

# **CIMVHR Contract for R&D Services # W7714-125624 - TASK # 37**

## **Statement of Work**

### **Veterans Affairs Canada Research Directorate**

**2 Dec 14**

### **RFP Notice**

**Review of existing research and development of options for a future research proposal to better understand if and how Operational Stress Injuries (OSIs) affect the mental health of spouses and children of Canadian Veterans.**

1. Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) requires information on the linkages between OSIs and family mental health. In order to determine the feasibility of a major study on the topic, VAC requires options for a future research proposal.

#### **Background**

2. The *Department of Veterans Affairs Act* gives VAC the authority to administer acts related to “the care, treatment or re-establishment in civil life” of persons who served in the military, as well as in allied military services, and “the care of the dependants or survivors” of those persons.

3. In recent years, there have been increasing calls on the Department to enhance its support for the families of Canadian Veterans.

4. To date, there has been very little Canadian research on the families of Veterans - most existing work has been conducted in the United States and is on the families of serving personnel.

5. VAC’s Research Directorate requires information on factors faced by families during and after a Veteran’s transition to civilian life and recommendations for future areas of study on this topic.

#### **Objective**

6. The goals of this study will be to:
- a. Identify current services available for military and Veteran families in Canada and internationally.
  - b. Determine if there are mental health issues unique to the children and spouses of Veterans.
  - c. Make recommendations on interventions being used for military families that may be transitioned to Canadian Veteran families.

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#### Scope

7. The researcher will be required to examine existing literature and services on the topic and prepare options for a future research proposal.

#### Project Start Date

8. This project will begin immediately upon contract award.

#### Project Completion Date

9. 20 March 2015.

#### Tasks

10. The Sub Contractor shall:

- a. Conduct a review of published scientific evidence to:
  - i. Evaluate the strength of evidence and certainty of conclusions for this question:  
*What are the factors faced by children and spouses of Veterans during and after transition to civilian life and do these factors impact their mental health?*
  - ii. Identify gaps in the existing evidence base.
  - iii. VAC will share findings of prior literature reviews in this area.

Specifics relating to this work are attached as **Annex A**.

- b. Describe options for a future research proposal based on this research goal: To determine if there are mental health issues for children and spouses of Veterans and identify potential interventions and supports.

Specifics relating to this work are attached as **Annex B**.

#### Deliverables

11. Between the dates indicated, the Sub Contractor shall perform and complete the work described below with care, skill, diligence and efficiency and will produce the following deliverables:

- a. A final report, documenting the approach to the evidence review, including the question, the methodology, the findings; and gaps in the existing evidence base. Details in **Annex A**.

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- b. A document that describes options for a future research proposal, including research goal, research team, methods and budget, as detailed in **Annex B**.

All deliverables will be submitted to CIMVHR by the completion date along with an invoice for pre-approved costs incurred in performance of the work and supporting documents. Sub-Contractor will also submit to CIMVHR and VAC any information or other items specified in Annex B by the completion date.

### **Proposal Evaluation Criteria**

- 12. When considering the proposals from candidates, the review process will consider the following evaluation criteria (note: CIMVHR may include additional criteria):
  - a. overall research experience and capabilities of the applicant and team members
  - b. educational and work experience conducting research with Military and/or Veteran populations
  - c. familiarity with Military and/or Veteran issues
  - d. expertise and experience in the areas of mental health and/or family research
  - e. ability to engage and consult with stakeholders
  - f. potential conflict(s) of interest for applicant and/or team members

### **Security**

- 13. All deliverables are to be unclassified.

### **Language of Work**

- 14. Language of work is English.

### **Travel**

- 15. There are no travel requirements associated with this work. It is anticipated that all work can be conducted via teleconference or email or other mechanisms.

### **Finance**

- 16. A budget for the work will be developed in consultation with the CIMVHR Contracts Manager. The funding available for the project is approximately \$12,500 plus applicable overhead. Please consult Contracts Manager for details.

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## Evidence Review Requirements

Veterans Affairs Canada

Research Directorate

2 Dec 14

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**Overview:**

Veterans Affairs Canada requires an assessment of the evidence base regarding if and how Operational Stress Injuries (OSIs) affect the mental health of spouses and children of Canadian Veterans.

**Objectives:**

Conduct a review of published scientific evidence and expert opinion to:

1. Review published evidence for this question: *What are the factors faced by children and spouses of Veterans during and after transition to civilian life and do these factors impact their mental health?*
2. Identify gaps in the existing evidence base and suggest opportunities for further research.

**Methodology:**

1. Use a combination of formal search strategies, including:
  - a. Structured literature search of multiple reference databases.
  - b. Hand search of bibliographies of selected references.
2. Initial search inclusion criteria:
  - a. Literature reviews, meta-analyses and primary study papers published in peer-reviewed scientific literature.
  - b. Credible peer-reviewed reports of rigorously conducted scientific studies and literature reviews published or contracted by government agencies.
3. Select references for review using a standard methodological approach
4. Use a standard method to synthesize the findings to draw conclusions and make a general statement about the strength of evidence.

**Final Report:**

1. Document the approach to the evidence review, including the question, the methodology and the findings.
2. Identify gaps in the existing evidence base.
3. Suggest opportunities for further research to strengthen evidence base.

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**Research Proposal Options**

**Veterans Affairs Canada**

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**Overview:**

1. Given the evidence resulting from the work outlined in Annex A, options for a future research proposal will be described. This work will inform the feasibility of future development of a full research proposal with the goal of identifying potential interventions and programs that support the mental health of children and spouses of Canadian Veterans.

**Deliverable:**

A document that describes options for a future research proposal, including:

1. **Research Goal:** To identify potential interventions and programs which support the mental health of children and spouses of Canadian Veterans.
2. **Research Team:** Identify the expertise and qualifications of investigators to contribute to a successful study in this area.
3. **Methods:** Examine methodology of any identified similar studies in this area, noting the strengths and limitations of these studies and their designs; suggest options for a future research proposal to provide evidence to meet the research goal; describe primary outcome measures for the research; and provide an estimated sample size for each option.
4. **Budget:** For each study design option, estimate costs in dollars, and other resources.

**Ownership and Control:**

All information (personal or otherwise) which is used, processed, handled, stored, and recorded by the Sub Contractor for the purposes of fulfilling the requirements of the Sub Contract, regardless of the format, medium, and physical characteristics, remains under the ownership and control of VAC. All applicable Federal legislations apply under all circumstances, even when such information is in the sole custody of the Sub Contractor.

In accepting this contract, the Sub Contractor acknowledges that VAC maintains ownership and control over all personal information and any other information that is collected, created,

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captured, received, used, processed, handled, stored, and recorded by the Sub Contractor when fulfilling the requirements outlined in the Sub Contract.

Upon delivery of the final requirements of the contract, the Sub Contractor will ensure that all information referenced above is returned to CIMVHR and VAC.

**Access to Information:**

Records created by the Sub Contractor, and under the control of Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), are subject to the Access to Information (ATI) Act. The Sub Contractor acknowledges the responsibilities of VAC under the ATI Act and must assist VAC in discharging these responsibilities.

**Requests for Information:**

Should the Sub Contractor receive a request for information from a third party the Sub Contractor will advise the CIMVHR Contracts & Publications Manager immediately. Following consultation with CIMVHR and the VAC Access to Information and Privacy Coordinator, CIMVHR will provide the Sub Contractor with guidance and direction on handling the request.