

Voluntary National Standards of Canada (NSC)

Animal-Assisted Services (AAS) are mutually beneficial relationships that nurture One Health for People, Pets, and Partners™. Health in this context includes the physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being of people of all ages and the welfare of pets and other animals involved in delivering services.

AAS includes multiple disciplines and sectors like healthcare, social services, justice, corrections, and public safety. The proposed National Standards of Canada (NSCs) applies to all types of Animal-Assisted Services (AAS), including therapies, activities, assistance, crisis response, and interventions accessed by persons with visible and invisible disabilities, life-altering injuries, and other daily challenges.

National Standards of Canada (NSCs) are NOT policies, guidelines, procedures, accreditation or certification programs. **National Standards of Canada (NSCs) ARE** expressed through requirements based on current normative references such as, regulations, policies, guidelines, and informative references like publications, articles, journals, and seed documents.

Canada's Animal-Assisted Services Marketplace - Why National Standards of Canada are Needed

Animals have been helping humans since the beginning of time. Furthermore, there is no shortage of historical information, research, and testimonials capturing the many ways that animals improve the lives of people of all ages with visible and invisible disabilities, life-altering injuries, and other daily challenges. However, AAS has evolved into a competitive marketplace whereby anyone can hang a shingle on their door to work or volunteer within this promising unregulated sector. In other words, the government does not accredit organizations, programs, or certify the practitioners or service providers through a third-party conformity assessment system.

Without NSC, this long-standing gap continues to pose risks to consumers, the animals, businesses, and practitioners because there is no consistent manner to ensure public safety, animal welfare or to inform existing or propose new public policy. Moreover, volunteers, donors, sponsors, and grant-makers are also often unaware of the many challenges facing this rapidly growing sector and the barriers it creates for consumers, end-users, and their families.

The absence of NSC compromises practitioners' and service providers' credibility within this rapidly growing sector and marketplace while driving up the cost of AAS, including insurance premiums. Long wait times to access AAS are also creating barriers to serve, accommodate, and benefit Canadian consumers, end-users, and their families.

NSC will act as the building blocks, bricks and mortar needed to co-create a foundation of solidarity, functional framework, structural requirements, ethics, and a common language to work or volunteer in this burgeoning sector to enhance the delivery of AAS across our nation.

Our National Response

In response to thousands of Canadians and, on occasion, people from other countries for more than two decades, The Canadian Foundation for Animal-Assisted Support Services (CFAS) proposed four Notices of Intent (NOI) to initiate the development of a suite of National Standards of Canada (NSC). NSC benefit Canadians daily by hearing and informing consumer choices, the businesses and practitioners that provide services in the marketplace, the government, and other stakeholders. To find out how NSC fit into the grand scheme of this evolving landscape [please click here](#).

Multi-Stakeholder Engagement

The development of the National Standards of Canada (NSCs) is an inclusive process and an opportunity to unite, engage, and learn from relevant stakeholders. Accordingly, the Foundation and HRSO, the organization accredited by the Standards Council of Canada, followed rigorous procedures in developing the Notices of Intent for the NSCs, confirming the need for National Standards of Canada (NSCs) where none currently exist.

Preparation to form the first Technical Committee is underway. The next phase will involve developing the NSC followed by a 60-day public consultation of the draft National Standard of Canada (NSC). Feedback will be taken into consideration by the Technical Committee and revisions made as appropriate.

To learn more about this process and its context please visit:

<https://www.cf4aass.org/notices-of-intent.html>

<https://www.cf4aass.org/how-national-standards-of-canada-are-developed.html>

<https://www.cf4aass.org/the-big-picture.html>

<https://www.cf4aass.org/what-are-national-standards-of-canada.html>

Notices of Intent

CAN/HRSO-500.01-2021 - THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR ANIMAL-ASSISTED SERVICES (AAS)

The National Standard of Canada (NSC) about a Management System for AAS will encompass all types of Animal-Assisted Services (AAS). The Technical-Committee Members (TC) will consider documentation available to the public concerning existing practices such as policies, procedures, and private standards. This NSC will serve as a generic baseline by identifying, specifying, defining, and establishing requirements and objectives regardless of the size of an organization, business, or the type of AAS being provided.

CAN/HRSO-500.02-2021 - PRODUCTION AND DELIVERY OF ANIMAL-ASSISTED SERVICES (AAS)

This National Standard of Canada (NSC) will specify the service delivery requirements by type of service, e.g., therapies, activities, assistance, crisis response, and interventions to establish suitability for their performance under actual service conditions.

CAN/HRSO-500.03-2021 - TRAINING, HANDLING, AND CARE OF ANIMALS IN SERVICE

This National Standard of Canada (NSC) will specify benchmarks for the training, handling, and care of pets and other animals involved in delivering services regardless of type or the size of a business, practice, or organization.

CAN/HRSO-500.04-2021 - PRODUCTION AND DELIVERY OF ANIMAL-ASSISTED SERVICES (AAS) DURING PUBLICLY DECLARED EMERGENCIES

This National Standard of Canada (NSC) will specify benchmarks for the handlers' safety, training, handling, and care of animals during natural or human-induced publicly declared emergencies and hazardous situations.

FUTURE ANIMAL-ASSISTED SERVICES NOTICES OF INTENT

During the development of the first four National Standards of Canada (NSC), a need to drill down to create additional standards that fall under each of the four generic NSC may be required.

CAN/HRSO-500.03-2021

For example, the basic training, handling, and care of a dog involved in crisis response work are different from the basic training, handling, and care of a horse engaged in a mental health modality or hippotherapy sessions. Therefore, additional NOIs can be written to develop a more in-depth NSC that further breaks down corresponding specifications.

Acknowledgements

Technical Committee Members are acknowledged within published National Standards of Canada.

Both normative and informative documentation is cited within published National Standards of Canada.

Ways to Get Involved

Involvement is voluntary. Those who wish to contribute to this initiative can do so by:

completing the subscribe form on the Notices of Intent page at <https://www.cf4aass.org/notices-of-intent.html> to receive email updates,

attending an information session concerning the roles and responsibilities of participating on a Technical Committee by checking off this option on the subscribe form,

submitting relevant documents concerning existing private standards and practices to inform the process, and or

participating in public consultations.

Benefits of Developing and Applying National Standards of Canada

"Simply put, standards make everyday life work, and for Canadian businesses, standards open a world of possibilities. Standards are an invisible infrastructure working behind the scenes to protect the safety of all Canadians. They ensure the products, services and systems we depend on are safe and reliable and consistently perform the way they were intended to. In fact, standards touch virtually every aspect of our lives—from the moment our alarm clock sounds in the morning to the time our head hits the pillow at the end of the day. Without standards, we couldn't trust that the water we drink is safe, that the cars we drive will steer properly, or that the toys our children play with won't harm them." For more information, please visit <https://www.scc.ca/en/standards/what-are-standards/benefits>

About Us

The Canadian Foundation for Animal-Assisted Support Services (CFAS) is an impartial national non-profit and registered charity that promotes the advancement of Canada's Animal-Assisted Services Sector. We are dedicated to end-users, the welfare of the animals involved in the delivery of services, and collaboration with AAS front-line workers (practitioners and service providers) to promote quality and service excellence. We build bridges between communities, disciplines and sectors to benefit people, pets and partners (animals involved in the delivery of services).

For inquiries please email us at community@cf4aass.org or visit us online at www.cf4aass.org. The Consumers and End-Users page can be accessed at <https://www.cf4aass.org/consumers-and-end-users.html> ©