2020 Centennial Research Initiative

Request-for-Applications

Issuance Date: August 10, 2017
Closing Date: December 5, 2017

ASAE Foundation advances knowledge in association management and nonprofit leadership; and sponsors and conducts research in an array of areas, the breadth and depth of which no single trade or professional association would likely be able to undertake on its own. The Foundation has a balanced multi-dimensional portfolio of research initiatives that are designed to 1) advance a body of knowledge, 2) define and inform effective practices, and 3) provide outcomes that lead to data-driven predictions and decision making.

ASAE Foundation is seeking applications to produce a significant and meaningful body of research that helps mark ASAE’s 100th birthday occurring in the year 2020 in a bold and dynamic way. For the purposes of this research initiative, this request for applications is being issued and consists of the following:

I. About ASAE and the 2020 Centennial Research Initiative
II. Objective and Outcomes
III. Applicant Eligibility
IV. Application and Submission Process
V. Review and Selection Process

Any prospective applicant who has questions concerning the contents of this RFA should submit them electronically to Sharon Moss at smoss@asaecenter.org.

Thank you for your time and interest,

Sharon Moss, Ph.D., CAE
Chief Research Officer
ASAE Foundation
I. About ASAE and the 2020 Centennial Initiative
   a. About ASAE
      Who We Are
      ASAE is the essential organization for association management, representing both organizations and individual association professionals. We believe associations have the power to transform society for the better. Our passion is helping association professionals achieve previously unimaginable levels of performance. We do this by nurturing a community of smart, creative, and interesting people: our members.

      ASAE Foundation (a separate, not for profit entity) advances association and nonprofit leadership, focusing principally on three areas important to the success of association management professionals and the organizations they serve: research, leadership, and innovation. The support, participation, and knowledge of an engaged community of people, linked by a shared passion for association management, make the foundation’s work possible and amplify its impact.

      ASAE Business Services, Inc. (ABSI), ASAE’s wholly-owned subsidiary, provides business solutions to the association community that help associations grow and prosper, save time and money, and simplify the business of running an association.

      What We Stand For
      Our cause: ASAE helps associations and association professionals transform society through the power of collaboration.

      Our value proposition: ASAE connects great ideas and great people to inspire leadership and achievement within the association community.

      Our promise: ASAE provides exceptional experiences, a vibrant community, and essential tools that make you and your organization more successful.

      Our guarantee: Our goal is to provide truly exceptional offerings and service, and we won’t be happy until you are. If any programs, products, or services of ASAE do not fulfill our promise, we will make the situation right.

      What We Do
      Build knowledge: ASAE is the definitive source for ideas, tools, and resources for the association profession.

      Enable learning: ASAE’s exceptional learning experiences enable the association community to consistently produce superior results.

      Foster community: ASAE engages association professionals and industry partners in a diverse, global, welcoming community.

      Engage in advocacy: ASAE’s advocacy and communications efforts enhance recognition for the profession and result in a positive legislative and regulatory climate for the association community. ASAE tracks a wide range of legislative, regulatory, and legal issues, looking at policy matters in terms of their potential impact on associations. In addition to engaging in issue advocacy, ASAE helps shape public policy through grassroots activism, our political action committee, and the Power of A campaign. The Power of A Fund, along with the Power of A Awards and the annual Summit Awards Dinner, support ASAE’s public policy initiatives.
b. About ASAE Members

Our organizational members are trade associations and individual membership societies that represent almost every sector of the economy and countless professions. Our more than 30,000 individual members—association professionals and industry partners—lead, manage, and work in or partner with organizations in more than a dozen association management disciplines, from executive management to finance to technology. Together, our membership represents more than 7,400 organizations and creates a vibrant community that makes the world smarter, safer, and better every day.

c. About ASAE’s 2020 Centennial Initiative

A multi-year initiative has been proposed that serves to highlight research contributions in association management as part of ASAE’s 2020 Centennial Celebration. The major focus of this initiative will be to describe and measure the impact and influence of associations in making society better, safer, smarter, and stronger. The research will consider past, present, and future perspectives on topics such as workforce development, education, economy, member engagement, and change management. The multi-year research initiative will include several individual data-collection, dissemination and engagement, and research awareness efforts.

II. Objective and Outcomes

Objectives

The purpose of this research is to describe and quantify the impact and unique positioning of ASAE and the association management profession. This research will tell a story about:

1. How associations make the lives of individuals in society better, stronger, smarter, and safer now and into the future;
2. How associations have made an impact in the U.S., and why other cultures may benefit from emulating the association management model;
3. What is present in society today that was not present 100 years ago as a result of the influence of associations; and

Connection of Research Objective to ASAE’s Power of A Pillars

The overarching objective for this research initiative is aligned with the pillars of ASAE’s Power of A advocacy campaign. The four pillars are that associations:

1. Strengthen the Economy
2. Strengthen Lives
3. Strengthen Jobs/Skills/Employment
4. Strengthen Structures, Systems and Policies

Key Themes of the Research

The research will center on distinct topics indicated below, from varying perspectives (past, present, and future). These topics may be combined to better assess the topic and achieve the research goals.

- Change management – the ways in which associations affect change
- Education – the ways in which associations contribute to professional development and enhance the knowledge and education of the American workforce
- Economy – the ways in which associations impact and influence the American economy, and the value of that impact
• Connection – the ways in which associations facilitate building relationships and communities of professionals; and demonstrate impact (or influence behavior and professional interaction) through various connections and partnerships

• Membership and engagement – the ways in which employers support membership and engagement of professionals in associations; and what economic value is placed on member engagement

• Workforce – the ways in which associations put America to work

• Protect – the ways in which associations protect members of society (i.e., establishing standards, certification, accreditation)

• Preparation for the future – the ways in which associations proactively address shifts in society

Specific research questions should be developed as part of the application process. Applicants are welcome to submit proposals for one or more research topic areas, or combine research topics based on their areas of expertise.

Outcomes
The outcomes of this research should ensure that the value, impact, and contributions of associations are made more apparent to a broad range of constituents, internal and external to the association community, including: policy makers, non-profit professionals, academics, corporations, etc.

This research should yield tools to track current and future behavior of associations, and social media opportunities that might engage a broader audience. At the end of this research, the findings should be discussed relative to:
1. Advocacy (local vs. national)
2. Value of associations (ASAE and association wide)
3. Recognition by internal and external groups (what associations provide/ASAE's voice)
4. Economic activity/Job creation (sustainability)
5. Community (better living)

III. Applicant Eligibility

Eligibility for this award program is unrestricted. However, applications are encouraged from qualified investigators representing organizations (e.g., for-profit, non-profit, trade, professional), institutions of higher education (public, state, and/or private), and consultants with interest and expertise in the area(s) of work outlined in this RFA.

Ideal applicants will have knowledge of the nonprofit (specifically, professional and trade associations) community and have the ability to bring diverse professional and theoretical perspectives to the planning, execution, and reporting of this research. Prior demonstrated experience on projects of relatively similar size and scope is required.

Documents (e.g., white papers, executive summaries, tools and resources, publications) produced under this award are considered work-for-hire, and as such, the copyright for any deliverables defined by this award agreement will be presumed to be owned by the ASAE Foundation.
Applications will be considered that include a partnership between two or more entities to accomplish all of the goals of this initiative.

IV. Application and Submission Information

To gain more knowledge about the proposed program of research, and to glean valuable insights about ASAE, its members, and the association management profession, applicants have the opportunity to attend our upcoming meetings: **ASAE’s Annual Meeting** in Toronto, Canada [August 12-15, 2017], **Associations at Work** conference in Baltimore, MD [October 16-17, 2017].

The applicant must provide a description of the *Proposed Program of Work* that incorporates the desired elements of interest outlined above (See Section II). The *Proposed Program of Work* must include project title, specific aims, program design, projected timelines, expected outcomes, and proposed deliverables.

In addition to the *Proposed Program of Work*, the applicant must also include the following documents:
- *Project Abstract* (not to exceed one page)
- *Budget* (with accompanying justification that is consistent with proposed plan of work)
- *References*
- *Biographical Sketch* (not to exceed one page) of all project personnel, focusing on related experience

**Submission Deadline**
A notice indicating your intent to apply, and specific area(s) of research focus, is requested on or before 11:59pm ET, Friday, November 10, 2017.

The completed application must be submitted on or before 11:59pm ET, **Tuesday, December 5, 2017**.

Completed applications should be submitted electronically to:

Sharon Moss  
Chief of Research  
ASAE Foundation  
1575 I Street NW; 11th Floor  
Washington, DC 20005-1103  
research@asaecenter.org

Any questions related to this request for applications or the submission process should be directed in writing to the email address listed above.

**Timeline**
The Foundation anticipates a multi-year commitment, with the research to be completed no later than fall 2019. Applications should include timelines accordingly, with details about various phases of work and corresponding deliverables. Appropriate interim deadlines for completion of each phase of the project will be established depending on the nature of the proposed work.
Budget
The ASAE Foundation will entertain all reasonable budgets within the scope outlined in this request. Applications of interest should include detailed allocations, including estimates for outside costs (such as website development). Costs should be allocated across the full timeline of the initial contract.

V. Review and Selection Process
The deadline for receipt of applications is December 5, 2017. Notification of award status will be completed in early February 2018, with the award period commencing immediately thereafter.