



Request for Proposal (RFP)

Town of Pendleton, South Carolina Identity & Culture Project

Release Date: October 3, 2025 @ 1PM

Questions Deadline: October 17, 2025 @ 5PM

SEALED Proposal Due Date: November 6, 2025 @ 2PM

1. Introduction

The Town of Pendleton, South Carolina, is seeking proposals from branding agencies to develop a comprehensive brand strategy. The goal is to strengthen brand awareness, recognition, and positioning while unifying communications and enhancing engagement with residents, visitors, businesses, and regional partners. This strategy will establish a consistent and meaningful identity, shaping how the public perceives and connects with the Town while fostering pride and loyalty. It will also serve as a foundation for economic development, community initiatives, and cultural growth.

2. Background

Nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Town of Pendleton is a historic community in Anderson County, South Carolina. Founded in 1790 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Pendleton is recognized for its well-preserved town square, rich architectural and agricultural heritage, and enduring small-town charm. With a population of just over 3,500, Pendleton offers a unique blend of history, community spirit, and modern growth. The town is home to Tri-County Technical College and benefits from its close proximity to Clemson University, Anderson University, and Southern Wesleyan University, making it an attractive place to live, work, and visit.

Community pride and hospitality are central to Pendleton's identity, creating a welcoming atmosphere for residents and visitors alike. The Town has consistently sought to honor its historic roots while embracing sustainable growth, community development, and economic vitality, ensuring its legacy as one of South Carolina's most treasured small towns.

In 1999, Pendleton undertook a branding effort that introduced a new icon and the slogan "*History, Hospitality & Happenings.*" Over time, the word "*Home*" was informally added,

reflecting residents' pride and connection to their community. However, no formal updates or refinements to the Town's visual identity have been made since then.

In 2024, the Town hired its first Community Engagement Manager to enhance outreach and public connection. A new website has since been launched, offering an improved platform for communication, information-sharing, and interaction with the public. This step, combined with Pendleton's Strategic Direction Plan, has highlighted the critical importance of refining and modernizing the Town's visual identity and implementing a comprehensive brand strategy.

One of the Strategic Direction Plan's key focus areas, *Fostering a Connected Community*, has specifically prioritized a branding and culture campaign. This initiative has already included a community survey to better understand how the public perceives Pendleton's image. As the Town moves forward, it is vital to ensure that the new identity resonates with a wide variety of audiences, reflecting Pendleton's diversity, inclusivity, and strong sense of place.

Despite having a workforce of approximately 29 full-time employees, situated alongside a neighboring municipality with more than 200 employees, the Town of Pendleton continues to effectively move forward in the direction established by Town Council. This commitment demonstrates not only the dedication of Town staff but also the efficiency, collaboration, and resilience that define Pendleton's approach to governance and service delivery.

A refreshed and comprehensive brand strategy will serve as a visual representation of Pendleton's history and future and as a cornerstone for strengthening community engagement, economic development, tourism, and civic pride. This project represents an important step in defining how Pendleton presents itself to residents, businesses, and visitors in the years ahead.

3. Objectives

The Town of Pendleton seeks to:

- Establish a consistent and professional brand system for identified internal and external audiences that:
 - Clarifies brand positioning in the marketplace
 - Creates a compelling brand narrative
 - Develops a visual and verbal identity system
 - Establishes a unified community culture and experiential elements that support the brand experience (e.g., locations, buildings, wayfinding)

4. Scope of Work

Discovery & Research

- Conduct stakeholder interviews (elected officials, staff, non-profit leaders, businesses, neighborhood/community liaisons, and a diverse group of residents).
- Conduct a minimum of four in-person community input sessions at four different accessible locations, reaching a diverse group of residents and stakeholders, including online and in-person surveys that yield significant results.
- Audit existing brand assets (icons, marketing materials, signage, website, social media).
- Develop a research summary outlining brand challenges and opportunities.

Brand Strategy Development

- Define brand positioning, values, and messaging framework.
- Create brand pillars and key narratives that highlight Pendleton's unique identity.
- Develop a tagline and messaging guide to unify communications.
- Present strategy concepts for review and feedback.

Creative Development

- Enhance visual identity concepts:
 - Brand icon concepts
 - Guidelines for appropriate usage to include town seal and brand icons. (3–5 initial directions, refined to final design)
 - Create a color palette, typography system, and design elements that are flexible for all applications. (e.g. digital, print, signage, and merchandise applications)
 - Produce primary and secondary icon variations, including color and grey scale (horizontal, vertical, simplified, etc.).

Brand Assets & Guidelines

- Develop a comprehensive Brand Guidelines Manual including:
 - Icon usage standards
 - Color and typography specifications
 - Photography and graphic style direction
 - Voice and tone guidance for communications
- Provide branded templates for letterhead, business cards, PowerPoint, social media, and press releases.

- Provide digital brand asset files in multiple formats (EPS, PNG, JPG, PDF).

Implementation Support

- Deliver brand launch strategy and recommendations.
- Assist with rollout of rebrand (press release templates, social media announcements, signage mockups).
- Provide framework & facilitation tools for staff training/workshop on applying the brand consistently.

Futures Services

The Town reserves the right to engage the selected firm for additional professional services beyond this project, including Phase 2 branding and marketing initiatives, if applicable.

5. Deliverables & Ownership

- Research and Discovery Report
- Brand Strategy & Messaging Framework
- Final Icon Package (primary + variations, multiple file formats)
- Color Palette & Typography System
- Brand Guidelines Manual (PDF)
- Marketing and Communication Templates
 - Letterhead and internal document templates
 - Social media posts examples
 - Recommendations on messaging
- Brand Launch Plan
 - Create a visual presentation launching the final brand identity to internal and external audiences.
 - Develop co-branding guidelines to ensure consistent use of the Town's brand alongside partner, sponsor, and community organization logos.
- All creative work (icons, style guides, templates, etc.) will be the property of the Town of Pendleton upon final payment.
- The Town will hold full copyright of the visual identity, including the right to reproduce, adapt, and use materials without restriction.

6. Proposal Requirements

Interested firms must submit a sealed proposal, including seven (7) hard copies and one (1) electronic copy on a flash drive, of the following:

- Cover letter and firm introduction.
- Relevant experience with municipal or nonprofit branding projects.
- Proposed approach and methodology.
- Examples/portfolio of past brand work.
- Project team bios and roles.
- Proposed timeline.
- Detailed budget and fee structure.
- Three (3) professional references from previous clients.

7. Minimum Qualifications

To be considered for selection, firms must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- 1) Experience with Research-Driven Branding
 - Demonstrated ability to develop brand strategies based on both quantitative and qualitative research, including stakeholder engagement, surveys, and focus groups.
- 2) Public Engagement Process
 - Proven record of facilitating community input sessions, public meetings, and/or digital engagement tools to incorporate diverse stakeholder voices into the branding process.
- 3) Comprehensive Brand Development
 - Experience creating complete brand packages, including messaging frameworks, visual identity systems, brand manuals, and implementation strategies.
- 4) Project Management Capacity
 - Ability to manage timelines, budgets, and deliverables for complex, multi-phase projects while maintaining consistent communication with client staff.
- 5) Provide results of strategies and outcomes for goals and objectives established for target audiences.
 - Submit five letters of recommendation showing work with diverse audiences.

8. Submittal Requirements

Each proposal must include the following:

- 1) Cover Letter & Firm Profile
 - A formal cover letter introducing the firm, its qualifications, and ability to meet the requirements of this RFP.
- 2) Project Understanding & Approach

- A clear explanation of the firm’s understanding of the Town of Pendleton’s unique identity, history, and goals.
 - Outline of methodology and approach, including community engagement strategies.
 - 3) Proposed Budget & Cost Breakdown
 - Itemized cost proposal organized by task/deliverable.
 - Aggregate project cost, including all overhead, travel, and incidental expenses.
 - Optional services priced separately.
 - 4) Project Schedule
 - Timeline tied to key milestones and deliverables.
 - 5) Qualifications & Minimum Requirements
 - Documentation of how the firm meets the Minimum Qualifications listed in Section 7.
 - Team Bios
 - Roles and qualifications of all staff assigned to the project.
 - 6) References & Work Samples
 - Three (3) professional references from past clients, preferably municipal or nonprofit.
 - At least five (5) examples of completed branding projects, including visual samples and summary of process.
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9. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Experience and qualifications, demonstrated through creativity and the quality of past work
- References and client satisfaction
- Proposed methodology and approach
- Cost-effectiveness

Preferred Experience

- Municipal or Government Experience
 - Prior experience developing brand identity systems for municipalities, government agencies, or nonprofit organizations of similar size and scope.
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10. Timeline & Payments Schedule

- RFP Release: October 3, 2025 @ 1PM
- Questions Due: End of business day on October 17, 2025, with answers provided by end of business day on October 24, 2025

- Proposal Deadline: November 6, 2025 @ 2PM
 - Address sealed proposal as follows:

Town of Pendleton
 Attn: Lindsey Watley
 310 Greenville St.
 Pendleton, SC 29670
 - In person presentations or interviews: January 2026
 - Selection of Firm: February 3, 2026, at Regular Session Council Meeting
 - Project Start: March 2026
 - Anticipated Completion: July 2026
 - Funding Resolution ([CLICK HERE](#))
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11. Milestones & Payment Schedule

Milestone	Target Date	Key Deliverables	Payment %
1. Project Kickoff	March 2026	Kickoff meeting, finalized project plan, communication protocols	10%
2. Discovery & Research Complete	Late March 2026	Stakeholder interviews, community sessions & surveys, brand audit, Research & Discovery Report	15%
3. Brand Strategy Development	April 2026	Draft Brand Strategy & Messaging Framework (positioning, values, brand pillars, tagline concepts)	15%
4. Creative Development	May 2026	Initial visual identity concepts (3–5 directions), refined icon design, draft messaging guide & narrative	20%
5. Brand Assets & Guidelines	June 2026	Final Icon Package (all variations + file formats), Color Palette & Typography System, Brand Guidelines Manual (PDF), branded templates	20%
6. Implementation Support & Training	Early July 2026	Brand launch plan, rollout recommendations, press/social templates, signage mockups, staff training workshop	10%
7. Final Brand Launch & Closeout	July 2026	Visual launch presentation to internal/external audiences, handover of all final digital brand asset files, project approval	10%

11. Additional Information

- The Town of Pendleton reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.
- Firms may be asked to present their proposal to Town leadership.
- Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to Lindsey Watley at lindseyw@townofpendleton.org by October 17, 2025, @ 5PM.
- Proposers wishing to receive notification of any addendums must submit their contact information to Lindsey Watley.