



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Booking and Marketing Services

**The Classic Center Authority (CCA)
CCA RFP# ARENA1MKTG**

**THE CLASSIC CENTER
300 N Thomas Street
Athens, Georgia 30601**



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
for
BOOKING & MARKETING SERVICES

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OVERVIEW

The Classic Center CCA (“CCA”), an Authority of the State of Georgia, is soliciting proposals from firms interested in providing professional event booking and marketing services for the CCA, including for a new public arena to be constructed on the CCA campus in downtown Athens, Georgia, known as Project No. ARENA1, Classic Center Arena Project (“Project”). The Project is one of a set of capital improvement projects included in the 2020 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) which was approved by voters on November 5, 2019. The SPLOST information may be found at: [SPLOST-2020-Final-Projects-and-Project-Statements \(accgov.com\)](https://accgov.com/SPLOST-2020-Final-Projects-and-Project-Statements)

This Request for Proposals (RF) seeks submittals from potential providers to potentially partner with CCA for the above-mentioned services. Some firms that respond to this RFP, whose submittals are determined by the CCA to be sufficiently advantageous to the mission of the CCA, may be deemed eligible for further consideration by the CCA to provide these services in a progressive partnership with CCA. All respondents to this RFP are subject to instructions communicated in this document and are cautioned to completely review the entire RFP and follow instructions carefully.

CCA retains the right to reject any or all submittals or subsequent submittals and/or proposals, and to waive technicalities, irregularities, and informalities, and retains the right to cancel or conclude this procurement at any time without selecting a firm to provide the described services, without any liability to any respondents, or any other person or entity, and is under no obligation to make an award relating to this RFP to any person or entity. The final terms of any Services Agreement contemplated by this procurement will comply with the final terms and conditions of the CCA; subject, in all cases, to strict compliance with the applicable laws and ordinances of the of the State of Georgia and Athens-Clarke County (ACC).

A RESTRICTION OF COMMUNICATION IS IN EFFECT FOR THIS PROJECT. From the time of advertisement of this solicitation until final award is made to a successful respondent and such award is announced, interested firms are not allowed or permitted to communicate about this solicitation or scope with any staff or any official representatives of the CCA, ACC, or their consultants to the Project, except for submission of questions as instructed in the RFP, or as provided by any existing work agreement(s). Finalists and Apparent Awardee(s) are restricted from making public statements or press releases about their selection as finalists or their apparent award. For violation of this restriction, the CCA reserves the right to reject the submittal of the offending respondent.

CCA Information

The CCA is responsible for the operations and management of the public assembly facilities of The Classic Center, in Athens, Georgia. A new Arena will be made part of the Authority's responsibility within the existing complex of venues it operates in Athens. The Authority was created in 1988 by the state of Georgia Legislature and is a quasi-governmental not-for-profit organization.

The **Mission Statement** of The Classic Center:

“To seek to enhance the quality of life in Athens- Clarke County by serving as the cultural, civic, and social center of the Southeast by generating maximum economic impact.”

The **Brand Statement** of The Classic Center:

“Through a thoughtfully planned and conveniently placed facility located in a uniquely vibrant and charming cultural environment and proactive, creative approach to personal service, The Classic Center elevates the experience of events to exceed the expectations of our guests.”

Existing Facility/Complex Overview

The existing Classic Center is an 350,000 square foot (includes all pre-function/lobby spaces) public assembly facility located in the northeast section of the state of Georgia and is approximately sixty (60) miles northeast of Atlanta, Georgia. The Classic Center Authority was formed in 1988 and currently holds a 50-year lease (beginning in 2020) on The Classic Center which is owned by the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County (ACC). ACC serves an immediate area population of approximately 126,000 with a growth of over 9% since year 2010. The Center is also a business, cultural and social hub for the many surrounding counties/communities in Northeast Georgia that include, but are not limited to, the counties of Oconee, Barrow, Greene, Gwinnett, and Madison. The Center includes a 2000 seat performing arts theater, 18,000 square foot ballroom

(divisible into 10 breakout room), 55,000 square foot exhibit hall, historic 3,000 square foot Firehall, a 9,000 square foot indoor Atrium, fully functional 5,000 square foot kitchen facility, a 12,000 square foot break-out space in its renovation of an old warehouse now making up the Foundry Street Ballrooms, and an additional 4 more break-out rooms above its exhibit space totaling 7000 square feet making a total possible 29 break-out rooms. More information can be obtained about The Center at www.ClassicCenter.com.

Arena Project & Timeline:

As the basis for the services sought by this RFP, the CCA is developing and soon constructing a new 5500/6000 + fixed/telescopic seating capacity Arena in downtown Athens, Georgia. It will host a variety of entertainment, concert, sports, and convention activities. A focus for the venue creation will be constructing and designing an Arena that will provide an exceptional experience for music concerts and entertainment- from both the artists and attendee perspective. While we anticipate regularly drawing attendees from a 200-mile radius from Athens GA, the Arena will serve the entire north Georgia, and southeastern U.S. region. The notoriety of downtown Athens and high population due to the University of Georgia campus, as well as the vibrant Athens music scene will help the notoriety of this venue. The Arena is currently in the planning, design and programming stages having been fully approved in a 2019 community SPLOST referendum and the architect, Perkins & Will, is anticipated to soon be under contract under contract and to have begun design work in January 2021. Land and the specific site for the Arena has already been identified and secured. We are imminently soliciting a Construction Management firm (CM at-risk) as a partner to our team to build the Arena, with anticipated completion in the fall of 2023.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

Definitions

“Authority” or “CCA” shall refer to The Classic Center Authority/Classic Center and/or its authorized representative. “Firm” (“Offeror”) shall refer to that party responding to the RFP solicitation and that may be selected by The Classic Center Authority. “Services” or “Partnership” shall refer to the prospective scope of services of the successful Offeror.

Schedule of Events

The following Schedule of Events represents the CCA’s best estimate of the schedule that will be followed. All times indicated are prevailing times in Athens, Georgia. The CCA reserves the right to adjust the schedule as the CCA deems necessary.

a. CCA issues RFP	2/9/21	-----
b. Deadline for submission of written questions and requests for clarification (See 4. Submittals of questions and request for clarification below)	2/19/21	2:00 PM

c. Deadline for submission of Proposals	3/2/21	2:00 PM
d. CCA completes evaluation and determines finalist firms	3/9/21	TBD

CCA’s Objectives of RFP

The CCA, specifically with regard to the new Arena being developed, seeks to formally partner with an entertainment industry leader and experienced professional organization to specifically:

- 1) Assist and partner with the CCA to secure prominent national touring entertainment and concert bookings to be held within the new Classic Center Arena to meet the Arena event goals
- 2) Assist and partner with the CCA to market and advertise the Arena’s hosted ticketed entertainment events to the region to drive ticket sales to meet each engagements’ financial objectives
- 3) Assist with marketing Athens as viable market outside of Atlanta that can benefit from the UGA population as well as surrounding metro areas that can be looked at as a viable market to promoters and presenters to bring talent to Athens.
- 4) Assist and partner with the CCA to Identify, target, and maximize all business, financial and revenue opportunities of and related to the new Arena so the CCA might realize appropriate net return over the initial 10-year opening period.

CCA’s Teaming Objective

CCA wishes to add reliable, professional expertise to the CCA team in marketing and booking the Arena. The Offeror must be an established professional entertainment industry organization and have specific experience and expertise in the venue, entertainment, and concert booking industry. The organization should be a nationally recognized booking and marketing firm with a proven track record of drawing large national touring acts to such a destination. It is the desire of the CCA to provide world-class entertainment such as comedians, family shows and music concert performances to Athens and the north Georgia region. The Arena will be an “open room” and therefore non-exclusive to any one partnering entity for booking, but the CCA seeks a multi-year preferred agreement with a single primary partner (also referred to as “the partnership”) to actively lead and ensure the concert and entertainment booking goals and objectives of the Arena are met annually.

The CCA in-house sales and booking team, following an established booking policy, will directly handle bookings related to a tenant hockey team (approx. 10 game dates), conferences, conventions, exposition, civic, and sporting tournaments for the Arena. Generally, priority is given to events generating thresholds of hotel room nights and these

event sales efforts will be focused of dates beyond the immediate 18 months. The focus inside 18 months will be filling dates with ticketed entertainment and concerts.

Specific Booking Objectives

While not all ticketed entertainment and concert bookings will originate out of the partnership, a significant portion is expected to be. These are the overall total event count objectives for the Arena that shall be met.

- 1) Host 25 music concerts annually
- 2) Host 10 family style shows annually
- 3) Other objectives determined by CCA, including studies and other resources

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL SUBMSSION INSTRUCTIONS

ALL PROPOSALS RECEIVED WILL BECOME A PART OF THE OFFICIAL CONTRACT FILE AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS. Note: Labeling sections of the RFP information as proprietary or confidential does not waive this provision.

PROPOSAL DELIVERABLES:

A complete, signed proposal must include the information and/or documents listed below:

COVER – Transmittal Letter: Provide cover letter of introduction and statement of interest.

TAB 1 – Table of Contents: Provide a table of content to allow reviewers to easily navigate the response

TAB 2 – Business Information: Provide relevant information regarding organizational structure and standing. Documentation should include:

1. A narrative description of the founding of the company, its purpose and business focus, years in business and overall growth and capabilities.
2. If the name of the Firm/Offeror is a corporation/trust. The proposal shall be signed by an authorized person of the corporation, with the designation of the signer's official capacity. The proposal shall show the state in which the corporation is chartered, and that the corporation is responsible and authorized to do business in and in good standing the State of Georgia. A statement of

organizational structure (e.g., ownership structure, partners, board of directors, joint venture partners, etc.), a listing of financial references.

3. If the Firm/Offeror is a partnership, the proposal shall be signed in the name of the partnership by a general partner or other person duly authorized to bind the partnership. The capacity and title of the person signing shall be shown set forth on the document.
4. If the Firm/Offeror is an individual or sole proprietorship, the Proposal shall be signed by the individual in person, stating the name or style, if any, under which the Offeror is doing business.
5. The proposal shall show the present business address of the Firm/Offeror at which communications from the Authority and notices served are to be received.
6. Financial statements for the previous 3 years, showing sound relevant business practices and Firm stability. Provide any other evidence the firm feels will engender confidence in its financial stability. Although this information is subject to potential public review, you may identify areas you wish for CCA to keep confidential to the extent possible.

TAB 3 – Qualifications & Experience: Provide relevant information regarding organizational Qualification & Experience. Written responses should include:

- 1) Outline the firms experience in the live entertainment industry with booking, and/or brokering, and/or marketing live entrainment and concerts at venues of at least 3,000 and up to 8,000 in ticketed capacity. Provide examples of specific engagements and venues as well as outline the detailed scope of experience.
- 2) Provide specific experience in developing a market in smaller urban areas similar to Athens (outside of a major market such as Atlanta) demonstrating the firm’s ability to assist in progressing the Arena and Athens as a viable market for national touring acts.
- 3) Provide names, biographical data, professional experience/credentials, and roles of the persons that would be involved in both a possible future presentation/meeting concerning the RFP, as well as those persons that would be specifically working on the account within the partnership with the CCA to lead the related booking activities upon possible award.
- 4) Provide at least 3 specific and targeted examples of artists, bands, or other national touring acts that proposer feels would be an ideal fit (size, scope, appropriateness, etc.) for the new Arena in Athens, and the Athens area/Northeast Georgia market overall. As the venue may not open until 2023 and artists

popularity can ebb and flow, please use present day examples for purposes of a response.

- 5) Provide confirmation of specific levels of investment your firm is willing to front to this project for capital needed to complete the facility as well as specific requirements your firm would need to receive a return on that level of investment.

TAB 4 – Professional Expertise: Provide relevant information regarding the organization’s professional expertise. Written responses should include:

- 6) Describe the firms’ specific perspective and approach on the marketing (in the realm of selling tickets/access) of entertainment events to meet the established financial needs outlined for the engagement. Include information on methods, tactics, current/evolving trends, customer relationship management, patron communications, budgeting, planning, management, and design/creative.
- 7) Describe and outline the Firms’ expertise in prospecting, networking, establishing relationships, and in securing Arena and large venue sponsorships such as naming rights, scoreboards, concourses, specialty seating areas, and various digital and electronic opportunities. As well as your commission on such sponsorships.
- 8) Describe how you have worked with other venues in allowing them to market opportunities locally and in cooperation with your firm and how is commission handled
- 9) Describe and detail the Firms’ relationship with entertainment booking agencies across North America, and most relevantly those with significant agency offices in Nashville, Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. Provide some examples and context of the relationships.
- 10) Describe and detail the Firm’s relationship with concert/entertainment promoters that operate both nationally as well as possess a well- known regional presence in the Southeastern United States
- 11) Explain who is at risk when you are able to attract national touring acts to play in the venue and provide examples of specific deals that you feel would be applicable for our market.
- 12) Proven track record (list examples) of working with partners to meet their event targets and financial goals, and improving, continually, the viability of the local market and venue for future events and acts which will advance the economic impact of the venue.

- 13) What other industry service providers, sub-contractors, and vendors do you/would you work with, why, and how do they provide value to you and your possible partners.
- 14) Explain benefits beyond financial and marketing that Athens Arena would benefit from their partnership with your firm.

TAB 5 – Suitability: Provide relevant information regarding the organization’s suitability to perform booking/marketing functions for The Classic Center Arena, in Athens GA. Written responses should include:

- 15) Provide clear clarification as to whether the Firm is proposing to directly promote shows at the Arena, broker rental shows to benefit the Arena, co-promote shows with venue or others, or any specific combination therein within the scope of your proposal for partnership services. Please be as clear as possible expressing your desires for partnership understanding the Arena booking goals must be met.

While ultimately renting the Arena to professional entertainment promoters is the preferred approach by the CCA, the CCA is open to review and consider a variety of options or combinations relating to risk (profit vs. loss on engagements). It shall be further understood that the CCA does intend to directly present entertainment within the Arena to the extent it desires or is required to meet financial objectives.

- 16) Provide venue names and locations of any venues the firm currently has booking interests in and/or related contractual agreements with that are within 300 miles of Athens, Georgia. Please explain the detailed specifics of the booking relationship, beginning and end dates for these agreements, and the detailed role you provide.
- 17) Explain what you would do specifically to meet and exceed our concert goals as identified in the studies and specifically how you will work to ensure we are not cannibalizing the Atlanta market. also how would we work with the existing venues in our community to ensure that the area would work in harmony with such existing venues both those currently here as well as the 10,000 seat potential amphitheater.
- 18) Athens, home of the University of Georgia, is located about 65+ miles from the major market of Atlanta. Outline and describe the proposer’s approach to entertainment/ticketed event marketing, promotions and advertising (aimed to sell tickets to events) specifically as it relates/correlates to Athens-Clarke County Georgia considering all the competitive cities and other larger venues and media markets within 200 miles of Athens. Further, describe how you see this new Arena fitting into and carving its own niche in the existing entertainment market system.

- 19) Describe what the proposer feels are Athens and NE Georgia's strongest advantage(s) for attracting shows, as well as what the proposer feels will serve as the areas (and the Arena's) largest challenge(s). Be as specific as possible.
- 20) Describe and propose any other specific areas of value-added services, expertise, or revenue opportunities the proposer seeks to include in the proposal package that will potentially maximize the operational, programming, and financial position of the new Arena

TAB 6 – Pricing Proposal & Return on Investment: Provide relevant information regarding the organization's financial and compensation proposal for providing services and the scope of such services. Written responses should include:

- 1) Understanding the Arena's stated booking objectives in terms of concert & family event counts, outline how many entertainment and concert events the firm feels strongly can be secured through the partnership for the new Arena. Explain generally the rationale and action plan that would be required to support these numbers.
- 2) The Arena seeks possible assistance in securing a naming rights sponsor. Provide your proposed role, potential services, and outlook on the prospective opportunities for sponsorship in the best interests of the CCA.
- 3) Address creatively and as specifically as possible how the firm would address providing investment, to the extent the firm deems possible and appropriate, to help meet debt service needs of the facility over the course of a 10-year period.
- 4) Provide specific and detailed information on the compensation sought in return by the for proposed booking services and the detailed manner and specific timeframes in which are desired. Please include clear and transparent detail if compensation is to be tied to one, or several, individual financial outcomes of events. Provide clear information as to the categories of revenue the firm might wish to gain compensation from. Provide examples of pro forma or other clear financial statements for sample time periods and/or would-be events, demonstrating the categories and percentages of the proposed range of revenue sharing scenarios.
- 5) List and clarify clearly if there are any minimum and/or maximum numbers or dollar thresholds associated with any portion, piece, or allocation regarding the firm's compensation and or provisions within your proposal

- 6) Provide the desired or proposed length of the agreement in the form of months or years and clearly explain how any compensation applies, disperses, or allocates over the terms of the possible agreement
- 7) Statement and details (as applicable) on firms' intentions regarding the Investment Opportunity and any related required return on Firm's investment.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Interested firms shall submit one (1) electronic copy in .pdf format of the complete qualifications package in a single file. Submittals must be prepared in a manner that when printed would typically fit on standard (8 ½" x 11") paper. (The entire response shall not exceed 40 pages. All pages count, with no exceptions.) Submittals that include qualifications or information of more than one firm shall not exceed the page limits. Emphasis should be on completeness, relevance, and clarity of content. **Questions and Submittals shall be provided, by the required deadlines to:**

Richard Sawyer, Arena Project Procurement Director,

email: richardsawyer@classiccenter.com

Addenda, answers, clarifications, and other important information will be provided on the Classic Center RFP Webpage.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Proposals will be evaluated by a CCA Evaluation Committee approved by CCA. The evaluation will be based on the proposal's fulfillment of the stated CAA's Arena Objectives as well as those areas outlined and identified in the response requirements, Tabs 2 through 6.

The following areas will be the basis of evaluation, not necessarily in order of importance.

- Qualifications & Experience
- Professional Expertise
- Suitability
- Pricing Proposal Evaluation & CCA Estimate of potential Return on Investment

One or more proposals considered most responsive, suitable, and contributing to the Arena's requested specific objectives as listed within this document may be included on a short list of up to three (3) firms, however the CCA reserves the ability to allow more if deemed in its best interest. Shortlisted proposers will be asked to attend interview(s) with the review committee and be given an opportunity to make targeted presentation(s) regarding their proposal. The committee will evaluate all shortlisted proposers and make

a final selection of the firm which best meets the CAA's overall needs and objectives, and negotiations may ensue. If negotiations are not successful, the CCA may terminate the negotiations at any time and may select the next highest-ranking firm for negotiations, and so on, until an agreement is met, or the procurement is cancelled.