



Association of Social Work Boards

Regulatory research
request for proposals

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Deadline: June 12, 2026

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Program summary and background

The Association of Social Work Boards is the nonprofit organization composed of the social work regulatory bodies of all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and all ten Canadian provinces. ASWB's mission is to provide support and services to the social work regulatory community to advance safe, competent, and ethical practices to strengthen public protection.

ASWB owns and maintains the social work licensing examinations that are used to test a social worker's competence to practice ethically and safely. ASWB also supports its membership in a variety of capacities, including through the provision of research and other information for the development and administration of social work regulation. The ASWB vision is that all social workers are licensed in order to protect clients and client systems.

Purpose of the RFP

The research will promote social work regulatory best practices and inform decision-making in the United States and Canada. ASWB is requesting proposals for original qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods research with evaluation on scientific merit.

ASWB seeks research on the following topics:

- Supervision
- Technology

Supervision topics may include the relationship between accessibility, quality, and cost of supervision and social workers' competence, professional boundary management, and preparedness to practice.

Technology topics may include ways to support practice and regulations needed to ensure ethical, competent, and safe service delivery. Potential areas of focus include AI, documentation, teletherapy, in-person engagement, social media, interventions, consent, system management, and confidentiality, as well as the impact of technology on clients, ethical decision-making, and the benefits and limitations of emerging tools.

ASWB has committed a total of \$400,000 to fund this research initiative. Based on the response to this RFP and project descriptions, it is anticipated that multiple contracts will be awarded. Research projects should be completed and submitted for publication before December 31, 2028.

Minimum qualifications and requirements

All proposals received on or before June 12, 2026, to research@aswb.org will be evaluated to determine whether they meet the minimum qualifications and requirements set forth in this request for proposals.

Organizational access

The successful bidder must have a means of accessing the relevant research and technical publications from appropriate sources. The successful bidder must also have the capability to conduct any proposed studies/research efforts. Organizations may enter into partnerships as long as proposals define the contributions of each organization to the project.

Researcher qualifications

The successful bidder must have the educational background, knowledge, and skills necessary to successfully complete the proposed project. The successful bidder must be able to discern the difference between primary and secondary sources in research. Additionally, the successful bidder must be able to evaluate existing literature around the topic including experimental design, data collection, and validity of conclusions drawn. The successful bidder must also be able to access relevant data, organize, and conduct proposed studies, and be able to present the findings in a cohesive narrative piece.

Communication skills

The successful bidder must be able to communicate the results of this study in a well-written manuscript with comprehensive bibliographic citations, suitable for publishing in English. The successful bidder may also be asked to present a summary of the results at a future ASWB event.

Budget

A detailed project budget including tasks, a timeline, and a schedule for deliverables must be included with the proposal. Proposals and projected expenses will be considered and evaluated based on the overall strength of the proposal, including intellectual merit and project design.

Deliverables

- A research plan and outline for review and feedback
- Periodic progress reports
- A comprehensive list of all research and grey literature evaluated
- Any data/results/conclusions gathered from the study
- A manuscript or an article* based on this research and submitted for publication

*All research documents submitted to ASWB remain the property of the successful bidder; however, the successful bidder shall enter into an agreement with ASWB regarding publication and presentation of the product, disbursement of funds, and ASWB access to research data.

Proposal submission requirements

Proposals must address all program components and include the following four sections:

- Program design narrative
- Organizational and individual capacity
- Demonstrated effectiveness and innovation
- Budget

Program design narrative

Program design should consider the level of effort for tasks and the value of tasks. The narrative should:

- Be comprehensive
- Clearly identify tasks and schedule
- Include a description of the methodology
- Present the scope timeline
- Demonstrate ability to complete tasks

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Clarity and conciseness of the narrative
- Appropriateness and comprehensiveness of program design
 - Identification of discreet tasks
 - Schedule of deliverables
 - Technical methodology, processes, and personnel

Organizational and individual capacity

Proposals should demonstrate adequate:

- Human resources
- Organizational resources
- Technical resources

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- **Human resources:** Academic/technical qualifications of project team, including proposed subcontractors
 - Resumes or curriculum vitae of key personnel involved in implementation
 - Experience of project team members
 - Experience of assigned lead researcher
- **Organizational resources:**
 - An explanation of how the provider's internal monitoring system adheres to generally accepted accounting principles
 - Access to administrative support services to appropriately administer the grant
- **Technical resources:** Resources identified and available for each workplan element, such as:
 - Software
 - Datasets

Demonstrated effectiveness and innovation

The proposal should include evidence of:

- Effectiveness of the personnel and methodology and usefulness of the proposed findings
- Innovative research approach

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Evidence of effectiveness:
 - Need for the research findings to enhance regulatory practices
 - Adequacy of methodology to produce needed findings
 - Demonstrated experience of personnel necessary to deliver the research
- Evidence of innovation
 - Clear identification and description of an innovative approach
 - Clearly linkage of innovative approach to added value
 - Robust rationale for innovative approach
 - Delineation of training/experience/academic background of project team in relation to innovative approach

Budget

Proposals should include a detailed budget that stipulates how funds will be spent, including:

- Tasks
- Timeline of research activities
- Schedule of deliverables
- Personnel
- Supplies, equipment, and materials
- Travel
- Overhead
- Other sources of income for funding the proposal, if applicable
- Expense tracking methodology

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Budget plan
- Timeline
- Deliverables
- Reasonableness of total cost
- Comparison with other proposals

See Appendix A for detailed budget requirements.

Proposal evaluation procedures

A diverse and impartial committee will review all proposals submitted on time to determine whether bidders meet all the requirements prescribed in the RFP. The evaluators may contact any individual or entity, whether offered as reference or not, to obtain information that will assist in evaluating the bidder. The evaluators retain the right to use such information to make selection decisions. Submittal of a proposal constitutes agreement that the evaluators may obtain and utilize such information.

The evaluators may request oral presentation or discussion with any or all bidders for the purpose of clarification or to amplify the material presented in any part of the proposal. However, bidders are cautioned that this provision is not mandatory; therefore, all proposals should be complete, concise, and reflect the most favorable terms available from the bidder.

The chosen bidder(s) will be notified in writing of their winning proposal(s), and a contract will be drawn that will include reference to this RFP, its attachments and addenda, the winning proposal(s), and any additional contract language that may be required by ASWB or by law. All other bidders will be notified regarding the selection of the winning proposal(s).

Evaluation criteria

See Appendix B for the evaluation rubric.

Proposal details

Proposal package:

All proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. ET on June 12, 2026.

File format and type. Bidders shall submit proposals as a Word document. Proposal text shall be in a font size of no less than 12 points, with not less than a one-inch margin on all pages, in order to facilitate the proposal review process. All pages must be consecutively numbered. Attachments and appendices do not need to be consecutively numbered from the main body of the proposal as long as any referenced attachment or appendix pages are easy to locate and the pages within each attachment or appendix are consecutively numbered.

Cover letter. Bidders shall submit a cover letter transmitting the proposal package to ASWB. The cover letter shall be signed and dated by an authorized individual representing the bidder's organization.

Contents page. Bidders shall include a contents page with page numbers. Proposals are not page limited; however, applicants are encouraged to be concise while providing sufficient detail to convey their ability to undertake the proposed research.

Please submit the entire proposal package in one email to jhenkel@aswb.org.

Submission details

Proprietary content. The contents of any proposal are considered proprietary to ASWB and the respective bidder. All bidders agree not to discuss their proposal with any other parties, including competitors, at any time.

Costs. Any costs incurred by the bidder in the preparation, transmittal, and presentation of any proposal or material submitted in response to this RFP shall be borne solely by the bidder.

Revised proposals. Any bidder may submit a revised proposal before the due date. Such revised proposals must be complete replacements for a previously submitted proposal and must be clearly identified as such in the cover letter.

Withdrawal. Bidders will be allowed to withdraw their proposals at any time prior to the proposal submission deadline. To withdraw, bidders shall email a withdrawal notice signed by the bidder's duly authorized representative to research@aswb.org.

Time frame. Responses to this RFP, including negotiated costs, will be considered firm for 180 days after the due date for the receipt of proposals. Research should be complete by two years after project start date.

Appendix A: Budget template

Tasks

Timeline for research activities

Schedule for deliverables

Personnel

- Staff member names and/or roles
- Number of hours spent on research activities
- Cost of staff salary for each staff member
- Cost of benefits for each staff member
- List of consultants/contractors used
- Consultant/contractor fees

Supplies, equipment, and materials

- List of materials needed
- Cost of each item
- List of equipment needed
- Cost of each item

Travel

- Destination, and purpose of travel
- List of individuals traveling
- Cost of transportation for each
- Cost of lodging for each
- Cost of meals for each
- Miscellaneous costs for each

Overhead (not more than 15% of entire budget)

- List of expenses covered
- Total cost of overhead

Other sources of income for funding the proposal, if applicable

Expense tracking methodology

Appendix B: Evaluation rubric

Category	Possible score
Program design narrative	40
Clarity and conciseness of the narrative	10
Identification of discreet tasks	10
Schedule of deliverables	10
Technical methodology, processes, and personnel	10
Organizational and individual capacity	25
Human resources	10
Organizational resources	10
Technical resources: Resources identified and available for each workplan element	5
Demonstrated effectiveness and innovation	12
Evidence of effectiveness:	6
Evidence of innovation	6
Budget	23
Budget plan	8
Timeline	4
Deliverable	4
Reasonableness of total cost	4
Comparison with other proposals	3