

Research Collaboration Process Description

(Updated April 14, 2011)

The American Camp Association (ACA) conducts research in order to learn about participants' experiences of camp, garner information about the camp industry, develop educational resources, and promote positive youth development. When it is of mutual benefit to ACA and another interested party, such as a graduate student, a professor, another youth development organization, or an academic institution, we partner with those parties. Such collaborations may produce brand new studies, new analyses of existing data, and new publications.

In order to promote research of the highest caliber and provide a foundation for strong professional collaboration, any party (or "outside Collaborator") interested in partnering with ACA in a research endeavor must follow the steps outlined below. Each separate project requires a separate agreement.

- (1) **STEP 1: Submit Proposal.** Submit a proposal (e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word) to ACA's designated research team member that includes:
 - a. Project theoretical background, hypotheses, and methods. (750 words max).
 - b. Nature of collaboration. There are 3 common types of collaboration: (1) Collaborator collects, accesses, and/or uses data owned by ACA, (2) Collaborator works with ACA using collect, access, and/or use data owned by the Collaborator, OR (3) Collaborator works with ACA to access a sample of ACA camps to collect data that will be owned by the Collaborator.
 - c. Project products/deliverables. (250 words max) (e.g., dissertation, manuscript for publication, report for a professional conference, field resource for camping professionals, manuscript for peer-reviewed publication). If the deliverables are unknown (for example, you know that you are going to publish in a peer-reviewed journal, but aren't sure which one) then please provide as much detail as is possible. If deliverables change, a new proposal is not required. However, ACA should be notified about the nature of the change in deliverables.
 - d. Project budget. (If funding is requested from ACA then you must detail total project amount and total requested from ACA.) ACA does not usually provide research funding.
 - e. Project timeline.
- (2) **STEP 2: Identify ACA Support.** If a proposal is accepted, then the outside Collaborator must then discuss with ACA's designated research team member what, if any, internal support the ACA staff can provide. In most cases, the support will be minimal and will consist of providing the database, its codebook, and supporting documentation, such as copies of questionnaires. In other cases, you may be requesting access to ACA data. This ACA support must be acknowledged in all deliverables.
- (3) **STEP 3: Obtain and Sign "Research Collaboration Agreement."** If a proposal is accepted, then you will be contacted by ACA's designated research team member and asked to sign a "Research Collaboration Agreement." Read and sign the agreement and send the signed agreement to ACA's designated research team member. Retain a copy for your records.

- (4) **STEP 4: Submit Draft for Review.** Submit drafts of project products to ACA's designated research team member in order to determine whether data have been handled with scientific integrity. In cases where data analyses or conclusions are scientifically flawed, ACA's designated research team member will indicate those flaws to the outside Collaborator. The purpose of this integrity review is to screen it for gross inaccuracies or misrepresentations. ACA's designated research team member reserves the right to withhold approval of any Project product or to withhold access to data whenever he/she determines in his/her sole judgment that the Project product of an outside party makes inappropriate or scientifically flawed use of any ACA data.

- (5) **STEP 5: Submit Final Project Deliverables According to Pre-Determined Deadlines.** Final project products should be finalized within the timeframe specified in the Research Collaboration Agreement.