

Guidelines for Organizations Conducting Equine Assisted Services (EAS)

The EQUUS Foundation is dedicated to protecting America's horses and strengthening the bond between horses and people. At the core of our mission is that horses involved in any role and in any capacity - as athletes, companions, teachers, laborers, and healers - are safe, healthy, and treated with dignity as partners. Any activity, including Equine Assisted Services (EAS), that incorporates equine interactions and/or the equine environment, mounted or ground-based, must safeguard the comfort and dignity of America's horses and make the quality of life of our equine partners paramount.

For organizations that conduct EAS programs, the EQUUS Foundation awards financial support on the basis of the impact of the organization's EAS programs on the health and welfare of the equines involved and the organization's compliance in meeting the guidelines outlined below and not on an evaluation of the impact of an organization's EAS programs on the individuals involved.

Outlined below is a description of the Equine Assisted Services (EAS) which are recognized by the EQUUS Foundation:

THERAPY

Therapy Services are defined as Psychotherapy/Counseling (Mental Health) incorporating interactions with equines, Physical Therapy incorporating equine movement, Occupational Therapy in an equine environment and Speech-Language Pathology incorporating equine movement as a treatment tool.

Psychotherapy/Counseling (Mental Health)

Organizations where mental health professionals provide psychotherapy and/or mental health counseling incorporating equine interactions and the equine environment must meet the following criteria:

1. There must be at least one full-time, part-time, independent contractor, and/or service provider, either on staff, serving in a volunteer capacity or accompanying clients, present at all times when providing these services, who is licensed in accordance with state law in the state where the organization is located as a mental health professional, such as a therapist, counselor, or clinical social worker.
2. The licensed mental health professional providing services must work within their scope of practice and meet national competencies, such as those provided by the American Counseling Association for Animal-Assisted Therapy and/or within a specific model or method within which they have received training (if applicable). The provider must have received education, training, and supervision/consultation per the Code of Ethics of their profession in graduate-level programs or non-academic training programs, in order to include interactions with horses and the equine environment in their therapy services.
3. There must be at least one full-time, part-time, independent contractor, and/or service provider, either on staff, serving in a volunteer capacity or accompanying clients, present at all times when providing these services, who is experienced in equine handling and equine behavior to ensure the safety of the mental health professional, client, and the equine; such individual may also have the qualifications outlined above.

Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology Services

Organizations where physical therapists, occupational therapists or speech-language pathologists provide therapy services in an equine environment and/or that incorporates equine movement within each profession's scope of practice, must meet following criteria:

1. There must be at least one full-time, part-time, independent contractor, and/or service provider, either on staff, serving in a volunteer capacity or accompanying clients, present at all times when providing therapy services, who is licensed in accordance with state law in the state where the organization is located as an occupational, physical, or speech-language therapist
2. The licensed provider must be certified by the American Hippotherapy Certification Board (AHCBS) as a Certified Therapist or Hippotherapy Clinical Specialist or certified by PATH Intl. as a Registered Therapist and/or
3. There must be at least one full-time, part-time, independent contractor, and/or service provider, either on staff, serving in a volunteer capacity or accompanying clients, present at all times when providing these services, who is experienced in equine handling and equine behavior to ensure the safety of the therapist, client, and the equine; such individual may also have the qualifications outlined above.

HORSEMANSHIP

Horsemanship Services are defined as horsemanship instruction which is adapted to the ability/disability of the people receiving services for the purpose of contributing positively to their cognitive, physical, emotional, and social well-being and encompasses Therapeutic/Adaptive Equestrian Sport, Riding, Driving, Vaulting and horsemanship-related groundwork.

Organizations providing Horsemanship Services as defined above must meet the following criteria:

1. The organization must have at least one full-time, part-time, independent contractor, and/or service provider, either on staff, serving in a volunteer capacity, or accompanying participants, present at all times when providing these services, who is specifically trained in therapeutic horsemanship instruction and who holds at least one or more of the following credentials:

For Therapeutic/Adaptive Riding

- a. PATH Intl. Registered, Advanced or Master level therapeutic riding instructor; Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor (will take the place of Registered Therapeutic Riding Instructor by the end of 2020)
- b. Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA) Instructor of Riders with Disabilities (IRD) Level One, Two, or Three in both Cognitive and Physical
- c. Riding for the Disabled (RDA) Coach
- d. Council for Education and Certification in Therapeutic Horsemanship (CECTH) PQI Certification

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For Therapeutic/Adaptive Driving

- a. PATH Intl. Therapeutic Driving Certification
- b. Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA) Driving Certification working in association with a PATH Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor, a Riding for the Disabled (RDA) Coach, or a CECTH Certified Instructor

For Therapeutic/Adaptive Vaulting

- a. PATH Intl. Therapeutic Vaulting Certification
- b. Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA) Vaulting Certification working in association with a PATH Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor, a Riding for the Disabled (RDA) Coach, or a CECTH Certified Instructor

LEARNING

Learning Services incorporate interactions with equines to achieve educational, personal, and/or professional goals.

Academic Learning

An organization providing Academic Learning Services has established a curriculum utilizing ground-based equine interactions for the purpose of attainment of academic goals to be implemented by the organization in consultation with an educational entity and/or an educator; the qualifications of such educator demonstrated by an academic degree specific to the service being provided from an accredited college or university and a license in accordance with state law in the state where the program is located. Organizations providing Academic Learning as defined above must meet the following criteria:

1. There must be at least one full-time, part-time, independent contractor, and/or service provider, either on staff, serving in a volunteer capacity or accompanying participants, present at all times when providing these services, who is an educator demonstrated by a degree in education and/or a license in accordance with state law in the state where the organization is located as defined above;
2. There must be at least one full-time, part-time, independent contractor, and/or service provider, either on staff, serving in a volunteer capacity or accompanying clients, present at all times when providing these services, who is experienced in equine handling and equine behavior to ensure the safety of the educator, client, and the equine; such individual may also have the qualifications outlined above.

Personal and/or Professional Development

An organization providing Personal Development Services and/or Professional Development Services has established a program utilizing ground-based equine interactions for the purpose of attainment of personal and/or professional development goals, individually or collectively as part of a group, to be implemented by the organization in consultation with another non-profit, government entity, a mental health professional, such as a therapist, counselor, or clinical social worker, or a coach, the qualifications of such mental health professional or coach demonstrated by a certification specific to the service being provided, and/or an academic degree from an accredited college or university and a license if mandated by the state in accordance with state law in the state where the program is located. Organizations providing Personal and/or Professional Development Services as defined above must meet the following criteria:

1. There must be at least one full-time, part-time, independent contractor, and/or service provider, either on staff, serving in a volunteer capacity or accompanying participants, present at all times when providing these services, who is an educator, mental health professional, such as a therapist, counselor, clinical social worker, or coach and has received the applicable degree and/or is licensed in their scope of practice in accordance with state law in the state where the organization is located;
2. There must be at least one full-time, part-time, independent contractor, and/or service provider, either on staff, serving in a volunteer capacity or accompanying clients, present at all times when providing these services, who is experienced in equine handling and equine behavior to ensure the safety of the coach, client, and the equine; such individual may also have the qualifications outlined above.

DEFINITIONS:

Equine Assisted Services (EAS): Any activity that incorporates equine interactions and/or the equine environment, mounted or ground-based, including horsemanship instruction adapted to the ability/disability of those receiving services aimed at contributing positively to their cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being, psychotherapy and/or mental health counseling aimed at achieving goals set forth by the mental health professional and the client, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech-language pathology treatment strategies that utilize equine movement, and experiential learning approaches that promote the development of life skills to achieve educational, personal and professional goals.

Special Needs: Any difficulty or difficulties (such as a physical, emotional, behavioral, or cognitive disability or impairment) that require or benefit from instructors, specialists, counselors, trainers and/or facilitators who have certified training for their scope of practice applicable to the people participating in the programs and specific to the program offerings. The difficulty may not be limited to a health issue but may result from the interaction between the individual and the society in which he or she lives arising from an abusive or unhealthy environment or situation and/or a lack of resources, including economic resources, placing them at risk of a future with less than optimal outcomes.