



CCAC Annual Report  
**2025/2026**

Reflecting on Ethical Animal Care



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## CCAC Annual Report 2025-2026

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### How to Reach Us

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**Dr. Denna M. Benn**  
CCAC Chair



**Mr. Pierre Verreault**  
CCAC Executive Director

## Message from the CCAC

This year marks the final year of the CCAC's 2021-2026 strategic plan, a period defined by significant progress and thoughtful evolution. The CCAC is proud to be leading a fundamental shift in how the scientific community values the welfare of animals in science, recognizing the full lives of individual animals and the importance of their cumulative lifetime experiences. Our standards emphasize much more than physical health; they consider how animals live, how they are handled, and how every interaction shapes their well-being.

Over the past five years, the CCAC has published several key guidelines that reflect this focus, culminating in the development of a revised national animal use data reporting system. Coming into effect on January 1, 2030, this system and its associated guidelines will capture richer information, support stronger decision-making, and deliver a clearer national picture of animal welfare outcomes and scientific activities. We recognize that this has been an intense period of change for our community and will continue to be as we work toward full implementation. We thank you for your patience and commitment.

In a rapidly changing landscape and amid national conversations about the ethical treatment of animals in science, the importance of transparency has never been greater. The CCAC continues to advance openness around animal-based science, through the launch of the second phase of our transparency initiative in September 2025. We are encouraged by the meaningful shift across the scientific community, with more institutions integrating openness into their communications, websites, and public engagement efforts. As these conversations evolve, the CCAC will play an active role in guiding program participants, supporting clear, responsible communication, and helping to navigate complex questions related to the use of animals in science. We remain committed to upholding high ethical standards, advancing animal welfare, and strengthening ethical practices across the country.

As we look ahead, our new strategic plan will guide us toward these important goals aimed at strengthening the foundation for ethical animal care and use in Canadian science. More change is on the horizon as we refine our programs, update support materials, and enhance relationships with our community, including stakeholder groups, government partners, and program participants. We look forward to collaborating with you on these major endeavours and are eager to hear your feedback as we work together to build a strong, ethical future for animal-based science in Canada.

Thank you to all program participants, volunteers, and staff for your ongoing dedication. Your commitment to animal welfare, your professionalism, and your willingness to go above and beyond for the animals in your care are deeply appreciated.

## Who We Are

The CCAC is a unique and Canadian approach to overseeing the ethical care and use of animals in science. On behalf of the Government of Canada, the CCAC has provided a harmonized, independent, pan-Canadian system for the oversight of animal-based scientific activities in Canada since 1968. This is done through a rigorous process of standards development, assessment, certification, and training.

The CCAC relies on the support of approximately 2,000 people, serving on more than 200 local animal care committees, to help fulfill its mandate. We are also fortunate to work with hundreds of volunteers who give their time and expertise to the CCAC by participating on the CCAC Board of Directors and numerous committees, subcommittees, task forces, and assessment panels. Still more volunteers comment on documents and translations, review the drafts of CCAC guidelines documents, and share their knowledge through our training initiatives. Together, we share a common goal of continuously improving the ethical care and use of animals in science and working diligently to deliver our program in institutions across Canada. The CCAC's work would not be possible without this vibrant volunteer community.



**DISCOVER MORE**  
About the CCAC

The CCAC Secretariat is comprised of three sectors and three corporate services, working collaboratively and interconnectedly to achieve the CCAC's mission and goals.

### Assessment and Certification

- » Assists in the implementation of CCAC standards across Canada
- » Provides independent, third-party oversight
- » Collaborates with more than 200 animal care committees and a strong network of volunteer experts
- » Promotes good animal practices, including Three Rs principles

### Standards

- » Develops ethical principles, guidelines, and policies for animal care and use in Canadian science
- » Ensures that standards development is based on evidence and includes input from the public, scientists, veterinarians, animal welfare experts, and other relevant experts
- » Incorporates the Three Rs into CCAC standards

### Training and Networking

- » Provides training, networking activities, and resources
- » Creates online training tools, webinars, and modules
- » Hosts the annual CCAC national workshop

### Governance

- » Provides support for the CCAC's overarching governance structure
- » Supports strategic planning, performance measurement, and impacts assessment functions

### Operations

- » Manages the CCAC's human, financial, administrative, and material resources
- » Ensures and supports seamless and effective organizational performance and delivery of the CCAC program

### Public Affairs and Communications

- » Creates and implements an organizational communication strategy aligned with the CCAC's strategic plan, mission, and mandate
- » Supports the CCAC in communications, graphic design, copyediting, translation, and revisions
- » Continually improves the efficiency of its engagement with CCAC stakeholders, including certified institutions, member organizations, the media, and the public



# Ethical Animal Care

The CCAC is leading a [fundamental shift](#) in how the Canadian scientific community views and applies animal care and use standards, now considering the cumulative lifetime experiences of each animal: how they live, how they are handled, and how every interaction affects their well-being. Good welfare extends far beyond physical health; it encompasses every aspect of an animal's experience. It is also well established that safeguarding animal health and welfare improves the rigour, reproducibility, and translatability of scientific results. Ethical animal care and good science are, therefore, inseparable.

Over the past five years, the CCAC has published five major documents that reflect this focus on lifetime welfare and ethical practice:

- the [CCAC guidelines: Animal welfare assessment](#) (2021)
- the [CCAC guidelines: Identification of scientific endpoints, humane intervention points, and cumulative endpoints](#) (2022)
- the [CCAC guidelines: Categories of welfare impact](#) (2024)
- the [CCAC guidelines: Outcomes for animals at the end of scientific activities](#) (2026)
- the [CCAC Ethics Principles for Animal Use in Science](#) (2026)

In January 2026, the CCAC also introduced a [revised national animal use data reporting system](#), coming into effect on January 1, 2030. The data captured will support stronger decision-making and provide clearer insights into animal welfare outcomes.

The CCAC and its [dedicated volunteers](#), including scientists, animal welfare experts, animal health professionals, administrators, animal care committee members, and community representatives, play a pivotal role in the Canadian scientific landscape. The country's scientific community relies on us to develop and oversee the ethical practices upon which its findings are built. Canadians, in turn, count on us to ensure that animal-based science is ethical and that the Three Rs principles of replacement, reduction, and refinement are respected and applied according to high-quality, science-informed standards.



## Our Goals

As we look back at the progress we have achieved over the past year, we are pleased to share how we have advanced our four strategic goals. We are leading the way as an important advocate for the ethical care and use of animals in Canadian science, and we are committed to working with our partners and volunteers to strengthen our core activities.



**DISCOVER MORE**

CCAC Strategic Plan 2021-2026



### Goal 1

Advance the integration of Three Rs practices in the ethical care and use of animals

#### Objectives

- Enhance reproducibility to increase translation
- Improve experimental design
- Enhance and strengthen partnerships



### Goal 2

Ensure a high level of animal care and ethical practices through leading, science-informed standards

#### Objectives

- Remain a leader in the ethical care and use of animals
- Enhance the impact of guidelines by supporting adoption and implementation by the scientific community



### Goal 3

Adapt the CCAC to an evolving environment

#### Objectives

- Support institutions in achieving compliance
- Adapt the program participation structure



### Goal 4

Work in partnership with the CCAC community

#### Objectives

- Increase engagement and communication
- Diversify training opportunities



## Advancing the Integration of Three Rs Practices in the Ethical Care and Use of Animals

The Three Rs promote ethical science through the implementation of replacement, reduction, and refinement strategies and are foundational to the CCAC's program. Working hand-in-hand with our partners and volunteers across the country, we continue to tackle the gaps in their implementation and improve the care and ethical use of animals in Canadian science.

✓ **TWO-DAY** Three Rs workshop hosted by the CCAC

✓ **FOUR** CCAC fellows engaged in projects to advance the Three Rs in animal-based science



## Ensuring a High Level of Animal Care and Ethical Practices Through Leading, Science-Informed Standards

The delivery of our mandate is based in large part on our standards, which give clear direction to institutional animal care and use programs. The CCAC and its many volunteer experts work together to develop evidence-based guidelines that incorporate expert peer advice, the values of Canadians, and strategies to reduce the need for, and harm of, animals in science, while promoting their wellbeing.

✓ **THREE** guidelines documents published

✓ **NINE** guidelines documents in development



## Adapting the CCAC to an Evolving Environment

One of the key aspects of the CCAC is its community-driven and collaborative approach. Throughout the assessment process, CCAC staff and volunteers work closely with certified institutions to ensure that ethics and animal welfare are always a priority. We are committed to working together to continuously refine and adapt our processes to ensure that they strike a balance between maintaining a rigorous assessment and certification process and reducing the cost of compliance for institutions.

- ✓ **TWO HUNDRED AND SIX** certified institutions
- ✓ **SEVENTY** assessment visits conducted
- ✓ **FIFTY-SEVEN** certifications renewed
- ✓ **THIRTEEN** institutions on probation
- ✓ **TWO** institutions joined the program



## Working in Partnership With the CCAC Community

We continue to work collaboratively with our volunteers and stakeholders to increase engagement and continuously improve the welfare of animals in science. To further this goal, the CCAC launched a number of initiatives and training opportunities, assisting institutions in meeting the CCAC's requirements, ensuring high standards of oversight for animals used in research, teaching, and testing, and encouraging the sharing of best practices.

- ✓ **ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHT** attendees at the in-person 2025 national workshop in Richmond, BC
- ✓ **NINETY-SIX PERCENT** national workshop satisfaction rate
- ✓ **ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-ONE** registrants for the animal welfare assessment webinars
- ✓ **NINETY PERCENT** overall webinar satisfaction rate
- ✓ **FIFTY-THREE PERCENT** follower growth rate on LinkedIn
- ✓ **FORTY-FOUR** communiqués sent



## Our Volunteers

The CCAC's work is made possible by the dedication of a diverse community of volunteers, including scientists, educators, veterinarians, animal care professionals, animal welfare specialists, and public representatives from across Canada. By contributing their time and expertise to standards development, assessments, training, governance, and outreach, they help strengthen the CCAC program and support the ethical care and use of animals in science. We are also sincerely grateful to all those who serve on institutional animal care committees; their commitment and dedication are key to helping the CCAC fulfill its mandate.

**Thank you.**



**CONTACT US**

Lend your expertise to the CCAC

### Volunteer Snapshot

✓ **ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-ONE** volunteers participated on subcommittees, task forces, and advisory groups

✓ **ELEVEN** active groups

✓ **THIRTY-ONE** meetings

✓ **FORTY-SIX** volunteers participated on standing committees

✓ **FIVE** standing committees

✓ **TWENTY-FOUR** meetings

✓ **FIFTY-TWO** volunteers participated on assessment panels

✓ **EIGHTEEN** volunteers served as member organization representatives

✓ **FIFTEEN** volunteers presented during training activities

✓ **THIRTEEN** volunteers served on the CCAC Board of Directors



**DISCOVER MORE**

2025-2026 list of volunteers

## CCAC Recognition Award Winners

The CCAC is fortunate to work with many knowledgeable professionals who devote their time and expertise to its mission and mandate. In celebration of its dedicated community, the CCAC offers three recognition awards to honour outstanding individuals who have contributed to both the CCAC and to the ethical care and use of animals in Canadian science.



**DISCOVER MORE**

CCAC recognition awards



### Harry C. Rowsell Lifetime Achievement Award

The Harry C. Rowsell Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes dedicated individuals who have made a lifetime of exceptional contributions to the CCAC and who uphold the highest standards in the ethical care and use of animals in Canadian science. This award is named for the CCAC's founding executive director, who devoted his life to promoting the optimal care and use of animals in Canadian science.



**Ms. Karen Gourlay**, Director of Animal Facilities at McMaster University, is the winner of the 2025 Harry C. Rowsell Lifetime Achievement Award. Over her 43 years of experience, Ms. Gourlay has been a tireless advocate for the ethical care and use of animals in science, advancing the Three Rs, supporting technician certification, and strengthening continuing education and communication in the field. Her extensive work with the CCAC has helped elevate oversight and ethical practices across Canada. As she prepares for retirement, we celebrate her lasting impact on both animal welfare and the many professionals she has mentored and inspired throughout her career.

## Gilles Demers Award for Excellence in Animal Care

The Gilles Demers Award for Excellence in Animal Care recognizes outstanding individuals who have made exceptional contributions to institutional animal care and use programs, upholding high ethical standards and practices, and who actively champion the CCAC program within their organization.



**Mr. Stephen Barber**, long-time community representative at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University, is the winner of the 2025 Gilles Demers Award for Excellence in Animal Care. Since 2016, Mr. Barber has applied his expertise, analytical skills, and unwavering commitment to ethical animal care, volunteering hundreds of hours annually in policy development, CCAC program reviews, and facility oversight. His thoughtful guidance, problem-solving, and collaborative approach have ensured the highest ethical standards in research, leaving a lasting impact on both institutions and the broader scientific community.

## CCAC Emerging Leader Award

The CCAC Emerging Leader Award recognizes individuals with less than 10 years of experience in the field of ethical animal care and use, who have demonstrated exceptional growth in their levels of leadership, responsibility, sphere of impact, and contributed to both the ethical care and use of animals in science and to the CCAC.



**Ms. Aleah McCorry**, Animal Care Coordinator at MacEwan University, is the winner of the 2025 CCAC Emerging Leader Award for her outstanding contributions to zebrafish welfare, ethical research, and institutional leadership. In just a few years, she has driven innovation in aquatic animal care, mentored new researchers, and fostered a culture of compassion, notably establishing a large breeding colony and contributing to the launch of MacEwan's new aquatic research facility. Active in CCAC committees and working groups, Ms. McCorry's expertise and dedication have advanced animal care standards across the broader research community.

## Five-Year Retrospective: CCAC's Top Five for 2021-2026

This list highlights the CCAC's most significant accomplishments over the past five years. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed; together, you are helping to strengthen Canada's scientific community and advance the ethical care and use of animals in research, teaching, and testing.



### Driving Three Rs Research

The CCAC has engaged five post-doctoral fellows over the last five years to help advance the integration of the Three Rs (replacement, reduction, and refinement) in animal-based science. From improving experimental design and reproducibility, to enhancing rodent welfare and ethical wildlife research, their work is shaping evidence-based practices that strengthen both animal welfare and research quality. They also assisted with a Three Rs workshop in November 2025, where invited guests explored how animal welfare assessment and improved experimental design can enhance the replicability of animal research in Canada and ultimately strengthen translation.



### Leading the Way to an Animal-Centric Approach

The CCAC is leading the way in shaping a more animal-centric approach in Canadian science by prioritizing the lifetime experiences of animals and recognizing that welfare extends beyond physical health to support rigorous, reproducible, and translatable science. Over the past five years, the CCAC has released key guidance on welfare assessment, ethical endpoints, categories of welfare impact, outcomes for animals, and ethics principles, and introduced a revised national animal use data reporting system to enhance oversight and inform evidence-based decision-making.



## Promoting Transparency for Better Science and Animal Welfare

In response to public calls for openness, the CCAC is promoting greater transparency in animal-based science. By reviewing its own processes and encouraging certified institutions to share information with the public and each other, the CCAC aims to foster collaboration, learning, and improved animal welfare. A three-phase plan, announced in 2022 and launched in 2024, is gradually making more national, aggregated data publicly available, including the names of its certified institutions, the year and type of their last assessment visit and the type of certificate held by each, while supporting continuous progress toward openness at each institution.



## Reaching More Participants Through Enhanced Training

The CCAC expanded its training portfolio by adding virtual events to reach a broader audience and enhance learning opportunities. This included the launch of a virtual learning series of webinars and the addition of biennial virtual national workshops, enabling more scientists, animal care staff, and institutional representatives to attend, participate, and benefit from high-quality training regardless of location. The CCAC also expanded its in-person national workshop format to two days, incorporating in-depth sessions on key priority areas. These initiatives strengthened the CCAC's commitment to building expertise and promoting best practices in ethical animal-based science.



## Enhancing Support and Communication for Program Participants

To better support program participants and improve communication, the CCAC introduced social media channels, refined its digital communications, refreshed its website, and expanded opportunities for feedback through surveys. Additional guidance materials were also developed to assist with implementing revised guidelines, ensuring participants have the resources and tools they need to succeed.

# Renewed Vision, Mission, and Mandate

Canadians expect transparency, accountability, and rigorous oversight of animal use in science, and so does the CCAC. In 2025, we updated our vision, mission, and mandate to reflect evolving public values and strengthen our role in advancing ethical animal care. This work reinforces the CCAC's leadership in fostering a national culture of animal care, where the ethical use of animals in research, teaching, and testing meets the highest standards.

Aligned with the 2026-2031 strategic plan, these changes embed openness and accountability into our mandate while advancing a consistent, Canada-wide approach to animal care. In doing so, they support public trust and affirm our commitment to strong ethical oversight and respect for animal welfare.



**DISCOVER MORE**

Our vision, mission, and mandate

## VISION

For Canada to be an international leader in the ethical standards for the care and use of animals in science.

## MISSION

The CCAC fosters a culture of care, compassion, and respect by ensuring that animals in science are only used when necessary and in alignment with evidence-based ethical standards that maximize animal welfare and promote public trust.

## MANDATE

Acting in the interest of Canadians and on behalf of the Government of Canada, the CCAC advances practices for the ethical care and use of animals in science by:

- developing evidence-based and welfare-centred national standards for the use of animals in science
- assessing and certifying institutional animal care and use programs for compliance with the CCAC's standards
- empowering and supporting program participants through training, networking, and the sharing of best practices for implementing and upholding the CCAC's standards
- engaging and collaborating with members of the animal care and use community to optimize the quality and impact of the CCAC program
- building public trust through transparency and increased awareness of Canada's ethical oversight system



# Building a Strong Future for Ethical Animal Care and Use in Canadian Science: CCAC Strategic Plan 2026-2031

Over the next five years, the *CCAC Strategic Plan 2026–2031* will ensure that the welfare of animals in science remains a central national priority while enhancing support for Canada’s animal-based scientific community and securing the organization’s long-term sustainability. The plan focuses on three key goals.

Together, these priorities will reinforce the CCAC’s foundation, modernize program delivery, and enhance support for institutions, ensuring Canada’s national oversight system remains effective, forward-looking, and responsive to the needs of both science and Canadian society.



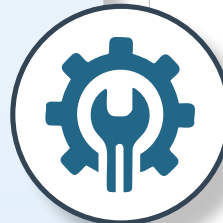
**DISCOVER MORE**

CCAC Strategic Plan 2026-2031



## Strengthen Organizational Resilience

Secure sustainable, policy-driven federal funding, build stronger partnerships with stakeholders, and ensure the CCAC’s operations remain robust and forward-looking.



## Optimize Delivery of the CCAC Program

Streamline guideline and policy development processes and modernize the assessment and certification program to improve consistency, prioritize animal welfare, and reinforce institutional alignment with CCAC standards, focusing efforts on high-value activities through clearer requirements, refined site visits, and risk-based, efficient tools.



## Enrich Support for Program Participants

Expand services and training, foster a national culture grounded in ethical animal care and scientific integrity, and actively engage stakeholders through collaboration and feedback.

## Get Involved



### Volunteer

- Join a guidelines subcommittee
- Become a member of an assessment panel
- Review guidelines documents as an expert or public reviewer
- Join the translation advisory group
- Become a member of the CCAC Board of Directors



#### DISCOVER MORE

2025-2026 list of volunteers

### Training Sessions

- Suggest topics for the CCAC national workshops or CCAC webinars
- Offer your expertise to present a session at one of our workshops or webinars
- Attend training sessions



#### DISCOVER MORE

CCAC workshops and webinars

### Recognition Awards

- Nominate someone who has made exceptional contributions to the CCAC and who upholds the highest standards in the ethical care and use of animals in Canadian science
- Open to anyone working in the field of animal care and use in science



#### DISCOVER MORE

Award nomination information

### Mailing List

- Stay updated on all CCAC news by joining our mailing list
- [Join our community on LinkedIn](#)



#### DISCOVER MORE

The CCAC mailing list

# Board of Directors 2025-2026

The CCAC Board of Directors is elected by our member organizations. As the CCAC's leadership team, members of the board are charged with setting the direction of the organization in accordance with its mandate.



**DISCOVER MORE**

CCAC Board of Directors

## Chair



**Dr. Denna M. Benn**  
DVM, Dip. Med. (Small  
Animal Medicine)

## Vice-Chair



**Dr. Jeffrey Richards**  
University of  
British Columbia

## Treasurer



**Dr. Lucie Côté**  
Research Institute of  
the McGill University  
Health Centre

## Directors



**Mr. Stéphane Beaudoin**  
Magon Inc. / Gestbeau Inc.



**Dr. Jean-François Cloutier**  
McGill University



**Dr. Michael Czubryt**  
University of Manitoba



**Dr. Richard Dyck**  
University of Calgary



**Mr. Dan Fryer**  
VCA Canada



**Ms. Caila Henderson**  
Saint Mary's University



**Dr. Vanessa Oliver**  
University of Calgary



**Ms. Catherine Rushton**  
FCPA, FCA



**Dr. Albrecht  
Schulte-Hostedde**  
Laurentian University



**Dr. Andrew Winterborn**  
Queen's University



**Mr. Pierre Verreault**  
CCAC Executive Director

## Secretary (non-voting)

# Member Organizations

The CCAC's membership is comprised of 23 member organizations from across the country, with an interest in science, education, and ethical animal care and use.



**DISCOVER MORE**

CCAC governance structure

We are seeking **animal welfare organizations** to join the CCAC membership, so if you work with, contribute to, or support an animal welfare organization that may have an interest in becoming a member of the CCAC, please contact us!



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Joining the CCAC membership

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Animal Health Canada
- Association of Canadian Faculties of Dentistry
- Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada
- Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Medicine
- Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Science
- Canadian Bioethics Society
- Canadian Cancer Society
- Canadian Council of Departments of Psychology
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution
- Canadian Society of Zoologists
- Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
- Deans Council – Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Medicine
- Defence Research and Development Canada
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Health Canada
- Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
- Humane Canada
- Innovative Medicines Canada
- National Research Council of Canada
- Universities Canada

# Financial Statements

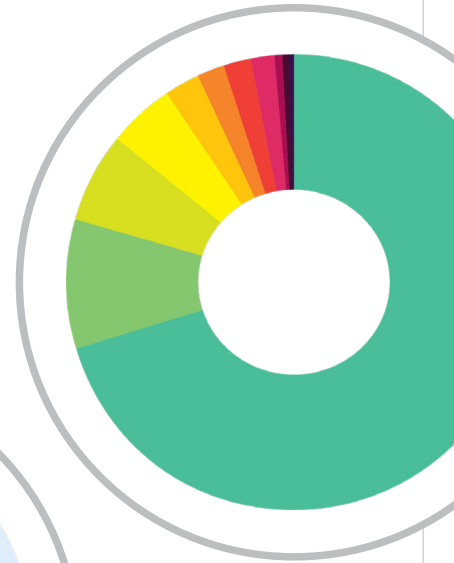
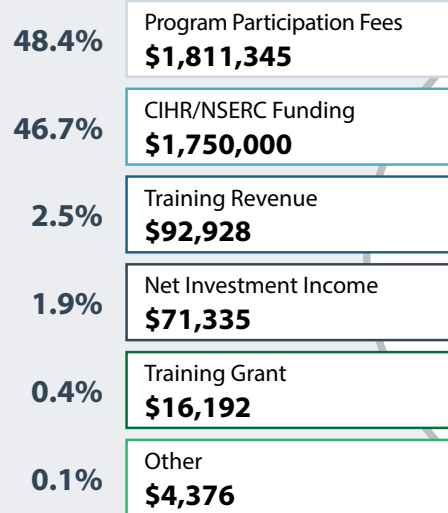


**DISCOVER MORE**

CCAC's financial statements

## Revenue

**\$3,746,176**



## Expenses

**\$3,842,835**

