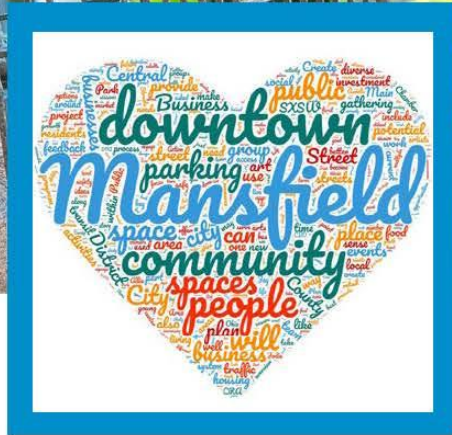


# Community Branding Request for Proposal



**Mansfield Rising**  
Downtown Investment Plan 2019



You are invited to prepare a community branding proposal as outlined in this document. The following RFP includes a background of our area and describes the purpose of the community branding, its desired components, and specific requests relating to the proposal.

In providing these details, our intent is not to convey that we have all of the answers in creating the best possible community brand. The ideal vendor will bring their own ideas and vision based on industry expertise, technical capability, and client relations, guiding us to incorporate our goals into that vision.

We understand that details may be subject to change upon vendor recommendation and/or research of more optimal solutions. In your proposal, please feel free to suggest alternatives where noted.

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## THE CHALLENGE

The Community Branding Steering Committee is seeking proposals to develop a comprehensive brand and marketing strategy for the greater Mansfield and Richland County Community (hereinafter referred to as Mansfield/Richland County Community). The branding and marketing initiative should be reflective of all existing economic development activities (i.e. Community, downtown, business attraction and expansion, entrepreneurship and tourism).

As the largest city in the county, Mansfield is generally used when referring to the area just as is done with any other metro area. However, our community is comprised of eight other cities and villages each with their own personality (Shelby, Ontario, Lexington, Bellville, Butler, Shiloh, Lucas and Plymouth). We are looking for a partner who can research and identify “WHO” the Mansfield/Richland County Community is and how we share the transformation of who we are and who we are becoming...Our Community Brand.

The following have been identified as the key objectives:

- Flexibility** - Establish a brand that works for the community as a whole that must be flexible and adaptable in order to meet the needs of a variety of partners, including agencies within the Mansfield/Richland County Community, as well as groups and businesses with their own specific marketing initiatives, while maintaining consistency with the overall brand. It must also be flexible enough to evolve in order to adapt to any changes in the market.
- Authenticity** - The brand must be authentic and resonate with citizens, businesses and community groups within the Mansfield/Richland County Community throughout the region in order to gain the broadest possible support for the initiative. Design a campaign brand that tells the authentic story of what draws people here and reveals initiatives that will make our area even more intriguing as we continue to develop and grow.
- Inclusivity** - The brand should convey a common message and image to audiences both inside and outside of the Mansfield/Richland County Community.
- Community Identity/Pride** - Identify and promote what makes the Mansfield/Richland County Community appealing in a regionally competitive environment to investors, businesses, retailers, visitors and residents.
- Community and Economic Development Promotion** - Promote a healthy economy; attract private investment; attract new residents and young professionals; retain key businesses and creative talent; and inspire visitation.



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

**Mansfield Rising** is a downtown development effort spearheaded by The Richland County Foundation and partners. This plan focuses on three core pillars: Mansfield is a place for business, gathering and living. The purpose of this RFP is to secure an experienced and capable company that can partner with our community for the branding, marketing and wayfinding strategies of this mission.

Downtown Mansfield has been on a revitalization path since 1991 when the Richland Carrousel Park opened. During the planning, many people in the community scoffed at the idea that a wooden carrousel could improve downtown. Twenty-eight years later, most would agree it was a fantastic idea. Since then, many improvements have been made in downtown. But it has not reached critical mass with regards to development and investment. The Mansfield Rising plan offers ways to help reach critical mass.

The Richland County Foundation invested in fifteen local citizens by sending them to the South by Southwest Conference in Austin, TX. The goal was to come back with ideas on how to improve downtown Mansfield. Turning regular citizens into consultants gives depth and authenticity to the plan. It has been vetted through the community, developed through historical knowledge and written through the voices of fifteen local citizens. It provides a road map of projects and opportunities for partnerships to continue the renaissance of downtown Mansfield.

Our target demographic is as diverse as the areas within our community. We serve our neighbors, tourists, media, businesses, planning organizations, filming companies and relocation companies. Mansfield must be attractive to our residents and world travelers alike.

World class industries like The Gorman-Rupp Company have discovered the strategic advantages of starting their business in, or moving to, Richland County. Mansfield is the central hub of business and life in Richland County. The city is highly accessible being located off Interstate 71 (I-71) and US Route 30 (US 30), halfway between Cleveland and Columbus, making it within a day's drive of half of the United States and Canadian populations. Average Daily Traffic (AADT) values for I-71 & US 30 interchange area are 47,000 vehicles per day for I-71, while US 30 sees an average of 18,000 vehicles per day.

This workforce is supported by ten different educational institutions, such as the Mansfield campus of The Ohio State University and North Central State College. With over 16,000 students enrolled, these institutions offer everything from industry certifications to associates





degrees to doctorate programs. North Central State College's James W. Kehoe Center features one of the nation's top industrial training and retraining facilities.

When off the job, city-lovers can enjoy the hustle and bustle of the city Mansfield, but the area has never lost its small-town charm. The area's other communities are just a short drive from the cultural and retail centers of the county. The area is a recreational hub for North Central Ohio thanks to two state parks, rivers for canoeing and hiking, biking and bridle trails, Ohio's first ski resort, Snow Trails, as well as two motorsports facilities. Mansfield is home to the Ohio State Reformatory, an internationally known historic site and filming location for major motion pictures including *The Shawshank Redemption*, and Kingwood Center Gardens' 47 acres of formal woodland and terraced gardens. There is more to experience for residents and visitors alike.

We are not looking to demonstrate how we are LIKE other successful cities – we are focused on telling of the story of why we are who we are, and why you want to take a closer look no matter the reason. We have great breweries, cool coffee shops and top-notch entertainment, but that should be expected in a thriving city – we want people to experience all that and more. We need you to help us present the more.

## SCOPE OF WORK

1. Conduct Mansfield/Richland County Community identity, image and perception research.
2. Develop a community branding vision.
3. Identify/establish a brand for the Mansfield/Richland County Community
4. Create branding deliverable, including brand guidelines and creative samples (one for tourism and one for overall economic development)
5. Establish a brand implementation plan

## PROJECT DETAILS

*Project Management* – The respondent will lead all aspects of the Mansfield/Richland County Community branding initiative, including the following:

1. **Advisory to the Steering Committee** – This team will be composed of representatives from the Richland Area Chamber & Economic Development, Destination Mansfield-Richland County, Downtown Mansfield, Inc., Cities of Mansfield, Shelby, and Ontario, Villages of Lexington and Bellville, Richland County Foundation, Richland County Commissioners and other business/community leaders.
2. **Facilitator during the research process and/or discovery of the brand** - The Mansfield/Richland County Community has been very involved and engaged. The



respondent will be expected to employ creative means of public involvement to ensure all segments of the community are aware of and engaged in the project.

3. **Research** – Research will be the basis for the development of a brand concept, creative elements, and the overall brand initiative. The respondent will create and implement a brand research plan, which should include qualitative and quantitative research to identify the following:
  - a. Quantitative consumer image research on the Mansfield/Richland County area. The Community Branding Steering Committee (CBSC) can provide a consumer email list of consumers who have inquired to Destination Mansfield seeking tourism information as well as a list of site selectors and/or businesses that have looked here from the Richland Area Chamber & Economic Development.
  - b. Qualitative research with key stakeholders to assess stakeholder perceptions regarding the Mansfield/Richland County area, its image, assets, deficits and opportunities. The CBSC will provide a list of key stakeholders, groups, or influential individuals who have a vested interest in the branding initiative and need to be involved in the process.
  - c. An assessment of the assets, deficits and opportunities for growth for both tourism and overall economic development in the Mansfield/Richland County area.
  - d. Other research recommended by the respondent to accomplish our scope of work.
4. **Brand Implementation Plan** – The respondent will develop a plan to implement, manage, and promote the brand to include, but not limited to the following:
  - a. Promote use of the brand among community partners, groups, and businesses while maintaining brand integrity.
  - b. Maintain consistency of brand image and message while providing suitable flexibility for the target audiences of the participating agencies.
  - c. Recommend ways to articulate the brand, define markets and promotional opportunities, and advise on strategies to promote brand awareness.
5. **Creative Development of Brand** - The respondent will develop creative elements which include design concepts, logos, messages, taglines, and other features to support the overall brand initiative. Two creative samples will be created, one for overall economic development marketing and one for tourism promotion.
6. **Evaluation Plan** - The respondent will develop a plan for ongoing evaluation of the brand's effectiveness.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

We are requesting the following timeline:

- RFP released on July 15, 2019



- Questions from potential bidders by July 26, 2019 to [ltasseff@DestinationMansfield.com](mailto:ltasseff@DestinationMansfield.com)
- Answers to questions will be published ([on this page](#)) on August 9, 2019
- Proposals submitted by September 6, 2019
- Finalists will be asked to present to the branding steering committee in person at a date to be confirmed during the week of October 7-11, 2019
- Vendor selection will be completed by October 21, 2019
- Project Commencement December 1, 2019
- Project Completion May 1, 2020

### PROPOSAL PREPARATION INSTRUCTION AND MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

**Responses must include answers to the questions below, numbered as below. The maximum number of pages for your response is 20 pages. Responses more than 20 pages will not be scored and will be discarded.**

1. Provide an overview of your firm and its branding experience.
2. As a minimum qualification, bidders must have completed three branding initiatives for a community, organization, product or service in the past seven years. Describe three branding initiatives your firm lead in the past seven years.
3. Describe your plan to develop branding for Mansfield/Richland County.
4. Describe your research plan for this project.
5. Describe your plan for stakeholder input into this process.
6. Describe your proposed timeline for this project.
7. Describe your staffing, with bios, for this project.
8. Describe the deliverables you will provide at the completion of this project.
9. Funds available for this project are \$75,000 to \$100,000. Provide a budget to provide the services described in this RFP.
10. Provide three client references with key contact information.

Proposals are due by 5:00 pm, September 6, 2019 to [ltasseff@DestinationMansfield.com](mailto:ltasseff@DestinationMansfield.com)