to ensure all prospective proposers have access to the same information.

8. Budget and Pricing Proposal

The anticipated budget for this project is up to \$20,000, inclusive of all professional fees, stakeholder engagement, deliverable development, travel and related expenses. Proposers are encouraged to submit a cost-effective proposal reflecting the scope of services outlined in this RFP. DBDA reserves the right to negotiate the final scope and contract amount.

9. Evaluation and Selection

DBDA will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

- Relevant experience and qualifications.
- Understanding of the project goals and Boone community context.
- Proposed methodology and work plan.
- Cost reasonableness and value.
- Ability to meet the project timeline.

DBDA may request interviews, references, clarification, or additional information before selection.

10. Procurement and Grant Compliance

DBDA will conduct this procurement in accordance with applicable federal procurement standards, including 2 CFR Part 200, the Town of Boone's adopted purchasing policies, and applicable North Carolina procurement requirements.

The selected contractor shall comply with all applicable federal requirements and the terms and conditions of DBDA's grant agreement. Prior to contract execution, DBDA will verify the contractor's eligibility to participate in federally funded transactions, including applicable suspension and debarment requirements. The final agreement will incorporate all applicable federal contract provisions.

DBDA will maintain written documentation of its procurement process, including proposals received, evaluation criteria, evaluation results, contractor selection, and the basis for determining that the contract price is reasonable.

11. Conflict of Interest and Open Competition

Respondents must disclose actual or potential conflicts of interest, including financial or organizational relationships with DBDA board members, staff, or affiliated entities.

DBDA staff and board members participating in evaluation or selection will follow DBDA conflict-of-interest policies and applicable federal procurement standards. Individuals with a conflict will not score or select proposals.

DBDA encourages proposals from qualified firms regardless of geographic location, including small businesses, minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, and historically underutilized businesses.

12. Contract, Payment, and Records

Payments will be tied to agreed-upon deliverables and acceptable documentation. Final payment may depend on acceptance of final deliverables.

The selected contractor must maintain contract-related financial and project records and make them available to DBDA, funding agencies, or auditors upon request, consistent with applicable federal grant requirements.

13. Reservation of Rights

DBDA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive informalities or minor irregularities, request clarification or additional information, negotiate scope, price, and deliverables, select the proposal determined most advantageous to DBDA and the project goals, or decline to select the lowest-cost proposal.

14. Submission and Questions

Proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format to lane.moody@boonenc.gov no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, October 23, 2026. Please include "DBDA Marketing and Communications Strategy RFP" in the email subject line. Late submissions will not be considered.

Lane Moody

Downtown Development Director

Downtown Boone Development Association

567 W. King Street Boone, NC 28607

828-268-6283

lane.moody@boonenc.gov

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Target Selection: December 1, 2026

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