

Counseling Compact Commission

Request for Proposals – Secretariat Services

Release Date: April 13, 2023

Closing Date: May 19, 2023, 5:00 p.m. EDT

For additional information, please contact:

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Proposal Title

Counseling Compact Commission Support

Proposal Purpose

The Counseling Compact Commission seeks a secretariat and executive director to continue, implement and sustain the work of the Counseling Compact Commission.

Responding organizations must include the secretariat position in their proposal. The inclusion of executive director services is optional. See the *Scope of Work* section for more details.

Project Overview and History

A secretariat and executive director for the Counseling Compact Commission will provide administrative and management services to execute the Commission's responsibilities and strategic initiatives, as well as handling day-to-day operations. The Counseling Compact Commission, a joint interstate governmental agency, was established in 2022 following 10 states enacting the Counseling Compact.

Since 2019, The American Counseling Association (ACA) and The Council of State Governments (CSG) have worked closely with state regulatory boards and associations to write and introduce compact legislation. A national task force gathered representatives from professional practice, state regulation boards, state associations, the United States Department of Defense and ACA to exchange experiences, ideas, concerns, expectations and solutions. A sub-group of the national task force then wrote and refined the compact legislation, which was made available for public review and comment.

In addition to public stakeholders, counseling state associations and state regulatory communities were granted the opportunity to provide input. All information solicited throughout the review process was carefully considered. The revised bill draft received final review and approval from the national task force before being made available for introduction in state legislatures across the country, beginning with state legislative sessions in 2021.

The compact legislation required 10 states approve the legislation before assembling the Counseling Compact Commission. Two states passed the compact legislation in 2021, with an additional 15 states approving the legislation in the 2022 legislative session. As of April 13, 2023, three more states passed the compact legislation and over 20 states introduced it for consideration.

Having met the minimum enactment requirement, the Counseling Compact Commission officially formed. Each participating state appointed a commissioner. At the inaugural meeting on October 25-26, 2022, seven commissioners were elected to an executive committee. In addition, the executive committee has four ex-officio representatives from professional counselor organizations. Currently, the four organizations, as selected by the commission, are the American Counseling Association, the American Association of State Counseling Boards, the American Mental Health Counselors Association and the National Board for Certified Counselors.

The executive committee holds monthly meetings to continue the Commission's work. The Compact Commission intends to be fully operational by mid-2024.

The secretariat will be responsible for working with the Counseling Compact Commission, executive committee and executive director to develop all necessary commission infrastructure, secure a national licensure data system, which includes licensure information and disciplinary actions, and implement management of all activities.

More information about the Counseling Compact, including governing documents, FAQs, and commission information, may be found at <https://counselingcompact.org/>.

Terms of Contract

The Counseling Compact Commission desires to enter into an agreement with the successful awardee for a period of three years. The contract contains an option to renew in one-year increments for an additional three years subject to successful performance evaluation as determined by evaluation metrics and criteria listed herein and dependent on continued funding. The Commission expects the secretariat and executive director (if applicable) to begin services by September 1, 2023.

Scope of Work

Applicants may submit either a proposal for the secretariat position only or a proposal for both the secretariat and executive director positions. For proposals including both the secretariat and executive director positions, the Commission may elect to accept only the proposal for secretariat.

Additionally, please note that the secretariat and executive director will individually report to the Commission. If an Executive Director is not contracted following this RFP, the Commission may issue a second RFP for the Executive Director role.

The secretariat will provide administrative services to the Counseling Compact commission. The scope of work for the secretariat shall be as follows:

- Convene meetings with Counseling Compact Commission as needed.
- Provide all necessary management infrastructure including appropriate staffing, technology and resources as needed.
- Secure a national licensure data system.
- Work with each state counseling regulatory board or state agency on interface and implementation of the database.
- Process all counselor requests for a compact privilege to practice.
- Respond to all state counseling regulatory board administrators' requests to confirm disciplinary action information.
- Prepare annual budget.
- Apply for grants.
- Establish national policies and procedures.
- Develop all initial reporting templates.
- Develop all initial routine communication templates.
- Prepare all initial public-facing communications.
- Prepare and implement a marketing strategy and messaging to counseling state regulatory boards who may be interested in the compact legislation.
- Prepare data and reports, as needed, for the Counseling Compact Commission.

The Executive Director will serve as the primary staff person for the Counseling Compact Commission. The necessary qualifications of the Executive Director are listed below. The Executive Director position is expected to be a part-time role in the first year of the contract, with time requirements increasing to full time in subsequent years. The scope of work for the executive director shall be as follows:

- Serve as the lead staff executive for the Counseling Compact Commission.
- Direct the day-to-day operations of the organization, including but not limited to projects, relationships, and staff.
- Work in concert with the Commission leadership, and its Executive Committee to fulfill the intent and purpose of the Counseling Compact.
- Manage the day-to-day operations of the Counseling Compact.
- Provide support to the Commission Chair, Delegates, Committee Chairs and Executive Committee in the execution of its responsibilities, under the Compact Bylaws.
- Maintain records of the Commission. May serve as Secretary to the Commission; coordinates Executive Committee elections.
- Supervise the staff and independent contractors of the Commission.
- Develop and submits to the Commission for consideration the administrative personnel policies governing the recruitment, hiring, management, compensation, and dismissal of Commission staff.
- Participate in the development and implementation of the Counseling Commission strategic plan and objectives. Collaborates with the Executive Committee in setting the overall strategic direction.
- Provide external presentations and education and technical assistance for legislative enactments, as needed.

- In conjunction with the Treasurer and Executive Committee, manage the annual operating budget and reserves and monitoring the Commissions financial performance.
- Works in consultation with Commission Chair to develop meeting agendas, materials, minutes, and reports. Provides executive level staff support and ensures effective planning, promotion, and execution of commission meetings.
- Conduct outreach and public relations related to the Counseling Compact.
- Manage external stakeholder relationships while representing the Commission.
- Serve as the Counseling Compact training officer; provides training to member state counseling regulatory boards.
- Facilitate the orientation of new Commissioners.
- Develop and maintain a repository of informational, educational, and training materials regarding the Counseling Compact.
- In conjunction with the Commission and its committees, oversee and monitors regulatory compliance of member states with statute, bylaws, and rules.

The secretariat and executive director are expected to work closely on shared and complimentary objectives. A comparison chart listing the job functions and responsibilities for each position may be found in the Appendix as *Attachment I*.

Job Specifications for Executive Director

The following are the requirements for potential candidates for the Executive Director position:

- Bachelor's degree required, Master's or JD preferred. Background in business, management, healthcare administration or related field. Five or more years of member-based association management/governance and committee management experience preferred.
- Knowledge of occupational licensure, administrative law and operations management preferred.
- Excellent oral and written communication, presentation, technical, organizational, customer service, problem solving, analytical and critical thinking, and problem-solving skills are required.
- Ability to work independently to resolve member issues and collectively to establish a positive working rapport with members and stakeholders. Facilitates effective meetings with stakeholders. Domestic travel will be required.
- Ability to build, maintain, communicate, and manage professional relationships with members, stakeholders, and public and governmental agencies, with an emphasis on political awareness, public perceptions, and Counseling Compact initiatives and details.
- The secretariat and executive director are expected to work closely on shared and complimentary objectives. A comparison chart listing the job functions and responsibilities for each position may be found in the Appendix as Attachment I.

Budget

The Counseling Compact Commission's total expense budget for its first fiscal year will be approximately \$367,500 to cover operations of the commission, secretariat, executive director, annual commission meeting and any additional related costs. The funds are provided by ACA and NBCC. Funding in similar amounts is expected for the commission's second and third fiscal year. Additional revenue will be

needed to cover the development and operations of the national licensure database. The cost of the national licensure database will be determined at a future date and will be budgeted separately.

Proposal Requirements

Support of the Counseling Compact Commission and the necessary data system is essential to ensure the success of the Counseling Compact. Secretariats may mitigate risks by identifying best practices to accomplish the defined scope of work.

Proposals should include the following five sections, using the form provided at the end of the application:

- 1) Provide the company name, address, telephone number, website and any social media handles.
- 2) Provide the name, title and email address of the individual who will serve as the company's primary contact.
- 3) Provide a response of up to 1,000 words which addresses:
 - a) Past work with similar projects.
 - b) Qualifications for this project.
 - c) An implementation plan for this project.
- 4) Submit a cost proposal for only the cost to execute the administration and management services necessary to complete the scope of work for which you are applying. The cost proposal for secretariat should be listed as a total amount; the cost proposal for executive director should be listed at an hourly rate. The cost to the commission for non-management related items will be separately budgeted and separately expensed to the commission. The cost proposal can include up to 250 words of justification or explanation for the proposed amount.
- 5) Provide three client references, ideally with prior experience of similar scope and magnitude to the services requested. Include name, organization, phone number, email address and a 100 word description of the work completed on behalf of each client.

Applicants submitting a proposal which includes the Executive Director role should also include **one** of the following items:

- 6) A one page resume listing the potential Executive Director's experience and qualifications. OR
- 7) A 250 word explanation of the process your organization will utilize to secure a candidate for Executive Director, if you do not have a current employee to fill the role.

Proposal Deadline

All proposals must be sent to the Counseling Compact Commission Interim Administrator, Isabel Eliassen, via email at ieliassen@csg.org no later than 5:00 p.m. U.S. EST on May 19, 2023. Proposals must be in PDF form. Failure to do so may result in bidder disqualification.

Questions received before April 28, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. will be answered publicly on <https://counselingcompact.org/> by May 5, 2023.

Negotiation

The Counseling Compact Commission reserves the right to negotiate a fair and reasonable compensation based on the pricing submitted in the selected offeror's proposal. If the negotiations fail to reach an agreement on a fair and reasonable compensation rate, the Counseling Compact Commission reserves the right to proceed to the next highest rated proposal.

Items to be Negotiated

Items to be negotiated are at the sole discretion of the Counseling Compact Commission. The Commission reserves the right to negotiate compensation with the selected offerors. If the negotiations fail to reach an agreement on a fair and reasonable compensation rate, the Commission reserves the right to proceed to the next highest rated proposal.

Modification or Withdrawal of Offers

Offers may be modified or withdrawn by written notice sent via email to jeiassen@csg.org and must be received prior to the proposal deadline.

Right to Reject Proposals

Proposals that are incomplete, exceed word counts, appear unrealistic, demonstrate a lack of technical competence or demonstrate a lack of comprehension of the complexity and risks involved may be rejected. The Commission, or those designated to carry out the work of the Commission, reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any informalities or minor irregularities and to award the contract in the manner it deems will carry out the best interests of the Counseling Compact Commission, with or without further discussion or negotiations.

No Liability of the Commission

The Counseling Compact Commission assumes no liability for any cost incurred by an applicant to prepare or deliver its proposal or for attending any meetings related to the RFP.

Use of Proposal for Evaluation

Responses to this RFP will be the primary source of information used to evaluate the applicants. Applicants are requested and advised to be as complete as possible. The Commission, or those designated to carry out the work of the Commission, may: 1) contact any applicant to clarify any response; 2) contact any references and current users of an applicant's services; 3) solicit information from any available source concerning any aspect of the proposal; and 4) seek and review any other information it deems pertinent to the evaluation process.

Evaluation Criteria for Secretariat

Proposals will be evaluated in their entirety. The evaluation will include consideration of:

- A. Qualifications and prior experience of the applicant (40 points).
- B. Understanding of Technical Requirements (10 points).
- C. Proposed work plan and method to accomplish the scope of work (25 points).
- D. Cost of Proposal (25 points).

Evaluation Criteria for Executive Director (if applicable)

For applicants providing a candidate for executive director, their application will be evaluated on the qualifications of their candidate.

For applicants providing a procurement process for executive director, their application will be evaluated on the strength of their procurement process.

- A. Qualifications of Key Personnel (Executive Director) OR Organizational Capacity and Proposed Procurement Process to Identify Executive Director (75 points).
- B. Cost of Proposal (25 points).

Application Timeline*

Request for Proposal released to vendors	April 13, 2023
Deadline for questions to receive public response	May 5, 2023
Deadline for proposal submission	May 19, 2023
Evaluation of proposals by Executive Committee	May & June, 2023
Executive Committee vote to accept RFP and execution of contract	July Executive Committee Meeting
Awardee commencement of project	September 1, 2023

*Dates subject to change at the discretion of the Counseling Compact Commission.

Evaluation Metrics and Criteria after Award

Once the secretariat has been selected, the following evaluation criteria may be used to assess the secretariat's performance:

- Is the secretariat responding to requests and needs of the Counseling Compact Commission and its executive director in a timely manner?
- Has the secretariat provided appropriate assistance to the Counseling Compact Commission and its executive director to complete national policy and procedural documents?
- Has the Counseling Compact national licensure database been secured by the secretariat?
- Have the implementation goals of the Compact Commission been met to the secretariat's best ability?
- Is the secretariat proactive in working with the Counseling Compact Commission and its executive director, in addition to supplying problem solving solutions to challenges?
- In conjunction with the Counseling Compact Commission and its executive director, what kind of marketing initiatives has the secretariat implemented to further educate and collaborate with other state counseling regulatory boards who may be interested in the compact legislative initiative?

If an Executive Director is selected, the following evaluation criteria will be used to assess the Executive Director's performance:

- Is the Executive Director responding to the requests/needs of the Counseling Compact Commission in a timely manner?
- Is the Executive Director fulfilling the Counseling Commissions' operational objectives?
- Has the Executive Director met the implementation timelines established by the Commission?
- Is the Executive Director proactive in working with the Counseling Compact Commission and its secretariat, especially in regard to resolving challenges?
- In conjunction with the Counseling Compact Commission and its secretariat, what kind of outreach initiatives has the Executive Director carried out to educate and work with current and prospective member state counseling regulatory boards who are interested in the compact?

Contact Information

All questions and requests for clarification should be directed to the Interim Administrator of the Counseling Compact, Isabel Eliassen. Contact her via email at ieliassen@csg.org.

Appendix – Attachment I

Job Function	Executive Director	Secretariat
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as the lead staff executive for the Counseling Compact Commission. • Direct the day-to-day operations of the organization, including but not limited to projects, relationships, and staff. • Work in concert with the Commission leadership, and its Executive Committee to fulfill the intent and purpose of the Compact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report directly to the Compact Commission. • Work in collaboration with the Compact Commission and the executive director, who may be hired later. • The Secretariat position and Executive Director position will remain separate positions, separately reporting to the Compact Commission.
General Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the day-to day operations of the Counseling Compact. • Provide support to the Commission Chair, Delegates, Committee Chairs and Executive Committee in the execution of their responsibilities under the Compact and Bylaws. • Maintain records of the Commission. May serve as Secretary to the Commission; coordinates Executive Committee elections. • Supervise the staff and independent contractors of the Commission. • Develop and submit the administrative personnel policies governing the recruitment, hiring, management, compensation, and dismissal of Commission staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide all necessary management infrastructure including appropriate staffing, technology, and resources as needed.

Job Function	Executive Director	Secretariat
Strategic Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the development and implementation of the Counseling Commission strategic plan and objectives. • Collaborate with the Executive Committee in setting the overall strategic direction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish national policies and procedures
Legislative Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide external presentations and education and technical assistance for legislative enactments, as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and implement a marketing strategy and messaging to state counseling regulatory boards who may be interested in the compact legislation.
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conjunction with the Treasurer and Executive Committee, manage the annual operating budget and reserves and monitoring the Commissions financial performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare annual budget. • Apply for grants.
Meeting Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in consultation with Commission Chair to develop meeting agendas, materials, minutes, and reports. Provides executive level staff support and ensures effective planning, promotion, and execution of commission meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene meetings with Counseling Compact Commission as needed.
Compact Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process all practitioner requests for a compact privilege to practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works in consultation with the Executive Director to process all practitioner requests for a compact privilege to practice. • Respond to all state counseling regulatory board administrator's requests to confirm disciplinary action information. • Secure a national licensure data system. • Work with each state counseling licensure board or state agency on interface and implementation of the database.

Job Function	Executive Director	Secretariat
PR and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct outreach and public relations related to the Counseling Compact. • Effectively manage external stakeholder relationships while representing the Commission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare all initial public facing communications. • Develop all initial routine communication templates.
Compact Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as the Counseling Compact training officer. • Provide training to member state counseling regulatory boards. • Facilitate the orientation of new Commissioners. • Develop and maintain a repository of informational, educational and training materials regarding the Counseling Compact. 	
Regulatory Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conjunction with the Commission and its committees, oversee and monitor regulatory compliance of member states with statute, bylaws and rules. 	
Reporting		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop all initial reporting templates. • Prepare data and reports, as needed, for the Counseling Compact Commission.