

Vendor Q&A Addendum
Strategic Insights for New Jersey Higher Education: Stakeholder Strategy and Public Engagement Framework

Request for Proposals (RFQs)

Last Updated: March 31, 2026

Link for RFQ: <https://www.nj.gov/highereducation/documents/pdf/finance/StratInsights-SSPEF.pdf>

- 1. The first version of the RFQ required an "Equity Impact Assessment Across Different Merger/Consolidation Scenarios." This has disappeared from the revised RFQ. Can you offer an explanation for why it was omitted?**

The request for proposal for stakeholder strategy and public engagement framework was updated to reflect a realignment of the project components. The revision leverages inter-agency expertise and addresses considerations regarding data accessibility and the technical skill sets required to successfully execute the full scope of work.

- 2. How will findings from this engagement directly inform statewide strategy and decision-making related to mergers, consolidations, and partnerships?**

Findings will be shared with OSHE, Governor and Legislature to directly inform policy decisions and strategic planning. The engagement will yield actionable insights on stakeholder impacts, collaboration opportunities, and public perception that will serve as an evidence-based toolkit for evaluating and implementing future mergers, consolidations, and partnerships at both state and institutional levels.

- 3. What are the primary success criteria OSHE will use to evaluate the effectiveness of this work?**

The goal of the Strategic Insights for New Jersey Higher Education: Stakeholder Strategy and Public Engagement Framework help New Jersey examine the complex structure of higher education to ensure it remains sustainable, high-quality, and responsive amid shifting demographic, financial and technological realities. The State is looking for the Vendor's ability to deliver comprehensive, well-analyzed findings and accessible deliverables across the scope of services that effectively synthesize stakeholder perception and input and provide practical value for statewide leaders and policymakers in considering future approaches.

- 4. Are there specific policy, planning, or communications milestones this work must align to?**

The Vendor should align to the timeline and standards indicated in section 4.4 of the RFQ. This includes regular biweekly meetings with OSHE, monthly meetings with vendors and meeting all deliverables. The Vendor shall develop a detailed workplan that includes

Vendor's approach to executing the scope of work, including key tasks and subtasks, sequencing of activities, and interim milestones, among other items.

5. Can OSHE provide additional clarity on the scope and responsibilities of other vendors engaged in this broader initiative?

The scopes of work for the other two projects within the broader initiative are available to review on the website:

[View the Request for Quotes: Mapping the Future](#)

[View the Request for Quotes: Opportunity Outlook](#)

6. Will OSHE provide an existing stakeholder list or support recruitment across key groups?

OSHE does have established relationships and communications with many of the stakeholder groups and may provide general support for recruitment across key stakeholder groups, as appropriate. However, the vendor will be responsible for all scheduling and coordination activities. The extent and nature of OSHE's support will be discussed and mutually agreed upon following selection and in alignment with the vendor's proposed methodology.

7. Are there priority or sensitive stakeholder audiences that require tailored engagement approaches?

The State anticipates that different stakeholder audiences may require tailored engagement strategies, particularly given the sensitive nature of perceptions related to potential mergers and consolidations. Vendors should propose approaches that are responsive to these dynamics while ensuring comprehensive engagement across all identified stakeholder groups.

8. Are there expectations for geographic or demographic representation across New Jersey?

Yes, OSHE is seeking diverse stakeholder perspectives to inform insights, including geographic and demographic representation. In particular, the stakeholder landscape and influence analysis should ensure all relevant voices are represented.

9. Should participant incentives, outreach, and logistics be included in the vendor scope and budget?

Vendors must include all costs necessary to perform and complete the work required to achieve the outcomes of this RFQ, this would include participant incentives, outreach by vendor, and logistics if determined necessary by vendor. No additional funding will be provided beyond the amount proposed and agreed upon.

10. Will the selected vendor have access to prior research, data, or findings from earlier phases of this initiative?

The Strategic Insights projects will be operating in tandem and insights may be shared through regular project meetings and coordination with OSHE across vendors. Vendors will have access to relevant publicly available information to inform their work.

Additional resources may be made available through signed data-sharing agreements beyond what is available on OSHE's website and in accordance with State data security and confidentiality rules as indicated in the Standard Terms and Conditions. As noted in RFQ, the Vendor should note in workplan any data dependencies.

11. How will public-facing outputs be used and distributed across stakeholders?

The documents will be used to drive accountability and to inform future State institutional processes and policies, including the upcoming higher education strategic planning process. The outputs may be distributed via the agency's typical communication channels, including, our website and biweekly broadcast. The State may consider additional distribution methods beyond those outlined in this RFQ, as appropriate, to enhance reach and participation.

12. Within the \$304,000 maximum award, are there expectations for how effort should be allocated across phases or activities?

Vendors are expected to propose a level of effort that is reasonable, sufficient, and aligned with achieving all requirements outlined in this RFP.

13. How should vendors account for cross-vendor coordination and ongoing reporting requirements in scope and budget?

The vendors shall budget time for cross-vendor coordination with an expected cadence of at least monthly meetings and the vendors should account for regular reporting of progress and metrics through biweekly meetings and monthly reports.

14. Are there additional evaluation criteria or post-submission steps (e.g., presentations or interviews) that vendors should anticipate?

There are not post-submission steps for the vendor. All submissions will be reviewed for completeness and responsiveness to the goals and requirements outlined in the RFP.