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Alexandria Economic Development Partnership issues RFP for website redesign

By James Cullum

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The Alexandria skyline (staff photo by Jay Westcott)

The Alexandria Economic Development Partnership has put out a request for proposals (RFP) to revamp its website.

While the nonprofit doesn't want a new logo, it does want qualified marketing and design firms for a "phased communications and marketing initiative" that includes a "light-touch messaging framework, a full website redesign (including video and content support), and collateral templates to support AEDP's business development and public engagement efforts," according to AEDP.

AEDP is requesting proposals by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, September 3. Late submissions will not be accepted.

"Ideally, the total project cost (before add-on services) would not exceed \$250,000, inclusive of all fees and expenses," AEDP said.

The timeline, project scope, and deliverables are below.

RFP Issued	Monday, August 11, 2025
Questions Due	Monday, August 18, 2025
Responses to Questions Posted	Monday, August 25, 2025
Proposals Due	Wednesday, September 3, 2025
Finalist Interviews	Week of September 22, 2025
Firm Selected	Week of September 29, 2025
Project Kickoff	Week of October 6, 2025

## Part I: Audience Refinement & Messaging Update

Based on the City of Alexandria's soon-to-be completed economic strategic framework and interviews with internal stakeholders, conduct a light-touch discovery process to surface audience profiles, marketing goals, and core messaging priorities that can serve as the foundation for all future deliverables.

Development of a messaging framework for AEDP's business development audiences to support consistency in outreach across AEDP's platforms and materials.

## Part II: Website Redesign & Content Development

Refresh AEDP's visual identity online with a modern, professional, and engaging design.

Improve navigation, content hierarchy, and calls to action to serve business attraction and retention, site selectors, developers, brokers and local businesses.

Ensure mobile responsiveness and ADA/WCAG 2.1 compliance.

Optimize for both traditional SEO and Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) to enhance visibility in search engines and AI-generated responses.

Incorporate analytics planning to track user behavior and engagement.

### Deliverables for Website Redesign:

Discovery and stakeholder engagement sessions to inform design direction.

Sitemap and content architecture recommendations.

Wireframes and page templates for key content types.

Visual design mockups reflecting AEDP's updated brand identity.

UX/UI guidelines and a design handoff package for development.

Copywriting to support the website launch and development. AEDP's internal resources won't cover the needs of a new site. An inability to provide a copywriter will not disqualify your bid, but in that case you must be willing to work with a copywriter we engage.

## Part III: Website Development

Build a secure, scalable, and easy-to-maintain website using a modern CMS. AEDP currently uses WordPress but would consider other options.

Implement the visual and UX designs produced in the redesign phase with pixel-perfect accuracy.

Ensure cross-browser compatibility, responsive design, and ADA/WCAG 2.1 compliance.

Integrate analytics, SEO tools, and performance monitoring.

Provide a user-friendly content management experience for AEDP staff with minimal ongoing vendor dependency.

#### Deliverables for Website Development:

Technical discovery to align CMS and hosting solutions with AEDP's needs.

Full build-out of approved design templates and page types.

Content migration from the current site, including text, media, and metadata.

Integration of third-party tools as needed (Hubspot CRM, analytics, marketing automation).

Testing and QA across browsers, devices, and assistive technologies.

CMS training, documentation, and handoff to AEDP staff.

#### Part IV: "Why Alexandria" Video and Shorts

Create a strategy for developing and deploying key brand videos for Alexandria, to support website use, digital marketing campaigns, and social media.

Execute those videos.

Potential videos to include: Short-form videos (15–60 seconds) optimized for social media, long-form (2–3 minutes) anchor videos for the website or presentations.

Industry-specific highlight reels (e.g., tech, life sciences, federal contractors).

#### Part V: Branded Collateral and Templates

PowerPoint and Canva presentation templates.

One-pager, fact sheet, project brief, and proposal templates (Adobe and Canva).

Adobe and Word digital letterhead.

Branded Excel sheet template.

Pop-Up banner for booth displays.

Event collateral: name badges, signage, and print materials.

Social media graphics suggestions and branded virtual backgrounds.

#### Optional Add-On: Digital Marketing Strategy and Campaign Development

Increase AEDP's visibility among site selectors, developers, entrepreneurs, and business decision-makers.

Drive qualified traffic to AEDP's website and digital platforms.

Digital Advertising: Recommendations for paid search, display, retargeting, and geotargeted campaigns.

Social Media Strategy: Organic and paid approaches tailored to AEDP's audiences.

Content Marketing: Ideas for ongoing blog posts, videos, or downloadable resources that support business attraction.

Email Marketing: Strategy for outreach, lead nurturing, and marketing automation.

Analytics & Reporting: Frameworks to measure ROI and continuously refine campaigns.

Projects will be evaluated with the following criteria:

**Creativity and Design Aesthetic (25 points)** — Demonstrates strong visual storytelling, compelling creative concepts, and a modern, cohesive design approach aligned with our brand values and audience.

**Relevant Experience (25 points)** — Includes specific examples of past work in economic development, particularly within the Alexandria region or similar communities. Familiarity with local market dynamics and stakeholder needs is strongly preferred.

**Project Approach and Methodology (15 points)** — Outlines a clear, thoughtful, and achievable plan for executing the work, including timelines, workflows, collaboration methods, and quality control.

**Team Qualifications (10 points)** — Provides bios and roles of key personnel, with attention to subject matter expertise, creative capabilities, and experience managing similar projects.

**Cost Proposal (15 points)** — Offers a transparent and realistic cost structure that aligns with project scope and delivers strong value for investment.

**References (10 points)** — Includes at least three professional references who can speak to the proposer's reliability, creativity, communication, and project management.

**Extra Credit: Added Value (5 points)** — Proposals may earn up to 5 additional points for demonstrating unique ideas, services, or tools that provide additional value beyond the core scope.

## About the Author

James Cullum

Reporter James Cullum has spent nearly 20 years covering Northern Virginia. He began working with ALXnow in 2020, and has covered every story under the sun for the publication, from investigative stories to features and photo galleries. His work includes coverage of national and international situations, as well as from the White House, Capitol, Pentagon, Supreme Court and State Department. He's covered protests and riots throughout the U.S. (including the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol), in addition to earthquake-ridden Haiti, Western Sahara in North Africa and war-torn South Sudan. He has photographed presidents and other world leaders, celebrities and famous musicians, and excels under pressure.