



# Amherst Industrial Development Agency (AIDA) | Amherst Economic Development Department (AED) – Website Management Services

March 14, 2024

## PREPARED FOR:

David Mingoia, Executive Director

4287 Main Street  
Amherst, NY 14226  
dmingoia@AmherstIDA.com

## PREPARED BY:

Emeka "Shawn" Ikpa | President

CASTLETOP SOLUTIONS  
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## SECTION I: TITLE PAGE

### COVER LETTER

Emeka “Shawn” Ikpa  
President, Castletop Solutions  
800 Riverwalk Parkway Tonawanda, NY 14150  
[hello@castletopsolutions.com](mailto:hello@castletopsolutions.com)  
o: 716-471-1405 | c: 404-434-1572  
3/14/2023

Dear Mr. Mingoia,

On behalf of Castletop Solutions, I am excited to present our proposal in response to the Request for Proposal issued by the Town of Amherst Industrial Development Agency (AIDA) for the website design and associated services aimed at enhancing economic development within the Town of Amherst. As a company deeply rooted in the principles of innovation, IT consulting, program management, and specialized web development, we recognize the significance of this project not only as a tool for economic growth but as a pivotal element in promoting Amherst as a prime destination for business and development.

Led by myself, Shawn Ikpa, alongside Mr. Michael Neely, our esteemed Lead Front-End Web Developer, our team is prepared to bring a wealth of expertise, creativity, and technical prowess to this project. We understand the critical nature of AIDA’s mission to foster economic expansion, and our proposal is designed to deliver a cutting-edge, user-friendly, and visually compelling website that will serve as the cornerstone of Amherst's economic development efforts.

Our approach to this project is multi-faceted, focusing on innovative design, seamless user experience, effective content management, and robust SEO practices to ensure maximum visibility and engagement. We aim to construct a website that not only meets but exceeds the expectations set forth by the AIDA, facilitating a dynamic platform that will attract a diverse audience ranging from small business owners to major corporate executives.

As a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business, Castletop Solutions embodies the values of dedication, integrity, and excellence. Our proposal reflects a deep commitment to these principles, underscoring our goal to deliver a project that will significantly contribute to the Town of Amherst’s economic development narrative.

We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to discuss our proposal in more detail and are confident in our ability to execute this project to the highest standards. Thank you for considering Castletop Solutions for this pivotal initiative. We are committed to making the AmherstLeads.com website a beacon of innovation and success in the realm of economic development.

Sincerely,  
Shawn Ikpa - President, Castletop Solutions



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## SECTION II: QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

### FIRM BACKGROUND

CastleTop Solutions (CTOP) proudly presents our proposal for website management services for the Amherst website. As a Western New York-based Limited Liability Corporation with over 90 full-time employees and a profound background in IT consulting, program management, and e-commerce project execution, we are uniquely positioned to meet the sophisticated demands of this project. Our expertise is deeply rooted in managing complex IT and e-commerce projects, as demonstrated by our team's accomplishments in the industry.

Since our inception, CTOP has specialized in delivering high-quality IT consulting and program management services. Our President, Mr. Shawn Ikpa, brings a wealth of experience in e-commerce project management, having held pivotal roles at Amazon and Chewy. His expertise, outlined in detail on his LinkedIn profile ([linkedin.com/in/shawnikpa/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/shawnikpa/)), includes successfully leading large-scale e-commerce projects, streamlining operations, and implementing innovative IT solutions. These skills are critical to managing the multifaceted requirements of the Amherst website project.

Complementing our team is Michael Neely, our Lead Web Manager, whose extensive experience in web development and management is integral to our approach. His proficiency in creating and maintaining robust, user-friendly web solutions ensures that our projects are not only technologically advanced but also align with user expectations and business objectives. His hands-on experience in building HubSpot websites and developing and implementing WordPress themes is a perfect fit for this engagement.

CTOP's approach is further fortified by our commitment to quality and security, as evidenced by our certifications in ISO 9001:2015 for Quality Management and ISO 27001:2013 for



Information Security. These certifications highlight our dedication to maintaining the highest standards in our operations and client engagements.

As a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB), HUBZone, and Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), we are adept at crafting tailor-made solutions for a diverse range of clients, including public and private sector organizations. Our team's unique combination of e-commerce expertise, web management skills, and project management acumen makes us an ideal candidate for the website management services of AIDA and AED.

In conclusion, CTOP is fully equipped and eager to bring its extensive experience in e-commerce project management and web development to the AIDA and AED project, promising a delivery that is efficient, secure, and exceeds expectations.



## COMPANY CERTIFICATIONS

At Castletop Solutions, we pride ourselves on our commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and excellence. Our diverse range of certifications not only reflects our dedication to these values but also positions us to meet the unique needs and expectations of our clients. Below is a list of our esteemed certifications, which validate our expertise and eligibility for various specialized and competitive opportunities:

- **New York State Minority/Women's Business Enterprise (MBE):** Recognized by the state of New York, this certification highlights our status as a business enterprise owned and operated by minorities and women, showcasing our commitment to diversity in the workplace and business practices.
- **New York State Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Business (SDVOB):** This certification underlines our contribution as a business owned by service-disabled veterans, demonstrating our deep connection with and support for the veteran community.
- **National Minority Supplier Diversity Council Minority Business Enterprise (MBE):** Accredited by the National Minority Supplier Diversity Council, this certification affirms our role as a minority-owned business, enhancing our ability to connect and contribute to diverse markets.
- **SBA Certified Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone):** As a business operating in a Historically Underutilized Business Zone, this certification from the Small Business Administration (SBA) signifies our commitment to contributing to the economic development of historically underrepresented communities.
- **SBA-Certified Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB):** This certification from the SBA recognizes our business as being owned by service-disabled veterans, highlighting our commitment to supporting the veteran community through our business endeavors.
- **Disability:IN Disabled Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE):** Accredited by Disability:IN, this certification represents our status as a business owned by individuals with disabilities, underscoring our commitment to inclusivity and representation in the professional sphere.

These certifications are not just accolades; they represent our core values and our dedication to creating an inclusive, diverse, and dynamic business environment. They enable us to offer specialized services and perspectives, ensuring that our contributions are both meaningful and impactful.





## EXPERIENCE OF FIRM

In the context of our comprehensive proposal, it is pertinent to underscore the significant role Castletop Solutions has played in supporting Amazon over the past nearly four years, a partnership that speaks volumes about our expertise and reliability in the tech industry. Our involvement in this project, with an annual budget of approximately \$5 million, primarily encompasses the enhancement and continuous improvement of the user experience (UX) and user interface (UI) for the Amazon Flex delivery app. This app is a critical tool in Amazon's delivery ecosystem, downloaded by over 5 million users worldwide, and serves as a testament to our capability in managing and refining technology solutions on a global scale.

Our approach to the Amazon Flex app project has been multifaceted and dynamic, focusing on regular usability testing and iterative design improvements. Recognizing the importance of a seamless user experience, our team has dedicated itself to diving deep into usability testing, employing both qualitative and quantitative research methods to gather actionable insights. This continuous feedback loop allows us to understand user behaviors, preferences, and challenges in real-time, enabling us to make informed decisions and implement daily improvements to the app.

These enhancements range from minor tweaks to significant overhauls, all aimed at ensuring the app is not only functional but also intuitive and user-friendly. Our efforts have directly contributed to increased user satisfaction, higher engagement rates, and a decrease in user drop-off, significantly impacting Amazon's delivery efficiency and reliability.

The dedication of Castletop Solutions to driving daily improvements reflects our broader commitment to excellence, innovation, and client success. This experience with Amazon, particularly our role in enhancing the Flex app, exemplifies our ability to handle complex, large-scale projects and our unwavering focus on delivering results that exceed expectations. For the Town of Amherst Industrial Development Agency's website project, we intend to leverage this extensive experience and our proven strategies in usability testing and continuous improvement to create a superior online platform that serves as a cornerstone for economic development and growth in the Town of Amherst.

Below are recent work examples of website development and a recent letter of recommendation from a client:

- Recent WordPress websites built by Michael Neely:
  - <https://www.kansascityseasoning.com>
  - <https://www.loglightersales.com>
  - <https://www.seasoningblendinc.com>
  - <https://www.greekkitchenseasoning.com>
  - <https://www.tomahawktreeservice.com>
  - <https://cleveland.nflalumni.org>
  - <https://minnesotra.nflalumni.org>
  - 24 other sites for NFLalumni.org
- Recent HubSpot sites built by Michael Neely:
  - <https://www.thebucketology.com>
  - <https://web.positiveintelligence.com/government>



- <https://tsrgrow.com>
- <https://foresite360.com>

## PROJECT TEAM

In spearheading the website design and associated services for the Town of Amherst Industrial Development Agency (AIDA), Castletop Solutions has embraced a compact and highly collaborative team configuration. This deliberate organizational strategy is particularly well-suited to the specialized requirements of this project. By opting for a smaller, yet profoundly interconnected team, we unlock numerous benefits that are critical for the successful execution of this project.

First and foremost, this streamlined team model ensures enhanced coordination and communication. With a condensed team, we enable faster decision-making processes and the ability to swiftly adapt to the evolving needs of the project. Such agility is paramount, especially when merging technical development with innovative design and strategic content creation, aiming for a harmonious and impactful online presence.

Moreover, the intimate nature of our team structure promotes direct supervision and meticulous project management. This guarantees that each project component is meticulously aligned with AIDA's overarching objectives and expectations. Our approach not only elevates operational efficiency but also cultivates a strong sense of responsibility and commitment among team members. This heightened level of engagement and accountability is instrumental in driving a concerted effort toward surpassing project benchmarks.

In essence, our decision to employ a consolidated team structure for AIDA's website project is a testament to our dedication to delivering a superior, integrated, and adaptable digital solution. This methodology positions Castletop Solutions to achieve a level of precision, excellence, and client satisfaction that aligns with the ambitious goals set forth by the Town of Amherst Industrial Development Agency.

### **1. Project Manager - Mr. Shawn Ikpa (Part-Time)**

- Qualifications: Extensive experience in leading IT and e-commerce projects at Amazon and Chewy. Proven track record in project management, team coordination, and strategic planning.

Mr. Ikpa will be the primary contact, ensuring a consistent and direct line of communication throughout the project.

### **2. Lead Front-End Web Developer & Marketing Support - Mr. Michael Neely (Full-Time)**

- Qualifications: Expertise in front-end web development specializing in responsive and user-friendly website design. Proficient in both HubSpot and WordPress, with additional skills in graphic design and digital marketing.
- Recent Client References:
  - Has logged 947 hours and completed 88 projects with 100% Job Success on Upwork



- James Wright | [jwright@exec-it.com](mailto:jwright@exec-it.com) | 678-471-7696
  - Worked with James on several websites for long-time, mutual client (Cheryl Moultrie)
  - <https://www.thebodynexus.com>
  - <https://www.exec-it.com>
- Zoraya Lee Hamlin | [zoraya@rayzo.com](mailto:zoraya@rayzo.com) | 973-332-4381
  - Worked with Zoraya on several projects for non-profits including 26 mirror websites for NFL alumni

## SECTION III: TECHNICAL APPROACH

### PROPOSED SCHEDULE

To ensure timely delivery while maintaining high-quality standards, we have condensed our project timeline to 6 weeks. This revised schedule allows for efficient project execution from initiation to launch.

#### **Week 1: Project Kickoff and Initial Planning**

- Conduct kickoff meetings with AIDA to align on project goals and expectations.
- Finalize project timeline and deliverables.

#### **Weeks 2-3: Design and Development Phase**

- Begin core development work, focusing on the main functionalities and aesthetics of the website.
- Engage in iterative reviews with the project team for early feedback.

#### **Weeks 4-5: Testing and Refinement**

- Conduct thorough testing of the website, including usability and functionality tests.
- Implement necessary refinements based on feedback to ensure optimal performance.

#### **Week 6: Final Review, Launch, and Transition**

- Perform final review and adjustments.
- Officially launch the website.
- Transition to post-launch support, monitoring the website's performance and addressing any immediate concerns.

This accelerated timeline reflects our commitment to delivering the project within the desired timeframe without compromising on quality or functionality. We are confident in our ability to efficiently manage this project, ensuring that the Town of Amherst Industrial Development Agency's objectives are met with excellence.





## COST BREAKDOWN

Our proposal offers a comprehensive and flexible approach to cost structuring, designed to provide AIDA with clear, predictable pricing for the initial website development as well as ongoing support and enhancements. This strategy ensures that the website remains vibrant, secure, and aligned with your evolving needs, all while maintaining transparent and manageable costs.

Please note, these costs are estimates based on the provided project scope and our understanding of your needs. We are open to discussing these figures in more detail to ensure they align with AIDA's budget and expectations.

### **Initial design and development: \$7,425.00.**

- This cost encompasses all activities related to the initial design and development of the AIDA website, including user interface design, user experience optimization, and the initial development phase. This figure is based on our comprehensive planning and the expertise of our team, ensuring that the website is aesthetically appealing, functional, and aligned with AIDA's strategic objectives.

### **Ongoing Maintenance and Updates: \$85/hour**

#### **Hourly Rate for Additional Services: \$95/Hour**

For services outside the scope of the standard maintenance and update packages, such as significant new feature development or major redesign efforts, we offer an hourly rate. This rate applies to tasks agreed upon by both AIDA and Castletop Solutions as exceeding the predefined maintenance and update efforts.





November 30, 2023

To Whom it My Concern

**Letter of Recommendation for Michael Neely, Neely Media Solutions, LLC**

I am pleased to provide this recommendation for Michael Neely for your consideration of his company, Neely Media Solutions, LLC., a Veteran owned Small Business.

Michael has performed excellent work for our company for many years. He designed our Website and continues to provide a highly professional approach to keeping the site maintained and up to date as needed. Michael is very responsive and produces his work thoroughly and accurately, in a short turn-around time frame. He is always a pleasure to work with and is committed to going the extra mile to produce exactly what we have asked for. He exceeds our expectations time after time.

Your company and project will greatly benefit from enlisting Michael's services and will, along the way, enjoy a successful partnership in working with him..

Sincerely,  
FACILITY DESIGN GROUP



Cheryl Moultrie  
Marketing Director

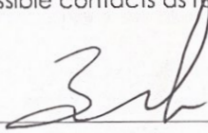


Procurement Lobbying Restrictions

ATTACHMENT 1

**Affirmation of Understanding and Agreement  
Pursuant to State Finance Law §139-j(3) and §139-j(6)(b)**

I affirm that I understand and agree to comply with the procedures of AIDA relative to permissible contacts as required by State Finance Law §139-j(3) and §139-j(6)(b).

By:  Date: 3/14/2024

Name: Emeka "Shawn" Ikpe Title: President

Offerer Name: Castletop Solutions

Offerer Address: 800 Riverwalk Parkway

Tonawanda, NY 14150

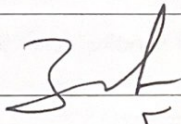


Procurement Lobbying Restrictions

ATTACHMENT 2

Offerer Certification:

I certify that all information provided to AIDA with respect to State Finance Law §139-k is complete, true and accurate.

By:  Date: 3/14/2024  
Name [printed]: Emeka "Shawn" Ikpa Title: President  
Offerer Name: Castletop Solutions  
Offerer Address: 800 Riverwalk Pkwy  
Tonawanda NY 14150

5. Has any Governmental Entity or other governmental agency terminated or withheld a Procurement Contract with the above-named individual or entity due to the intentional provision of false or incomplete information? (Please circle):

No

Yes

6. If yes, please provide details below.

Governmental Entity:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Termination or Withholding of Contract:

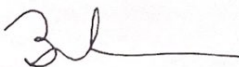
\_\_\_\_\_

Basis of Termination or Withholding:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Add additional pages as necessary)

Offerer certifies that all information provided to AIDA with respect to State Finance Law §139-k is complete, true and accurate.

By:  Date: 3/14/2024  
Signature

Name: Emeka "Shawn" Ikpa Title: President



**Procurement Lobbying Restrictions**

**ATTACHMENT 3**

**Offerer Disclosure of Prior Non-Responsibility Determinations**

Name of Individual or Entity Seeking to Enter into the Procurement Contract: Castleton Solutions

Address: 800 Riverwalk Parkway  
Tonawanda NY 14150

Name and Title of Person Submitting this Form: Emeka "Shawn" Ikpe, President

Date: 3/14/2024

1. Has any Governmental Entity made a finding of non-responsibility regarding the individual or entity seeking to enter into the Procurement Contract in the previous four years? (Please circle):  
 No                      Yes

If yes, please answer the next questions:

2. Was the basis for the finding of non-responsibility due to a violation of State Finance Law §139-j (Please circle):  
No                      Yes                      N/A

3. Was the basis for the finding of non-responsibility due to the intentional provision of false or incomplete information to a Governmental Entity? (Please circle):  
No                      Yes                      N/A

4. If you answered yes to any of the above questions, please provide details regarding the finding of non-responsibility below.  
Governmental Entity:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Finding of Non-responsibility:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Basis of Finding of Non-Responsibility:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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(Add additional pages as necessary)