

USER GUIDE FOR THE NATIONAL STANDARD OF CANADA (NSC) DEVELOPMENT OF A MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR ANIMAL-ASSISTED HUMAN SERVICES (AAHS)

[Download this Standard](#)

[Téléchargez la norme](#)



Re-Imagining Animal-Assisted Human Services (AAHS)

Re-imagining AAHS is an intentional effort to shift the status quo from a fragmented, unregulated industry sector to a cohesive, seamless, vibrant, versatile, and recognized industry sector and marketplace that values and improves quality of life and public safety while ensuring the health and welfare of Human Services Assistance Animals (HSAA).

Stewardship of the gift that keeps on giving - the precious bond between humans and animals has brought us together; may it be a source of inspiration that kindles our imaginations and collaboration for the greater good, unity in diversity, and solidarity.

ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΩ TÄNAN HVALA GRACIAS DZIĘKUJĘ
GRAZIE ありがとう MERCI TACK
THANK YOU DIAKUIU
PALDIES
ACIU TACK DANKE DANK U WEL ДЗЯКУЮ
СПАСИБО 谢谢 OBRIGADO diolch KIITOS
TESEKKUR EDERIM

To Our...

NSC Project Donor

Standards Development Organization HRSO

Technical Committee Members

Stakeholders



The Canadian Foundation
for Animal Assisted Support Services

{CF4AASS}

"Without standards, there can be no improvement." Taiichi Ohno

Co-Innovation

Co-Innovation, a catalyst to fostering ComeUnity among multiple stakeholders, disciplines, and sectors.

DISCOVER! DREAM! DESIGN! DESTINY!

FROM A MAZE TO AMAZING

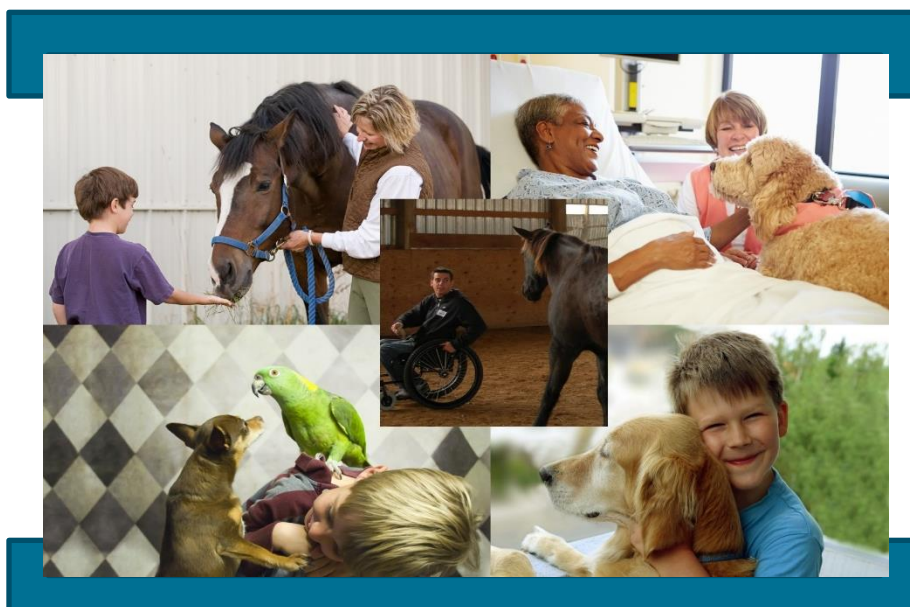
Animal-Assisted Human Services (AAHS) Industry Sector

AAHS, commonly referred to as “Animal-Assisted Services,” encompasses a variety of multi- and interdisciplinary practices and placement of **Assistant/Service Animals and Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAI)**.

Human Services Assistance Animal (HSAA)

HSAAAs are domesticated, healthy, suitable, often trained, appropriately socialized, evaluated, and positively motivated partners in the delivery of AAHS.

AAHS is delivered by **Animal-Assisted Human Service Providers (AAHSPs)** and **Animal-Assisted Services Professionals (AASPs)**. AAHS is a subcategory within Canada’s human services industry. This evolving industry is a significant driver within an all-encompassing socio-economic sector and rapidly growing marketplace.



This User Guide aims to introduce a companion document that will be helpful, educational, and practical as interested stakeholders of the National Standard of Canada (NSC) begin or continue to navigate Canada's burgeoning AAHS Industry Sector through the lens of a more cohesive framework. The NSC "describes" essential requirements and recommended best practices to operate and deliver AAHS. *The NSC does not "prescribe business's standard operating procedures."* Instead, the NSC was established to be doable, descriptive, and definable regardless of the business size, the type of AAHS it provides, and the species involved. The NSC's versatility and this guide foster and features the significance of a fair, innovative, and open marketplace to benefit pertinent stakeholders.

Background

Access to AAHS in healthcare, social, justice, and corrections services settings is inconsistent, ambiguous, and confusing, and quality cannot always be ascertained. Despite the versatility of AAHS, the absence of NSCs could harm consumers, the public, and the animals involved in service delivery while impacting the credibility of service providers and essential resources to sustain and foster innovation.

Moreover, AAHS is not regulated by Canada's public sector. Therefore, this cutting-edge NSC was developed to promote, unite, and engage interested stakeholders to cultivate essential best practices and to clarify mandatory requirements to operate an AAHS business in Canada. While the enclosed list of interested stakeholders is not exhaustive, this document offers examples of interested stakeholders (Users) to help make the most of the NSC for their intended purposes. Thank you for your interest in the NSC and for considering the significance of standards as a framework and conduit for mutually beneficial success.

The Development Process and How It Works

While co-creating the NSC, the Technical Committee (TC) reviewed relevant legislation, regulations, other legal instruments, and, where applicable other published NSCs. These information sources are referred to as Normative Documents. Other pertinent documents were added to the Informative References Section of the NSC. The Informative References assisted the TC in shaping the Technical Requirements in Section 4 of the NSC, as did the feedback received during the 60-day public consultation. HRSO was the accredited Standards Development Organization (SDO) the CF4AASS commissioned to develop the NSC. HRSO's integrity, expertise, and diligent adherence to its accredited policies and procedures brought this project to fruition along with our visionary donor, the committed TC, and the interested stakeholders participating in this initiative.

Because the NSC is a technical document, the word "**shall**" indicates that the requirement is mandatory and is supported by Normative References, whereas "**should**" indicates that the requirement is recommended or a best practice statement.

Readability and Context

Section four focuses on the "technical requirements," which outline all aspects of operating an AAHS business, regardless of how small or big the business, the type of program, or which species are involved making the NSC doable, scalable, and measurable.



The Current Landscape

The term “accreditation” within Canada’s industry sector does not refer to impartial “third party” contractual or governmental legislated or regulatory requirements. Instead, a service provider's self-attestation or a peer review process is implemented to determine whether a business or its members have met brand performance expectations through their respective “private” Standard Operating Policies and Procedures (SOPs).

The words “standards, certification, and accreditation” are often used interchangeably within different contexts, causing confusion and ambiguity. To prevent any further confusion, the guide will briefly underscore these differences.

Who are the Service Providers?

Animal-Assisted Human Service Provider (AAHSP)

An AAHSP includes individuals, for-profit or not-for-profit, and public or private organizations who engage in AAHS business.

Animal-Assisted Services Professional (AASP)

An AASP is a person who may require a certain designation, certification, or competency level to deliver particular types of AAHS within their specified scope of practice, such as volunteers, therapists, and animal trainers.

An AAHSP or AASP in Canada shall work within an enterprise structure. The enterprise structure shall have a written Mandate that describes the management systems and administrative framework required to deliver AAHS. The management system incorporates all aspects of providing AAHS to the public. The NSC is a tool and resource to shape and support a business enterprise structure.

AAHS Program Accreditation and Certification of AAHSPs/AASPs



Published NSCs do not certify service providers’ credentials or accredit their programs (services, activities, etc.); that is what audits and assessments are designed to do. The Foundation is looking into filling related gaps.

The Users' of this NSC are responsible for judging its suitability for their intended purpose. This NSC may also be applied to assess compliance. For example, AAHSPs may use the NSC to:

- compare and improve its current practices to manage risk and quality,
- monitor compliance with written procedures
- determine whether the service provider meets or exceeds the NSC's requirements and to
- voluntarily acquire third-party program accreditation to enhance credibility in the marketplace.

The Normative and Informative References in the NSC act as guideposts while working through Section Four's technical requirements within the scope of each business. Moreover, Normative References are legal requirements that denote binding business practices where applicable.

The NSC's Informative References impart practical direction and help to frame suggested best practices. With this in mind, self-regulating AAHSPs/AASPs may be motivated to invest in voluntary third-party program accreditation to demonstrate good faith and adherence to the NSC to boost their commitment to quality, public safety, those they serve, and the health and welfare of the Human Services Assistance Animals (HSAAs).

Finally, the NSC can help service providers to prepare for internal audits, peer-reviewed audits, and voluntary third-party program accreditation. Third-party program accreditation differs in that it would furnish an objective, external assessment to verify compliance with the NSC.

Consumers and End-users

Whether you are a consumer or someone already using AAHS (end-user), navigating this rapidly growing and highly fragmented industry sector and accessing credible information can be challenging. What questions need to be asked before choosing a service provider? What kind of information are service providers asking for, and how is personal information collected and protected? Does the organization have appropriate insurance coverage? How are the safety and well-being of the client and the health and welfare of the HSAAs taken into consideration? Do the service providers have relevant credentials? What does their website tell you or not tell you (be aware of marketing versus informative, transparent, and factual information)?

Because the industry sector is privatized (not regulated by the government), accountability and transparency are not always easy to ascertain. Therefore, the NSC could initiate a discussion with a potential service provider to make or enhance informed choices.

Veterinarians and Related Professionals

Navigating Canada's emerging and diverse AAHS Industry Sector is challenging. The veterinary profession supports a national standard such as the NSC for assistance animals that incorporates the One Health (reference) and One Welfare (reference) concepts and contributes toward harmonization, awareness, and education concerning the AAHS Industry Sector.

The NSC can be instrumental in creating internal policies and informing public policy development to meet mutual objectives. Additionally, the NSC can be referenced in part or whole within regulatory legal instruments, at which time the NSC would be considered mandatory. Likewise, the NSC can be used to simplify the regulatory development process, avoiding the need for expensive and lengthy amendments.

Private Sector (For Profit) Businesses

A growing number of for-profit businesses are not just interested in their profit margins but are also strategically partnering with social-good organizations to improve the quality of life and the welfare of animals and our planet. The NSC could become a valued tool to inform private sector businesses as they seek to expand their visibility and value-added relationships for the greater good.

Grantmakers, Sponsors, Volunteers, Donors, and Philanthropists

Did you know that more than 86,000 registered charities in Canada need similar resources like grants, sponsorship, volunteers, and donations to deliver their services? This does not include approximately 80 to 100,000 non-profits
https://www.canadiancharitylaw.ca/blog/key_statistics_on_canadas_charity_and_non_profit_sector/.

Consequently, third-party audits could become the deciding factor when determining the eligibility of which organization to support. The NSC presents considerable information and is a valuable tool that could be used to inform decisions.

Federally Regulated Industries and Other Stakeholders

The NSC can inform policies and procedures and promote consumers and human rights, such as the accessibility of service dog teams in public spaces (e.g., shopping malls, government facilities, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, banks, hotels, restaurants, and public transportation). AAHS encompasses healthcare, social, justice, and corrections services involving multiple disciplines, sectors, and communities across Canada, all of whom can use the NSC for various purposes.

Insurance Underwriters

Underwriters may use the NSC to manage risk and reduce premiums for third-party audited AAHSPs/AASPs.

Researchers

At last, the NSC provides a tangible metric (standard system) to measure the outcomes and impact of involving animals in Canada's AAHS Industry Sector. As such, the NSC may also inform studies within the emerging scientific field of anthrozoology, which focuses on humans and non-human animals and the bond between humans and animals. Moreover, the NSC could help establish criteria for selecting AAHSPs/AASPs to involve in research projects.

Proudly Serving Canadians & Promoting the Health & Welfare of Animals Since 1998

We Envision

One Health for People, Pets, & Partners™. Health in this context includes the physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being of people of all ages and the health and welfare of pets and other animals involved in delivering the Animal-Assisted Human Services {AAHS}.

Who We Are, What We Do, and Why We Do It

The Canadian Foundation for Animal-Assisted Support Services {CF4AASS} is an impartial national registered charity that promotes the availability, credibility, and sustainability of Animal-Assisted Human Services excellence.

The charity's programs encompass but are not limited to stakeholder engagement, special events, advocacy, outreach and education, research, and voluntary development of the National Standards of Canada (NSC).

We aim to cultivate unity in diversity among multiple stakeholders, disciplines, and sectors to enhance public confidence, public safety, quality, and animal health and welfare to nurture [One Health for People, Pets, and Partners™](#).

CF4AASS initiated this initiative to ensure Canadians' well-being and the animal's health and welfare to help connect the dots, fill gaps, and address barriers toward innovation and quality assurance, e.g., systemic, supply and demand, social, economic, and marketplace obstacles.

This nationwide One Health approach promotes and supports the interconnections between animal welfare, human well-being and the natural environment by fostering interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration at home and internationally. One of the many reasons we established industry sector benchmarks for best practices was to catalyze innovation and elevate the importance and value of voluntary third-party conformity assessment. To learn more about this ground-breaking initiative, support, or to get involved, please use one of the options below to contact or visit us online.

9 Camelot Drive, Suite 200, Nepean, Ontario, K2G 5W6

Ways to Keep in Touch

community@cf4aass.org

<https://www.cf4aass.ca/>

Copyright © May 29, 2023, all rights reserved.

Business Number: 870159043RR0001