Center for Industry Self-Regulation

Call for Papers on Industry Self-Regulation

The Center for Industry Self-Regulation (CISR) is pleased to announce this call for papers addressing the past, present, and/or future of industry self-regulation. We welcome abstracts from scholars in law, public policy, business (MBA and undergraduate), marketing (graduate and undergraduate), economics, and related or interdisciplinary fields.

Abstracts will be accepted and reviewed for any topic relating to industry self-regulation. Scholars need not have conducted prior research or writing in the field.

We are particularly interested in research that explores:

» The role of soft law mechanisms (e.g., industry codes, standards, certifications) in governing emerging technologies.

» Legal education models that integrate soft law, ethics, and technology fluency.

» Cross-sector approaches to adaptive governance, particularly in areas where regulation lags innovation.

» Case studies of successful or failed self-regulatory frameworks in the digital or data economy.

» Examination of self-regulatory efforts in high-risk or highly regulated industry sectors.

While international perspectives remain welcome, priority will be given to proposals that explore frameworks, challenges, and case studies in the United States.

This call also supports our development of a graduate-level soft law curriculum, designed to prepare the next generation of legal, business, and policy professionals to operate as architects of ethical innovation and guardians of public trust in a technology-driven world.

» Prior CISR-funded research: Research Center

» Submissions will be accepted through November 17, 2025.

» Research selected will be featured in CISR publications and programming throughout 2026.

The Center for Industry Self-Regulation (CISR) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (FEIN: 84-5021924) and is a DBA of BBB National Programs' Charitable Foundation. 1676 International Drive, Suite 550 | McLean, VA 22102

About Industry Self-Regulation

Industry self-regulation is a process where businesses agree to adhere to voluntary legal, ethical, or safety standards, sometimes creating and implementing these standards, and often using an independent third party to serve as an accountability agent or compliance watchdog. The process is usually meant not just for one company, but for an entire industry, a cross-section of an industry, or a group of businesses across industries confronting a similar challenge, thereby raising the ethical bar for practices across the board and ameliorating the concern of unfair competitive advantage if rules are not followed. It is a type of “soft law” and represents a middle ground between a company’s own compliance efforts and the “hard law” of government regulation.

Successful industry self-regulation systems create, deploy, and update dynamic industry standards to reflect a market landscape that evolves faster than law and regulation. The standards deployed reflect consumer, industry, and public policy concerns and provide an informed and tailored response to the values embodied in the underlying legal, regulatory, and constitutional framework. Meaningful, lasting industry self-regulation is sufficiently independent of control by industry members and driven by the adoption of agreed-upon standards with a mechanism to monitor compliance, such as through a third-party accountability agent.

In other words, effective industry self-regulation involves meaningful guidelines with “teeth.” Often the teeth come from the monitor’s ability to refer instances of non-compliance to a government agency with jurisdiction. This adjacency to the government, whether through a backstop or through collaboration in standard-setting, is one of the less-recognized yet important aspects of successful independent industry self-regulation. Meaningful industry self-regulation does not occur in a vacuum; instead, independent programs develop policies and procedures that take account of and work together with existing laws and applicable regulatory frameworks.

Process

Funded submissions shall be awarded $10,000 in financial support to the scholar, which shall cover the costs involved with the time necessary to prepare the paper and seek its publication, as well as any other costs related to the paper including data acquisition, research assistance, and any research-related travel. Most submitted draft papers would normally be expected to be 20-40 pages in length and address an interesting research question in the scholar’s field. Multiple scholars may join together to submit a single research abstract; however, the funding would remain the same and would be split between the scholars submitting together.

The timeline for funded research is as follows:

- Abstract Submission Deadline: November 17, 2025 by 5:00 P.M. ET
- Successful Abstracts Notified: December 17, 2025 by 5:00 P.M. ET
- Initial Draft of Paper Due: June 17, 2026 by 5:00 P.M. ET
- Revised Draft of Paper Due: August 1, 2026 by 5:00 P.M. ET

Once the draft has been finalized, the scholar is expected to submit the paper for publication in a journal of record in the scholar's field. Scholars shall also be invited to present their work at a conference to be convened by CISR.

For the initial submission, the scholar(s) should prepare a short abstract of the concept for the paper, including a proposed title (which may change), the name and academic affiliation of the submitting scholar(s), and if applicable, a description of any research or data collection required in order to support the paper.

About the Center for Industry Self-Regulation

The Center for Industry Self-Regulation ("CISR"), the 501(c)(3) charitable foundation arm of BBB National Programs, is dedicated to education and research that supports responsible business leaders developing fair, future-proof best practices, and to the education of the public on the conditions necessary for meaningful industry self-regulation. Armed with the expertise and experience needed to incubate new initiatives, CISR is the place for industries to build accountability programs to address emerging issues.

Completed abstracts should be submitted no later than ***November 17, 2025***, via email to the Center for Industry Self-Regulation email: **papersubmissions@industryselfregulation.org**

Questions about this Call for Papers or other research opportunities may be directed to Howard Smith, **hsmith@industryselfregulation.org** or Mary Engle, **mengle@bbbnp.org**