

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**  
**RFP#924080**

**TRUST AND CULTURE BUILDING IN THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM**

RFP Timeline	
RFP Issue Date:	February 23, 2026
Deadline for Respondent Questions to MSU:	February 27, 2026
MSU deadline for providing response	March 2, 2026
<b>RFP Response Due Date:</b>	<b>March 5, 2026, 3:00 pm Eastern</b>
Estimated Contract Award	March 16, 2026

RFP Contact	
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Unit:	MSU Procurement
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**DESCRIPTION:** Michigan State University (the “**University**” or “**MSU**”) is soliciting proposals through this Request for Proposal (“**RFP**”) for the purpose of engaging a Supplier to support Trust and Culture Building in the School of Journalism. 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**

- 1. 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

- 2. EXPECTED RFP TIMELINE.**

RFP Timeline	
RFP Issue Date:	February 23, 2026
Deadline for Respondent Questions to MSU:	February 27, 2026, 3:00 pm Eastern
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- 3. 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.
- 4. 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
Implementation Strategy (approach to the scope of work) and Project plan	40%
Qualifications, Experience and references	30%
Price	20%
Supplier Risk and Compliance (Adherence to legal terms, etc.)	10%
	<b>100%</b>

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 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.

# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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	

# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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)	

**NOTE:** *The three (3) experiences provided should be from institutions similar in type, size, and complexity to Michigan State University where a comparable consulting engagement has been completed within the past ten years. Ensure that the people you noted as “contact” can be reached via the information provided and are aware that MSU may be reaching out during this RFP.*



## **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.**

An academic unit in the College of Communication Arts and Sciences has experienced ongoing challenges related to communication processes, alignment of expectations, and interpersonal working dynamics. These challenges have affected collaboration and clarity around shared decision-making processes. Ongoing success of the unit and faculty/staff retention necessitates an external consultant to assess and strengthen the community through facilitated organizational development strategies.

### **2. Objective**

To hire external organizational development consulting services to support an academic unit in the College of Communication Arts and Sciences during a period of leadership and organizational transition. The engagement will provide experienced, neutral, higher education-focused facilitators to assess organizational dynamics, strengthen professional norms, improve team-alignment, and create a stable foundation for interim and incoming leadership. The engagement is intended to stabilize internal processes and strengthen professional working relationships at a critical point in the unit's development.

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

This Service will include structured assessment of unit climate and working dynamics; facilitated listening sessions; identification of operational and communication barriers; development of shared norms and expectations; and guided planning to strengthen collaboration, transparency, and professional working relationships. The outcome should also identify key unit strengths and areas for improvement, operational, governance, and communication barriers as well as suggested accountability structures and progress indicators. An additional expectation is a structured climate and organizational assessment with thematic analysis of findings with prioritized recommendations and phased implementation roadmap (short-, mid-, and long-term actions).

### **4. Expected Deliverables**

- I. A comprehensive document outlining findings, including data analysis, a summary of assessment methodology, benchmarking results as well as a detailed strategy map reflecting key priorities for the unit.
- II. Stakeholder communication framework and engagement plan
- III. Actionable recommendations and implementation roadmap for improving the trust and culture building in the unit.

### **5. Assignment Duration**

The assignment is expected to be completed within six months starting late March to September 2026. Suppliers are required to identify and propose clearly defined phases (e.g., assessment, synthesis, facilitation, implementation planning) within this timeframe.

## 6. Implementation strategy and Project plan

Suppliers are required to propose the best implementation strategy and approach that will accomplish/address the scope of this assignment. A preliminary project plan and schedule should be in sufficient detail to clearly outline tasks and timelines for implementation of the strategies. The schedule should show the expected sequence of tasks and include proposed durations for the performance of each task. Suppliers proposed strategies will be evaluated based on demonstrated higher education expertise, methodological clarity, feasibility within timeline, and ability to produce actionable outcomes. Proposals will be evaluated and scored in accordance with section 7.

## 7. Qualifications and Experience

### a. Company qualification and experience

- i. Industry Experience: at least 10 years' experience in organizational development consulting, particularly within the higher education sector
- ii. Track Record: Demonstrated experience facilitating organizational development engagements within academic units at research-intensive universities comparable in size and complexity to MSU.
- iii. Independence: The consulting firm must demonstrate independence and absence of conflicts of interest, including disclosure of any current or recent engagements with MSU that may affect impartiality.
- iv. Robust Methodology: Provide evidence of established and transparent methodologies for conducting similar assignments.

### b. Core Team qualifications and experience

The proposed engagement team must include a minimum of two senior-level consultants who will directly facilitate the assessment and organizational development work.

Each senior consultant must demonstrate possessing the following minimum qualifications :

- a) At least ten (10) years of experience in higher education, project management, or a related field.
- b) Demonstrated experience facilitating complex conversations within academic units operating under shared governance
- c) Experience supporting leadership transitions or organizational realignment in higher education settings
- d) Strong facilitation, analytical, and written communication skills
- e) Ability to synthesize qualitative and/or quantitative data into actionable recommendations

***The proposal must clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each team member and describe how their combined expertise supports the scope of work.***

## 8. Minimum Mandatory Requirement

To be considered for further evaluation as stated in Section 7 of the RFP Instructions, a Supplier must:

- A. Have at least 10 years' experience in conducting similar assignments in a University similar in size and complexity as MSU.

**9. Required Documents for RFP Submission**

- a) Written response to Scope of Work
- b) Completed Respondent Information Sheet with the 3 required experiences.
- c) Implementation Strategy and Project Plan
- d) Other information about company required under #10 of Scope of Work Section
- e) Signed Pricing Proposal valid for 180days and confirming acceptance of payment terms
- f) Master Service Agreement (if requesting redlines)

**10. Travel**

- a. All travel and costs must be preapproved by the University
- b. All travel shall be reimbursed at actual cost and shall be subject to MSU's Travel Reimbursement Policy set forth at Michigan State University Office of the Controller (msu.edu)

**11. Invoicing**

- a. Invoice Billings
  - i. Each invoice is to be billed on a separate sheet of paper.
  - ii. Each invoice must be billed within 30 days after the completion of the stated work.
  - iii. All invoices are to be emailed or mailed to MSU Accounts Payable. Do not mail or email invoices to Administration Building or MSU Client, they will not be paid and will delay receipt of payment
  - iv. If invoices for reimbursement of travel expenses, receipts for actual travel costs shall be provided as supporting documentation along with the invoice
  - v. More information on MSU invoice submission requirements can be found at: <https://upl.msu.edu/finance-analytics/accounts-payable/submitting-invoices/index.html>
- b. Invoice Requirements
  - i. Every invoice must show
    - 1. Company Name
    - 2. University Purchase Order Number
    - 3. Itemized/Breakdown of costs being invoiced

**PRICING**

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

All pricing includes hourly rates and estimates total hours for each Team member required to work on the assignment.

The signature below confirms that this proposal is valid for 180 days after the due date.

**Supplier**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**MASTER SERVICE AGREEMENT**

(attached)

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