



## **Request for Proposal: Secular Pastors Research Project**

### **Summary:**

Research the needs of non-religious prisoners in Canada's criminal justice system to determine whether they are receiving the same (or equivalent) psycho-social care that is offered to religious prisoners through prison chaplains or lay pastors, and, if not, whether this type of care can be offered in a secular manner and would be beneficial.

The Centre for Inquiry Canada is seeking proposals from researchers interested in learning more about the needs of non-religious inmates in Canada's correctional system. This opportunity would be of particular interest to students conducting research to complete a thesis for a Masters or PHD degree in the areas of social work, psychology, criminal justice, sociology, political science, public administration, criminology or other related programs.

A total of \$15,000 is available for the completion of this project.

**Project Title:** Secular Pastors Research Project

**Requester:** [Centre for Inquiry Canada](https://www.centreforinquiry.ca)

**Question Period:** Send all questions to [secularpastors@centreforinquiry.ca](mailto:secularpastors@centreforinquiry.ca) no later than August 30, 2024

**Notice of intent:** If you wish to receive answers to questions asked by other candidates, please email [secularpastors@centreforinquiry.ca](mailto:secularpastors@centreforinquiry.ca) with the subject line **"Intention to submit a proposal"**, no later than September 5, 2024. *Note that you may submit a proposal without submitting a notice of intent.*

**Proposal Deadline:** To be considered for this opportunity, please submit your proposal in PDF format to [secularpastors@centreforinquiry.ca](mailto:secularpastors@centreforinquiry.ca) no later than 4 pm, September 15, 2024.

### **About the Centre for Inquiry Canada (CFIC)**

CFIC is a registered educational charity promoting science, secularism and critical thinking.

CFIC advances education by training members of the public in critical thinking, media literacy, and the scientific method, by means of:

\*hosting lectures and seminars, featuring distinguished academics and other recognized subject matter experts;

\*hosting facilitated discussion groups;

\*providing access to scientific journals, books, and materials; and

\*publishing and circulating free materials on these subjects.

CFIC promotes secularism (government neutrality in matters of religion) because research (Zuckerman, 2022) demonstrates that secular societies fare better on almost every desirable social outcome including reduced poverty, rates of incarceration, teenage pregnancies, and addictions and increases in literacy rates, life expectancy, employment, and wealth. CFIC promotes freedom of and freedom from religion.

CFIC brings people together to promote critical thinking and evidence-based decision making. We do this to build a more just, secular and compassionate society and to equip people to protect themselves from those who make false statements and unsubstantiated claims.

### **Objectives**

This project is being undertaken to better understand the benefits (if any) of religious pastoral care provided through the prison system and by lay pastors to determine whether non-religious, atheist, and agnostic prisoners could benefit from a similar type of programming. The final report should include findings and recommendations for next steps which could include the development of a secular pastor program or other non-professional psycho-social support.

The project should achieve the following:

1. Identify the number of non-religious prisoners in the justice system being considered
2. Review the availability and purpose of religious pastors and spiritual care providers
3. Determine the source and amount of funding required for religious pastors programs
4. Present international research and programming related to the needs of non-religious prisoners in other jurisdictions
5. Identify next steps to be taken to improve the incarceration experience for non-religious prisoners
6. Provide a well-written, accessible report and summary.

### **The role of the researcher:**

- work with the CFIC Secular Pastors Research Team and/or their academic advisor, to establish the research methodology and timelines
- use an appropriate and creative methodology to design and manage the project which may include quantitative and qualitative data, literature review, key informant interviews, surveys
- provide minimum of monthly written updates to the Research Team

- liaise with Canadian and International experts on criminal justice to gather additional information
- carry out information and data retrieval searches using electronic databases
- analyze and evaluate available research
- prepare final reports including a research paper and an executive summary
- determine future steps which are suggested by the results of the research which may include government briefings, further research, or program development.

**Researcher requirements:**

- access to technology appropriate to the research including appropriate computer and Internet speed to allow access to on-line files, to conduct data manipulation and to generate a visually appealing report.
- academic experience with research, writing and policy development
- familiarity with standard research ethics practices
- knowledge of and interest in the criminal justice system, psychology and/or secularism
- ability to work remotely as part of an interdisciplinary team
- enrollment in a post-graduate program related to this research is preferred

**Project timelines:**

RFP released: August 10, 2024

Questions answered: September 5, 2024, 2024

Notice of intention to apply: September 5, 2024 (note that this is only required in order to receive answers to questions, individuals may submit a proposal before the deadline without notifying CFIC or their intention to apply)

Deadline for receipt of proposals: September 15, 2024 at 4 pm

Interviews: Interviews will be conducted virtually the first week of October 2024

Contract awarded: October 15, 2024

**Data Ownership and Intellectual Property**

Copyright for all materials and intellectual property produced in connection with this project will belong to The Centre for Inquiry Canada. It is our intention to publish the findings from the project as broadly as possible. A full communications and dissemination plan will be developed in collaboration with the researcher. The budget for any such communications and additional publications is not included in this proposal.

Due recognition for the successful consultant's role as researcher on the project will be given in all communications, including listed names as authors in the appropriate order, in respect of international publication guidelines.

**Proposal Inclusions:**

All proposals shall include at a minimum:

- A detailed work plan and schedule of deliverables
- A detailed payment schedule
- A detailed budget of what is included in the contract amount and what costs (if any) CFIC is responsible for
- Professional and/or academic qualifications of researcher
- Three (3) examples of research and/or report writing, submitted electronically or as a hard copy.

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