

Camden Special Services District

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RESPONSES TO SUBMITTED QUESTIONS

FOR BRANDING SERVICES

Opening Date: August 20, 2025

Due Date: September 17th, 2025, no later than 9:00 AM EST

Camden Special Services District
200 Federal Street, Suite 146
Camden, NJ 08103

E-mail completed proposals to:

Kristine Kennedy
Camden Special Services District
(865) 336-6022
KKennedy@CamdenSSD.com

CLARIFYING THE PUBLIC CONTRACT LAW REQUIREMENT

Since issuing this RFP, CSSD has further investigated the requirement of certain documents, such as the New Jersey Business Certification, that are required by units of government for procurement. CSSD is a 501c3, not a unit of government, but has historically adhered to the principles of public contracting in an effort to maintain open and fair procurement. However, these requirements could have the effect of deterring qualified respondents, such as small local firms. After conversations with other business improvement districts around New Jersey, we are issuing guidance that we will not require the New Jersey Business Certification for this contract. Respondents should still consult their own legal and/or tax advisors to ensure that they are complying with all laws and regulations.

Q: Is there a budget for the RFP Branding Services? I see that the duration of the project, but no mention of a budget or do not exceed.

A: A budget for branding services was not published in the RFP to encourage responses from a broad range of firms. The scope of work should guide respondents' proposed costs. Should CSSD feel strongly about a candidate during the interview process but their proposed cost is outside of our budget, we would see if there is an opportunity for aligning the scope and costs.

Q: Can you confirm whether all branding and communications will be promoted under the Downtown Camden umbrella? I.e., CSSD as an entity of Downtown Camden. Or is it CSSD standalone?

A: This is a question that needs to be answered through the brand assessment process. CSSD is the 501c3 that manages the business improvement district in Downtown Camden, but how these things are communicated requires direction. It is a goal of this project to define this brand hierarchy as it is not currently very clear.

Q: For the examples/mockups requested in the Scope & Deliverables section, can you clarify what types of items you'd like to see included so we can provide a relevant portfolio? For

instance, web creation and design and social media development and management vs. collateral and logo creation

- With that being said, in addition to the Brand Guide and Deployment plan, could you provide more detail on final deliverables/materials you expect to come out of this process (web, social media, collateral, logo creation, etc.)?

A: The focus of this project is brand identity and logo creation, not a reenvisioning of our website or social media, though CSSD will be updating our physical and digital real estate, including our website, with the resulting brand identity. Major changes to the website are outside of this scope.

Examples of mockups might be how a logo looks on tee shirts, banners, or a wrapped work vehicle. It might also include creative ways to use our brand assets “in the wild” – such as a mural or vacant storefront design.

The specific deliverables should include a suite of design files, native and converted, that CSSD can easily deploy for web, digital, and print, as well as a style guide. CSSD also seeks guidance on the brand hierarchy and how/when we might best utilize the various brands. We anticipate that there will be distinct designs for CSSD, CBID, and Downtown Camden. Please keep in mind that we also have a physical mascot, Buzz Bee, that is also illustrated.

Q: Can you provide more information about what your expectations are regarding: **Brand Identity** with individual assets for:

- Downtown Camden
- Camden Special Services District
- Camden Business Improvement District
- Downtown Camden Young Professionals Network
- Buzz Bee mascot
- Key seasonal events

In general, our Placemaking and Neighborhood Branding clients typically focus on branding the City/Neighborhood/District, clean up the brand architecture (how each of the sub-brands relate to the overall brand of the City/Neighborhood/District) and create a system of coordinated logos for the set of sub-brands (Downtown Camden, Camden SSD, Camden BID, Downtown Camden Young Professionals Network, Buzz Bee Mascot, Events).

Does that approach resonate with you?

A: Yes, this approach is what we have in mind. Downtown Camden does not currently have its own brand identity, which has led us to rely on one of our two organizational brands. This does not leave room for us to talk about the district as the “star of the show.”

Q: Do we have to be a business registered in NJ to be eligible for the RFP?

A: Please refer to the guidance issued at the top of this document.

Q: Can we get a list of the seasonal events included in the branding scope

A: CSSD is in the midst of revamping its annual events schedule for 2026. In the past, we have hosted free lunchtime/happy hour concerts, an art crawl, pop up picnics, and young professionals get togethers.

Q: Will someone on the CSSD team be available to facilitate surveying key stakeholders?

A: Yes.

Q: Our team requires a guided tour of the neighborhood to fully understand the boundaries, key landmarks and culture. Will someone on the CSSD team be able to facilitate a group tour prior to the visioning session for the project?

A: Yes.

Q: Does the CSSD have a space large enough to host a visioning session for the branding team and key stakeholders?

A: We will be able to secure space for large group meetings.

Q: How many agencies do you expect to respond to the RFP?

A: The RFP has been shared widely. We anticipate a strong response but cannot estimate the number of anticipated responses. As of 9/3/25 CSSD has received some form of communication from 14 firms.

Q: How many agencies will you be inviting to the interview round?

A: Most likely three.

Q: What is the budget for this project?

A: A budget for branding services was not published in the RFP to encourage responses from a broad range of firms. The scope of work should guide respondents' proposed costs. Should CSSD feel strongly about a candidate during the interview process but their proposed cost is outside of our budget, we would see if there is an opportunity for aligning the scope and costs.

Q: Is the goal to keep separate brands (including logos) for CSSD and CBID? Is there a world where CSSD and CBID could be brought under one brand, and one mark to avoid confusion and potential cluttering of materials and messaging as you noted?

A: CSSD is a 501c3 entity with a board of directors that manages work within the CBID boundaries. CBID is a funding mechanism without a separate board of directors. How these brands interact is open for conversation. We desire to reduce confusion.

Q: Could you add clarity around assumed # of 1:1 interviews, small group discussions, etc. to be an inclusive process?

A: We understand that the process of rebranding a well-known organization - and of creating a new brand for a neighborhood - is a complex and highly subjective process. People in the city of Camden are typically asked to come in at the end of a design process and choose from a couple of completed options. It is our intention to get meaningful input early in the process so that the work is authentic to Downtown Camden and the brand is something our community is proud to put forth. CSSD staff will facilitate meetings, surveys, and conversations. Respondents should anticipate two in-person community charettes and about 6 small-group or individual interviews, though this can be refined as needed.

Q: Please describe the deliverable for the “evaluation of audiences”. Do you anticipate needing market research to understand these audiences?

A: CSSD has conducted market research and can provide background on the audiences but we would expect the branding firm to offer insights into how our brand(s) might be perceived by these audiences.

Q: You noted you need a “Brand identity with individual assets for Downtown Camden, CSSD, CBID, Downtown Camden Young Professionals Network, Buzz Bee mascot, and key seasonal events.”

We’re assuming you are thinking this is 1 larger brand identity that will be created with sub brands that can tie back to the 1 identity, is that correct?

A: Yes, this is our hope.

Q: When you say “individual assets” for each of these, can you describe what the expectation is there in more detail? Or are you referring to the elements that would commonly be developed as part of the visual identity system (color, type, graphic elements, photo style, etc.)

A: We are referring to the elements that would commonly be developed as part of the visual identity system. The specific deliverables should include a suite of design files, native and converted, that CSSD can easily deploy for web, digital, and print, as well as a style guide.

Q: In order for us to best scope e-newsletter templates, can you share any examples of what these look like today, how many you feel you may need in total, and what email system you use to currently deploy them?

Commonly we might create 1 modular template + a few header graphic options based on the communication that can be used; does that sound like a viable approach?

A: An example of our current newsletter: <https://mailchi.mp/a80c78aaeaea/news-from-the-camden-special-services-district-10333658>

CSSD has two types of newsletters – general public and business – that would each need an updated template.

Q: Can you expand a bit more on your hopes and dreams for an eventual deployment plan - what would you hope to have outlined and included in the final deliverable?

A: We of course would like to ensure we are updating our existing physical and virtual real estate (uniforms, website, etc) but also would want to see any bold, creative ways of launching the brand “in the wild” such as murals or vacant storefronts. CSSD is also retaining a PR consultant who will be responsible for announcing and promoting the brand launch. Downtown Camden has not had its own brand identity and we want this to be a big deal.

Q: Can you expand on what you’re hoping to see when you mention “examples/mockups” as part of the deployment plan?

A: What will the new logos and colors look like on team uniforms, our vehicle wraps, an example of outdoor advertising? Mock ups will help CSSD understand how the visual identity might be deployed.

Q: As there are a few stakeholders involved in the project, can you clarify who is the responsible party (parties) for deliverable approvals?

A: CSSD staff, specifically the executive director, will be the responsible party for approvals of deliverables. A list of community stakeholders is provided so that respondents have an idea of who has an interest in how Downtown Camden is branded.

Q: Do we have to provide state of NJ business registration in order to be contracted for this job? Our business is currently registered in PA.

A: Please see the guidance issued at the top of this document

Q: You mention 3 staff members being the main points of contact. Does that mean there are only 3 key decision makers? Would like to know how many are in the group deciding on who wins the contract as well as how many in the group that makes decisions throughout the branding process, if different.

A: CSSD is a highly collaborative organization. Staff (3) and a board committee (2-4 members) will review submissions and determine which firms to interview. It is likely that these board committee members will also participate in interviews which will be led by the executive director. Interviews are intended to help our organization get to know the firms, their staff, their aesthetic and approach, as well as provide an opportunity for firms to get their questions answered. The executive director will make the final decision about firm selection.