

**Mississippi State University  
Request for Proposals (RFP) MSU2026112  
Institutional Repository, Digital Collections, ETD, and Journal  
Hosting**

ISSUE DATE: **October 9, 2026**

ISSUING AGENCY:

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

Sealed Proposals, subject to the conditions made a part hereof, will be **October 29, 2026 at 2:00 PM in the MSU Office of Procurement Services, same address above**, for furnishing services and potentially, optional services as described herein.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you are physically mailing your response, indicate firm name, and RFP number on the front of each and every sealed proposal envelope or package.

All inquiries concerning this RFP should be sent via the instructions in Section 4.

Jennifer Mayfield  
Office of Procurement Services  
[jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu](mailto: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 the RFP number. 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. The main campus is located adjacent to the community of Starkville in northeast Mississippi, with a remote campus located in Meridian. 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](http://www.msstate.edu).

## **2. INVITATION TO SUBMIT PROPOSAL ON RFP**

Mississippi State University is requesting proposals from qualified firms to enter into a contract for a single platform that can handle: Institutional Repository, Digital Collections, Journal Hosting, and ETD hosting.

## **3. SCOPE OF SERVICES REQUIRED**

Description of proposed solution. At minimum, this should include:

### **Company Background**

- What is the legal name of your company?
- Are you a subsidiary, affiliate, or franchise? If yes, what is the name of your parent company?
- Please provide how many years your company has been in business.
- General background information on your company.
- How many full-time employees work for your company? Worldwide? North America? Locally?
- What is the company ownership structure?
- If your company has been involved in a reorganization, acquisition, or merger in the last five (5) years, please explain.
- Is your company currently for sale or involved in any transactions to expand or be acquired by another organization? Please explain.
- Please provide any details of all past or pending litigation or claims filed against your company that would affect your company's performance under a contract with the University and the MLP.
- Is your company currently in default on any loan agreement or financing agreement with any bank, financial institution, or other entity? If yes, specify date(s), details, circumstances, and prospects for resolution.
- What differentiates your company/organization from your competition?

- Does any relationship exist whether by relative, business associate, capital funding agreement or any other such kinship exist between your company and a university employee? If yes, please explain.
- Please provide at least two references from similar size academic and consortium library customers that can speak about the quality of the company and the services being proposed. Reference list must include institution name, contact person, telephone number, e-mail address, project description, length of business relationship and background of project (year of project, summary of work performed, etc.).
- Please provide a breakdown of your customer base as to how many are academic, public, or special/other libraries. How many consortia are there and what type of consortia are they (academic, public, mixed)?
- **Product Features**
  - **Infrastructure**
    - Please explain general system architecture
      - Location of servers and storage (AWS, Azure, your own data center, etc.)
      - Storage availability and scalability. Are there file number or size limitations?
      - How do your scheduled maintenance windows work?
      - Are there file type limitations?
      - Do you have Support for a range of file types and metadata schemas?
  - **Product Support**
    - Would we have a designated support representative?
      - Are there annual planning calls?
    - Do you have a dedicated development team?
      - Do you use an iterative development process?
    - Is there support for hosted teams, such as journal editorial boards?
    - Do you offer text and video-based tutorials to train users on your product?
    - Will there be frequent communication from support and sales?
  - **Accessibility**
    - Are you WCAG 2.1 AA compliant?
  - **Security/Privacy**
    - How do you handle bots? (i.e. there have been many cases in recent months of whole platforms being offline due to bot attacks)
    - Do you support stable URLs?
    - Do you support reCAPTCHA?

- Do you support login controls? (e.g. only \*@msstate.edu email addresses can register)
- Please explain your support for customizable access / access levels on a per collection basis?
- Do you support IP address restrictions?
- Please explain your approach to patching and security updates.
- Explain your transparency about data collection and sharing.
- **Content acquisition, management, and dissemination**
  - Customizable metadata
    - Do you support the ability to add HTML and hyperlinks (rich text fields)?
    - Do you support the ability to optimize metadata for specific collections?
    - Do you support the ability to keep selected metadata fields visible only to administrators/back-end users?
    - Do you support Dublin Core mapping?
    - Will we be able to add items like related publications, grants/funder information, and advisors/mentors?
    - Do you include tools for harvesting metadata from leading sources like ORCID, Scopus, and PubMed, and Open Policy Finder?
  - Indexing
    - Will content be automatically indexed in Google and Google Scholar?
    - Do you employ the use of a robust SEO (search engine optimization)?
  - Do you support customizable submission forms on a per-collection basis?
  - Do you support batch uploading and revision of items?
  - Do you support OAI-PMH?
  - Please explain API access that we would have.
  - Do you support OpenURLs?
  - Do you support DOIs?
  - Do you support access control and embargoes on a per-item basis?
  - Do you support native media streaming?
  - Do you support the ability to embed media from other platforms including livestreams and recorded presentations?
  - Please explain the way you handle additional or supplemental file uploads?
  - Do you support multiple view options for primary files?

- Do you track version history of items?
- Do you support private administrator/editor notes?
- Do you support the hiding and withdrawing of items?
- Do you support the ability to create and customize virtual collections?
- Do you support the permanent deletion of content?
- Do you support the ability to reorder content?
- Do you support the peer review workflow in many structure types, including automated reminder emails?
- Do you support the ability to subscribe to collections and join mailing lists related to those collections?
- Do you support file uploads from URLs, as well as direct file uploads from a web interface?
- Do you support the following content types? Also, please advise on other items listed under some of the types.
  - General
  - Images/video
  - Books
  - ETDs
    - How do you support access restrictions / embargoes plus reminders of those?
    - Do you support the option to use full ETD lifecycle workflow (including advisor review) or an abridged version?
    - Do you have customizable email notification templates?
    - Do you support audiovisual files via supplemental uploads?
  - Journals
    - Do you support automatic minting of DOIs for articles?
    - Explain how you support the editorial workflow required of peer reviewed journals?
  - Events
  - Digital Exhibits
  - Do you support the ability to create multiple subcollections within one overarching collection?
- **Impact monitoring / statistics**
  - Do you send scheduled emails to administrators and authors?
  - Do you support savable, shareable dashboards?
  - Do you offer embedded readership maps for viewership locations? Is this on a collection or per item basis?
  - Do you include PlumX Altmetrics for every item?

- Do you use layered statistics (view vs. page hit vs. download vs streaming)?
- Are referrer details visible (institution, country, search engine/website, etc)?
  - Does this also include institution breakdown (educations, commercial, government)?
- **User Interface**
  - Do you support the adding of extra links in sidebars on a per collection basis?
  - Do you support customized introductory text, policies, submission guidelines, and logos on a per collection basis?
  - Do you support customizing the display of items in a collection (grid vs. slideshow, jumplists for item type/date, etc.)?
  - Do you support a clickthrough agreement on submission form?
- **Data Migration**
  - Please outline migration plans and associated costs.
    - We are currently using Digital Commons and will need to migrate our data and metadata to a new platform if we make a change.
      - We currently have 93,000 items (and growing).
      - We are currently using ~500GB in storage space (and growing).
      - We are currently hosting 7 journals with 2 more journals to be added soon.

**When applicable for Software/IT requests only:**

**Cloud-Based Infrastructure & Security** – The system must be cloud-based, with a strong data security and backup plan. Vendors should provide applicable security certifications, such as SOC2 and HECVAT Lite, to ensure compliance with industry standards.

**Accessibility Standards** – Vendors should provide a completed Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) that covers all software user interfaces. Web interfaces must meet WCAG 2.1 AA requirements.

## 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 email at [jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu](mailto:jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu). **All inquiries must be in writing no matter how minor they seem.**

All inquiries should be marked “URGENT INQUIRY. MSU RFP MSU2026112”

## 5. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

### a) Issuing Office

This RFP is issued by the following office:

Office of Procurement Services  
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.

|                                                 |                          |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>RFP Posted</b>                               | <b>October 9, 2026</b>   |
| <b>Questions from Vendors Due</b>               | <b>October 15, 2026</b>  |
| <b>MSU Q&amp;A Response Due</b>                 | <b>October 22, 2026</b>  |
| <b>Proposal Submission Deadline – 2:00 p.m.</b> | <b>October 29, 2026</b>  |
| <b>Award Date (Estimated)</b>                   | <b>November 16, 2026</b> |
| <b>Contract Effective Date (Estimated)</b>      | <b>December 1, 2026</b>  |

## 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.
- 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 MSU.

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 first year maintenance and support)
- Data migration from Digital Commons platform (Information about current number of items and storage space at the bottom of section 3).
- Annual Maintenance Costs after initial purchase.

## **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
- Competitive fees
- Availability and access technical support
- Vendor's experience with similar systems
- Compliance with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations
- The committee may invite finalists for interviews and/or presentations

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 – 20 pts
- Operation Plan/Ease of Use/Services Offered – 50 pts
- Fees – 30 pts.

## **8. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

### **Responses Submitted Electronically in Bully Buy:**

If you did not receive an invitation to reply in Bully Buy, contact the person on page one and request an invite.

**Technical Proposal:** Proposal must be submitted in PDF format and state "Technical Proposal" in the title of the document. This document must be separate from the cost proposal or the response may be considered non-responsive.

**Cost Proposal:** Cost proposal must be submitted in PDF format and state "Cost Proposal" in the title of the document. This document must be separate from the technical proposal or the response may be considered non-responsive.

### **Responses Submitted Physically:**

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.

**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 proposal package must be received on or before the date/time listed on Page 1. It is the responsibility of the respondent to ensure that the proposal package arrives at Mississippi State University on time. The proposal package should be delivered or sent by mail to the address listed on Page 1.

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 can be electronic.

MSU reserves the right to reject any or 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. RFP submissions via facsimile or email are not acceptable. Responses will only be valid if mailed and received by the due date/time or if submitted through an approved electronic system.

## **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.

- **Option 1** – 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.
- **Option 2** – 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 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 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 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 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 into a one (1) year contract with the option to renew for up to four (4) more years, estimated to begin December 1, 2026.

MSU reserves the right to terminate this agreement with thirty (30) days-notice, by the Director of Contract Administration 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 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. The technical 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). Significant changes to the standard contract may be cause for rejection of a proposal. Both documents can be found here: <https://www.contracts.msstate.edu/resources/standard-forms>.

**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: \_\_\_\_\_