

**Mississippi State University
Request for Proposals (RFP) 20-23
Admissions and Recruitment Consulting Services for Mississippi
State University**

ISSUE DATE: January 30, 2020

ISSUING AGENCY: Office of Procurement and Contracts

Mississippi State University
610 McArthur Hall
245 Barr Avenue
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Sealed Proposals, subject to the conditions made a part hereof, will be received **March 3, 2020 at 2:00 PM in the MSU Office of Procurement and Contracts, same address above**, for furnishing services and potentially, optional services as described herein.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Indicate firm name, and RFP number on the front of each sealed proposal envelope or package.

All inquiries concerning this RFP should be directed to:

Jennifer Mayfield
Office of Procurement and Contracts, (Same address above)
jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu
662-325-2550

Any addendum associated with this RFP will be posted at <http://www.procurement.msstate.edu/procurement/bids/index.php> located under RFP 20-23. It is the respondent's responsibility to assure that all addenda have been reviewed and if applicable, signed and returned.

1. UNIVERSITY OVERVIEW

Mississippi State University (MSU) is a comprehensive land grant university of 21,500+ students and approximately 5,000 faculty and staff. The main campus is located adjacent to the community of Starkville in northeast Mississippi, with a remote campus located in Meridian with an enrollment of around 700 students. Additionally, the university operates several remote agricultural experiment stations and has an Extension office located in each of the eighty-two Mississippi counties.

Additional information about MSU can be found at our website www.msstate.edu.

2. INVITATION TO SUBMIT PROPOSAL ON RFP

Mississippi State University seeks to enter into a contract with one qualified, capable, and experienced firm to provide management analytic and consulting services to the Office of Admissions and Scholarships, covering areas of strategic enrollment planning, financial aid and scholarships, and market search.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES REQUIRED

The University desires a partnership with a strong consultative approach, including a team of professionals who have worked as enrollment managers as well as experts to institutions similar in size and scope to Mississippi State. Respondent's approach to the requirements below should integrate current trends in enrollment management and national best practices research. Major objectives to be obtained through this project include:

1. Assist leadership in the development of a strategic enrollment plan
2. Optimize scholarship packages to grow enrollment and maximize net tuition revenue
3. Implement a student search campaign to grow the pool of interested students and maximize application and enrollment in new markets

Work may include, but is not limited to:

-Work with MSU leadership to establish clear goals and planning efforts to achieve organization, creation, implementation and review of a long-term strategic enrollment plan.

-Facilitate dialogue and identification of strategic enrollment management goals including key performance indicators which include but are not limited to enrollment targets by class level, program, resident status, geographical location, academic preparation, income level and demographics; retention/completion; program mix; program delivery; expenditure limits and services. Assist with identifying return on investment for each goal.

- Implement pricing and financial aid strategies that improve MSU’s net tuition revenue and attract and retain the desired academic, racial/ethnic, and social/economic mix of students.
- Develop a multiple year financial aid strategy that supports enrollment, determines if MSU is meeting discount rates and net revenue targets, and will include the use of admissions based merit scholarships and need based awards.
- Must be able to provide a well-constructed program for student search, messaging for campaigns, parent communication program support, financial aid/scholarship submission marketing support, benchmarking, national/local research and analysis of all programs showing their impact on admission, enrollment, and retention outcomes
- Be available for on-campus visits, conference calls, email correspondence, webinars and general assistance with goals assigned to the relevant team members.

4. INQUIRIES ABOUT RFP

Prospective respondents may make written inquiries concerning this request for proposal to obtain clarification of requirements. **Questions should be submitted either via a Word document or plainly typed in the email itself.** Responses to these inquiries may be made by addendum to the Request for Proposal (RFP). Please send your inquiries to Jennifer Mayfield via electronic mail at jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu.

All inquiries should be marked “URGENT INQUIRY. MSU RFP 20-23”

5. ADDENDUM OR SUPPLEMENT TO RFP

In the event it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, an addendum to this RFP will be provided to each respondent who received the original RFP. Respondents shall not rely on any other interpretations, changes or corrections.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

a) Issuing Office

This RFP is issued by the following office:

Office of Procurement and Contracts
Mississippi State University
245 Barr Avenue, 610 McArthur Hall
Mississippi State, MS 39762

b) Schedule of Critical Dates

The following dates are for planning purposes only unless otherwise stated in this RFP progress towards their completion is at the sole discretion of the university.

RFP Posted	January 30, 2020
Questions from Vendors Due	February 20, 2020
MSU Q&A Response Due	February 26, 2020
Proposal Submission Deadline – 2:00 p.m.	March 3, 2020
Award Date (Estimated)	March 16, 2020
Contract Effective Date (Estimated)	May 22, 2020

7. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

This is a two-step RFP process. The technical proposals and the cost proposals are to be submitted in separate sealed envelopes. Indicate firm name, RFP# and word “Technical Proposal” on the front of the sealed technical proposal envelope or package. Indicate the firm name, RFP# and the word “Cost Proposal” on the front of the sealed proposal envelope or package.

At a minimum, the following items should be included in the contents of the Proposal:

- Cover letter, indicating the scope of the proposal. The letter should include an overview of the services being offered. The letter should include a statement of exceptions to any of the terms and conditions outlined in this RFP. (Cover letter should be no more than 3 pages in length.)
- Corporate Structure and Credentials
 - Number of years of experience
 - Staffing levels and support proposed
 - Examples of previous work at universities of similar size and scope
- Operations and Ability To Perform
 - Provide operation plan. This should include, but not be limited to, acknowledgement and agreement with all requirements as well as explanations, where applicable, of the intended plan to achieve the requirements.
 - Define the services to be provided, detailed information as to the timing of the scheduled work, and the approach used to provide these services to MSU

At a minimum, the following items should be included in the contents of the Cost Proposal:

- Please provide complete pricing for the total proposed solution according to the information provided in this request for proposal.
- Provide a cost for each proposed portion of the total solution, backed by the detail used for developing prices.
- Offerors must provide detailed pricing for their proposals, making certain to itemize/detail the costs for each proposed product and/or service. While Mississippi State University may elect to purchase all products and/or services offered by the Offeror, we reserve the right to purchase only a portion of the products and/or services offered.
- All prices and rates should be guaranteed firm for the first year. Please indicate pricing and/or discount percentage commitments for subsequent years (i.e. specific prices/discounts for years two and three; percentage increase maximums, or other defined methods). Mississippi State University reserves the right to exercise the option to extend or close any awarded contract at the expiration of year one.

8. DISCUSSIONS/EVALUATION CRITERIA/AWARD PROCESS

MSU reserves the right to conduct discussions with any or all respondents, or to make an award of a contract without such discussions based only on evaluation of the written proposals. MSU reserves the right to contact and interview anyone connected with any past or present projects with which the respondent has been associated. MSU likewise reserves the right to designate a review committee to evaluate the proposals according to the criteria set forth under this section. MSU may make a written determination showing the basis upon which the award was made and such determination shall be included in the procurement file.

MSU reserves the right to award this contract in whole or in part depending on what is in the best interest of MSU with MSU being the sole judge thereof.

The evaluation factors set forth in this section are described as follows:

- The Offerors's ability to meet the requirements and specifications as described in the RFP
- Best value, cost, and benefit to Mississippi State University
- Offerors's background and history of experience
- Quality of proposal documentation and/or presentation
- Offeror's experience with large flagship public higher education institutions

Failure to attend a requested interview presentation before the committee may result in a proposal not being considered.

Upon award of contract(s), successful respondent(s) will be asked to provide a transition plan and timeline and obtain MSU's input and concurrence before moving forward.

Proposals will be scored based on the following weights (100 points total):

- Corporate Structure/Years of Experience/References – 30 pts
- Operation Plan/Ease of Use/Services Offered – 35 pts
- Complete Program Cost – 35 pts.

9. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Proposals shall be submitted in two packages (envelopes or boxes) as set forth in Section 7. Please make sure that the RFP number is clearly visible on the outside of the package.

Technical Proposal – One (1) original and one (1) electronic copy (of the complete technical proposal in one pdf file on a flash drive) of parts 7(b)(i) (Cover Letter), 7(b)(ii) (Corporate Structure and Credentials), and 7(b)(iii) (Operations and Ability to Perform) should be sealed in a package with “Technical Proposal” in the lower left hand corner. Each submitted package should be a complete copy. The original shall be marked on the first page “Original”.

Cost Proposal – One (1) original and one (1) electronic copy (of the complete cost proposal in one pdf file on a flash drive). Should be sealed in a package with “Cost Proposal” in the lower left-hand corner. Each submitted package should be a complete copy. The original shall be marked on the first page “Original”.

The proposal package must be received on or before **2:00 p.m. on March 3, 2020**. It is the responsibility of the respondent to ensure that the proposal package arrives in the Procurement and Contracts office on-time. The proposal package should be delivered or sent by mail to:

**Office of Procurement and Contracts
Mississippi State University
610 McArthur Hall
245 Barr Avenue
Mississippi State, MS 39762**

Your response must include the signature page included in this RFP (See Appendix A) and contain the signature of an authorized representative of the respondent's organization. The signature on the “Original” signature page should be in blue ink

MSU reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive informalities and minor irregularities in proposals received and to accept any portion of a proposal or all items bid if deemed in the best interest of the University to do so.

Proposals received after the stated due date and time will be returned unopened. Submission via facsimile or other electronic means will not be accepted.

10. PCI COMPLIANCE ISSUES (IF APPLICABLE)

The vendor must provide a PCI compliant processing environment using one of the approved options below. If the vendor is unable to fully adhere to one of these options, the proposal will be removed from consideration.

- Option 1 – Integrate with MSU’s existing third party, PCI validated payment solution (Nelnet Business Solutions – Commerce Manager).
- Option 2 – Use vendor’s payment processing functionality with a different MSU Merchant ID but same bank account. Additional requirements include:
 - Vendor must provide PCI compliance certification information, e.g. Attestation of Compliance (AOC) to ensure all hardware, software and back end processing are compliant.
 - Vendor must provide a specific interface data file that supports Banner integration and automatic posting of credit/debit card payments to our ERP. The layout accepted by MSU, which MSU expects from the vendor can be provided upon request.
 - Card transactions processed by university personnel must be performed using hardware that is PCI-approved and point to point encrypted (P2PE).
- Option 3 – Use vendor’s payment processing functionality with vendor’s Merchant ID. Additional requirements include:
 - Vendor must provide PCI compliance certification information, e.g. Attestation of Compliance (AOC) to ensure all hardware, software and back end processing are compliant.
 - Payments due MSU will be remitted on a predetermined basis, net of all applicable fees and merchant discounts. Banner integration not required.
 - Card transactions processed by university personnel must be performed using hardware that is PCI-approved and point to point encrypted (P2PE).

11. TWO-PHASE, BEST AND FINAL OFFER

If the initial proposals do not provide MSU with a clear and convincing solution, or if MSU feels it is appropriate to offer the potential providers an opportunity to submit revised proposals, MSU reserves the right to use a two-phase approach and/or invite Best and Final Offers (BAFO). Based on the information obtained through the proposal submittals (Phase-One), MSU may choose a specific business model, and potential providers may be asked to submit revised proposals based upon that specific model.

The evaluation committee may develop, for distribution to the top-ranked firms, refined written terms with specific information on what is being requested as a result of information obtained through initial RFP submittal process. Proposers may be asked to reduce cost or provide additional clarification to specific sections of the RFP. Selected proposers are not required to submit a BAFO and may submit a written response notifying the solicitation evaluation committee that their response remains as originally submitted.

12. TERM OF CONTRACT

It is MSU's intention to enter into a three (3) year contract, estimated to begin May 22, 2020.

MSU reserves the right to terminate this agreement with thirty (30) days-notice, by the Director of Procurement and Contracts via certified mail to the address listed on the signature page of this RFP (See Appendix A) if any of the terms of the proposal and/or contract are violated.

In the event the contractor fails to carry out and comply with any of the conditions and agreements to be performed under the specifications, MSU will notify the contractor, in writing, of such failure or default. In the event the necessary corrective action has not been completed within a ten (10) day period, the contractor must submit, in writing, why such corrective action has not been performed. The University reserves the right to determine whether or not such noncompliance may be construed as a failure of performance of the contractor.

Termination of contract by contractor without cause can only occur with at least one-hundred and twenty (120) days-notice prior to the proposed termination of the contract.

In the event MSU employs attorneys or incurs other expenses it considers necessary to protect or enforce its rights under this contract, the contractor agrees to pay the attorney's fees and expenses so incurred by MSU.

13. ACCEPTANCE TIME

Proposal shall be valid for one-hundred and eighty (180) days following the proposal due date.

14. RFP CANCELLATION

This RFP in no manner obligates MSU to the eventual purchase of any services described, implied or which may be proposed until confirmed by a written contract. Progress towards this end is solely at the discretion of MSU and may be terminated without penalty or obligations at any time prior to the signing of a contract. MSU reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time, for any reason, and to reject any or all proposals or any parts thereof.

15. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR CLAUSE

The contractor shall acknowledge that an independent contractor relationship is established and that the employees of the contractor are not, nor shall they be deemed employees of MSU and that employees of MSU are not, nor shall they be deemed employees of the contractor.

16. OTHER CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Award Terms: This contract shall be awarded at the discretion of the University based on the capabilities and overall reputation of the Supplier, as well as the cost. Acceptance shall be confirmed by the issuance of a contract from the University.

Standard Contract: The awarded contractor(s) will be expected to enter into a contract that is in substantial compliance with MSU's standard contract http://www.procurement.msstate.edu/pdf/standard_rfp_contract.pdf. Proposal should include any desired changes to the standard contract. It should be noted that there are many clauses which the MSU cannot change (see Standard Addendum <http://www.procurement.msstate.edu/contracts/standardaddendum.pdf>) Significant changes to the standard contract may be cause for rejection of a proposal.

The Procurement Process: The following is a general description of the process by which a firm will be selected to fulfill this Request for Proposal.

- Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued to prospective suppliers.
- A deadline for written questions is set.
- Proposals will be received as set forth in Section 9.
- Unsigned proposals will not be considered.
- All proposals must be received by MSU no later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of this RFP.
- At that date and time, the package containing the proposals from each responding firm will be opened publicly and the name of each respondent will be announced.
- Proposal evaluation: The University will review each proposal.
- At their option, the evaluators may request oral presentations or discussions for the purpose of clarification or to amplify the materials presented in the proposal
- Respondents are cautioned that this is a request for proposals, not a request to contract, and the MSU reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all proposals when such rejection is deemed to be in the best interest of the University.
- The proposals will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth in Section 8.

APPENDIX A: SIGNATURE PAGE

Provide information requested, affix signature and return this page with your proposal:

NAME OF FIRM: _____

COMPLETE ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

AREA CODE/NUMBER

FACSIMILE NUMBER: _____

AREA CODE/NUMBER

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

AUTHORIZED
SIGNATURE: _____

PRINTED NAME: _____

TITLE: _____