

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**  
**RFP# 916630**

**Shared Governance Assessment**

RFP Timeline	
RFP Issue Date:	January 23, 2026
Deadline for Respondent Questions to MSU:	January 27, 2026
<b>RFP Response Due Date:</b>	<b>February 6, 2026, 3:00 pm Eastern</b>
Estimated Contract Award	February 20, 2026

RFP Contact	
Name:	Amanda Capanema
Unit:	Procurement and Payment Systems
Email:	<a href="mailto:alvesaff@msu.edu">alvesaff@msu.edu</a>
Phone:	(517) 884-6146

**DESCRIPTION:** Michigan State University (the “**University**” or “**MSU**”) is soliciting proposals through this Request for Proposal (“**RFP**”) for the purpose of external consultant to conduct a comprehensive Shared Governance Assessment to evaluate the effectiveness, responsiveness, and inclusiveness of shared governance across the university. The requested services are more thoroughly described under the Scope of Work Section of this RFP. Firms intending to respond to this RFP are referred to herein as a “**Respondent**” or “**Supplier**.”

## PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

- PROPOSAL PREPARATION.** The University recommends reading all RFP materials prior to preparing a proposal, particularly these Proposal Instructions. Respondents must follow these Proposal Instructions and provide a complete response to the items indicated in the table below. References and links to websites or external sources may not be used in lieu of providing the information requested in the RFP within the proposal. Include the Respondent's company name in the header of all documents submitted with your proposal.

Document	Description	Response Instructions
Cover Page	Provides RFP title and number, important dates, and contact information for MSU	Informational
Proposal Instructions	Provides RFP instructions to Respondents	Informational
Respondent Information Sheet	Company and Contact Information, and Experience	Respondent must complete and submit by proposal deadline
Scope of Work	Describes the intended scope of work for the RFP	Respondent must complete and submit by proposal deadline
Pricing	Pricing for goods and services sought by the University through this RFP	Respondent must complete and submit by proposal deadline
Master Service Agreement	Provides legal terms for a contract awarded through this RFP	Deemed accepted by Respondent unless information required in <b>Section 9, Master Service Agreement</b> is submitted by proposal deadline

- EXPECTED RFP TIMELINE.**

Activity	Date
RFP Issue Date:	January 23, 2026
Deadline for Respondent Questions to MSU:	January 27, 2026
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- CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE UNIVERSITY.** The sole point of contact for the University concerning this RFP is listed on the Cover Page. Contacting any other University personnel, agent, consultant, or representative about this RFP may result in Respondent disqualification.
- QUESTIONS.** Respondent questions about this RFP must be submitted electronically by email to the contact listed on the cover page of this RFP. In the interest of transparency, only written questions are accepted. Answers to all questions will be sent to Respondents via email. Submit questions by referencing the following: (i) Question Number, (ii) Document Name, (iii) Page Number, and (iv) Respondent Question. Please refer to **Section 2** above for the deadline to submit questions.

5. **MODIFICATIONS.** The University may modify this RFP at any time. Modifications will be sent via email. This is the only method by which the RFP may be modified.
6. **DELIVERY OF PROPOSAL.** The Respondent must submit its proposal, all attachments, and any modifications or withdrawals electronically via email to the contact listed on the cover page of this RFP. **The price proposal should be saved separately from all other proposal documents and should be sent as a separate attachment from the other proposal documents.** The Respondent should submit all documents in a modifiable (native) format (examples include but are not limited to: Microsoft Word or Excel and Google Docs or Sheets). In addition to submitting documents in a modifiable format, the Respondent may also submit copies of documents in PDF. Respondent's failure to submit a proposal as required may result in disqualification. The proposal and attachments must be fully uploaded and submitted prior to the proposal deadline. **Do not wait until the last minute to submit a proposal.** The University **may not** allow a proposal to be submitted after the proposal deadline identified in the Cover Page, even if a portion of the proposal was already submitted.
7. **MANDATORY MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS.** The RFP may contain minimum qualifications, which will be identified as "**Mandatory Minimum Requirements**" in the Scope of Work Section of this RFP. If the RFP does contain mandatory minimum requirements, any proposal not meeting these minimum requirements **will be deemed non-qualified and will not be considered.** All proposals meeting these mandatory minimum requirements will proceed for review and evaluation consistent with **Section 8, Evaluation Process.**
8. **EVALUATION PROCESS.** The University will convene a team of individuals from various Departments within MSU to evaluate each proposal based on each Respondent's ability to provide the required services, taking into consideration the overall cost to the University. The University may require an oral presentation of the Respondent's proposal; conduct interviews, research, reference checks, and background checks; and request additional price concessions at any point during the evaluation process. The following criteria will be used to evaluate each proposal:

Criteria	Weight
Cost proposal [Procurement to Evaluate]	15%
Experience with governance assessments & higher-ed governance	25%
Methodology quality & alignment with MSU scope	25%
Demonstrated familiarity with shared governance principles	15%
Project team qualifications	10%
Project timeline feasibility	10%
	100%

9. **MASTER SERVICE AGREEMENT.** The University strongly encourages strict adherence to the terms and conditions set forth in the Master Service Agreement. The University reserves the right to deem a proposal non-responsive for failure to accept the Master Service Agreement. Nevertheless, the Respondent may submit proposed changes to the Master Service Agreement in track changes (i.e., visible edits) with an explanation of the Respondent's need for each proposed change. Failure to include track changes with an explanation of the Respondent's need for the proposed change constitutes the Respondent's acceptance of the Master Service Agreement. General statements, such as "the Respondent reserves the right to negotiate the terms and conditions," may be considered non-responsive.

- 10. CLARIFICATION REQUEST.** The University reserves the right to issue a Clarification Request to a Respondent to clarify its proposal if the University determines the proposal is not clear. Failure to respond to a Clarification Request timely may be cause for disqualification.
- 11. RESERVATIONS.** The University reserves the right to:
- a. Disqualify a Respondent for failure to follow these instructions.
  - b. Discontinue the RFP process at any time for any or no reason. The issuance of an RFP, your preparation and submission of a proposal, and the University's subsequent receipt and evaluation of your proposal does not commit the University to award a contract to you or anyone, even if all the requirements in the RFP are met.
  - c. Consider late proposals if: (i) no other proposals are received; (ii) no complete proposals are received; (iii) the University received complete proposals, but the proposals did not meet mandatory minimum requirements or technical criteria; or (iv) the award process fails to result in an award.
  - d. Consider an otherwise disqualified proposal, if no other proposals are received.
  - e. Disqualify a proposal based on: (i) information provided by the Respondent in response to this RFP; or (ii) if it is determined that a Respondent purposely or willfully submitted false or misleading information in response to the RFP.
  - f. Consider prior performance with the University in making its award decision.
  - g. Consider total-cost-of-ownership factors (e.g., transition and training costs) when evaluating proposal pricing and in the final award.
  - h. Refuse to award a contract to any Respondent that has outstanding debt with the University or has a legal dispute with the University.
  - i. Require all Respondents to participate in a Best and Final Offer round of the RFP.
  - j. Enter into negotiations with one or more Respondents on price, terms, technical requirements, or other deliverables.
  - k. Award multiple, optional-use contracts, or award by type of service or good.
  - l. Evaluate the proposal outside the scope identified in **Section 8, Evaluation Process**, if the University receives only one proposal.
  - m. Obtain and consider information from other sources concerning a Respondent, such as the Respondent's capability and performance under other contracts, the qualifications of any subcontractor identified in the Proposal, the Respondent's financial stability, past or pending litigation, and other publicly available information.
  - n. Utilize third parties to assist in the evaluation process, provided such parties are subject to confidentiality requirements.
- 12. AWARD RECOMMENDATION.** The contract will be awarded to the responsive and responsible Respondent who offers the best value to the University, as determined by the University. Best value will be determined by the Respondent meeting any mandatory minimum requirements and offering the best combination of the factors in **Section 8, Evaluation Process**, and price, as demonstrated by the proposal. The University will email a **Notice of Award** to all Respondents. A Notice of Award does not constitute a contract, as the parties must reach final agreement on a signed contract before any services can be provided. The awarded Respondent is prohibited from partnering with losing bidders unless the RFP specifically allows for such arrangement, and any violation of this prohibition may result in disqualification of the awarded Respondent.
- 13. GENERAL CONDITIONS.** The University will not be liable for any costs, expenses, or damages incurred by a Respondent participating in this solicitation. The Respondent agrees that its proposal will be considered an offer to do business with the University in accordance with its proposal, including the Master Service Agreement, and that its proposal will be irrevocable and binding for a period of 180 calendar days from date of submission. If a contract is awarded to the Respondent, the University may, at its option, incorporate any part of the Respondent's proposal into the contract. This RFP is not an offer to enter into

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a contract. This RFP may not provide a complete statement of the University's needs, or contain all matters upon which agreement must be reached. Proposals submitted via email are the University's property.

14. **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.** Respondent acknowledges that any responses, materials, correspondence or documents provided to the University may be subject to the State of Michigan Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), Michigan Compiled Law 15.231 *et seq.*, and may be released to third parties in compliance with FOIA or any other law. Questions about the Respondent's own performance can be directed to the RFP Contact indicated on page 1 of this document. Questions about the overall evaluation and any other post-award inquiries must be submitted via a formal FOIA request to the [Michigan State University FOIA office](#).

**RESPONDENT INFORMATION SHEET**

*Please complete the following Information Sheet in the space provided:*

Information Sought	Response
<b>Contact Information</b>	
Respondent's sole contact person during the RFP process. Include name, title, address, email, and phone number.	
Person authorized to receive and sign a resulting contract. Include name, title, address, email, and phone number.	
<b>Respondent Background Information</b>	
Legal business name and address. Include business entity designation, e.g., sole proprietor, Inc., LLC, or LLP.	
What state was the company formed in?	
Main phone number	
Website address	
DUNS# AND/OR CCR# (if applicable):	
Number of years in business and number of employees	
Legal business name and address of parent company, if any	
Has your company (or any affiliates) been a party to litigation against Michigan State University? If the answer is yes, then state the date of initial filing, case name and court number, and jurisdiction.	
<b>Experience</b>	
Describe relevant experiences from the last 5 years supporting your ability to successfully manage a contract of similar size and scope for the services described in this RFP.	
<b>Experience 1</b>	
Company name Contact name Contact role at time of project Contact phone Contact email	
1. Project name and description of the scope of the project 2. What role did your company play? 3. How is this project experience relevant to the subject of this RFP?	
Start and end date (mm/yy – mm/yy)	
Status (completed, live, other – specify phase)	
<b>Experience 2</b>	
Company name Contact name Contact role at time of project Contact phone	

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Contact email	
1. Project name and description of the scope of the project 2. What role did your company play? 3. How is this project experience relevant to the subject of this RFP?	
Start and end date (mm/yy – mm/yy)	
Status (completed, live, other – specify phase)	
<b>Experience 3</b>	
Company name Contact name Contact role at time of project Contact phone Contact email	
1. Project name and description of the scope of the project 2. What role did your company play? 3. How is this project experience relevant to the subject of this RFP?	
Start and end date (mm/yy – mm/yy)	
Status (completed, live, other – specify phase)	

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

*Please address each of the sections below in a written response, which can be completed on a separate sheet (using the same section headings).*

### **1. Background**

Michigan State University (MSU) seeks proposals from qualified consulting firms to conduct a comprehensive Shared Governance Assessment to evaluate the effectiveness, responsiveness, and inclusiveness of shared governance across the university.

The purpose of this project is to conduct a campus-wide assessment of perceptions, structures, and practices related to shared governance and to identify opportunities for modernization, improved responsiveness, strengthened representation, and enhanced decision-making alignment with MSU's mission and strategic priorities.

The awarded Supplier will support the planning, execution, analysis, and reporting phases of this effort.

### **2. Project Objectives**

The goals of the Shared Governance Assessment Project are to:

1. Evaluate current shared governance structures and processes across academic and administrative units.
2. Assess stakeholder perceptions of governance effectiveness, transparency, inclusion, and responsiveness.
3. Benchmark MSU's governance model against peer institutions and national best practices.
4. Evaluate the impact of structural changes, including unit mergers and governance bylaw revisions, on representation and policy influence.
5. Recommend improvements to governance structures, procedures, and ongoing review mechanisms.

### **3. Scope of Work**

#### **A. Assess Current Shared Governance**

- Review current governance frameworks and bylaws.
- Analyze representation models, committee structures, and decision-making pathways.
- Identify misalignments between current structures and stakeholder expectations or institutional needs.
- Evaluate how mergers and bylaw revisions influence representation and policy influence.

#### **B. Stakeholder Engagement**

- Conduct stakeholder interviews, listening sessions, focus groups, and/or forums with:
  - Faculty (college and non-college units)
  - Academic staff
  - Students (undergraduate and graduate/professional)
  - Administrators
- Facilitate a campus-wide survey on shared governance perceptions.



- Ensure data collection practices incorporate inclusivity, confidentiality, and transparency.
- Benchmark governance models at peer R1 institutions.

C. Effectiveness Analysis

- Assess how shared governance supports decision-making, transparency, communication, and collaboration in a dynamic higher-education environment (e.g., technological change, evolving student needs, external pressures).
- Identify strengths, weaknesses, and structural gaps.

D. Recommendations & Future Framework

- Provide actionable recommendations for structural and procedural improvements.
- Propose an implementation plan.
- Recommend mechanisms for ongoing and recurrent governance review cycles.

**4. Deliverables**

Supplier shall produce the following deliverables:

**Monthly Deliverables**

- Monthly stakeholder engagement summaries.

**Project Deliverables**

- Comprehensive assessment report including:
  - Summary of what is working well and what needs improvement
  - Survey results and key themes from interviews and focus groups
  - Comparison to governance models at peer institutions
  - Recommendations for improving governance structures and processes
  - Step-by-step plan for implementing changes
  - Suggested process for reviewing governance on a regular basis
- Presentations to:
  - Steering Committee (interim and final)
  - Other governance bodies as requested (e.g., Faculty Senate, University Council)

**5. Mandatory Minimum Requirements (MUST Statements)**

The awarded supplier must meet **ALL** the following criteria in performance of these services:

- The Supplier must have documented experience conducting shared governance, organizational governance, institutional effectiveness, or higher-education governance assessments.
- The Supplier must have experience working with large R1 public universities.
- The Supplier must demonstrate expertise in survey research, focus group facilitation, qualitative interviewing, and benchmarking analysis.
- The Supplier must provide a detailed methodology for assessment and stakeholder engagement.
- The Supplier must deliver all final materials in accessible digital formats.
- The Supplier must ensure all data collection aligns with MSU requirements for confidentiality and security.

**Please detail in the proposal your ability to provide the services as outlined above.**

**6. Desired Qualifications**

- Experience facilitating governance assessments involving faculty, students, staff, and administrators.
- Expertise in shared governance models, AAUP principles, and comparative institutional governance analysis.
- Familiarity with public university systems and land-grant institutions.
- Ability to provide case studies or examples of prior governance assessment projects.
- Demonstrated capacity for neutral, third-party facilitation in politically complex or sensitive environments.

**7. Project Timeline**

The Supplier must meet the following MSU timeline:

- Interim progress report to the Steering Committee: **March 15, 2026**
- Final written report and recommendations due: **September 15, 2026**

**Supplier must include a detailed internal project timeline aligned to the above MSU milestones.**

## **PRICING**

*Please include a Pricing proposal as identified below on a separate sheet.*

### **Fees for Services**

Submit in detail Supplier's service fee structure for these services including, but not limited to:

- Breakdown of professional fees
- Travel (if applicable)
- Software or survey administration costs
- Any additional anticipated expenses
- Total fixed price for full project completion

The Supplier should clearly delineate fee structure and how fees related to services performed. All pricing should be itemized with clear descriptions of each charge. **The total cost should reflect all services and products provided, with no hidden fees. No sales tax, the University is a tax-exempt institution.**

### **Proposal Requirements**

Please prepare a standard proposal on your company letterhead detailing the Supplier's process to be used in providing the services described herein. Please include, at minimum, the following information in your Proposal:

1. Organizational background and qualifications
2. Detailed methodology and work plan
3. Project management structure
4. Examples of similar previous work
5. References from at least three higher-education clients
6. Budget proposal (fixed price)
7. Project timeline aligned to MSU deadlines
8. Identification of the project team and their qualifications



## **MASTER SERVICE AGREEMENT**

(attached)

*Please refer to Section 9 of the RFP Instructions when reviewing the Master Services Agreement terms and conditions.*