



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) TO CONDUCT A REVISION OF THE GRADUATE STANDARDS FOR THE COUNCIL ON REHABILITATION EDUCATION**

**Due Date:** 9/16/13 at 4:00 PM, Central Time

**Estimated RFP Award:** \$40,000USD (including indirect funds up to 9%),  
\$20,000USD annually with benchmarks

**Length of Contract:** October 2013 – September 2015

**Conference Call of  
Interested Investigators:** 08/23/13, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM Central time. Call in  
number: 1-800-250-2600, Passcode: 2001975

**Number of Awards:** 1

### ***Submission of Proposals***

All proposals must be received by the due date. Documents will be reviewed to ensure they contain all required elements. **RFP proposals that do not meet submission requirements will not be evaluated.** Proposals must be submitted to:

Council on Rehabilitation Education  
1699 E. Woodfield Rd., Ste. 300 ♦ Schaumburg, IL 60173  
ATTN: Dr. Frank Lane, Executive Director  
Standards Revision RFP

### ***Further Information***

Dr. Frank Lane, Executive Director

847.944.1345 (Voice)

847.944.1346 (Fax)

E-mail: lane@iit.edu

## **Purpose of the RFP**

The Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) seeks an independent contractor to conduct a project to revise the existing 2009 Graduate Educational Standards required of Rehabilitation Counseling Education (RCE) programs for the professional development of students completing their education through its accredited programs. The project is designed to capture the depth and breadth of the rehabilitation counseling profession within the context of the complex, evolving, and dynamic environment of the profession.

## **Background and Overview**

CORE was formed in 1971 and incorporated in 1972. It is a specialized accreditation organization that is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and a member of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA). In 2013, CORE became a corporate affiliate of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP). As part of this affiliate agreement, CORE will implement a newly developed set of Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling standards.

Today, CORE accredits 96 university and college-based RCE programs at the master's degree level. Accreditation serves to promote the effective delivery of rehabilitation services to people with disabilities by stimulating and fostering continual review and improvement of master's degree RCE programs. CORE also accredits, via the Commission on Undergraduate Standards and Accreditation, 10 undergraduate programs in Rehabilitation Services and Disability Studies. In 2013, CORE began forming a global directory as a first step in its efforts to research and develop a Global Registry of rehabilitation and disability education programs.

## **Scope of Work**

The selected contractor shall furnish the personnel, materials, and equipment necessary to accomplish the following objectives and tasks.

### ***Project Management System***

1. Maintains a project management system to track project activities, documentation, and timelines. The project management system includes quality control procedures for project implementation including, but not be limited to: 1) training of contractors and staff involved in the project; 2) study methods and

procedures; 3) data collection; 4) data analysis (e.g., processing, coding, editing); and, 5) report preparation and delivery.

### ***Project Purpose, Methodology, Sampling Strategy, and Data Collection***

2. Conducts a study of stakeholders to identify the skills necessary for graduates from CORE-accredited programs to perform the functions of their job by practice setting for the development or revision of the CORE graduate standards to meet those needs. Stakeholders are defined by CORE as: students, lawmakers, educators, practitioners, and employers. Study will be sufficiently broad to encompass overall rehabilitation education needs and standards to meet those needs (e.g., specialty standards such as in psychiatric rehabilitation).
3. In consultation with CORE's Research Committee, contractor determines the stakeholder groups to be included in an analysis of internal and external sources about current and future stakeholder trends and needs and subsequent methodology and sampling strategy appropriate to reach those stakeholder groups.
4. Develops data collection instruments and reviews with CORE's Research Committee as appropriate for the selected stakeholder populations. (See definition of stakeholders in #2.) CORE may wish to have qualitative and quantitative questions on project instruments. These questions may require that the project respondents be able to provide text responses to each item, which would be provided to CORE in an Excel or .csv file. Therefore, instruments must be designed to collect both qualitative and quantitative of information.
5. Reviews Institutional Review Board (IRB) application and materials for research with CORE Research Committee before the application is submitted to the respective IRB and provides evidence of subsequent approval, including any requested modification to the protocol.

### ***Data Analysis and Summary***

6. Processes and analyzes the data using generally-accepted procedures appropriate to the qualitative or quantitative data to validate the study findings for the stakeholder population based on various strata as agreed upon with the CORE Research Committee.

### ***Project Reporting and Deliverables***

7. Develops specific standard recommendations for revising the CORE graduate accreditation standards, taking into consideration the broader context of rehabilitation counselor accreditation standards, which now include the newly developed Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling standards, based on project findings according to Activity Timeline.

8. Completes final report with an executive summary documenting the validation processes and procedures conducted during the project and the recommended standards revision is submitted from contractor to CORE Research Committee. The final report should include the following: demographic characteristics of respondents; descriptive statistics to include means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions by all respondents; indices of agreement and variability; and, content analysis of any qualitative data.
9. Meets quarterly telephonically with the CORE Research Committee to review the project's findings and finalizes recommendations for revised standards for submission to CORE Board.
10. Develops regular status project reports per schedule in Activity Timeline.
11. Principal investigator presents on status and findings at CORE face-to-face Board meeting in Chicago in July of each contact year.
12. Prepares final report for CORE board and any materials for public distribution and presentation that describe the project's findings and recommendations.
13. Develops manuscript (APA format) describing the project and findings to be disseminated in scholarly journals determined in consultation with CORE Research Committee.

## **Principal Investigator**

### ***Qualifications***

The principal investigator should possess a doctoral degree and preferably a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor credential, have knowledge of CORE accreditation process and graduate standards, and secondary knowledge of the CACREP standards. The principal investigator must also demonstrate excellent research, analytical, and report writing skills and have experience with managing extramural funding. The investigator must be able to work closely with and under the direction of CORE's Executive Director and Research Committee to establish appropriate timelines and deadlines for the project.

In addition, the principal investigator must agree to seek approval from CORE on the use of any project instrument and provide full access to all data collected in the course of the project.

The principal investigator must disclose any potential conflicts of interest and how these will be avoided. No director, employee, or agent of the contractor, or any vendor or subcontractor of the contractor, shall give or receive any commission, fee, rebate, gift, or entertainment of significant cost or value in connection with the work hereunder, or enter into any business arrangement with any director, employee, or agent of CORE other than as a representative of CORE. Contractor shall promptly notify CORE of any violation of this paragraph and any consideration received as a result of such violation shall be paid over or credited to CORE. CORE may audit relevant records of contractor and such subcontractor or vendor in connection with the work performed hereunder and all transactions related thereto for the sole purpose of determining whether there has been compliance with this paragraph. Contractor shall assure that his/her agreement with any of his/her subcontractors or vendors shall provide for such audit rights by CORE.

### ***Principal Investigator Responsibilities***

- Completion of the project within the timeline approved.
- Submission of progress reports to the CORE Research Committee per approved timeline until the project is completed.
- Submission of final reports to the CORE Board per timeline in this RFP.
- Presentation of the findings to CORE summarizing the data using a PowerPoint or other similar presentation format at each annual meeting during the contract period.
- Submission and approval of request for use of institutional data for any public presentation or publication per CORE guidelines.
- Acknowledgment in any publication, paper, or poster presentation that the research was supported by CORE.

## **Submission Guidelines, Formatting, and Timelines**

### ***Submission Guidelines and Formatting***

An emphasis on clarity and completeness is requested. Proposals should be double spaced, no more than twenty (20) pages in length, and set in a minimum of 12-point Arial font, with one-inch (1”) margins all around. (Project Plan, *curricula vitae*, charts, etc. may be added as appendices).

Proposals must include the following:

- Cover Page with contact information
- Statement of Work – Including:
  - Project plan

- Methodology (including detailed environmental scan and sampling strategy)
- Number and types of meetings and timeline
- Contractor staffing and qualifications<sup>1</sup>
- Letter from senior institutional signatory authorizing submission of proposal
- Description of recent and related project experiences
- IRB Materials
- Citation references
- Itemized costs for project and supplemental tasks (inclusive of all travel for principal investigator)
- Billing schedule

**Human Subjects**

Please indicate how proposal methodology will protect human subjects based on *Code of federal regulations, Title 46: Public welfare, Part 46: Protection of human subjects, Subpart A, Sections 46.101-46.409*. National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services (<http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/guidelines/45cfr46.html>).

**Proposal and Project Timelines**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
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**All activities due by 4:00 PM, Central Time, on the date indicated.**

Deadline for Receipt of Proposal	09/16/13
Selection of Contractor	10/01/13
Contract Signed/Project Begins	10/15/13
IRB Approval Documentation Submitted to CORE	12/31/13
<i>Final</i> Interim Progress Report to CORE Board	01/10/14
<i>Final</i> Annual Status Report to CORE Board	06/30/14
Project Status Presentation to CORE Board/Chicago	07/18/14
<i>Final</i> Interim Progress Report to CORE Board	01/09/15
<i>Final</i> Revised Standards Recommendations to CORE Board	06/30/15
Standards Recommendations Presentation to CORE Board	07/15 (TBD)
Final Project Report to CORE Board	09/30/15

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<sup>1</sup> Include the name, contact, professional affiliation, credentialing, and degree information for the Principal and, if applicable, the Co-Principal Investigator. In the case of multiple investigators, the Principal Investigator is the one responsible for the administration of any funding. For multiple investigators, attach an additional page giving the same information for each individual. The travel costs for the project status presentation to the CORE Board in Chicago should be included in the proposed budget.

Submission of Findings to Peer Reviewed Journal(s)  
09/30/15

The project timeline requires monthly progress updates with the CORE Executive Director, quarterly updates with the Research Committee, and biannual updates with the CORE Board.

### ***Submitting Your Proposal***

Submit one copy of the complete electronic application on a thumb drive and two (2) hard copies in MS Word and PDF file formats to the CORE office by certified mail delivery.

All grant proposals (electronic and hard copy) ***must*** be received by 4:00 PM, Central Time, on 09/16/13. Incomplete proposals will not be considered. Proposals received after the due date will not be considered. Proposals and all correspondence regarding the project must be directed to:

ATTN: Standards Revision RFP  
Dr. Frank Lane, Executive Director  
Council on Rehabilitation Education  
1699 E. Woodfield Rd., Ste. 300 ♦ Schaumburg, IL 60173

## **RFP Evaluation Criteria and Scoring**

### ***Criteria***

CORE will select the contractor candidates whose proposals:

- Describe an understanding of the total project
- Identify and describe project milestones and timelines
- Describe what would be accomplished
- Provide sufficient background information on specific project costs
- Demonstrate expertise, similar experience, and strong personnel qualifications
- Provide a conflict of interest statement
- Detail the capacity and resources to support the methodology
- Possess sufficient institutional resources to support the scope of the project
- Provide a comprehensive IRB process description
- Letter from senior institutional signatory authorizing submission of proposal
- Citation references

## *Scoring*

Proposals will be evaluated and scored according the following criteria (100% total):

1. Statement of the Problem – 25%
2. Project Management System/Methodology/ Research Design/Sampling Strategy (appropriateness and feasibility of design and methods) – 45%
3. Qualifications of Investigator(s) to Conduct Project – 20%
4. Budget (appropriateness for project scope) – 10%

## **Copyright**

All reports, data, programs, models, and documents developed hereunder (collectively “Work Product”), and the right to copyright such Work Product shall be the sole property of CORE. Any publication of results of the research must be approved by CORE’s Research Committee through existing policies and guidelines to ensure that confidential information about CORE and its programs is not inadvertently divulged.

## **Acceptance Requirements**

### ***Letter of Agreement***

In accepting the CORE graduate standards revision contract award, the Principal Investigator will be required to execute a formal Letter of Agreement that outlines the contractor’s specific responsibilities.

### ***Principal Contact***

Oversight of the development and achievement of the project shall be conducted by Principal Investigator who shall be the contractor for this project. Contractor shall give CORE prior written notice of the replacement or reduction in the level of effort of the contractor.



CORE will accept proposals under the following conditions:

- 1) Proposals must be submitted electronically and in hard copy at the CORE office by the required deadline.
- 2) CORE reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposal without the assignment of reasons for doing so.
- 3) CORE reserves the right to make an award without further discussion to bidders who were not selected.
- 4) CORE accepts no responsibility for costs to contractor for proposal preparation or submission.
- 5) The contractor should acknowledge, if awarded the contract, that s/he will function as an independent contractor in the conduct of the project and assume full responsibility for all actions, damages, injuries, etc. and at all times comply with all laws, rules, and regulations.
- 6) In no case should any confidential information or propriety information be included in proposals.
- 7) The proposal should be prepared in conformance with the guidelines stated in this RFP.
- 8) CORE requires that the selected contractor must agree in writing, to adhere to CORE's Intellectual Property, Conflict of Interest, and Confidentiality Policies.

## **Results Notification**

Results of submitted proposals will be sent by mail to the candidates as soon as possible after the review deadline, typically within one month after the application deadline. Contract will be awarded by 10/1/13.

## **Questions or Further Information**

Dr. Frank Lane, Executive Director

847.944.1345 (T)

847.944.1346 (F)

E-mail: [lane@iit.edu](mailto:lane@iit.edu)

# RFP Application Form

## INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION

Principal Investigator (First Name, MI, Last)

Co-Principal Investigator (if applicable)

Address

Address

Phone/Fax

Phone/Fax

E-mail

E-mail

Professional Affiliation (Rank/Title/Credential)

Professional Affiliation (Rank/Title/Credential)

Highest Degree/Date Awarded

Highest Degree/Date Awarded

Institution

Institution

Note: If more than two investigators are involved, attach an additional page for each with the information noted in this section.

FUNDING REQUEST HISTORY

During the last five years, have you received external support for research activities?     Yes    No

If yes, attach an additional page that addresses the following for each of the research projects for which you have received external support:

- Project Title
- Investigators
- Agency Co-Principal
- Dollar Amount of Funding Requested
- Description and Status
- Dollar Amount of Funding Awarded (if applicable)
- Period (if applicable)

Please indicate: 1) Which of these projects are current and 2) The Principal Investigator's percent of effort on each.

BUDGET

Include below a detailed budget summary by category and year. A detailed justification budget must appear in the narrative proposal.

Enter the total amount of support being requested for Research Assistants and Research Support (non-RA). \_\_\_\_\_







SIGNATURES

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Printed name and signature of Principal Investigator

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Date

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Printed name, title, and signature of institutional signatory

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Date

# Checklist

(Include with Submission)

- Cover page with contact information
- RFP Application Form (signed)
- RFP Narrative Materials (Word & PDF, 1" margins, 12-pt. Arial font, maximum 20 double-spaced pages)
  - Project Management System description
  - Project Purpose, Methodology, Sampling Strategy, Data Collection, and Data Analysis Design, Methods, and Procedures
  - Timeline, Including Number and Types of Meetings
- Staffing and Qualifications, including *curricula(um) vitae* of Investigator(s)
- Description of Recent and Related Project Experiences
- IRB Materials and Protecting Human Subject Description
- Conflict of Interest Statement
- Citation References
- Itemized Costs of Project and Supplemental Tasks
- Description of Institutional Resources and Capacity and Resources to Support Methodology
- Billing Schedule
- Letter from Senior Institutional Signatory Approving RFP Application



# Criteria for Review

(For Informational Purposes Only – Not to be Included with Submission)

A. Required Information (Prescreen Essential)	Present		Not Present				Comments		
Documentation is complete Proposal prepared within limits specified Required forms are included									
1. Statement of the Problem (25%)	0	1	2	3	4	5	x	Total	Comments
Problem statement (Purpose) Literature review Research question/hypothesis Completeness of description									
2. Methodology (45%)	0	1	2	3	4	5	X	Total	Comments
Method to address research questions/ hypotheses Description of population/samples Description of data collection instruments Description of procedures and implications Timeline Quality of proposed project and evaluation plan Setting is relevant to research questions/hypotheses and available resources are adequate									
3. Qualifications of Personnel (20%)	0	1	2	3	4	5	X	Total	Comments
Principal investigator qualifications Qualifications of Additional Personnel									
4. Budget (10%)	0	1	2	3	4	5	X	Total	Comments
Activities appropriate for timeline Adequate resources to accomplish the project Budget Justification of adequacy of resources and support									
TOTAL SCORE									

Scoring is based on a scale of zero to five, with 5 being the highest possible and 0 the lowest. The highest score possible is 100.

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Five: Excellent</b>      | <b>Responsive and well-executed</b>             |
| <b>Four: Above Average</b>  | <b>Exceeds minimum in some areas</b>            |
| <b>Three: Acceptable</b>    | <b>Meets the minimum requirement of the RFP</b> |
| <b>Two: Fair</b>            | <b>Partially unresponsive in some areas</b>     |
| <b>One: Inadequate</b>      | <b>Fails to meet perceived needs</b>            |
| <b>Zero: Non-responsive</b> | <b>Not addressed in the proposal</b>            |