

Guidelines for Organizations Conducting Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT)

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 and healers - are safe, healthy, and treated with dignity as partners. Financial support from the EQUUS Foundation is awarded based on the amount of funds raised by the EQUUS Foundation over the course of the year and the evaluation by the EQUUS Foundation of the merits of the organization's horse care practices, the needs of the organization and the organization's operating budget. Any activity, including Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT), 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 EAAT programs, the EQUUS Foundation awards financial support on the basis of the impact of the organization's EAAT 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 EAAT programs on the individuals involved.

THERAPEUTIC HORSEMANSHIP SERVICES

Therapeutic Horsemanship (also known as Adaptive Horsemanship) is defined as horsemanship instruction (such as riding, driving, vaulting, or general groundwork) 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.

Organizations providing Therapeutic Horsemanship 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:
 - 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), PATH Intl. Therapeutic Driving Certification, PATH Intl. Interactive Vaulting Certification
 - 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

EQUINE INTERACTIVE THERAPY SERVICES

Equine Interactive Therapy Services is defined as Psychotherapy/Counseling (Mental Health) and Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology that incorporates equine interactions and the equine environment.

Psychotherapy/Counseling (Mental Health)

Organizations where mental health professionals provide psychotherapy and/or mental health counseling incorporating equine interactions and the equine environment (also known as "equine-assisted psychotherapy" or "equine-facilitated psychotherapy") 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.

Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology Services

Organizations where physical therapists, occupational therapists or speech-language pathologists provide therapy services inclusive of hippotherapy, or the skillful manipulation of equine movement within each profession's scope of practice, must meet following criteria to receive the EQUUS Foundation Guardian designation:

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 inclusive of hippotherapy/equine movement, 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 (AHCB) as a Certified Therapist or Hippotherapy Clinical Specialist or certified by PATH Intl. as a Registered Therapist.
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.

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EQUINE INTERACTIVE LEARNING SERVICES

Equine Interactive Learning services (also known as "equine-assisted learning", "equine-facilitated learning", or "equine-experiential learning") is defined as:

- *Academic and/or Vocational Learning where the organization has established a curriculum utilizing ground-based equine interactions for the purpose of attainment of academic and/or vocational 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;*
- *Self-improvement, Wellness, Team Building, and/or Personal or Professional Coaching where the organization has established a program utilizing ground-based equine interactions for the purpose of attainment of personal and/or professional development goals to be implemented by the organization in consultation with another non-profit, agency, 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.*

Academic and/or Vocational Learning

Organizations providing Academic and/or Vocational Learning as defined above must meet the following criteria to receive the EQUUS Foundation Guardian designation:

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 has been sanctioned by the educational entity or educator to implement the curriculum established in consultation with the educational entity or the educator 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.

Self-improvement, Wellness, Team Building, and/or Personal or Professional Coaching

Organizations providing Self-improvement, Wellness, Team Building, and/or Personal or Professional Coaching as defined above must meet the following criteria to receive the EQUUS Foundation Guardian designation:

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 has been sanctioned by the non-profit, agency, government entity, mental health professional, or coach to implement the program established in consultation with the non-profit, government entity, mental health professional, or coach 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 coach, client, and the equine; such individual may also have the qualifications outlined above.

DEFINITIONS:

Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT): 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, professional and personal 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.