

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**  
**RFP# 820694**

**STAFF COMPENSATION MODERNIZATION INITIATIVE**

RFP Timeline	
RFP Issue Date:	May 26, 2026
Deadline for Respondent Questions to MSU:	June 3, 2026
MSU deadline for providing response	June 10, 2026
<b>RFP Response Due Date:</b>	<b>June 23, 2026 by 3PM Eastern</b>
Virtual or In-Person Demo's	The week of July 13, 2026
Estimated Contract Award	July 31, 2026

RFP Contact	
Name:	Kathy Perron
Unit:	MSU Procurement
Email:	<a href="mailto:Perronka@msu.edu">Perronka@msu.edu</a>

**DESCRIPTION:** Michigan State University (the “**University**” or “**MSU**”) is soliciting proposals through this Request for Proposal (“**RFP**”) for the purpose of Auditing and assessing the university's job classification and compensation system for staff employees. 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
Issue RFP date	May 26, 2026
Deadline for Respondent Questions to MSU	June 3, 2026
MSU deadline for providing response	June 10, 2026
<b>RFP Response Due</b>	<b>June 23, 2026, 3:00 pm Eastern</b>
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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.

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	10 %
Supplier Risk and Compliance (Adherence to legal terms, etc.)	20 %
	<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.
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 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.

Founded in 1855, Michigan State University (MSU) is a premier land-grant institution recognized for its research, teaching, and application of knowledge. Established to broaden access to higher education, MSU served as a model for the Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act of 1862. Today, MSU is a world-class institution offering a wide range of programs and attracting top faculty, staff, and students. As a member of the Big Ten Conference and the Association of American Universities (AAU) since 1964, MSU stands as a leading research university committed to excellence, diversity, inclusion, and connectivity.

MSU excels in numerous fields including Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), social sciences, and humanities. Its strengths are recognized in areas such as nuclear physics, plant and animal sciences, K-20 education, supply chain logistics, and communication media. Additionally, MSU is gaining prominence in emerging fields like mobility, entrepreneurship, digital humanities, and African American and African Studies.

#### **Enrollment and Community**

- In fall 2025, MSU's total student body of 51,838 people was:
  - 63.79% white
  - 7.93% Asian
  - 6.65% African American/Black
  - 7.10% Hispanic/Latino/a (of any race)
  - 4.42% two or more races
  - 0.29% American Indian/Alaskan Native
  - 0.06% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Additionally, MSU's undergraduate class was 91.17% domestic and 4.83% international students, while the graduate student enrollment was 79.9% domestic and 20.1% international students.
- The university has over 510,000 alumni worldwide, with 286,000 residing in Michigan.
- Students come from all 83 counties in Michigan, all 50 states, and over 125 countries.

#### **Facilities and Resources**

- MSU employs approximately 13,451 faculty and staff member FTE.
- The university has an operating budget > \$3 billion and an endowment of > \$5 billion.
- MSU spans more than 5,200 acres and occupies 564 buildings, including 107 academic facilities totaling 24.5 million square feet. Additionally, MSU owns approximately 21,000

additional acres across Michigan for educational and research purposes.

### ***Research and Faculty***

- MSU's faculty and academic staff of ~6,500 are central to its reputation as a leader in scientific research and development. The university's research enterprise has grown significantly, with annual expenditure exceeding \$759 million.
- MSU scholars have received recognition from prestigious institutions, including the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and awards from foundations such as Dreyfus, Guggenheim, MacArthur, and Sloan.

### ***Staff and Labor Relations***

- MSU's regular support staff of over ~8,000, and ~4000 temporary and on-call support staff, play a crucial role in the university's mission. The university has a history of labor unions representing faculty, staff, and students, including the Administrative Professional Association (APA), Administrative Professional Supervisors Association (APSA), Clerical-Technical Union (CTU), and others.
- The existing job classification structures for APA, APSA, and CTU classifications were implemented in 1987, while structures for 1585, 324, and SSTU classifications date back to the 1960s. MSU aims to develop a modern structure that reflects industry standards, adapts to market conditions, and ensures clarity and equity for all employees. It currently has almost 1600 classifications.

### ***2030 Strategic Plan Initiative***

- Implement a modernized staff classification and compensation system.
- <https://strategicplan.msu.edu/strategic-plan>

## **1. Assignment Overall Goal & Objective**

The overall objective of this assignment is to audit and assess the university's job classification and compensation system for staff employees. This includes assessing MSU's current state, taking into consideration factors such as competitiveness, equity, higher education/industry best practice, and alignment with MSU's strategic mission and goals.

## **2. Specific Objective**

This assignment aims to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of Michigan State University's (MSU) current classification and compensation system for staff employees. The goal is to understand its

effectiveness and develop recommendations for a modern, efficient, transparent, and compliant classification and compensation system. This assessment will identify strengths, areas for improvement, and the steps needed to establish a contemporary classification and compensation framework. The findings will be reviewed with MSU stakeholders and will be used for the next phase of the project.

## 2. Scope of Work

This assessment will support the following current state analysis:

- i. **Job Architecture**– Assess MSU’s current job architecture to determine adequacy in meeting higher education best practice. This should take into consideration career path architecture.
- ii. **Pay Structures** – Assess MSU’s current pay structures to determine adequacy in meeting higher education best practice. This should take into consideration market competitiveness (hiring/retention), equity and fairness.
- iii. **Compensation Philosophy**: Assess and recommend a documented compensation philosophy based on higher education best practice, taking into consideration MSU’s 2030 strategic plan. Identify key values and principles.
- iv. **Compensation Strategy** – Assess the necessary components needed in a compensation strategy based on a recommended philosophy.
- v. **Compensation Processes, Policies and Decision-Making** – Evaluate MSU’s processes, policies, and organizational structure/authority levels for making pay decisions, and the ability to support a recommended competitive and equitable compensation strategy.
- vi. **Transparency and Communication**: Evaluate the transparency of the pay system for employees, including communication channels, access to information, and understanding of compensation components.

**Exclusion:** The assessment will not cover non-base salary benefits e.g., bonuses, healthcare, retirement etc.

## 3. Expected Outcome

- i. **Report:** A comprehensive document outlining findings, including data analysis, benchmarking results, and qualitative feedback.
- ii. **Recommendations:** Actionable suggestions for improving the job architecture and compensation system and addressing identified issues or disparities. Recommendations should include options for a new ideal state implementation, and also alternative recommendations where MSU’s current structure could be improved and not completely replaced, if feasible.

If MSU's current classification and compensation system cannot be considered for improvement, and wholesale replacement of the system is recommended, the final recommendation should give explanation.

Final recommendation options should include presentation materials to explain the recommendations to MSU management.

- iii. **Implementation Plan:** A proposed plan for implementing the recommendation options should include necessary changes to job architecture, pay structures, policies, and procedures, with change management and communication steps. This should also include an estimate of duration of implementation, and recommendations on necessary in-house or external resources and expertise. **This would not include recommended changes to MSU's HRIS.**

Provide example deliverables from other higher education implementations if available.

#### 4. **Assignment Duration**

The assignment is expected to be completed within six to nine months. Suppliers are required to propose an implementation plan/timeline that fits within this timeframe.

#### 5. **Implementation strategy and Project plan**

Suppliers are required to propose the best implementation strategy 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. Supplier's proposed strategy will be evaluated and scored in accordance with section 8.

#### 6. **Qualification and Experience**

- a. **Company qualification and experience**
  - i. **Industry Experience:** at least 10 years' experience in compensation consulting, particularly within the education sector
  - ii. **Track Record:** A proven history of successfully conducting compensation studies and providing actionable insights.
  - iii. **Demonstrate experience in job analysis and classification system review.**
  - iv. **Independence:** The consulting firm must demonstrate independence from the university to avoid conflicts of interest. This includes not having any financial or personal ties that could influence the study.
  - v. **Robust Methodology:** Provide evidence of established and transparent methodologies for conducting compensation studies.
  - vi. **Advanced Tools:** Proficiency in using advanced analytical tools and software to gather and analyze compensation data.

- b. Core Team qualifications and experience
  - i. **Team Lead:** This person should possess the following minimum qualifications:
    - a. At least five (5) years of experience in project management or a related field.
    - b. Proven leadership and management skills, with experience in overseeing teams and projects.
    - c. Proficiency in project management tools and software.
    - d. Experience in Agile methodology is often preferred
    - e. Higher education experience is required.
  - ii. **Analyst:** This person should possess the following minimum qualifications:
    - a. At least 3 years of relevant experience
    - b. Experience in data analysis, financial modeling, or business operations
    - c. Proficiency in data analysis tools
    - d. Strong analytical, communication, and organizational skills
  - iii. **Account Executive:** This person should possess the following minimum qualifications:
    - a. At least 5 years' Experience in the consulting industry, particularly in compensation or human resources consulting
    - b. Strong understanding of compensation structures, benefits, and HR practices
    - c. Higher education experience is required.

**NOTE: MSU reserves the right to conduct an interview with the proposed Core Team to confirm qualification and experience stated in the proposal.**

## 7. Mandatory Minimum Requirements.

To be considered for further evaluation as stated in Section 7 of the RFP Instructions, a Supplier must have at least 10 years' experience in compensation consulting, particularly within the education sector

## 8. Future Phase for this RFP

Upon completion of this assessment phase, MSU will evaluate the potential for a future phase. MSU reserves the right to re-engage the same supplier or bid out a future phase.

## 9. Other Information about the Company to provide

- a. **Firm Overview:** Describe the organization's history, leadership, and range of services offered.

- b. Provide your company's Dunn & Bradstreet number, if available.
- c. **Financial Position:** Provide an overview of the firm's financial status.
- d. **Special Services:** Detail any special services or product characteristics that offer advantages to MSU.
- e. **Team Information:** Provide detailed resumes or biographical information of the core Team and any other team members assigned to the project.
- f. **Consulting Philosophy:** Describe your firm's consulting philosophy and how it differentiates you from other providers.
- g. **Union Experience:** Show experience and sensitivity in working with clients in highly unionized environments.
- h. **Commitment to Diversity:** Demonstrate a commitment to professionalism, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in all aspects of work and interactions.

#### 10. 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)

#### 11. Payment Terms

- a. Invoice payment terms shall be 2.75% 10, NET 30 from date of receipt of invoice.
  - i. Respondents are expected to confirm acceptance of the above payment terms. Confirmation needs to be stated on the pricing schedule page of your proposal. Failure to accept these payment terms may result in a respondent being deemed non-responsive.

#### 12. Travel (if applicable)

- 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)

#### 13. 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 invoicing 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>

#### Invoice Requirements

- vi. Every invoice must show:
  - a. Company Name
  - b. University Purchase Order Number
  - c. 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: \_\_\_\_\_

