2023 AAS BACKGROUND

About The American Association of Suicidology
The American Association of Suicidology (AAS) is the world’s largest and nation’s oldest membership-based suicide prevention organization. Founded in 1968 by Edwin S. Shneidman, PhD, AAS promotes the research of suicide and its prevention, public awareness programs, public education and training for professionals and volunteers. Learn more at www.suicidology.org

AAS Mission Statement
To promote the understanding and prevention of suicide and support those who have been affected by it.

AAS Vision Statement
We are an inclusive community that envisions a world where people know how to prevent suicide and find hope and healing.

AAS Community Resources
The American Association of Suicidology provides comprehensive resources to help navigate your journey with suicide and mental health. AAS also offers a national directory of support groups that focus on a variety of survivors of suicide. Learn more at www.suicidology.org/resources.

AAS Memberships
An individual AAS membership provides you with member benefits and simultaneously supports AAS’s mission and vision to promote and elevate public awareness about suicide prevention. An organization AAS membership also provides member benefits and allows an organization to sponsor multiple employees. Explore all the benefits below and consider which membership level is the most aligned with your needs. Learn more at www.suicidology.org/memberships.

AAS Accredited Crisis Centers
The American Association of Suicidology (AAS) has accredited crisis service organizations for nearly 50 years in the United States and internationally. The Accreditation process strives to recognize exemplary crisis service organizations, online emotional support programs, mobile crisis services, and other services supporting individuals in crisis. Achieving accreditation defines an organization’s standard of practice, through the review of several areas including but not limited to administration and organizational structure, service delivery, and services in life threatening crises. Crisis Centers that comprise the National 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline often engage with AAS for Accreditation recognition, closely connecting AAS Accreditation services to a critical and growing national support network.

Learn more at www.suicidology.org/accreditation and for a complete listing of AAS Accredited Crisis Services Organizations, visit www.suicidology.org/crisiscenters.
2023 AAS Background (continued)

AAS Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior Journal
The AAS Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior journal provides the latest research, theories, and intervention methods for suicide and life-threatening behaviors, including research from biological, psychological, and sociological approaches. Learn more at www.suicidology.org/journal.

AAS Research Program
The American Association of Suicidology (AAS) research program focuses on advancing the understanding of suicide and suicide prevention through the promotion of scientific research and the dissemination of evidence-based information. The AAS Research Program has several key objectives, including:

▲ Supporting and promoting scientific research on suicide, suicidality, and life-threatening behavior
▲ Disseminating information on suicide prevention and intervention strategies to researchers, academics, and the general public
▲ Developing and implementing research-supported policies and programs to prevent suicide
▲ Providing training and resources to researchers, clinicians, and other professionals in the field of suicidology
▲ Advocating for increased funding and support for suicide prevention research

Learn more at www.suicidology.org/research

National Center for the Prevention of Youth Suicide
The National Center for the Prevention of Youth Suicide (NCPYS) is a division of AAS, which offers services and programs for and by youth. NCPYS includes a Youth Advisory Board who provide input on projects aimed at reducing the number of deaths by suicide and incidences of suicidal behavior amongst their youth peers. Learn more at www.suicidology.org/ncpys.

AAS Training & Certifications
The American Association of Suicidology (AAS) is a world-leader in the development, implementation, and facilitation of research supported training and certification programs. Courses are evidence-supported to uphold the highest standards of care and equity for those impacted by suicide. Dynamic curricula developed by leading researchers offer an array of advanced clinical training for professionals and introductory-level courses for a variety of sectors and disciplines.

Learn more at www.suicidology.org/training.
AAS Annual Conference

The American Association of Suicidology’s Annual Conference, held each spring, is the largest gathering of the Suicidology community; including clinicians, researchers, attempt survivors, crisis service professionals, public health and government officials and more. With more than 1,300 attendees (both virtual and in-person), the AAS Conference features virtual session co-hosts, live keynote addresses, poster presentations, hundreds of workshops and panel sessions, an Annual Membership Meeting, award ceremony, multiple networking opportunities, and an exhibit hall that features industry leaders, academic and training programs, resources, and community advocates. Learn more at www.suicidology.org/aas23.

How To Make an Impact

The American Association of Suicidology has several ways for you to get involved in supporting the AAS mission to promote the understanding and prevention of suicide and support those who have been affected by it. Your gift – in any amount – supports AAS as we provide training, education, and information to researchers, clinicians, and survivors working in the field of suicidology. Learn more at www.suicidology.org/makeanimpact.

Samantha Nadler, MSSW | Director of Accreditation | snadler@suicidology.org

Samantha has been working in crisis services and suicidology for nearly 15 years, starting as a volunteer for a Nashville crisis line in 2009. She has experience in carrying out front-line work in addition to leading various crisis services through her career, most recently working as Senior Manager of Clinical Quality at a national text-based crisis service. Her specialties include call center operations, quality improvement, change management in 24/7 services.

Sam enjoys finding solutions to complex issues, particularly leveraging data to inform next steps. Her background also includes working in advocacy and training in suicide prevention from a grassroots approach, which led to certifications in various evidence-supported curricula. As a childhood survivor of several suicide attempts as well as institutional abuse, Sam uses her lived experiences to advocate for change and improvement in the mental health field. These experiences have been used to elevate understanding of the harm of coercive practices and importance of collaborative care in her work as a public speaker, trainer, clinician, and manager.

She holds a Master of Science in Social Work with a concentration in trauma treatment from University of Tennessee and has been recognized for outstanding contributions to suicide prevention in Tennessee by receiving the statewide Madge & Ken Tullis Suicide Prevention Award.

For an additional staff listing visit https://suicidology.org/about-aas/#staff
About Accreditation
The American Association of Suicidology (AAS) has been accrediting crisis service organizations for nearly 50 years in the United States and internationally. The accreditation process strives to recognize exemplary crisis service organizations, and to support other related programs to refine their services according to these standards. These include but are not limited to: crisis services provided over telephone, texting, or web-based application (online emotional support), mobile crisis services, and other 24/7 services supporting individuals in crisis.

Why be accredited?
AAS accreditation validates service delivery programs that are performing according to our internationally recognized standards.

▲ AAS Director of Accreditation and accreditation examiners offer consultation tailored to the needs of an individual organization, its volunteers, staff, board, and community it serves.
▲ The increased visibility and credibility of an AAS-accredited program provides opportunities for modeling program excellence to other agencies and professionals.
▲ AAS accreditation provides a morale boost for its volunteers, staff, and board working in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.
▲ AAS-accredited programs have additional credibility with funding agencies and insurance providers.
▲ Programs seeking AAS accreditation have access to criteria for systematic, ongoing self-evaluation.
▲ People in life-threatening and other crises who obtain service from AAS-accredited programs are assured that volunteers and/or staff have seriously examined their commitment to providing the highest quality of care through this process.
▲ AAS accreditation is recognized and accepted by the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and a number of state and federal accreditation requirements.

Achievement of Accreditation is issued for three (3) years.

Visit suicidology.org to Apply Today
WHAT TO EXPECT + TIMELINE

Before Becoming Accredited
1. Ensure your organization is in good standing as a current organizational member of AAS
2. Complete the Accreditation Readiness Checklist and consult with the Director of Accreditation for any questions
3. Complete the application for accreditation, which requires operational information detailing:
   a. Organization’s services, budget, and metrics
   b. Commitment from organization to keep accreditation in good standing
   c. Agreement and implementation of the AAS Active Rescue and Active Engagement Policy with supporting documentation
4. Pay invoice to begin accreditation process, including receiving manual and being assigned to an AAS Site Examiner

While Becoming Accredited
1. Director of Accreditation to review application; may reach out to listed organization point of contact for any follow-up questions or requests prior to assigning an Site Examiner. (1-3 weeks)
2. Accreditation Standards Manual will be sent to organization. (Immediate-1 week)
3. Site Examiner will be assigned by Director of Accreditation. Site Examiners are assigned based on location to organization, professional background, and availability (Immediate-2 weeks)
4. Site visit prep, including receiving agenda and cloud-based folder to upload all requested documentation for review prior to the site visit. (Immediate-2 months)
5. Site examination (virtual or on-site) date confirmed by examiner (Immediate-2 months)
6. Site examination facilitated with organization’s program director or point of contact, and other relevant employees. Virtual site visits vs. in-person may be adjusted to meet the needs of 24 hour operations (1-2 days)
7. A scheduled meeting will be set with Director of Accreditation, Site Examiner and organization’s point of contact to discuss the outcome of the examination and next steps/recommendations. (Immediate – 2 weeks after site exam)
8. Organization completes accreditation feedback form (Immediate - 1 month after site examination)
What to Expect + Timeline (continued)

After Becoming Accredited (up to 3 years after site examination)

1. Organization receives Achievement of Accreditation packet, which includes a letter of congratulations, certificate of accreditation, and guidance on how to publicly share organization’s accreditation status.

2. AAS organizational membership must remain in good standing with the annual dues renewal based on your anniversary date. All AAS members are billed 30 days prior to their expiration.

3. Complete the annual accreditation self-report (for years where you are not applying for reaccreditation). Self-report will request information on:
   a. Annual volume and service metrics
   b. Compliance on various AAS accreditation standards from manual editions 9-13th
   c. Quality assurance procedures
   d. Significant organizational/service changes (if applicable)

Standard Timeline

[Diagram showing the timeline for the accreditation process, including milestones such as complete readiness checklist, submit completed application and payment, deadline for requested documents for site visit, site visit, and achievement of accreditation.]
ACCREDITATION READINESS CHECKLIST

Utilize the checklist to assess your organization’s readiness to start the accreditation process and consult with the Director of Accreditation for any questions.

☐ Organization is a current organizational member of the American Association of Suicidology

☐ Organization’s service subscribes and practices the AAS Active Rescue and Active Engagement Policy, and has supporting documentation of procedure

☐ Willing and able to provide information organization/business structure, budget, program metrics, and service evaluation

☐ Financial records kept in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) (provide copy of latest 990)

☐ Organization has technology policies, including a data retention and acceptable use policy

☐ Services provided are 24/7

☐ Minimum of 30 hours of pre-service training offered, with a written outline of content and bibliography (provide documentation of procedure/policy)

☐ Provides follow-up calls, texts, or email to suicidal individuals who reach out (provide documentation of)

☐ Provides ongoing supervision and in-service training to staff and volunteers

☐ Conducts a screening process for prospective crisis workers (staff and volunteers (provide documentation of procedure/policy)

☐ Designated, confidential space provided for workers to support those in crisis

☐ Routinely facilitates lethality assessments in all crisis support services and mediums

☐ Service has adopted a written Code of Ethics (provide copy)

☐ Program has detailed and secure documentation of each crisis contact/communication (provide documentation of procedure/policy)

☐ Has a list or database that identifies general community resources, including resources specific to counseling, Survivors of Suicide Loss, and lived experience
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. What does a site examination consist of and how long can we expect it to take?

A site examination will take place virtually with one or more Site Examiners. Organizations can request an in-person site examination if needed (additional fees apply). Documentation must be submitted to AAS through a cloud-based folder for review before the site examination. An initial accreditation can take 1 to 2 full days, while a re-accreditation will be completed in 1 day. Virtual site visits can be spread out over more than one day, if preferred. Organizations can expect to provide documentation and/or speaking on the following topics:

- Administration and Organization Structure
- Screening, Training, and Monitoring of Crisis Workers
- General Service Delivery
- Services in Life Threatening Crisis
- Ethical Standards and Practice
- Community Integration
- Program Evaluation
- And other relevant information that supports the examination process

2. How much will it cost for my organization to become accredited?

We view accreditation as an investment to your organization in order to support your crisis services operating by best practices and with high quality. Organizations can expect to be invoiced between $3700 and $4750 which includes preparation work, a virtual site examination, and consultations for up to six months. If an organization requires time beyond the six month deadline to complete accreditation, additional fees will be applicable.

If organization requires an in-person site examination, costs associated for travel and lodging will be their financial responsibility in addition to the accreditation fee.

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If multiple service or sites need to be accredited, a fee of $750 for each additional service will be assessed.

continued on next page
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) (continued)

3. What is an accreditation Site Examiner?

Upon completion of the accreditation application and payment of services, the Director of Accreditation will assign a Site Examiner to carry out the examination process who will assess the program(s) for accreditation achievement. Site Examiners are highly qualified professionals in the crisis field who have been vetted and trained in this process and are familiar with crisis service operations. Examiners are assigned to organizations based on familiarity/experience with the type of program seeking accreditation, availability, and confirming there is not an existing relation/conflict of interest with the applicant.

Programs can expect to work closely with the Director of Accreditation leading up to the site visit, who will request supporting documentation to review 2-4 weeks beforehand. The Site Examiner will perform the site visit and communicate with the Director of Accreditation throughout the process, including final accreditation recommendations.

4. Why are 30 hours required for pre-service training, and what activities count towards that?

Experience has shown that crisis programs will receive a wide variety of crisis contacts, despite their advertised focus in areas such as suicide prevention, mental illness, domestic violence or child abuse. Thus, the ability to deliver effective crisis intervention services in a broad range of problem areas must be developed in addition to an appropriate amount of time to cover them. The following activities could be considered towards the 30-hour training:

- Role playing and other experiential based methods
- Use of audiovisual materials, such as simulated recorded calls and videotape
- Opportunity to function as a co-crisis worker with experienced staff before assignment to work on an independent basis
- Observation of trainee while handling a crisis call, e.g. silent monitoring
- Sensitivity training techniques related to attitudinal training, and
- Didactic presentation and reading assignments
- Evidence-based training that supports the work (QPR, ASIST, etc.).

5. The timeframe listed for the accreditation process may not completely line up for my organization’s needs. What is the maximum amount of time our organization can take to submit documents required for the site examination?

Accreditation can be a tedious and lengthy process for some organizations and the timeline laid out is what can be expected from AAS if an organization is moving quickly through each step. We recognize that some may need longer windows of time to organize required documents – the maximum amount of time permitted to complete the accreditation process is six months from time of application submission and invoice payment.

If an organization requires time beyond the six month deadline to complete accreditation, additional fees will be applicable.
6. In previous years for accreditation, we were required to request online emotional support (OES) accreditation as an add-on. Can I still request this?

With the ever-changing landscape of crisis services and how we evolve in offering them, “online emotional support” accreditation is considered as part of the AAS Accreditation starting Spring 2023. Accreditation site visits for all organizations will include those standards (if indicated on the application). Organizations that have been previously accredited by AAS and were not evaluated by online emotional support standards at the time of their site visit will need to go through the re-accreditation process to receive an updated Achievement of Accreditation for their text or web-based services.

7. What happens if our organization receives a recommendation to delay or suspend our accreditation after a site examination? Can we appeal this decision?

On occasion and by the recommendation of a Site Examiner (in consultation with the Director of Accreditation), an organization may experience their accreditation being delayed or suspended until specific recommendations are implemented or improved.

You have the right to request an appeal through the following steps:
1) Submitting written documentation to clarify a possible misunderstanding
2) Requesting a virtual consultation with the Director of Accreditation to present grievances
3) Based on the appeal, a second opinion may be sought, and a new site examiner assigned to reevaluate the organization. The organization bears the cost of this reevaluation.

In all cases, the decision of the Director of Accreditation is final.

8. What is AAS’s Active Rescue and Active Engagement standard, and why is this required to become accredited?

One of the core values of AAS is that every person has the basic right to assistance in life-threatening or other crises. This value reflects the basic philosophy that an active rescue which includes active engagement, active rescue, and collaboration should be implemented if a client’s life is in danger even when the client will not or cannot assent. Because we also value a client’s privacy and self-determination, the intervention is done in collaboration with the caller in the least invasive way.

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APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION OR RE-ACCREDITATION

☐ New
☐ Re-accreditation

Current accreditation expiration date: ________________________________

I. BASIC INFORMATION

Name of Organization: ____________________________________________

Name of Program: ______________________________________________

Name of Executive Director (ED)/CEO: _____________________________

Email of ED/CEO: ______________________________________________

Contact Person: ________________________________________________

E-mail of Contact Person: _______________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________

City: ______________________ State: __________ Zip/Postal Code: ________

Telephone Number (provide non-regional/toll-free option): _____________

Afterhours number: _____________________________________________

1. Current Annual Budget (crisis services only): _______________________

2. Annual Metrics (crisis services only): _____________________________

   Call Volume: ________________________________________________

   Text: _______________________________________________________

   Chat: ______________________________________________________

Number of Active Rescues: _______________________________________

Number of Follow-Up Outreach: _________________________________

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3. Check all major funding sources

- Community-based grants
- Corporate contributions
- Federal grants and/or contracts
- Foundation grants
- Individual donations and/or major gifts
- State directive
- SAMHSA grant and/or contract
- Other, must specify: __________________________

II. SERVICES SEEKING (RE-)ACCREDITATION:

Check all crisis services you are providing:

- Telephonic Crisis Support
- Crisis Text (OES)
- Crisis Chat/other web-based service (OES)
- Mobile Crisis
- Walk-In Center
- Peer/Warmline
- Other: __________________________

How many sites/services are you seeking (re)accreditation for: __________________________

III. PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Program Director’s Name: __________________________

Credentials(s): __________________________

Employment Status:  
- Full Time
- Part Time
- Volunteer

Total Number of Paid Employees: __________________________

Full Time: __________________________

Part Time: __________________________

Other: __________________________

Total Number of Volunteers (organization wide): __________________________

If not a part of the 988 Suicide and Crisis network, does your organization intend to be in the future?  
- Yes
- No

I have included:

- A copy of my organization’s 990
In submitting this Application for Accreditation to the American Association of Suicidology, we hereby agree to the following conditions related thereto:

1. We completed the Accreditation Readiness Checklist and raised any questions to the Director of Accreditation prior to submitting this application.

2. We agree to prepare and provide copies of any written material that may be requested by AAS/Director of Accreditation as a part of the evaluation process.

3. We agree to pay the fees required and to remain an AAS organizational member in good standing.

4. We agree to notify AAS/Director of Accreditation immediately whenever any change in our service may affect our accreditation status.

5. We agree to notify AAS/Director of Accreditation within 30 days of any changes to our Executive Director/CEO and other contact person, address, phone numbers, email.

6. We agree to submit the annual self-survey report to AAS by December 31st. AAS/Director of Accreditation will provide for completion.

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Site Visits outside the continental United States will be accommodated, although additional fees will apply.
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Due upon receipt

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TOTAL:

$4,750 $3,700

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Site Visits outside the continental United States will be accommodated, although additional fees will apply.

All organizations must maintain a membership in good standing with AAS which offers trainings, education, resources, and various other benefits to help enhance the accreditation. Review member benefits: [Join today](#)

An invoice will be sent directly to the primary contact submitting the application within 24 hours of an accepted and reviewed application. Payment will be made through our secure online payment platform.

Authorized Signature: __________________________________ Date: __________________

Name (Printed): ____________________________________________________________________________________________

Title: ____________________________________________________________________________________________________

Submit completed documentation to submit to Accreditation@suicidology.org

For questions contact AAS/Director of Accreditation Sam Nadler at Snadler@suicidology.org

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