

Request for Proposals

Institutional & Workforce Development Rebrand

Issued by: Manhattan Area Technical College (Manhattan Tech)

Issue Date: May 1, 2026

Proposal Due Date: May 15, 2026, by 5:00 p.m. CDT

Submission Method: Electronic submission via email

Contact for Submission and Questions: Bryant Kniffin, Marketing Associate,

bryantkniffin@manhattantech.edu

Overview

Manhattan Area Technical College (Manhattan Tech) invites qualified branding and marketing agencies to submit proposals to support a comprehensive institutional brand refresh and the development of a distinct workforce development sub-brand. Manhattan Tech is a public, regionally accredited technical college committed to accessible, high-quality education that prepares learners for essential, in-demand careers through hands-on instruction, employer partnerships, and workforce-responsive programming.

The college seeks a strategic partner with demonstrated expertise in higher education, workforce education, or similar mission-driven organizations. The selected firm will help Manhattan Tech evaluate, strengthen, and modernize its core brand while developing a related but distinct sub-brand that supports workforce development efforts.

Institutional Background

Manhattan Tech serves traditional students, adult learners, employers, and community partners across a growing range of technical and career-focused programs. The institution has expanded its reach, programming, sites, and public presence in recent years, creating an opportunity to ensure its brand reflects its current identity, market position, and long-term vision.

The college has invested in marketing and communications improvements and has emphasized a blue-collar brand identity through messaging such as “HIRE Education” and “Get After It.” While those efforts have helped build visibility, Manhattan Tech seeks a more comprehensive, research-informed brand platform that provides greater clarity, consistency, and flexibility for future growth.

Project Background

This project includes two related components: a refresh of the Manhattan Tech institutional brand and the full development of a workforce development sub-brand. It is the preference of the President and Board of Directors to retain the name “Manhattan Tech”; however, the college is open to evidence-based recommendations if research indicates that a different naming approach would better support the institution’s long-term strategic goals.

Manhattan Tech is seeking an agency that can lead a disciplined, research-driven process and translate findings into a compelling strategy, visual identity system, and implementation roadmap. The resulting work should resonate with prospective learners, current students, employees, employers, community partners, and other key stakeholders.

Project Objectives

The selected agency should help Manhattan Tech achieve the following objectives:

- Validate whether the Manhattan Tech name effectively supports the institution’s mission, positioning, and future growth, and provide recommendations only if research clearly supports a change.
- Refresh the Manhattan Tech brand identity to reflect institutional growth, momentum, and strategic direction while honoring the college’s history and strengths.
- Develop a cohesive logo system and a mascot or brand symbol aligned with the updated institutional brand strategy.
- Create a distinct yet connected workforce development sub-brand, including naming, positioning, messaging, and visual identity.
- Ensure that both the institutional brand and the sub-brand resonate with internal and external stakeholders.
- Provide practical brand standards, tools, and launch guidance to support consistent implementation across channels and audiences.

Scope of Services

Proposals should address a complete approach to the project and may include, but are not limited to, the services below.

Brand Research and Discovery

- Brand discovery and assessment
- Internal and external stakeholder research, including learners, employees, employers, and community partners
- Quantitative and qualitative research methods
- On-campus visit(s) for discovery, research, and stakeholder engagement
- Assessment of current brand perception, positioning, and naming strength

Brand Strategy

- Brand positioning, promise, personality, and narrative development
- Validation of the Manhattan Tech name, with conditional naming recommendations only if strongly supported by research
- Brand architecture strategy defining the relationship between Manhattan Tech and the workforce development sub-brand
- Messaging framework and audience-specific messaging
- Brand voice and tone guidance

Institutional Brand Refresh

- Refresh of the Manhattan Tech logo system
- Updated color palette and typography system
- Visual identity elements and graphic standards
- Development of a mascot or brand symbol

Workforce Development Sub-Brand

- Sub-brand naming and positioning
- Full visual identity development
- Messaging framework, value proposition, and audience-based messaging

- Voice and tone standards that align with, but remain distinguishable from, the primary institutional brand

Brand Standards and Assets

- Comprehensive brand guidelines for both the primary brand and the sub-brand
- Core templates and foundational brand assets
- Recommendations for digital and marketing asset application
- Introductory creative assets and collateral to support launch readiness

Launch and Rollout Support

- Internal brand introduction and training recommendations
- External launch and rollout strategy
- Implementation roadmap
- Launch planning support, including recommendations for a public brand launch in Fall 2027
- **Recommendations on how to leverage AI and algorithms to effectively use marketing funds in sustained and future campaigns and plans**

Deliverables

At a minimum, Manhattan Tech expects proposals to address the following deliverables:

- Research plan and stakeholder engagement approach
- Findings summary and brand assessment
- Brand strategy for Manhattan Tech
- Name validation findings and, if warranted, naming recommendation(s)
- Refreshed institutional logo system
- Mascot or brand symbol concepts and final assets
- Workforce development sub-brand strategy, name, and visual identity
- Messaging framework for both brands
- Comprehensive brand standards/guidelines

- Core branded templates and foundational assets
- Rollout and implementation plan
- Recommended launch strategy and supporting creative concepts
- **Strategy to leverage AI and algorithms to effectively use marketing funds in sustained and future campaigns and plans**

Firms may recommend additional deliverables that would strengthen project outcomes.

Project Timeline

Manhattan Tech anticipates a multi-phase project spanning Spring 2026 through at least Fall 2027 to allow for research, stakeholder engagement, strategy development, creative execution, and phased implementation.

Respondents should propose a detailed timeline aligned with the following planning framework:

Phase	Anticipated Period	Activities
Research	Spring 2026/FY26	Quantitative and qualitative research, stakeholder engagement, on-campus visit(s), brand and name assessment
Strategy and Development	Summer-Fall 2026	Brand positioning, narrative development, naming exploration as needed, logo and mascot development, sub-brand strategy and naming
Creative Development and Implementation	Fiscal Year 2027 through Fall 2027	Final identity system, brand guidelines, introductory assets, rollout planning, and preparation for launch

Agencies should clearly identify milestones, dependencies, decision points, client review periods, and opportunities to phase work across fiscal years.

Budget

Respondents should provide a clear and transparent fee structure, including project phases, major deliverables, reimbursable expenses, and any optional services. Manhattan Tech encourages firms to note relevant experience working within public-sector, higher education, grant-funded, or multi-year fiscal planning environments.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should be concise, well organized, and include the following:

- Agency overview and relevant qualifications, including experience with higher education, workforce development, or comparable mission-driven organizations.
- Description of the agency's branding and rebranding process.
- Project approach and methodology aligned with the scope of services in this RFP.
- Proposed scope, deliverables, and phased work plan.
- Proposed timeline.
- Project team, including roles and relevant experience.
- Approach to client collaboration, feedback, approvals, and project management.
- Case studies and examples of related work, including before-and-after rebranding examples and logo and mascot refresh or creation projects.
- At least three client references, including contact information.
- Fee estimate and payment structure.
- Assumptions, exclusions, and any required client responsibilities.

Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically by **5:00 p.m. CDT on May 15, 2026** to **Bryant Kniffin, Marketing Associate, at bryantkniffin@manhattantech.edu**. Questions regarding this RFP should also be directed to Bryant Kniffin by email.

Manhattan Tech may request interviews, presentations, clarifications, or additional information from one or more respondents as part of the evaluation process. Finalists should be prepared to discuss methodology, team structure, project examples, and implementation approach.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following factors:

- Demonstrated understanding of the project and institutional context
- Strength of proposed methodology and research approach

- Relevant experience with higher education, workforce education, or similar brand engagements
- Quality and relevance of prior work examples
- Qualifications of the proposed team
- Ability to support phased implementation across the proposed timeline
- Overall value and budget clarity
- Strength of references

Terms and Conditions

Manhattan Tech reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive informalities, request clarification or additional information, negotiate with one or more respondents, and modify, suspend, or cancel this RFP process at any time.

Issuance of this RFP does not obligate Manhattan Tech to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal. All materials submitted in response to this RFP may become part of the college's official procurement file, subject to applicable law and institutional policy.

Desired Agency Profile

Manhattan Tech is particularly interested in partners that can combine strategic research, naming discipline, higher education brand expertise, and practical implementation planning. Firms should be able to work collaboratively with institutional leadership and stakeholders while producing creative work that is both distinctive and usable across real-world enrollment, workforce, and community-facing applications.