



Dear Prospective Bidder:

Kinexus Group is a 501c3 private non-profit organized in 1983 to provide workforce and business development services to the tri-county region of Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties. It is governed by a board consisting of private industry, community-based organizations, education, labor, non-profits, and governmental officials from the three county area. Kinexus Group's family of subsidiaries for which we may be conducting an RFP process include: Youth Solutions, Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass- Van Buren & Market Van Buren. **Youth Solutions is a 501c3 with its own governing board and is the entity seeking proposals from qualified bidders.**

We are seeking proposals from qualified bidders to provide consulting services on marketing and communications brand evolution.

Request for Proposal (RFP) applications as well as an Intent to Bid form will also be available immediately online at <https://www.miworks.org/public-information>. Intent to bid forms are important to submit so that your organizational representative receives future communication regarding this bid process including questions and answers during the process.

If you have questions regarding the specifications in the RFP, please e-mail [stacy@kinexus.org](mailto:stacy@kinexus.org) no later than 8:00 AM Eastern on 1/20/2021. Please note that **no** verbal Q & A will be permitted regarding product specifications, and all proposers who wish to e-mail questions are encouraged to file an Intent-to-Bid form with Kinexus Group.

During the bid rating process, Kinexus Group staff may contact you for clarification or additional information.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,  
*Stacy Neidlinger*  
Procurement Specialist



**Youth Solutions. Inc. Brand Consulting**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) TIMELINE**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
1/14/2021	Notice Sent to Bidders List with RFP
1/14/2021	Kinexus Group has RFP application available on miworks.org
1/14/2021	Legal Notice sent to Newspaper for publication
1/20/2021	Deadline for receipt of Bidder Questions at 8:00 AM Eastern
1/21/2021	Response to Bidder Questions by 5:00 PM Eastern
2/2/2021	Proposals due at Kinexus Group by 12:00 Noon Eastern
2/3/2021	Approximate Bidder Notification

The dates set forth above are for informational purposes. Kinexus Group reserves the rights to modify the dates.

**PLEASE NOTE : During COVID, we are working from home, and electronic submissions are preferred. If you are mailing or need to physically drop off a submission, please contact me at 269-215-4899 ASAP so that proper arrangements can be made. Upon receiving submissions of RFP, or questions, I will respond that they were received. Please contact me if you do not receive that response.**



## Request for Proposal

### Youth Solutions, Inc. Brand Consulting

#### Statement of Need

Youth Solutions recently completed a 5-year strategic plan with three priorities: Expand and deepen services through strategic partnerships; Accelerate post-graduation pathways that lead to sustainable employment; and sustain the organization through diversified funding sources and a trusted brand. As a complement to the plan and in support of all three priorities, we have conducted a brand analysis and evolution process. With this knowledge we are seeking a communications professional to create the narratives for the brand components and accompanying collateral materials.

#### Scope of Services:

##### **Creation of Communications Framework and Accompanying Narratives**

Based on the results of the Youth Solutions brand competitive and comparative analysis, additional market research, stakeholder interviews and creation of organization's purpose, create the content, and accompanying brand and other narratives for target audiences based on the Youth Solutions Communications Framework.

Deliverables: Populate the Communications Framework topics and content based on the Purpose Statement. Brand content may include brand voice, promise, position, and story.

Compose the narratives associated with the framework for general use as well as narratives for target audiences. This includes internal and external communications as well as collateral marketing materials.

Work in concert with Youth Solutions staff on content creation, review, approvals.

Provide stakeholder updates and check ins.

Timeframe: February, 2021

#### **Web Content**

Create web content for the relevant sections of the Youth Solutions website. (Section names are under review by staff) Exact content TBD, estimate is 10-15 pages of content.

Deliverables: Content for pages connected to the web sections described above.

Work in concert with Kinexus Group Marketing team as the design leads and collaborate on visuals and other content.

Time frame: February through March, 2021

### **Budget Amount and Contract Period**

Budget not to exceed \$10,500. Proposals will be judged on ratings criteria listed below. The contract will be for the time frame agreed upon but not to exceed 90 days.

### **Bidder Qualifications**

To be considered for award of this RFP, the proposing individual or company must meet the following minimum qualifications:

1. A minimum of ten (10) years of experience in marketing and communications work either consulting, with an agency or direct for a company.
2. A working knowledge of the education and workforce spaces.

### **Proposal Requirements**

Kinexus Group reserves the right to request additional information for clarification purposes or to allow corrections to errors or omissions provided errors or omissions do not provide a competitive advantage to any proposer.

The selected proposal may be subject to further negotiation if deemed, at Kinexus Group's sole discretion, to be advantageous to Kinexus Group.

Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance of all terms and conditions set out in this solicitation.

Proposers *may* be requested to appear before the Chief Executive Officer or any designated Senior Management Staff to further discuss the submitted proposal.

The resulting agreement will be for an initial period of one (1) year with the possibility of renewals for an additional two years based on satisfactory performance as determined solely by Kinexus Group.

Prior to execution of a written Agreement, Kinexus Group may request applicable certificates of insurance.

Any contract awarded under the RFP is subject to available funding and can be canceled by either party with 30 days written notice.

### **Closing and Submission Date**

Electronic or hardcopy proposals must be received by Kinexus Group no later than 12:00 Noon Eastern on 2/2/2021. Late proposals will not be considered. Electronic proposals must be submitted in PDF or MS Office file formats.

Send electronic proposals to : [stacy@kinexus.org](mailto:stacy@kinexus.org)

*Note: It is your responsibility to assure that your bid/questions have arrived. Please confirm receipt of electronic proposals and questions by contacting Stacy Neidlinger at 269-215-4899.*

Mail Hardcopy proposals to: Stacy Neidlinger  
Procurement Specialist  
Kinexus Group  
330 W. Main Street, Suite 110  
Benton Harbor, Mi 49022

### **Inquiries**

If you have specific questions regarding the goods and services requested in this RFP, submit them via email to Stacy Neidlinger at [stacy@kinexus.org](mailto:stacy@kinexus.org) no later than 8:00 AM EST **1/20/2021**.

**Verbal Q&A will not be permitted.** To ensure equitable dissemination of information, responses to e-mailed questions will be forwarded to all proposal offerors who identify themselves as interested bidders.

### **Cost of Proposal Preparation**

All costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP will be at the responsibility of the offeror and will not be reimbursed by Kinexus Group.

### **Right to Reject**

Kinexus Group reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, in whole or in part, to waive any informalities or irregularities in the proposals received, and to accept any proposal in whole or in part that is deemed most favorable to Kinexus Group.

**RFP Evaluation Scoring Criteria:**

This competitive request will be open to all bidders and all complete proposals will be evaluated on their respective merit. The scoring for all proposals will be judged against a weighted matrix of these factors and must score a minimum aggregate score of 75 total points to be considered.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Max. Points Possible</b>
<b>Detailed summary of work to be done.</b>	20
<b>Experience with compelling content creation, brand positioning, web content, and powerful story-telling that moves stakeholders to action.</b>	35
<b>Cost</b>	15
<b>Examples of past projects.</b>	30
<b>Total Possible points</b>	<b>100</b>

THE PROPOSAL COVER PAGE AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE.

**ATTACHMENT I**

**RFP- Youth Solutions, Inc. Brand Consulting**  
**Request for Proposal – please fill in this form**

**1. – General Information – COVER PAGE**

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Applicant Organization Federal ID Number

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Street Address

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City State Zip Code

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Printed Name and Title of Applicant’s Authorized Representative

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Telephone Number Fax Number

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E-mail address

**Certification**

**I certify that I have been authorized to submit and sign this proposal on behalf of the submitting organization(s). In addition, I certify that the entire proposal is true and accurate and to the best of my knowledge the projected costs are reasonable and necessary for the proposed Service and do not duplicate other funds already available, or which will be available, to pay the projected costs. I also certify that my organization will implement this project in compliance with the stipulations and guidelines set forth by Kinexus Group.**

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**Signature of Authorized Representative**

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**Date**

***ATTACHMENT II.***

**PROPOSAL**

Please answer the following:

1. Provide a detailed summary of the work to be conducted to achieve the objectives in the scope of services.
2. Provide a description of experience and qualifications that are relevant to the provision of consulting services as described in the scope of services.
3. Provide examples of content created independently or collaboratively in prior consulting arrangements.
4. Provide certification that neither the firm nor any employees have an interest, direct or indirect, which may conflict in any manner or degree with the performance or provision of services to Kinexus or its Board.
5. Provide total project cost with hourly rate and other costs included (out of pocket).



**ATTACHMENT III**

**CERTIFICATIONS  
Debarment and Lobbying**

**CERTIFICATION REGARDING  
DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY AND VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION  
Lower Tier Covered Transactions**

This certification is required by the regulations implementing Executive Order 12549 Debarment and Suspension (3 CFR, 1986 Comp.); Executive Order 12689 Debarment and Suspension (3 CFR, 1989 Comp.); 2 CFR Part 215, Appendix A, Section 8; 13 CFR Part 145; and 29 CFR Part 98, Section 98.510, Participants' Responsibilities. The regulations were published as Part VII of the May 26, 1988 Federal Register (pages 19160-19211).

**BEFORE COMPLETING CERTIFICATION, READ ATTACHED INSTRUCTIONS THAT  
ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CERTIFICATION.**

(1) The prospective recipient of federal assistance funds certified, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal department or agency.

(2) Where the prospective recipient of federal assistance funds is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name and Title of Authorized Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Representative

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR CERTIFICATION

1. By signing and submitting this proposal, the prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds is providing the certification as set out below.
2. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later determined that the prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the Department of Labor (DOL) may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.
3. The prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds shall provide immediate written notice to the person to whom this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.
4. The terms "covered transaction", "debarred", "suspended", "ineligible", "lower tier covered transaction", "participant", "proposal" and "voluntarily excluded", as used in this clause have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the person to which this proposal is submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.
5. The prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds agrees by submitting this proposal that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any low tier covered transaction with a person who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized the DOL.
6. The prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds further agrees by submitting his proposal that it will include clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions", without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitation for lower tier covered transactions.
7. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that is not debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it know that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the

method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the List of Parties Excluded from Procurement or Nonprocurement Programs.

8. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishing a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.
9. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 5 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the DOL may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

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## CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief that:

1. No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan or cooperative agreement.
2. If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.
3. The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants and contract under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all Subrecipient shall certify and disclose accordingly.
4. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, Title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED CERTIFYING OFFICIAL	TITLE	
APPLICANT ORGANIZATION:		DATE:

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY STATEMENT**  
**State of Michigan (WDA/TIA)- KINEXUS GROUP**

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO ALL PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE Workforce Development Agency, State of Michigan and Kinexus Group. It is the policy of the State of Michigan and Kinexus Group to assure that equal opportunity will be provided under any contract, program, or activity funded in whole or in part with funds made available by or through any state department, institution, or agency. All recipients of financial assistance are required to assure the equitable treatment of all persons in the opportunity for employment as well as their access to and receipt of, program services without discrimination based upon religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, height, weight, marital status, arrest record, handicap, or other non-merit factors.

This policy applies to all programs administered by the State, subgrantees, contractors, and subcontractors. All personnel will actively promote equal employment opportunity within their respective organizational units. This policy extends to the active recruitment of female and minority-owned enterprises in the delivery of services related to employment and training.

This policy will affect all employment and training practices including, but not limited to, recruitment, hiring, transfer, promotions training, compensation, benefits, layoffs, placements, and selection of subgrantees and contractors.

To ensure compliance with the established policy, a goal-oriented program has been structured with specific targets and timetables. Failure on the part of subgrantees and contractors to comply with this policy will jeopardize initial, continued, or renewed funding under federal and state-funded programs. The Workforce Innovation Act(WIOA) further requires for all programs receiving WIOA funds the following assurance:

As a condition to the award of financial assistance under WIOA from the Workforce Development Agency, State of Michigan the grant applicant assures, with respect to operation of the WIOA-funded program or activity and all agreements or arrangements to carry out the WIOA-funded program or activity, that it will comply fully with nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, as amended; including the nontraditional Employment for Women Act of 1991; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended; and with all applicable requirements imposed by or pursuant to regulations implementing those laws, including but not limited to 29 CFR Part 38. The United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance.

Issued by: Workforce Development/Talent Agency, State of Michigan

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Signature of Contractor Authorized Representative