

Request for Proposals

Executive Recruitment Services

ISSUE DATE: January 31, 2025

ISSUED BY: Richland – Lexington Airport District
3250 Airport Blvd, Suite 10
West Columbia, SC 29170
www.flycae.com

POINT OF CONTACT: Gregg Hornsby, Vice President of Finance and
Administration
g.hornsby@flycae.com

QUESTION DEADLINE: February 10, 2025; no later than 2:00 p.m. EST
Gregg Hornsby, Vice President of Finance and
Administration
g.hornsby@flycae.com

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: February 21, 2025; no later than 2:00 p.m. EST
Richland – Lexington Airport District
Attn: Gregg Hornsby, Vice President of Finance and
Administration
g.hornsby@flycae.com

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I. Introduction

1.1. Brief Overview of the Project

The Richland-Lexington Airport District (“District”) is soliciting proposals for a qualified executive search firm for the purpose of recruiting and hiring a President & Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”).

1.2 About the Richland-Lexington Airport District

The District owns and operates the Columbia Metropolitan Airport (CAE), a non-hub commercial service airport located in West Columbia, South Carolina. The District was established in 1961 as a political subdivision of the State of South Carolina, with the corporate powers and duties exercised and performed by the Richland-Lexington Airport Commission (“Commission”). The Commission is comprised of twelve members: five members appointed by the Lexington County Legislative Delegation; five members appointed by the Richland County Legislative Delegation; and two members appointed by the City Council of the City of Columbia. The airport is served year-round by three (3) legacy airlines: American, Delta, and United, as well as Allegiant Air starting services in May 2025. The terminal building completed a major renovation in 1997 and has been updated incrementally over the years. It is currently 300,000 square feet in size and services over 1.3 million passengers per year.

The District has 88 budgeted full-time equivalent positions with a senior leadership team comprised of five (5) leaders, including the President & CEO. The President & CEO leads the senior leadership team and reports to the Commission. The other four (4) positions held by senior leaders are the Vice President of Marketing and Air Service, the Vice President of Operations, the Vice President of Planning and Engineering, and the Vice President of Finance and Administration.

II. Scope of Work/Services

2.1 Project Goals and Objectives

The purpose of this RFP is to select a qualified executive search firm to address an immediate need to fill the President & CEO position. The firm selected will be asked to enter into an Agreement with the District until the President & CEO position has been successfully filled.

2.2 Project Scope of Work.

The work to be performed by the selected firm will include, but may not be limited to:

1. Provide the District’s Executive Search Committee with status reports at specific intervals to track the process of the executive search;

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2. Schedule and meet with the Executive Search Committee to complete the organization/position assessment and confer with key stakeholders to determine specific position responsibilities, levels of experience, training required, expectations, perceptions, concerns, reporting relationships, company culture, management style, business objectives, challenges, and opportunities;
3. Draft the Recruitment Profiles (Recruitment Brochure) for the Executive Search Committee approval;
4. Research strategy outline, including original research combined with firm's proprietary database of potential candidates and a list of target organizations;
5. Develop diversity outreach strategies;
6. Research and develop candidate pool;
7. Identify benchmark candidates;
8. Meet with the Executive Search Committee to discuss any necessary re-calibration of the search strategy or position requirements;
9. Develop and place recruitment ads and outreach to prospective candidates/sources in firm's proprietary database;
10. Outreach to prospective candidates and sources from original research;
11. Conduct a screening process to determine candidate's interest, qualifications, pertinent accomplishments, relevant experience, and overall ability to perform the duties of the position and provide documentation to the Chair of the Executive Search Committee;
12. Reduce "long list" of candidates to a "short list" of three (3) to five (5) candidates;
13. Conduct interviews with "short list" candidates and provide written evaluation on the three to five qualified finalists, including reference summaries that focus on verified job-related accomplishments, academic, and professional credential checks;
14. Coordinate interview schedules and appropriate travel accommodation details for finalists, if required;
15. Prepare questions, exercise, and evaluation forms to be used by the interview panel;

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16. Attend interview to introduce the finalists and assist with the interview panel debrief after each interview;
17. Conduct interview debriefs(s) with the Commission and/or Executive Search Committee;
18. Assist the Chair of Executive Search Committee with preparing, delivering, and negotiating an employment offer with the final candidate;
19. Notify all candidates of their status in the selection process by email or via phone.

III. INSTRUCTIONS TO PROPOSERS

- A. Proposers shall submit an electronic copy of their proposal to the email address listed below. The email subject line must state: “CAE-Executive Recruitment Services RFP” with a company name. The body of the email must contain the Proposer’s name, address, telephone number, primary contact name, and email address. Proposals must be emailed to the following Point of Contact:

Email: g.hornsby@flycae.com

Attention: Gregg Hornsby, Vice President of Finance and Administration

- B. All proposals must be delivered via email by **2:00 p.m. EST, February 21, 2025**. Requests for extensions of time to submit will not be granted. Late proposals will be rejected. Proposals sent other than by email will not be accepted.
- C. The opening and reading of a proposal does not constitute the District's acceptance of a Proposer as a responsive and responsible Proposer.
- D. It is the sole responsibility of the Proposer to ensure that the proposal arrives on time. The name, address, telephone number, and email address of the person to contact must be clearly identified.
- E. Any questions about the RFP should be directed in writing via email only to Gregg Hornsby at g.hornsby@flycae.com by **2:00 p.m. EST, February 10, 2025**.
- F. Other than with written consent from the Point of Contact, all Proposers, including any persons affiliated with or in any way related to a Proposer, are strictly prohibited from contacting any Commissioners or any District personnel on any matter having to do in any aspect with this RFP after January 31, 2025. Any other contact with such persons associated with the District shall be made only through and in coordination with the Point of Contact and must be made in writing. Prohibitive or inappropriate contacts made by the Proposer may result in the disqualification of the Proposer.

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- G. The District may elect to issue addenda to this RFP. All addenda will be posted on the District website at the following URL:

<https://flycae.com/procurement-bids/>

It is the responsibility of the Proposer to view, obtain, or download all addenda issued by the District for this RFP. The Proposer shall acknowledge all issued addenda on the Acknowledgement of Addendum Form (see Exhibit B). Submission of a proposal establishes a conclusive presumption that the Proposer is thoroughly familiar with the RFP and that the Proposer understands and agrees to abide by all of the stipulations and requirements contained therein.

- H. All notations must be typed or printed in ink. No erasures are permitted. Mistakes may be crossed out and corrections must be initialed in ink by the person(s) signing the proposal.
- I. All costs incurred in the preparation and presentation of the proposal are the Proposer's sole responsibility; no costs will be reimbursed to any Proposer.
- J. All documentation submitted with the proposal will become the property of the District.
- K. Proposals are to be submitted as outlined below:
1. Proposal
 2. References
 3. Certification (Exhibit A)
 4. Acknowledgement of Addenda (Exhibit B)
- L. The District reserves the right to cancel any or all solicitations, in whole or in part, as well as reject any or all proposals, or to accept or reject any proposal in part, and to waive any minor informality or irregularity in proposals received if it is determined by the Chairman of the Commission or his designee that the best interest of the District will be served by so doing. If the solicitation is cancelled or all proposals are rejected by the District, a notice will be posted on the District website as identified for the posting of addenda. A proposal will not be considered from any Proposer that is in arrears or in default to the District on any contract, debt, or other obligation.
- M. Proposals are subject to public disclosure after award in accordance with state law. All information contained in any submitted bid, request for proposal, or request for qualifications document to the District will be available for public review upon Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. All Proposers are hereby advised that any information that they may consider to be confidential or proprietary and would give a competitive advantage if disclosed, should be identified as "Confidential" or

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“Proprietary.” If any portion of a proposal is labeled as “Confidential” or “Proprietary,” the Proposer must also submit a redacted form of the proposal at the same time it submits its proposal. The redacted copy will be made available for public review upon a FOIA request. Proposers are cautioned to use care when labeling portions of the proposal as “Confidential” or “Proprietary” as blanket invocations of confidentiality are often unwarranted and may require additional scrutiny from the District.

- N. In the event a contract is entered into pursuant to this RFP, the Proposer shall not discriminate against any qualified employee or qualified applicant for employment because of race, sex, color, creed, national origin, or ancestry. The Proposer must include in all subcontracts a provision similar to the above.
- O. Any ambiguity in any proposal as a result of omission, error, lack of clarity or non-clarity by the Proposer with this RFP, instructions, and all conditions of the submission shall be interpreted in the light most favorable to the District.
- P. The District has set the following schedule:

<u>Action Item</u>	<u>Date</u>
Request for Proposal Issued	January 31, 2025
Deadline for Proposal Question Submission	February 10, 2025, by 2:00 p.m. EST
Questions and Answers Posted to Airport Website	February 13, 2025
Deadline for Proposal Submission	February 21, 2025, by 2:00 p.m. EST

IV. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- A. The District reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or to award the contract to the next most qualified Proposer if the selected Proposer does not execute a contract within fifteen (15) days after the award of the proposal.
- B. The District reserves the right to request any supplementary information it deems necessary to evaluate the Proposer’s experience, qualifications, or to clarify or substantiate any information contained in the Proposer’s submittal.
- C. Any proposal submitted will constitute an irrevocable offer, for a period of ninety (90) days, to sell to the District the services requested in this RFP.

V. SELECTION PROCESS, PROTEST PROCESS, AND PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

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A. Selection Process

1. All proposals must be received by the District no later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of this RFP. Late proposals will not be accepted and will not be opened.
2. Following the date and time when proposals are due, the email attachment containing the proposals from each Proposer will be opened by District personnel. The opening of the proposals is not open to prospective proposers or the public.
3. The Executive Search Committee will review and score the proposals based on the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points (Total of 100)
Firm Qualifications, Experience and References	30
Project Organization, Personnel and Staffing	25
Project Methodology	20
Project Management and Timeline	10
Cost	10
Disadvantage Business Opportunity Goals (ACDBE)	5

4. Following contract negotiations with the selected Proposer, the District Commission will vote on approval of the final contract.

B. Right to Protest and Protest Process

1. The rights and remedies described in this section to an aggrieved prospective and/or actual Proposer are at the exclusion of all other rights and remedies of such aggrieved Proposer against the District at common law or otherwise for the loss or potential loss of an award of a contract.
2. Any prospective and/or actual Proposer who is aggrieved in connection with the solicitation of a contract shall protest to the Vice President of Finance and Administration of the District in the manner stated below in subsection (4) within fifteen (15) days of the issuance of the RFP or other solicitation document or any amendment or addendum thereto, if the amendment or addendum is at issue.
3. Any actual Proposer who is aggrieved in connection with the award of a contract shall protest to the Vice President of Finance and Administration of the District in the manner stated below in subsection (4) within fifteen (15) days of the notice of intent to award the contract.

4. Any protest submitted must be in writing and shall set forth the grounds of the protest and the relief requested with sufficient detail to give notice of the issues to be decided. It must be addressed to:

Gregg Hornsby, Columbia Metropolitan Airport
3250 Airport Blvd – Suite 10
West Columbia, SC 29170
g.hornsby@flycae.com

C. **Proposal Requirements**

The proposals will be evaluated using the following factors and corresponding maximum available points (100 total points available):

1. Cover Letter

Cover letter to identify Proposer and to state other general information that the Proposer desires to include regarding the Proposer's business organization. At a minimum, the cover letter must include the name, principal address, federal tax ID number, telephone number, facsimile number, and e-mail address of the Proposer.

If a corporation, state the full name and title of each of the corporate officers and their experience as an owner, operator, or manager of an executive recruitment/search firm. The state of incorporation is to be included. If the Proposer is not a South Carolina corporation, please include a statement advising whether or not the Proposer is qualified to do business in the State of South Carolina as a foreign corporation. A foreign corporation will be required to qualify to do business in the State of South Carolina prior to the execution of a contract.

If the Proposer is a sole proprietorship, state the name of the individual doing business and state the individual's experience as an owner, operator, or manager of an executive recruitment/search firm.

If a partnership, state the full name, address, and other occupation, if any, of each partner; whether the partner is active or dormant; whether each partner is a general or limited partner; each partner's experience as an owner, operator, or manager of an executive recruitment/search firm; and the proportionate share of the business owned by each partner.

If a joint venture, state the names of the firms participating in the joint venture and the principal officers of each firm; each officer's experience as an owner, operator, or manager of an executive recruitment/search firm; and

the proportionate share of the joint venture owned by each joint venture partner.

If a limited liability company, state the full name and title of each of the members and/or managers of the company and their experience as an owner, operator, or manager of an executive recruitment/search firm. The state of formation is to be included. If the Proposer is not a South Carolina company, please include a statement advising whether or not the Proposer is qualified to do business in the State of South Carolina as a foreign company. A foreign company will be required to qualify to do business in the State of South Carolina prior to the execution of a contract.

2. Executive Summary

The executive summary should provide a clear and concise summary of the Proposer's background, level of expertise, and direct relevant experience, particularly within the aviation industry. The Proposer should structure this section in a manner that allows it to serve as a stand-alone summary when separated from the other sections of the proposal.

3. Firm Qualifications, Experience, and References (Maximum 30 points)

- a. Interested firms must be able to demonstrate a record of successful executive searches for high level management positions. Include information regarding your firm's experience involving the size and scope regarding such services and include any relevant experience in the aviation industry. Qualifications and experience for proposed subconsultants should also be included.
- b. In order to evaluate the responses to this requirement, please submit a listing of executive positions recruited within the last three years. Please list the positions by title, the organization for which the recruitment was conducted, the major areas that the position had responsibility for, and list of references for each position.

4. Project Organization, Personnel, and Staffing (Maximum 25 points)

- a. Specify the project manager and staff (including partners and subconsultants) who will be conducting the search activities, their credentials and experience, and the role that they will fill during the proposed executive search process.

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- b. Provide a project organization chart which depicts the organization of the project team, including reporting relations to the District’s Executive Search Committee chair.
 - C. Indicate the on-site availability for the project manager as well as other staff during the lifetime of the recruitment project.
5. Project Methodology (Maximum 20 points)
- a. Interested firms must demonstrate expertise in innovative recruitment methods, understanding of equal employment opportunity principles, and understanding of the sensitivity of conducting high level executive searches from the standpoint of both the District as a public entity and of potential candidates.
 - b. Describe the firm’s methods of identifying candidates, screening the pool of applicants, and evaluating management skills, with an emphasis on interpersonal traits.
 - c. Describe the firm’s method used to check job references, academic backgrounds, and professional credentials.
 - d. Describe the firm’s ability to administer the selection process.
6. Project Management and Timeline (Maximum 10 points)
- a. Describe how your firm intends to manage all aspects of the work to be performed, including schedules for completion of tasks, procedures for scheduling, and cost control. Include a timeline that illustrates the recruitment process. Note: the District intends to begin the recruitment process immediately upon entering into an agreement with the selected firm, within the intent to find and appoint a candidate to the position no later than July 31, 2025, but preferably earlier if feasible.
7. Cost (Maximum 10 points)
- a. Provide pricing and cost information for the project. Include hourly rates for all proposed team members. Include a total proposed fee to conduct a search for the President & CEO position. The fee must be reasonable and competitive with other proposals for executive search services without compromising the quality of the search and the resulting candidate pool. The proposed fee should include costs for advertisements and brochures generated for the executive search.

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- b. Indicate if your firm offers any type of guarantee if a shortlisted finalist is selected for employment and then terminated for cause or resigns within twelve (12) months. Describe any such guarantee in full.
 - c. Provide an explanation of how the total cost for services rendered for executive searches are determined.
 - d. Discuss any budget control measures of your firm and proposed subconsultants.
8. Disadvantage Business Opportunity Goals (ACDBE) (Maximum 5 points)
- a. Proposer has an opportunity to discuss its past and present demonstration to commitment to small and minority businesses and contributions toward a diverse marketplace.
 - b. Proposer should highlight the company efforts to encourage ACDBE utilization including such items as mentoring or outreach programs and/or similar programs in which the Proposer engages DBEs and small business participation.
 - c. Provide ACDBE certifications (if applicable).

VI. REFERENCES

Please provide at least three (3) current references. At least one (1) must be within the aviation industry.

1. Business Name: _____
Contact Name: _____ Title: _____
Address: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____
Length of Relationship: _____

2. Business Name: _____
Contact Name: _____ Title: _____
Address: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____
Length of Relationship: _____

3. Business Name: _____
Contact Name: _____ Title: _____
Address: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____
Length of Relationship: _____

VII. EXHIBITS

For Incorporation

1. CAE Organizational Chart and President/CEO Job Description

For Completion by Proposer

- A. Certification
- B. Acknowledgement of Addenda



Exhibit 1 –

CAE Organizational Chart and President & CEO Job Description

“Exhibit A”

CERTIFICATION

I, undersigned, on behalf of the below Proposer, certify and declare that I have read the response to this RFP and know its contents. The matters stated therein are true of my own knowledge and belief, except as to those matters stated on information and belief, and as to those matters I believe them to be true. I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of South Carolina that the foregoing is correct.

(Signature)

(Printed name)

(Title)

(Date)

(Proposer)

“Exhibit B”

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ADDENDUM

Proposers must initial each applicable Addendum below and complete the designated Corporate or Non-Corporate Proposer section and submit this form with their proposal as acknowledgment of receipt of all issued Addendum.

This is to acknowledge receipt of the following **Addendum(s)** for **Request for Proposals (RFP) / Executive Recruitment Services**

1. _____; 2. _____; 3. _____; and 4. _____.

(Signature)

(Printed name)

(Title)

(Date)

(Proposer)