

The Association for **Animal Welfare Advancement**



Overview for OnPOINT Developing a Best Practices

So you want to create a best practices....best practices are a set of guidelines, which lay out efficient and effective methods to achieve optimal results. The Association for Animal Welfare Advancement establishes best practices in a variety of areas that lead to superior care of animals and help our members have more impact on their communities. The methods in a best practices document are generally accepted as those that will produce the best results for animal welfare organizations.

Accessibility

Some of the activities described in a best practices may be beyond the current operational capabilities of many animal welfare organizations. As best practices, these protocols and techniques are not necessarily the most accessible, but rather are the most effective. If an organization is not currently capable of implementing all of the recommendations in a best practices, we encourage organizations to consistently improve services in order to advance the care given to the animals entrusted to them.

Review Existing Documents

Before embarking on creating a new best practices, read The Association's existing documents which are all available in the Resources section of The Association's website at this address:
<https://theaawa.org/page/Bestpractice>.

Reading prior documents will help new groups understand format and tone. This will also help your group avoid duplicating or contradicting existing documents.

Choosing the focus

The focus of the best practices should be limited to a specific area of animal welfare work. A document that is too expansive can become unwieldy. Be cautious not to drift into other areas of the work.

Be sure to identify areas that you have purposely decided not to include. For Example: The first best practices on animal transport purposely excluded air travel because it was rarely used at the time and we did not have the expertise on the committee. When that best practices was updated, we added the expertise to write knowledgeably about air travel, but made the decision to exclude international importation.

Five Freedoms

The committee has looked to the Five Freedoms as a guide for best practices creation. The best practices typically addresses one or more of the freedoms to create better conditions for animals.

Structure

Generally, The Association's Best Practices have had the following structure. This structure is not required, but should serve as an outline for new documents:

- Introduction
- Key Considerations
- Identification of how this practice is unique in animal welfare (if applicable)
- Goals and Impacts
- Components and Requirements
- Above and Beyond (if applicable)
- References
- Glossary
- Exhibits

For examples, see previous best practices documents at <https://theaawa.org/page/Bestpractice>.

Should or Must

The choice to use the word 'should' or 'must' in a best practices can present a significant difference in the standards. This can be an important choice and raise or lower the standard.

For example:

“An organization ['should' or 'must'] vaccinate animals upon entry.”

The best practices is for animals to be vaccinated upon entry so in the best practices for veterinary care, the word 'must' is used. In another context it might be acceptable to use 'should', but not when we are trying to create the highest standard.

Process

Any OnPOINT group can decide to work on a best practices. To do so, the group should:

1. Create a brief summary of what they plan to create
 - a. The summary does not have to be formal, it could be a bulleted outline.
 - b. The OnPOINT group can ask a Best Practices Committee (BPC) Member to attend a group meeting if the group wants to discuss the process.
2. Submit the summary to The BPC for review. The committee...
 - a. will determine if the proposal is duplicative of an existing practice
 - b. may make suggestions to broaden or narrow the scope
 - c. determine whether the practice will advance the cause of animal welfare
3. The OnPOINT group will begin the creation of the best practices, generally following the format above.
 - a. Groups may exclude recommended sections or add others. Each document does not have to have identical section headings.

4. The OnPOINT group may at any time submit an outline or draft to the Best Practices Committee (BPC) for feedback, but this is not required.
5. The OnPOINT group will submit their recommended best practices to the BPC
6. The Committee will request 2-3 members of the OnPOINT group to join the BPC temporarily as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs).
7. The BPC may recruit 2-3 additional SMEs from outside the OnPOINT group to hear other perspectives and verify the practices
8. The Best Practices Committee will edit content and verify the document meets The Associations standards for a best practices.
9. A final draft will be submitted to The Association board for final approval
10. SMEs may be asked to present the document at conferences and on webinars along with one of the members of the standing BPC.

Other Considerations

- Ideally a member of the Best Practices Committee will join the workgroup. Please send a request to The Association Staff at jgrigg@theaawa.org.
- Ideally the group will complete the BP within six months, or arrange an alternate timeline.