Mississippi State University
Request for Proposals (RFP) 26-18
MRA Core Facility Management Software

ISSUE DATE: November 14, 2025

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 **December 11, 2025 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 26-18. 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 is seeking a web-based Core Facility Management Software application system that will support a multi-institutional shared resource exchange portal. This search portal will enhance research collaboration across Mississippi by providing a centralized, searchable database of research equipment and services available through the state's institutions of higher learning. The portal will have:

- A homepage introducing the Mississippi Research Alliance (MRA) and its member institutions
- A page listing all participating member institutions and their associated core facilities
- Core landing pages for each participating facility. Two types of core landing pages must be supported:
    - Core landing pages (Qty 30-45) that provide visibility only. These pages will display a facility description, contact information, and available resources.
    - Core landing pages (Qty 10) that provide visibility and include all features of the software's functionality—such as scheduling, service requests, pricing, billing/invoicing, and reporting.
- A search page where equipment and services from all cores can be searched using a list of preset search terms. Results should display matching equipment/services and the affiliated core landing pages.

The system should be flexible, customizable, and expandable, allowing employees and customers to change options and settings as permitted without IT/vendor assistance.

Product pricing must include tiered management levels and an unlimited number of users for each institution. Core pricing must include unlimited calendars and services.

Implementation must include a full suite of services including integration design. A dedicated project manager, implementation staff, technical integration manager, and software engineer should be assigned to each of three (3) institutions. Service provider will begin implementation according to the project plan within four (4) months of receipt of a purchase order and must deliver a fully functional and stable system for each Service Center Group using the system within three (3) months implementation start. Service Provider must also provide extensive training on use and management of the system to all levels of managers in the system.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES REQUIRED

a) Technical Requirements

Platform/System – should support:

- End User application capability to be installed and operated on mobile, PC, and Mac devices.
- SAML integration for Single Sign On (SSO)
- Optional API connector for connection with Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) or other comprehensive data management system.

b) Users

There should be no restrictions on the number of users.

User permissions and access to various system functions should be role based with users allowed in multiple roles. Role-based permissions govern each user's rights to add, edit, and view information within the system. There should be capability to accommodate tiered access based on roles. Institution-level managers must have access to all institution-level settings, all lab/user/account lists, and all reporting data. Core-level managers must be able to easily communicate with users in sortable groupings, configure all core-level settings, and perform all core invoicing, billing and reporting. Financial managers must be able to access billing, invoicing, and reporting features. Employees and customers must be able to track their reservations and service requests across all cores using a single project number. Group leaders must be able to control their own lab membership, membership levels, membership duration, fund assignments, and spending limits per group member. Group leaders should be able to assign permissions to designated group managers to have access to the same features as they do.

c) Reporting/Forms, Custom Fields, Files

- The system should have the ability to create custom reports by select users and system administrators.
- Reports should include scheduled items, services, charges, requests, projects completed, custom forms, cost, time, events, users, cores, labs, and maintenance.
- Users should be able to develop configurable report templates and save for future use.
- System should be able to display, email, export, print, share, and save reports and raw

data in PDF, CSV, and XLS formats.
- The service provider should explain in detail the reporting function of the system.

d) Functions

Resource scheduling calendars:
- Core-created calendars configurable for time in the future for instruments to be searched/reserved per setting
- Specific prices per instrument for a defined date/quantity/group of users
- Generate multiple instances of a schedule for duplicate identical resources.
- Calendars can display instrument category, description, and an image.
- Internal/external visibility control of calendars
- Service Center managers can reserve time on behalf of a user.
- Add service charges and custom forms to reservations.
- Link schedules and reserve time on multiple resources in one step.
- Set cancellation fees, discount pricing, usage restrictions, multiple permission levels, and permissions to create recurring reservations.
- Require reservation approval, option to link to permission and time of day.
- System sends email notifications, calendar invites, and reminders to users and responsible staff for reservations per settings.
- Manage training/maintenance events and retain records for each schedule.
- Create instant instrument usage entries via a Start/Stop time tracking feature.
- Allow hardware access control linked to user permission.

Service Project Request:
- Specific prices per service, by a defined date/quantity/grouping of users
- Create project templates including milestones, custom forms, and add-ons.
- Internal/external visibility control of offered services
- Service Center managers can create service requests on behalf of a user.
- Project logbook, complete record of all communications, actions/approvals including user, date and time
- Project approval workflow for quotes and quote generation to PDF
- Generate automated emails upon the change in status of a project.
- Assign Service Center staff to overall project or milestone.
- Categories for project and services templates for searching and filtering
- Create schedule reservation from a project, upload documents (e.g., report files) to projects, and/or link to external file folder for data and reports.
- Multiple Service Centers/Cores can access the same project.
- Employee Project Time Entry

- Matrix grid for time entry
- Time entry against assigned services
- Figures from time entry update on projects

Billing management:

- Confirmation of usage and validity check of funds upon finalizing project
- PI invoice approval
- Manager can initiate billing cycle and classify invoices in varying ways.
- Remove charges or invoices from billing cycle if information is missing.
- Communicate with relevant people related to billing activities.
- Restrict billing process to delegated financial managers.
- Remaining Value Check
- File upload including General Ledger information
- FTP server file transfer

e) System Maintenance and Support

The MRA requests the bidder to provide installation, setup, and configuration training.

The MRA anticipates the initial award will cover a 24-month period. Bidders shall provide details on licensing requirements and all ongoing expenses for maintenance and support. After the second year, ongoing annual support or maintenance costs shall become a year-to-year contractual agreement. This includes product updates and hotfixes.

Institution and Customer Support should include:

- Dedicated product Customer Support Team located in the customer country
- Responsive support team and system monitoring to prevent/correct issues
- Dedicated point-of-contact support manager per institution and network
- Phone, chat, and email support available 12-24 hours/day on business days
- Online FAQ/forums related to product functionality

f) Other Requirements

- Provide a completed Higher Education Cloud Vendor Assessment Tool (HECVAT) (lite version available at: https://www.ren-isac.net/public-resources/hecvat.html). or provide applicable certifications such as SOC2 documentation.

- Provide product interfaces that are compliant with WCAG 2.0 AA and provide VPAT if available.

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 26-18”

5. 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	**November 11, 2025**
Questions from Vendors Due	**November 21, 2025**
MSU Q&A Response Due	**December 2, 2025**
Proposal Submission Deadline – 2:00 p.m.	**December 11, 2025**
Award Date (Estimated)	**January 5, 2026**
Contract Effective Date (Estimated)	**January 12, 2026**

6. 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 **Technical 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 similar previous work
    - Any existing contracts with Mississippi institutions

- 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.
    - Describe how services will be provided to MRA member institutions.

- Provide a completed Higher Education Cloud Vendor Assessment Tool (HECVAT) (lite version available at: https://www.ren-isac.net/public-resources/hecvat.html). or provide applicable certifications such as SOC2 documentation.

- Provide product interfaces that are compliant with WCAG 2.0 AA and provide VPAT if available.

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

- Fees for initial purchase of software/items/service (including all preparation, installation, rollout, training and two years of maintenance and support)
- Annual Maintenance Costs after initial purchase including price increases.
- Itemized pricing for required and optional components of the system.

7. 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 Vendor's ability to deliver an application meeting the overall objective and functions described in the RFP
- Vendor's experience with similar systems
- Competitive fees
- Availability and access to technical support
- Company characteristics and structure
- Compliance with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations
- The committee may invite finalists for interviews and/or presentations
- Existing contracts with Mississippi 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):

- Experience building a multi-institutional network search portal with subscribed and unsubscribed cores – 30
- Operation Plan/Ease of Use/Services Offered – 20 pts
- Fees – 20 pts
- Corporate Structure/Years of Experience/References – 15
- Current Mississippi Contract – 15 pts

8. 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 December 11, 2025**. 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 <u>blue</u> 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.

9. 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.

- **<u>Option 1</u>** – Integrate with MSU's existing third-party solution (NelNet Business Solutions – Commerce Manager), because all hardware, software and back-end processing have been vetted and credit/debit card payments are automatically posted to Banner.

- **<u>Option 2</u>** – Use alternative third-party solution. Use a different MSU Merchant ID but same bank account.

- Work with members of MSU's PCI Council and third-party PCI Compliance consultant to review business needs and proposed solution.
- Ensure card transactions processed by university personnel are performed using a PCI-validated point to point encrypted (P2PE) solution. The solution must be listed on the PCI council's website (https://www.pcisecuritystandards.org), must not be expired, and devices to be used with the solution must have a PIN transaction security (PTS) expiration date at least 3 years past the date of installation.
- Obtain the following solution information
- Attestation of compliance (AoC) from all parties involved in handling or that affect the security of cardholder data.
- Verify that all devices have a current PTS certification and have an expiration date at least 3 years past the installation date of the solution.
- Obtain a data flow diagram showing where payment card data will be introduced to the proposed solution and all steps/hops it will take until payment information is delivered to the merchant processing bank. This will determine all of the service providers that must provide an AoC.
- Require specific reporting requirements and interfaces to support Banner integration and automatic posting of credit/debit card payments to the ERP. The exact file layout will be provided upon request.

- **Option 3** – Use alternative third-party solution. Use vendor's Merchant ID.
  - Work with members of MSU's PCI Council and third-party PCI Compliance consultant to review the solution.
  - Ensure card transactions processed by university personnel are performed using a PCI-validated point to point encrypted (P2PE) solution. The solution must be listed on the PCI council's website (https://www.pcisecuritystandards.org), must not be expired, and devices to be used with the solution must have a PIN transaction security (PTS) expiration date at least 3 years past the date of installation.
  - Obtain the following solution information
  - Attestation of compliance (AoC) from all parties involved in handling or that affects the security of cardholder data.
  - Verify that all devices have a current PTS certification and have an expiration date at least 3 years past the installation date of the solution.
  - Obtain a data flow diagram showing where payment card data will be introduced to the proposed solution and all steps/hops it will take until payment information is delivered to the merchant processing bank. This will determine all of the service providers that must provide an AoC.

- Payments due MSU will be remitted on a predetermined basis, net of all applicable fees and merchant discounts. Banner integration is not required.

10. 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.

11. TERM OF CONTRACT

It is MSU's intention to enter a two (2) year contract, estimated to begin January of 2026.

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.

12. ACCEPTANCE TIME

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

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. DISCLOSURE OF PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Proposals will be kept confidential until evaluations and award are completed by MSU. At that time, all proposals and documents pertaining to the proposals will be open to the public, except for material that is clearly marked proprietary or confidential.

IMPORTANT! The offeror/proposer should mark any and all pages of the proposal considered to be proprietary information which may remain confidential in accordance with Mississippi Code Annotated 25-61-9 and 79-23 1 (1972, as amended). Each page of the proposal that the proposer considers trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information should be on a different color paper than non-confidential pages and be marked in the upper right-hand corner with the word "CONFIDENTIAL."

Failure to clearly identify trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information will result in that information being released subject to a public records request.

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
https://www.contracts.msstate.edu/sites/www.contracts.msstate.edu/files/2025-

03/Standard_Services_Contract2023Oct18.docx. Proposal should include any desired changes to the standard contract. It should also be noted that there are many clauses which the MSU cannot change. (see Standard Addendum https://www.contracts.msstate.edu/sites/www.contracts.msstate.edu/files/2025-03/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 8.
- 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 7.

APPENDIX A: SIGNATURE PAGE

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

Name of Firm: ____

Complete Address: ____

____

Telephone Number: ____

E-mail Address: ____

Authorized Signature: ____

Printed Name: ____

Title: ____