

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL- SPORTS TEAM TENANT

Akins Ford Arena

The Classic Center Authority

Athens, Georgia

General Information- The Classic Center Authority

The Classic Center Authority is responsible for the operations and management of The Classic Center and Akins Ford Arena, in Athens, Georgia. 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

Akins Ford Arena is Athens' premier new entertainment venue. It is perfectly located in the heart of downtown Athens, Georgia, and is part of The Classic Center campus. With a maximum capacity of over 8,000, this state-of-the-art arena is designed to host concerts, sports events, and special performances, delivering an unforgettable experience to every fan. Whether you're there to cheer for the Rock Lobsters professional hockey team, support the UGA Ice Dawgs, or enjoy a world-class show, Akins Ford Arena offers top-tier entertainment in a dynamic setting.

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 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.

SECTION 1: REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL 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.

Purpose

CCA’s Objectives of RFP:

The CCA, and specifically Akins Ford Arena, seeks to formally partner with a sports and entertainment industry leader and experienced professional organization to specifically

1) Bring a second professional sports tenant to play a dedicated indoor home season at Akins Ford Arena.

2) Sign a multi-year lease agreement that is competitive with industry standards and is mutually beneficial to both the Offeror and Authority.

Overview of opportunity:

The Offeror must be an established professional sports/entertainment industry organization and have specific experience and expertise in the venue, professional sports/entertainment operating industry. The organization should be a regionally or nationally recognized ownership group with a proven track record of successfully managing professional sports teams in tenant agreements. It is the desire of the CCA to provide world-class entertainment and sporting experiences to Athens and the north Georgia region. The CCA prefers a multi-year agreement to be determined and negotiated based on a variety of conditions.

Given that the CCA already has a tenant lease agreement with a professional hockey team, clear preference will be given to proposals offering team/tenant sports organizations other than hockey.

Specific Tenant Objectives

These are the overall objectives for the CCA/Akins Ford Arena that shall be met.

- 1) Host a minimum of 8 home dates per season
- 2) Preference will be given to teams that play in the months of May, June, July, August and September.
- 3) Receive a rental rate of no less than \$15,000 per game.
 - a. Includes building rental, venue security, Guest Services/Usher staff, Medical, Police and Conversion Labor
- 4) A \$3.50 Facility Fee will be paid to CCA on each sold ticket
- 5) Ticket Fee base standard to patrons will be 22.5% of the ticket cost. Subject to +/- modifications at the CCA's discretion.

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. The CCA reserves the right to adjust the schedule, with prior notice, as it deems necessary.

a. CCA issues public advertisement of RFP	10/15/25	-----
b. Deadline for submission of written questions and requests for clarification-	11/14/25	2:00 PM
c. CCA provides answers/clarifications/addenda-	12/12/25	-----
d. Deadline for submission of Proposals-	1/16/26	2:00 PM
e. Proposal evaluation completed and CCA issues Finalist Notification, and additional information to Finalists (target)-	2/6/26	-----

SECTION 2: REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Proposal Deliverables

Proposals must be assembled in accordance with the instructions provided herein, must be categorized and numbered as outlined below, and must be responsive to all requested information to the extent applicable to the proposing Firm.

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

1. Within the Letter, please identify the specific nature of the arena sport (football, basketball, soccer, or other sport) proposed and generally identify the professional level of play and any league anticipated, to the extent possible.

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 form of ownership, its purpose and business focus, years in business and overall growth and capabilities.
2. If Firm is proposing creating a new team in a specific league or moving an existing team from a league, they are currently a part of, include a letter from league officials demonstrating their approval/support to have a team in Athens, Georgia and that the Firm is presently in good standing with the league.
3. 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.
4. 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 in the document.
5. 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.
6. In any case, 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.
7. Financial statements, showing sound business practices and Firm stability over the past 5 years, or the full duration of the Firm's existence, if less than 5 years.

TAB 3 – Qualifications & Experience: Provide relevant information regarding organizational Qualification & Experience. Written responses shall include, where applicable to Firm:

- 1) Outline the Firm's experience in the sports industry with a tenant lease 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) Demonstrate specific experience in developing, growing and sustaining a team in a secondary or tertiary market, preferably in the southeastern United States as able.
- 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 partnership upon possible award.
- 4) Provide at least 3 specific and targeted examples of other organizations which you would emulate and consider your endeavor a success if you were to be selected.

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

- 5) Describe the Firms' specific perspective and approach on the marketing (in the realm of selling tickets/access) of sport 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.
- 6) Describe and outline the Firms' expertise in prospecting, networking, establishing relationships, and in securing sponsorships such as field, scoreboards, dasher walls, and various digital and electronic opportunities.
- 7) Describe how you have collaborated with venues in dually marketing your sponsorship assets in cooperation with your Firm and your proposed commission rate, to the benefit of both parties.
- 8) Describe and detail the Firms' relationship with potential leagues you are targeting to participate in. Provide some examples and context of the relationships. You will be asked to introduce the CCA to proposed League representatives for future discussions.

- 9) Provide examples of working with venues to meet their event and attendance targets and financial goals.
- 10) Describe and highlight all intangible and community benefits that Akins Ford Arena would experience from their partnership with the Firm.

TAB 5 – Suitability: Provide relevant information regarding the organization’s suitability to contract a tenant sports team for Akins Ford Arena, in Athens GA. Written responses should include:

- 11) Provide venue names and locations of any venues the firm currently has tenant related contractual agreements with that are within 300 miles of Athens, Georgia. Please explain the specific details of the relationship as well as the beginning and end dates for these agreements.
- 12) Explain what the Firm would do specifically to meet and exceed financial and community goals and ensure an ongoing viable community benefit exists for the duration of an agreement term.
- 13) Athens, home of the University of Georgia, is located about 65+ miles from the major market of Atlanta. Describe how your organization would plan to specifically position and market the Athens area, and the northeast Georgia region that surrounds it, to attract raving fans to this new team while competing with and successfully coexisting with UGA and other regional sports teams and entertainment.
- 14) Provide a general outline/range of ticket prices (for patrons to attend) the Firm would anticipate that are forecast to support the proposed tenant business model
- 15) Describe what the proposer feels are Athens and NE Georgia’s strongest advantage(s) for attracting fans, as well as what the proposer feels will serve as the areas (and the Arena’s) largest challenge(s). Be as specific as possible.
- 16) 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 partnership.

TAB 6 – Pricing Proposal: 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 objectives. Outline your lease deal points, as well as the rationale and action plan that would be required to support these numbers.
- 2) Provide specific and detailed information on the compensation sought in any form of potential revenue sharing categories.
- 3) Provide the desired or proposed length of the agreement in the form of months or years. Please further illustrate a minimum and maximum period range that the Firm feels is in the mutual best interest of the parties in an initial agreement.

Questions and Requests for Clarification

Questions about any aspect of the RFP shall be submitted prior to the appropriate deadlines indicated in the Schedule of Events, and shall be submitted in writing to:

Richard Sawyer, via email: richard@classiccenter.com

The deadlines for submission of questions relating to the RFP are the times and dates shown in the (Schedule of Events Section). At any time prior to the submission date, the CCA may issue an RFP addendum to further clarify any part of this RFP, amend this RFP or issue instructions or further information. Each such addendum will be posted and/or distributed to all respondents. In addition, the CCA may adjust any timelines related to the project referenced herein or otherwise.

Proposal Submittal Instructions

One complete submittal must be provided to the issuing officer by the prescribed deadline via e-mail as a SINGLE PDF file. Each submittal shall include a concise transmittal letter. Submittals must be printable on standard (8½” x 11”) paper. Proposals are limited to 25 pages or less using a minimum of size 11 font. Each proposal shall be prepared simply and economically, providing straightforward, concise description of the of the Firm’s offer. Promotional graphics materials are not desired unless relevant to the offer. Emphasis must be on completeness, relevance, and clarity of content. Submittals received after the time and date set for receipt are subject to rejection.

All submittals, and subsequent submittals upon receipt become the property of the CCA. Labeling information provided in submittals “proprietary” or “confidential”, or any other designation of restricted use will not be binding upon the CCA nor its representatives and will

not protect the information from eventual public view. Subject to the provisions of the Open Records Act, the details of the proposal documents will remain confidential until final award, or cancellation of this solicitation. All expenses for preparing and submitting responses are the sole cost of the party submitting the response. The CCA is not obligated to any party to reimburse such expenses.

Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated by a review committee based on the proposal's fulfillment of the stated CCA's Objectives as well as those areas outlined and identified in response requirements, Tabs 2 through 6.

The following areas will be the basis of evaluation. None of the individual objectives will stand alone or be conclusive. The areas are weighted accordingly, and end results will be a cumulative total of the areas.

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|---|-----|
| • Qualifications & Experience | 20% |
| • Professional Expertise | 22% |
| • Suitability | 28% |
| • Pricing Proposal & Return on Investment | 30% |

Using the above criteria, proposals considered most responsive and contributing to the Arena's requested specific objectives as listed within this document will be included on a short list. The short list shall consist of not more than three (3) Respondents. Shortlisted or "finalist" proposers may be asked to submit to 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 may make a final selection of the proposal which best meets the CAA's overall needs and objectives. The CCA reserves the right to negotiate or request Best and Final Offers from one or more offerors as deemed in the best interest of the CCA.

Submittal Conditions

Respondents understand and agree that the CCA is not required to select the "best" priced proposal and has the right to reject any and all submittals or to cancel the RFP process at any time without any liability to the CCA or any other person, and the parties are under no obligation to make an award relating to this RFP to any person or entity. In addition, the CCA reserves the right to evaluate only those submittals determined to be fully responsive to the RFP. All such decisions are ultimately to be made in the sole discretion of the CCA, for any reason or for no reason whatsoever, and the CCA is under no obligation to assign any reason for the rejection,

non-review or non-acceptance of any proposal. Under no circumstances shall this RFP or subsequent requests be construed as a contractual offer.

Respondents understand and agree that the CCA may, in its sole discretion, request proposals or subsequent submissions from, and subsequently enter into negotiations or an agreement with, any entity selected in this process, including any entity that has previously advised or acted on behalf of the CCA in any capacity. Furthermore, Respondents shall not hold the CCA, their respective affiliates and/or any of their respective employees, representatives, agents, attorneys, advisors, or consultants liable for any reason whatsoever related to this RFP and respondents hereby waive all such claims.

Respondents may make no modification, correction, or withdrawal of their submissions after the submission date. By submitting its submission, each respondent represents that: (i) it has read and understands this RFP, (ii) its submission complies with the requirements of this RFP, (iii) respondent has the necessary corporate authority to submit its proposal.

All information supplied in this RFP or by the parties or anyone acting on behalf of the parties to each respondent is provided solely as a convenience to facilitate the selection process. The CCA does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of any such information supplied. In addition, respondent shall not rely on any express or implied statements, warranties or representations made by the CCA or anyone acting on its behalf. Respondent agrees that the CCA and its affiliates and their employees, representatives, agents, advisors, or consultants cannot be held liable for any such statements, warranties or representations or inaccuracies or incompleteness in any information provided.

Drug Free Workplace- The CCA requires that the labor force of onsite tenants are drug-free. The offeror hereby acknowledges this requirement and asserts that the organization of the offeror adheres to such policy and practice.

Non-Discrimination- The CCA may require, prior to, or incidental to, the award of a tenant agreement or contract, confirmation by the respondent stating that the respondent has not discriminated and will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, religion or national origin in any of its employment practices with respect to the work force of the business, or procurement services in connection with business operations. A successful respondent may be required to execute certificates, affirming these requirements of non-discrimination.