

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP# 935177

Employee Recognition Program

RFP Timeline	
RFP Issue Date:	July 16, 2026
Deadline for Respondent Questions to MSU:	July 23, 2026
RFP Response Due Date:	August 12 2026, 3:00 pm Eastern
Virtual or In-Peron Demo's	The week of September 14
Estimated Contract Award	October 19, 2026

RFP Contact	
Name:	Kathy Perron
Unit:	MSU Procurement
Email:	Perronka@msu.edu

DESCRIPTION: Michigan State University (the “**University**” or “**MSU**”) is soliciting proposals through this Request for Proposal (“**RFP**”) for the purpose of a comprehensive employee service-appreciation gift program. 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 Section 9, Master Service Agreement is submitted by proposal deadline
Pricing Estimate	Overall pricing estimate per awards level	Use Average Prices

- EXPECTED RFP TIMELINE.**

Activity	Date
Issue RFP	July 16, 2026
Deadline for Respondent Questions to MSU	July 23, 2026
RFP Response Due	August 12, 2026, 3:00 pm Eastern
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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:

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Criteria	Weight
Pricing competitiveness and transparency	20%
Supplier risk	10%
Technology platform functionality	15%
Commitment to accessibility in communications	10%
Quality of customer service and support.	25%
Vendor experience and references	20%
	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.

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- 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
Contact Information	
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.	
Respondent Background Information	
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.	
Experience	
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.	
Experience 1	
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)	

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Experience 2	
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)	
Experience 3	
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.

1. Introduction and Background

Michigan State University (MSU) is soliciting proposals from qualified vendors to provide a comprehensive employee service-appreciation gift program. The program must include the provision, selection, fulfillment, and shipping of gifts for employees reaching milestone years of service, as well as customer support and reporting. Approximately 400-600 employees annually.

MSU may want to expand the program to include 1, 5, 10 year gifts within the same budgetary constraints.

MSU provides a predetermined customized gift to retirees and an embossed retiree “scrapbook/guest book” with a few pictures and pages for photos, letters, and signatures.

Additionally, the selected vendor must support a process for gifts that will not be fulfilled through the vendor (e.g., custom chairs) by providing a consolidated summary list of selections to MSU for processing with alternate suppliers.

This program supports MSU’s commitment to recognizing employees' contributions in a meaningful, efficient, and inclusive manner.

2. Scope of Work-Please respond to each area:

A. Gift Selection and Fulfillment-Service Milestones

- Curated “catalog” of milestone gifts at a per-person average price determined by MSU. Prepare scope statement beginning with 1 year, 5 year and 10 year common gift); retirement (common gift) and then gift choice starting at 15 years and every five years thereafter.
 - Include 1, 5, 10 year as options
- Mailed “award yearbook” with MSU-centric messaging.
 - Email only option
 - Mail + email option
- On-demand reporting capability.
 - Cost per employee for gift, shipping, taxes; number of each gift
- Online selection platform with user-friendly navigation, accessible on desktop and mobile.
 - Web customer service for “lost” or “never got” codes
- Fulfillment of gift orders, including packaging and shipping to individual recipients.
- Some custom engraving (small plaque with name and years of service).
- MSU-centric selections in addition to general merchandise.
 - Note any MSU branded items must be approved by MSU licensing or from approved, licensed vendors.
- Timely gift delivery based on MSU milestone recognition schedules.

B. Retiree Commemoration and Gift

- Comparable and contemporary solution wanted to the current program (gift), and:
 - Current practice is an engraved piece mailed to the home the following year.
 - MSU HR prepares a retirement book with a letter from the president, prefilled pictures and blank pages and signature pages with foil name is prepared for each retiree. This is typically finished by the unit.

C. Support for Non-Vendor Fulfilled Gifts

- Process to record and track selections for special items (e.g., custom chairs) not fulfilled through the vendor.
- Provide MSU with a consolidated and on-demand reporting of these selections.

D. Customer Support

- Dedicated customer service for MSU employees, accessible via phone, email, and chat.
- Assistance with order changes, tracking, and issue resolution.

E. Reporting and Communication

- Real-time tracking of order status for MSU program administrators.
- Summary reports of selections, fulfillment status, and costs.
- Communication protocols for milestone event coordination and issue escalation.

F. Education and Professional Development Support

- Provide annual or as-needed training and orientation for MSU program administrators on system use, best practices, and reporting.
- Offer opportunities for professional development in program management, recognition strategies, and vendor system enhancements.
- Provide administrators' handbook with all phases of program initiation through completion and ongoing updates and training after the initial launch.

3. Vendor Proposal Requirements

- Company Profile – Years in business, relevant experience with higher education or large public-sector clients, client references.
- Fulfillment data, including on-time, employee satisfaction.
- Program Approach – Detailed description of selection, ordering, fulfillment, and customer service processes.
- Communication with employee plan; include sample materials sent to employees, whether via email or regular mail, and a recommended timeline of communication. The gift program will be annual and will kick off at or near the time of the employee reception. Assume May 1 for the proposal.
- Technology Platform – Demonstration or screenshots of the online gift selection from employee perspective and reporting system for administrators.
 - Specification for all data fields to vendor
- Pricing Structure – Per-person average pricing, item cost ranges, shipping costs, and any administrative fees as outlined in A. and B. above. Gift Selection and Fulfillment and C. Support for non-vendor fulfilled gifts.

- Implementation Timeline – From contract award to program launch.
- Support Plan – Customer service model, hours of availability, escalation processes.
- Education/Training Plan – Approach to training MSU staff and supporting ongoing program administration and documentation.
- Value-Added Services – Additional offerings such as expanded gift options, sustainability initiatives, or other considerations such as peer-to-peer recognition.

4. Deliverables and Timelines

The successful vendor will be expected to:

- Fully launch program by April 1, 2027. The program is on an annual basis with a beginning and an end of the gift selection period.
- Provide quarterly performance reports and annual program review.
- Meet agreed-upon shipping and service-level standards.

5. Proposal Submission Instructions

- Format: Submit electronically in PDF format.

6. Evaluation Criteria

Program capabilities and alignment with MSU's requirements.

- Vendor experience and references.
- Technology platform functionality.
- Pricing competitiveness and transparency.
- Quality of customer service and support.
- Commitment to accessibility in communications.

7. Terms and Conditions

This RFP is issued in accordance with MSU purchasing policies. Submission of a proposal constitutes acceptance of MSU's standard contractual terms unless exceptions are clearly noted. MSU reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive informalities, and accept the proposal that best serves the university's interests.

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PRICING

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

Provide best practices for awards with the following estimates:

Service Level	Estimated Number per Year	Average Cost per Person	Total
1	75		
5	20		
10	25		
15	125		
20	100		
25	130		
30	60		
35	40		
40	30		
45	10		
50+	5		
Retiree	150		

Please include all set up fees, admin fees, etc. Please be as detailed and transparent as possible



MASTER SERVICE AGREEMENT

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