

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



Scoping the Canadian Career Development Landscape: Who is Providing What Career Services and Where

February 2022

Deadlines

Requests for Proposals Released: February 23, 2022

Intent to Submit: March 25, 2022

(Submit name and contact info to sharon@ceric.ca)

Proposal Deadline: April 29, 2022

Award of Contract: June 29, 2022

Project Initiation: July 25, 2022

1. Introduction

Canada currently lacks comprehensive baseline data on the overall size, scope and composition of its career development sector. Having this valid and credible information is critical to inform the field itself as well as related stakeholders as to the magnitude, characterization and impact of this varied group of professionals.

CERIC is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) to undertake first-of-its-kind market research about the field. The purpose is to make visible the field by answering fundamental questions around how many professionals are practising career development in some form in the country, where are they located and what is their primary focus. As part of gaining a full picture of the career development landscape across the country, this RFP also seeks to identify select high-level outcome measures that flow from the delivery of career services. Additionally, CERIC has a special interest in understanding the state of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Indigeneity (EDI) among career professionals in Canada through this RFP.

2. Background

CERIC is a national charitable organization that advances education and research in career counselling and career development. CERIC collaborates with a multi-sectoral group of career development communities, including individuals working in K-12, post-secondary, non-profit, government and corporate sectors as well as independently.

CERIC, as well as other organizations in the sector, require the core intelligence around existing and prospective audiences to inform work related to determining the socio-economic impact of career development, understanding the learning needs among professionals in the field, and advocating for public awareness and recognition of the value of career development. Likewise, other stakeholders would also benefit from this knowledge in myriad ways. Examples include post-secondary institutions seeking to understand demand for career development courses; employers in the sector doing workforce planning and needing to establish the supply of career development professionals; and government policymakers interested in the potential that a network of career development professionals could provide to achieving policy goals related to graduation, skills development, newcomer integration, employment and more.

It is recognized that a mapping of the career development sector in Canada involves complexity due to the wide variety of different types of professionals engaged in career services and the varying extents to which they are engaged. Career discussions take place in a multitude of settings. They involve different occupations and job titles (including Employment, Career and Coaching). Conversations may be at an introductory level or go deeper. This work may encompass someone's entire job or only a small portion although the impact is large.

CERIC anticipates this research will embody CERIC's "big tent" approach to determining who provides career development in Canada but that a meaningful analysis will require a delineation between those who are substantively undertaking career development work (for example, career and employment practitioners, inclusive of some immigrant-serving professionals, school counsellors, social workers, mental health workers or HR specialists) and others who advise on careers more casually or infrequently (such as classroom teachers, university faculty/college instructors and organizational managers not to mention a vast array of family and friends.)

CERIC has directed past projects that may help to inform a response to this RFP. Every four years, CERIC has conducted a [Survey of Career Service Professionals](#), most recently in 2019, that could provide a starting point around demographics,

education and experience of professionals in the field. This voluntary survey draws on those in CERIC's database and those of related supporting organizations though with some sectors underrepresented. Additionally, CERIC has developed a set of [Guiding Principles of Career Development](#) that may be helpful in contextualizing the core elements of career development as a means to scope the field and those who practice within it.

CERIC's interest in this project is three-fold:

- To develop a composite picture of the career development field in Canada: Who is doing what kind of career services and where
 - Produce a snapshot of the total number of professionals, broken down by relevant categories, including but not limited to: province/territory, sector, client, half-time/full-time (or percentage of time or hours worked), education/training, level of experience (e.g., junior, mid, senior; front-line vs. management), main responsibility/ies, skills and salary
 - Create a model that reflects the landscape of those engaged in career development work, both formally and informally with a focus on those at the nucleus of the field who identify as a career development professional in terms of their primary function. These boundaries could be represented, for example, by concentric or overlapping circles, quadrants or stages of competence
- To identify the impact of the career development sector in Canada for employers, educators and government policymakers through a limited number of high-level metrics
 - These stakeholder impact measures could be, for example, related to staff retention, student graduation, jobseeker employment or mental health. This will enable the sector to develop a common narrative around how career development professionals are contributing to public good and building career mindsets
 - Additionally, determine the market impact of career development in Canada in terms of its contribution to the country's economy in overall dollars
- Given the increased awareness of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Indigeneity (EDII), to answer whether those providing career development services reflect learners and clients who face additional barriers to career development? This would, for example, require some consideration of makeup of learners/clients and an analysis of provider skills, such as intercultural competencies, or the way in which services are tailored

3. Purpose/Intent

The purpose of this RFP is to invite interested researchers to submit a detailed proposal that will enable CERIC to select the research/consulting team that it determines is best suited to complete the project according to the enclosed criteria.

4. Scope of Work

Each proposal will include details of the methodology to be used:

- Methodology for determining the size and scope of the career development sector in Canada, including:
 - Whether research design will be exploratory or descriptive or a combination thereof
 - How the parameters of the career development field will be defined, drawing on generally accepted definitions of “sector” and “workforce” as well as characteristics of this field; what role will self-identification play?
 - Incorporation of differentiated sector-specific strategies to capture distinctions in how career services are delivered (for example, K-12 vs. community employment services)
 - Use of secondary research (published data sources) as well as primary research (surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.)
- Approach for developing a model to understand the various players (formal and informal or core and peripheral) across the country and their relative levels and types of engagement given breadth of pan-Canadian field
- Approach to identifying a limited set of career development service impact metrics that address the priorities of key stakeholder groups and a baseline of current status
- Methodology to assess DEI component and provide a picture of the current level of congruence between Canadians and career development professionals and services
- Approach to create a project guidance team to provide inclusive representation and ongoing feedback, and support achievement of project objectives
- Strategies for creating visual and short-form content for the data that can be part of knowledge dissemination and incorporated into communications with stakeholders

The scope of work for this project includes:

- Refinement and application of the methodology, approaches and strategies outlined above to collect the data and perform the analysis required to 1) develop a composite picture of the career development field in Canada 2) identify high-level impact measures and baselines 3) assess how representative the profession is in terms of EDII
- Data and analysis to be presented in the form of the deliverables outlined below
- Recognizing that this will be point-in-time research, provision of guidelines for repeating this exercise in future or for other countries to apply this methodology to scope their career development landscapes

5. Target Audience

The primary target audience for this research are professional associations, educational institutions and employers who provide leadership and support to the career development field. Additionally, government policymakers considering policies, programs and funding for this sector would make use of this research.

6. Deliverables

- A market research report of (50-100 pages) including executive summary and appendices completed by November 2023
 - Report should include dataset presentations and analysis, including where gaps remain to paint a fulsome picture
 - It should also provide graphically oriented content, i.e., a visual mapping or representation of key information
- Knowledge dissemination through: a webinar for the field, presentations at 3 relevant conferences; and a session at Cannexus24

CERIC will own all copyrights to the deliverables.

7. Budget and Duration

The range of funding available to conduct the research and provide the deliverables above is \$75,000-\$100,000.

Travel

Travel and registration costs to attend and present at an in-person Cannexus are to be included in the financial proposal.

Duration

Timelines will be negotiated with the successful applicant. Ideally, the research, an English or French language, copy-edited professionally designed report, and presentation of findings can be completed in 12-18 months.

8. Eligibility Requirements

This RFP is open to all researchers, consultants or contractors residing in Canada.

The successful candidate will have strong knowledge of market research strategies and preferably experience with sizing or mapping a sector or profession. Previous exposure and understanding of the career development field in Canada would be of benefit.

Applicants are requested to submit an electronic copy (in Microsoft Word or PDF format) of their proposal which is no longer than 30 pages by the deadline above.

Your proposal should convey the following:

- Your understanding of the scope of work;
- The proposed approach including methodology (that is inclusive of diversity of perspectives and language);
- Your level of ethical awareness and capacity related to the subject matter and how you will treat any ethical issues which might arise from this project given your methodology;
- A work plan and timelines, identifying the level of effort required in relation to milestone/target dates;
- A detailed budget;
- If you are submitting on behalf of a team of researchers, the capacity of the team, which outlines the experience as well as delineates the roles and responsibilities of the team members; and,

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- Possible challenges and opportunities anticipated in undertaking this work.

In addition to the 30 pages, the following elements are mandatory:

- An overview of your relevant experience;
- Your current curriculum vitae/resume; and,
- A list of three references that can be contacted to discuss your relevant experience.

9. Inquiries

All inquiries, proposal submissions and other communications are to be directed to:

Sharon Ferriss, Senior Director, Marketing and Communications

CERIC

Foundation House

2 St Clair Avenue East, Suite 300, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 2T5

Email: sharon@ceric.ca

Tel: 416.929.2510 x 128

CERIC reserves the right not to move forward with this project.

RATED CRITERIA

Proponents are asked to include in the proposal the information that is requested in each of the areas listed in this section. Please limit the information provided to what is specifically requested in this RFP.

A. Understanding the Requirements – Total Points = 15

Each proponent should include a 1-2-page summary of their understanding of the scope of work specified in this RFP. This content should be expressed in the proponent's own words and not simply recite the requirements specified in this document.

B. Proposed Approach – Total Points = 30

Each proponent should describe the approach and/or process proposed to address the scope of work and deliverables requirements of this RFP (See Sections 4 and 6). The proposal should outline the proponent's approach to the following:

- a) Project management
- b) Market research
- c) Report design strategy
- d) Stakeholder engagement
- e) Collaboration
- f) Budget allocation
- g) Risk mitigation associated with: project scope; stakeholder resistance; ethical considerations that may arise; treatment of data and confidentiality; compliance with appropriate privacy legislation; and, turnover of internal and/or consultant personnel.

The proposal should include any notable methodologies, innovative solutions, tools and techniques, and the proponent's respective suitability to this project. Each proponent should also provide a high-level workplan that reflects the proposed approach/process and demonstrates your ability to meet the schedule requirements for this project, including any applicable milestones.

C. Demonstrated Expertise – Total Points = 20

Each proponent should provide the following in its proposal:

- a) A description of the services the proponent has previously delivered and/or is currently delivering demonstrating the proponent's experience, with an emphasis on experience relevant sections 4 and 6 – Scope of Work and Deliverables;
- b) Describe any similarities or differences from this project.

D. Proponent References – Total Points = 10

Each proponent is requested to provide three references for any work done by themselves in the past three years that is similar in nature, complexity, and size to the requirements specified in this RFP.

- a) Provide the name of each project reference, along with his/her phone number and email address.
- b) Identify the size of the projects, the extent of involvement, and results achieved.

Our review teams will only evaluate three references. If more than this number are provided by the proponent, only the first three (3) listed in the proposal will be evaluated.

E. Knowledge Dissemination – Total Points = 10

Each proponent should provide the following in its proposal:

- a) Experience with conducting webinars and live presentations (with links if possible), with a brief description of the scope, reach and impact
- b) Examples of reports or other written passages (via links)

F. Evaluation – Total Points = 10

Each proponent should provide the following in its proposal:

- a) Experience with conducting project monitoring and evaluation
- b) Examples of evaluation reports or other written summary passages (via links)

G. Added Value – Total Points = 5

“Added value” is the realization of additional benefits beyond the inherent worth of the requested goods or services. Describe the aspect(s) of your proposal that would result in added value for this project as related to this RFP.