



RICE UNIVERSITY  
**Human Resources**  
*Service. Strategy. Results.*

**Request for Proposal #: 2023-01-002**

**Rice University Engagement and Climate Assessment  
Objectives & Priorities**

Date of Issue: January 9, 2023

Proposal Submission Deadline: February 15, 2023

## **Rice University Engagement and Climate Assessment Objectives & Priorities**

### **Goals of the 2023 Engagement and Climate Assessment RFP**

Rice University is pleased to issue this Request for Proposals (RFP) to invite prospective vendors to submit a proposal to provide professional services to Engagement and Climate and Assessment (hereinafter “Climate Assessment”) in accordance with the scope of services as outlined herein. Rice University anticipates working with a single firm or consultant team but reserves the right to bifurcate the scope of work based on proposals received. The goal of the project is to determine the degree to which employees feel valued at Rice, the bottlenecks and the effectiveness of its current engagement initiatives, and to measure the real or perceived quality of interpersonal interactions between employees and their level of respect for each other’s need needs, abilities and potential.

### **About Rice University**

William Marsh Rice University, commonly referred to as Rice University, is a non-profit private research university located on a 285-acre campus in Houston, Texas. The university is situated near the Houston Museum District and adjacent to the Texas Medical Center.

Opened in 1912, Rice is a preeminent research university with a distinct undergraduate focus. Its educational distinction is demonstrated by a relatively small student body and 6:1 student-faculty ratio, among the lowest in the top American universities including the Ivy League. A member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), Rice has a very high level of research activity, with \$155.776 million in sponsored research funding in the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

We employ all types and levels of staff positions – from custodians to investment professionals to executives. Rice is a self-sufficient community with its own power plant, police department and fleet of buses. With a booming Houston economy, it has become increasingly important for us to create and implement systems and programs that will enable us to attract, retain, motivate and engage the best and the brightest to lead Rice University in its second century.

A quick break-down of our staff population is that we currently have

- 2,415 full-time, regular, benefits eligible staff;
  - 130 part-time, regular, benefits eligible staff;
  - 7 part-time, regular, non-benefits eligible staff;
  - 70 temporary, benefits eligible staff; and
  - 221 temporary, non-benefits eligible staff.
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### Project Context

Rice University conducted two previous climate surveys (the Houston Business Journal's Best Place to Work survey (2006 - 2014) which was for staff only and the Chronicle of Higher Education's Best Colleges to Work for survey (2010-2011), which included faculty and staff. However, Rice has not participated in a formal university-wide holistic engagement or climate assessment since 2014.

Rice is committed to creating a top-notch workplace for its staff. As such, it is important to understand the experiences and perceptions of the members of our campus, as it pertains to workplace culture.

By gathering feedback from our staff, Rice will be better positioned to understand and respond to the needs of our campus, and tailor programs, policies, and practices to better meet the needs of our workforce, which can improve morale and productivity. We believe the data obtained in a climate assessment is critical to understanding what Rice is doing well and where Rice could improve.

The impact of the Great Recession on the labor market and the desired employee value proposition has changed, and it's critical that Rice is in a place to respond and make the necessary changes to recruit and retain a vast talent network. Rice is well known globally as an exceptional place to receive an education. We want the same reputation as a workplace: we want people around the world to seek Rice out as an employer of choice. The only way we become an employer of choice is understanding what our staff want and need to see themselves having a career (and not just a job) at Rice.

Additionally, Rice is undergoing incredible and exciting change. This past year, Rice hired a new President, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Vice President for Research, Vice President for Innovation, and Vice President and General Counsel (in addition to newly appointed Deans in three of our schools). Our President, Reggie DesRoches, is in the initial phase of developing his strategic vision for the university. As such, this is the ideal (and most critical) time to gain an assessment of the climate at Rice for our staff for two main reasons: 1) to understand what we're doing very well and what we need to improve; and 2) to set a benchmark before President DesRoches announces his strategic vision for the next several years.

### Objectives

- Understand stakeholder perceptions and attitudes of current employee engagement and workplace climate.
  - Provide guidance and advice on selecting a statistically sound climate assessment platform or product to use across campus. The platform or product must:
    - be easy to access and use and must be available in Spanish and English
    - be easily accessible by our population of staff who are not technologically savvy and/or do not have a work computer
    - anonymity in responses, except for department name
  - Along with the Climate Assessment Committee determine which questions to include in the survey.
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- Provide robust reports and data, or the ability to create our own reports and sets of specific data from the assessment.
- Develop metrics and deliverables based on assessment data, to be discussed and determined by the Climate Assessment Committee.

### Deliverables

Tasks	Deliverables
Study/Assessment Planning/Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaborate with Climate Assessment Committee to design the survey format, develop questions, determine sampling, and test survey.</li><li>• Define terms to be used in survey.</li><li>• Conduct initial and follow-up focus groups.</li><li>• Provide timeline for data collection and analysis. Organize and develop content for website to communicating programs to all members of the community.</li></ul>
Study/Assessment Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Host Assessment</li><li>• Track and update survey response rates</li><li>• Work with Rice University web/IT support services during survey administration</li><li>• Ensure data privacy and security</li><li>• Provide user services</li></ul>
Data Scrubbing and Statistical Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scrub and analyze data</li><li>• Provide collected data in a format that is readily accessible, comprehensive and is amenable to further analysis</li><li>• Report and recommend potential future assessment improvements to the Climate Assessment Committee and administration</li></ul>
Final Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide draft and final report, including an executive summary and recommendations on climate study and focus group results</li><li>• Update website explaining study results</li><li>• Provide interactive data visualizations in a format ready to publish online</li><li>• Prepare a strategic communication plan for sharing results with the campus community</li><li>• Deliver on-site presentations summarizing final report(s)</li></ul>
Study/Assessment Data Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaborate with the Climate Assessment Committee and administration on a plan for data storage, security and ownership, which will include transfer of results to be query-able for future comparisons.</li></ul>



## **Proposal Requirements**

Please provide answers to the following questions in as efficient a manner as possible.

### **General Company Information**

1. Provide a brief history of your company, including the number of years your firm has been in business and the number of years of experience in survey building.
2. Provide a partial list of your company's customers and the type of services that you provide them.
3. Describe your company's experience with similar projects and building engagement and climate assessments.
4. Do you currently serve any other universities or other educational organizations? If so, please summarize.
5. What distinguishes your company and your products from your competition?
6. Is your company a certified minority - or women-owned business?

### **Project Information**

1. Provide a detailed, proposed work plan for delivering the requested deliverables such as building the assessment, conducting the assessment, evaluating the assessment, final reporting and storing the data for future queries.
2. Describe how the project would be managed and your process and response times for responding to project status updates.
3. Provide an itemized breakdown of fees for the project.

### **References**

1. List the organization name, contact person, email address and phone number for two (2) references for similar projects, as well as a brief description of each project.

## **Timeframe**

Distribute Request:	Monday, January 9, 2023
Rice Responds to Questions:	Monday, January 23 – Monday, January 30, 2023
Proposals Due:	Friday, February 15, 2023
Finalist Reviews:	Late February 2023
Desired Project Kick-Off:	March 1, 2023



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**Additional Information**

Please submit a proposal understanding and addressing the issues noted above. Also understand that we have a limited budget for this project and are seeking the best value for dollars spent and not necessarily an exhaustive study or the lowest cost provider. We feel that a firm's broad and deep understanding of both higher education and the Houston market will be a consideration in the selection.

Submittals Deadline: Rice University requires submittal of one electronic version submitted via email to the Office of Access, Equity and Equal Opportunity at [aeoo@rice.edu](mailto:aeoo@rice.edu). All proposal pages should be appropriately numbered and no proposal should be more than 15 pages. All responses, documents, terms, and information related to the proposer's response to this RFP shall be submitted with the response package prior to the submission deadline. No separate schedules, agreements, terms, conditions, etc. shall be recognized or accepted if not initially submitted with the response to this RFP. Proposal responses and submittals shall be received by [aeoo@rice.edu](mailto:aeoo@rice.edu) no later **5:00 pm January 30, 2023**.

Please direct questions and electronic copies of your proposal to [aeoo@rice.edu](mailto:aeoo@rice.edu). Please do not call or contact any other Rice faculty or staff member directly about this project.

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