Guidance for Working on NCHRP and TCRP Legal Studies Projects

This guidance highlights the process and administrative procedures and requirements for NCHRP and TCRP Legal Studies Projects. It has been prepared as a ready reference guidance for contractors conducting research under the Cooperative Research Programs (CRP) Legal Studies Programs. Contractors’ cooperation with respect to these procedures will expedite contractual matters and facilitate handling of administrative requirements.

This guidance sets a forth a basic process that will assist the contractor and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in the orderly administration and management of the NCHRP and TCRP Legal Studies Programs. It should be understood that it is guidance only.

# Process

*Task 1.* **Detailed Outline:** Once the Principal Investigator (PI) has been selected and a contract has been executed, the PI will provide a detailed outline of the report. This will entail some preliminary research to inform the outline. A research plan, describing how the information will be obtained, should also be submitted with the outline. Also, if the project was divided into phases, and only Phase I was authorized, a proposal for Phase II should be included with the submittal.

Approximately 3 weeks after submission of the Task 1 deliverable, there will be a conference call between the PI and the panel. Therefore, as soon as the contract is executed, please coordinate with the Program Officer on potential dates and times for the conference call so that the panel can be polled to find the best time for that call.

*Task 2.* **Approval of Workplan and Detailed Outline:** After completion of Task 1 and the kick-off conference call with the panel, the PI will conduct further research as approved by the panel and begin working on the Task 3 deliverable. This is the initial draft that the panel will read. The feedback and comments received will help the PI with editing the first of two deliverables for Task 4.

*Task 3.* **Draft Final Report**: The draft final report (DFR) is the initial draft that the panel will read. Another conference call with the panel may be scheduled approximately 3 weeks from submission of that draft. The panel will review the DFR within 3 weeks and formally respond with written comments. Those comments need to be addressed point-by-point. It’s important to note in the response to the comments that an edit that was made and the page in the final deliverable where the change can be found. (If a change is not made, a rationale must be provided.) This is helpful for internal review of the document prior to publication.

*Task 4.* **Revised Draft Final Deliverable** (FD) The revised deliverable may require two revisions as necessary. One revision may be required after review by the CRP Program Officer and members of a select subcommittee. Additional revisions may be required after the full committee has reviewed the report. The first version of the revised deliverable will be submitted along with a red-lined version from the Task 3 report. The final version is submitted as a Word document before the expiration of the contract and is referred to as the Final Deliverable. There is no need to submit a red-lined version with this submittal.

# Publication Process

Once the FD has been submitted, the report is quality checked. This involves reading it for consistency and to see if anything is in need of a citation. Citations are also checked for accuracy and format (see Blue Book style). The responses to panel comments are also reviewed to ensure that they have been adequately addressed and that the responses correspond to the FD submitted.

The FD then goes into the editing and publication phase where approval from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine is sought. CRP needs to ensure that no sensitive or pejorative comments are made and that the deliverable does not contain policy statements or recommendations to any federal agency.

# Style, Format, and Editing

Our legal research digests (LRD) are lightly edited for grammar, style, and usage consistency using the Blue Book: A Uniform System of Citation (18th Ed.) for case law and citation reporting style. However, it is the author’s responsibility to make sure all citations are in proper Blue Book form. Citations should be done in small caps, (rather than all caps), and if that is not possible, then please use roman. Remember to use supra references for reoccurring citations.

The level of editing effort covers grammar, spelling, punctuation, and other mechanics of style as well as the internal consistency of facts and presentation. Tasks also include querying and correcting inconsistencies; flagging and checking heading levels and callouts for figures and tables; cross-checking in-text references and footnote numbering; proofing graphics and appendixes; and flagging sexist language or jargon. “Content-specialist” editing is not done by TRB so it is incumbent upon the PI to obtain such professional editing services if it is deemed to be necessary prior to submitting the final deliverables.

Page proofs may be provided to the PI along with any queries the editors may have. To help keep the production of the LRD on schedule, it is expected that the turn-around time be a week. This is the PI’s opportunity to check for any glaring mistakes and answer the queries. It is not the opportunity to update the document, case law, rewrite new sections or add/change footnotes. Our documents are not considered to be “living documents” but represent a point in time.

Any questions about this process can be directed to the Gwen Chisholm Smith @ gsmith@nas.edu or 202-334-3246