

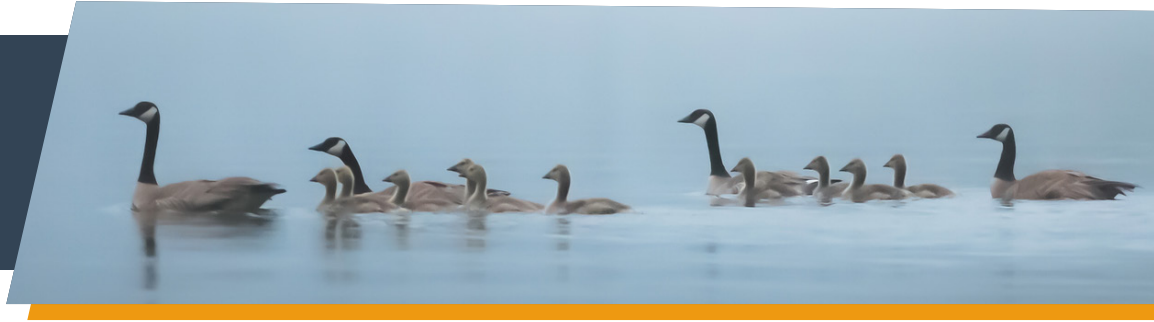








# CCAC Annual Report 2023-2024

Redefining our view  
of animal welfare in science



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# MESSAGE FROM THE CCAC

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As we reach the halfway point in the implementation of our 2021-2026 strategic plan, we are pleased to present our 2023-2024 annual report. With the support and engagement of the volunteer experts who continuously give us their time and advice, and of our dedicated Secretariat team, we have made good progress in making our strategic goals a reality.

We are particularly excited about two of our major accomplishments this year: the publication of the [CCAC guidelines: Categories of welfare impact](#) and the launch of our transparency plan. Both initiatives ensure that we look at the full picture when it comes to the welfare of the animals used in scientific activities. Published in February 2024, the new guidelines on the categories of welfare impact represent a fundamental shift in our understanding of animal welfare and in how we value the lives of individual animals in science, focusing on how they experience the world in which they live rather than solely on the procedures performed on them. The CCAC transparency initiative will facilitate open dialogue, clear communications, and the sharing of information, resulting in more informed choices and strategies, and encouraging a culture of learning, innovation, and improved animal wellbeing. Acting in the interest of the Canadian public, this information will also provide more clarity on the use of animals in science.

Our first in-person national workshop since the pandemic was held in May 2023, in Montréal, Québec, and drew a record number of participants. It was extremely rewarding to be able to bring together the members of our community once again in person, exchange ideas, and reflect on our challenges, accomplishments, and future activities.



Ms. Catherine Rushton  
CCAC Chair



Mr. Pierre Verreault  
CCAC Executive Director

We want to thank all program participants – scientists, animal care committees and coordinators, animal welfare experts, senior administrators, facility managers, animal care technicians, veterinarians, and all those who care for animals in scientific activities – for their unfaltering commitment to animal welfare. To the members of the CCAC Secretariat, we are grateful that you once again went above and beyond to meet the challenges and objectives of the last year.

# WHO WE ARE

The CCAC works to improve the ethical treatment of animals used in Canadian science. Since 1968, we have provided national oversight of animal-based research, teaching, and testing in Canada through a collaborative process of assessment, certification, training, and standards development.

The CCAC relies on the support of its staff and more than 2,000 experts, serving on more than 200 local animal care committees and other subcommittees and task forces. Together, we share a common goal of continuously improving the standards for the ethical care and use of animals in science, and work diligently to deliver our programs in institutions across Canada. The CCAC's work would not be possible without this vibrant community.

## 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 and guidelines for animal use and care 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 and 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

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At the core of the CCAC is the fundamental ethical requirement to treat animals used for research, teaching, and testing with high standards of care across Canada. It is well established that ensuring animal health and welfare leads to an improvement in the rigour, reproducibility, and translatability of scientific results, which then leads to better science. Together with our group of volunteers, which includes scientists, animal welfare experts, animal health professionals, administrators, animal care committee members, and community representatives, the CCAC is creating new guidance materials that recognize the lives and experiences of individual animals used in science, and capture how these scientific activities impact their welfare.



The CCAC and its volunteers play a pivotal role in the Canadian scientific landscape. The country's scientific community relies on us to develop and oversee the ethical animal practices upon which its findings are built. At the same time, Canadians 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

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We are one of Canada's most important advocates for the ethical treatment and use of animals in science and are dedicated to collaborating with our partners and volunteers to continue working on our core activities. As we look to the future of animal-based science in Canada, the following four goals will guide our operations until 2026.



More information about our strategic plan is available on our website



### GOAL 1

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



### GOAL 2

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



### GOAL 3

Adapt the CCAC to an evolving environment



### GOAL 4

Work in partnership with the CCAC community

# ADVANCE THE INTEGRATION OF THREE RS PRACTICES IN THE ETHICAL CARE AND USE OF ANIMALS

## GOAL 1

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.



### OUR OBJECTIVES

- > Enhance Reproducibility to Increase Translation
- > Improve Experimental Design
- > Enhance and Strengthen Partnerships



# ENSURE A HIGH LEVEL OF ANIMAL CARE AND ETHICAL PRACTICES THROUGH LEADING, SCIENCE-INFORMED STANDARDS

## GOAL 2

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.

1 Guidelines document published

2 Guidelines documents in public review

9 Guidelines documents in development

4 Calls for guidelines experts

## OUR 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





# ADAPT THE CCAC TO AN EVOLVING ENVIRONMENT

## GOAL 3

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.

**201** Certified institutions

**67** Assessment visits conducted

**45** Certifications renewed

**10** Institutions in probation

**4** New institutions joined the program

## OUR OBJECTIVES

- > Support Institutions in Achieving Compliance
- > Adapt the Program Participation Structure



# WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CCAC COMMUNITY

## GOAL 4

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, to assist institutions in meeting the CCAC's requirements, ensure high standards of oversight for animals used in research, teaching, and testing, and encourage the sharing of best practices.

269

Attendees at the 2023 in-person national workshop

209

Participants at the 2023 webinar on transparency

52

Communiqués sent to our community



## OUR OBJECTIVES

- > Increase Engagement and Communication
- > Diversify Training Opportunities



# THE CCAC'S TOP FIVE FOR 2023-2024



## CATEGORIES OF WELFARE IMPACT

The [\*CCAC guidelines: Categories of welfare impact\*](#) was published in February 2024. This long-awaited document brings with it a fundamental shift in how we view the lives of individual animals, and in our understanding of good animal welfare. These guidelines take into consideration the cumulative lifetime experiences of an animal, examine how these experiences impact their welfare (either positively or negatively), and create the expectation that they will be monitored throughout their lifespan. Good welfare is more than good health, and the welfare of animals used in science is impacted by more than just the procedures performed on them.



## TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE

Over the past two years, the CCAC and its volunteers have been working on a plan to increase its level of transparency while also encouraging certified institutions to become more open regarding their use of animals in science. In October 2023, the CCAC presented the latest draft of its transparency initiative to CCAC-certified institutions for their comments, and in January 2024, the plan was finalized. A dedicated web section will also be launched in June 2024, along with a public announcement of the initiative.



## WIDENING OUR REACH

After launching a presence on social media, the CCAC continues to explore new opportunities and channels for broader communication with the national and international scientific and animal welfare communities. Over the last year, the CCAC has partnered with several academic institutions, engaging post-doctoral fellows to help advance its Three Rs objectives in experimental design, translation, and reproducibility. CCAC staff also volunteered at the 12<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences; were named the Canadian representative for the International Council for Laboratory Animal Science governing board; participated on the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association's Animal Welfare Committee; and are assisting in the 3Rs Collaborative's creation of a Three Rs certificate course.



## NATIONAL WORKSHOP BREAKS RECORDS

In May 2023, a record-breaking 269 participants from across the country came together in Montréal, Québec, to take part in the CCAC's first in-person national workshop since the pandemic. This year, the CCAC expanded its program to two days, allowing more time for in-depth discussions on topics of value to animal care committee members. The second day featured dynamic plenaries and many engaging breakout sessions, on subjects such as the CCAC's wildlife guidelines, the reduction and replacement of sentinel animals, competency assessments, transparency, aquatic facilities, and the CCAC's animal welfare assessment guidelines.

## HIGHLIGHTING OUR VOLUNTEERS

Year after year, volunteers and subject matter experts across the country have provided an essential service to the CCAC, helping to carry out key aspects of its mandate and ensure the ethical treatment of animals in Canadian science. In 2023-2024 alone, 332 volunteers worked directly with the Secretariat staff, allowing us to make great progress on numerous projects, while across the country, more than 2,000 outstanding individuals continued to serve on more than 200 local animal care committees within their certified institutions.



Interested in lending your expertise to the CCAC? Contact us today!

## VOLUNTEER SNAPSHOT

**121** Volunteers participated on subcommittees and task forces

**12** Active subcommittees and task forces

**24** Meetings

**55** Volunteers participated on standing committees

**5** Standing committees

**30** Meetings

**16** Volunteers presented at the national workshop

**53** Volunteers participated on assessment panels



Visit our website to see our list of volunteers

# HARRY C. ROWSELL AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE CCAC

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The CCAC is pleased to announce that this year's winner of the Harry C. Rowsell Award for Outstanding Service to the CCAC is Dr. Craig Bihun. Dr. Bihun is the senior veterinarian at the National Research Council Canada (NRC), overseeing the ethical care and use of animals across the organization. He also served as a consultant veterinarian to multiple academic and private institutions, in particular the Coley Pharmaceutical Group, which was later acquired by Pfizer. Dr. Bihun helped design and inaugurate their state-of-the-art animal care facility and oversaw its accreditation by the CCAC and the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International.

Dr. Bihun also chaired the NRC's Joint Committee on Animal Care and spearheaded efforts for the NRC to sign a memorandum of understanding agreeing to participate in the CCAC program, the first Government of Canada department to do so. This led the way for other government departments to make similar declarations.

Dr. Bihun's deep personal commitment to improving the welfare of animals in science is evidenced by the many hours he dedicated to the CCAC over the course of his career. He was not only a member of 16 institutional animal care committees but was also a member of the CCAC Board of Directors, the Assessment and Certification Committee, and the Public Affairs and Communications Committee, as well as a subject matter expert on many guidelines subcommittees, assessment panels, and a presenter at CCAC national workshops. He also dedicated much of his time to training personnel in the field of laboratory animal research, both through teaching programs and through the hands-on training of many technical staff at the various institutions where he served as a consultant veterinarian. Dr. Bihun's great impact on the welfare of animals in science can be felt within the CCAC community, the NRC, across the country, and around the world. The CCAC would like to thank him for his dedication, hard work, and support over the course of his career.



Dr. Craig Bihun  
2023 Recipient



## NEW CCAC RECOGNITION AWARDS

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The CCAC is fortunate to be surrounded by so many knowledgeable professionals who dedicate their time and expertise to its mission and mandate. In January 2024, the CCAC announced that, in addition to the Harry C. Rowsell Lifetime Achievement Award (previously known as the Harry C. Rowsell Award for Outstanding Service to the CCAC), two more awards would be added: the Gilles Demers Award for Excellence in Animal Care, and the CCAC Emerging Leader Award.

The **Gilles Demers Award for Excellence in Animal Care** recognizes individuals who have made exceptional contributions to their institutional animal care and use programs, upholding high ethical standards and practices. This award was named for the late Dr. Gilles Demers, a long-time assessment director at the CCAC, who worked with animal care experts across the country and who spearheaded the creation of the CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice®, a cornerstone of the CCAC program.

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

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 was previously named the Harry C. Rowsell Award for Outstanding Service to the CCAC and was named for the CCAC's founding executive director, who devoted his life to promoting the optimal care and use of animals in Canadian science.



More information about our recognition awards is available on our website

# GET INVOLVED



## VOLUNTEER

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



See our list of volunteers



## 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



Nominate a deserving individual



## TRAINING SESSIONS

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



Learn about our national workshops



## MAILING LIST

- > Keep updated on all CCAC news by joining our mailing list



Join our mailing list



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023-2024

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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.



More information about our board  
is available on our website

### CHAIR

- > Ms. Catherine Rushton, FCPA, FCA

### VICE-CHAIR

- > Dr. Denna M. Benn, DVM, Dip.Med., MSc

### TREASURER

- > Ms. Adriane Porcin, Adm. A

### DIRECTORS

- > Dr. Nitin Bhardwaj | The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids)
- > Dr. Jean-François Cloutier | McGill University
- > Dr. Lucie Côté | Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre
- > Dr. Michael Czubryt | University of Manitoba
- > Dr. Richard Dyck | University of Calgary
- > Mr. Shawn Eccles | British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- > Dr. Michelle Groleau | Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
- > Dr. David Hanwell | University of Toronto
- > Dr. Jeffrey Richards | University of British Columbia
- > Dr. Andrew Winterborn | Queen's University

### SECRETARY (NON-VOTING)

- > Mr. Pierre Verreault | Executive Director



# 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.

- > Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- > Animal Health Canada
- > Association of Canadian Faculties of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine
- > 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
- > 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



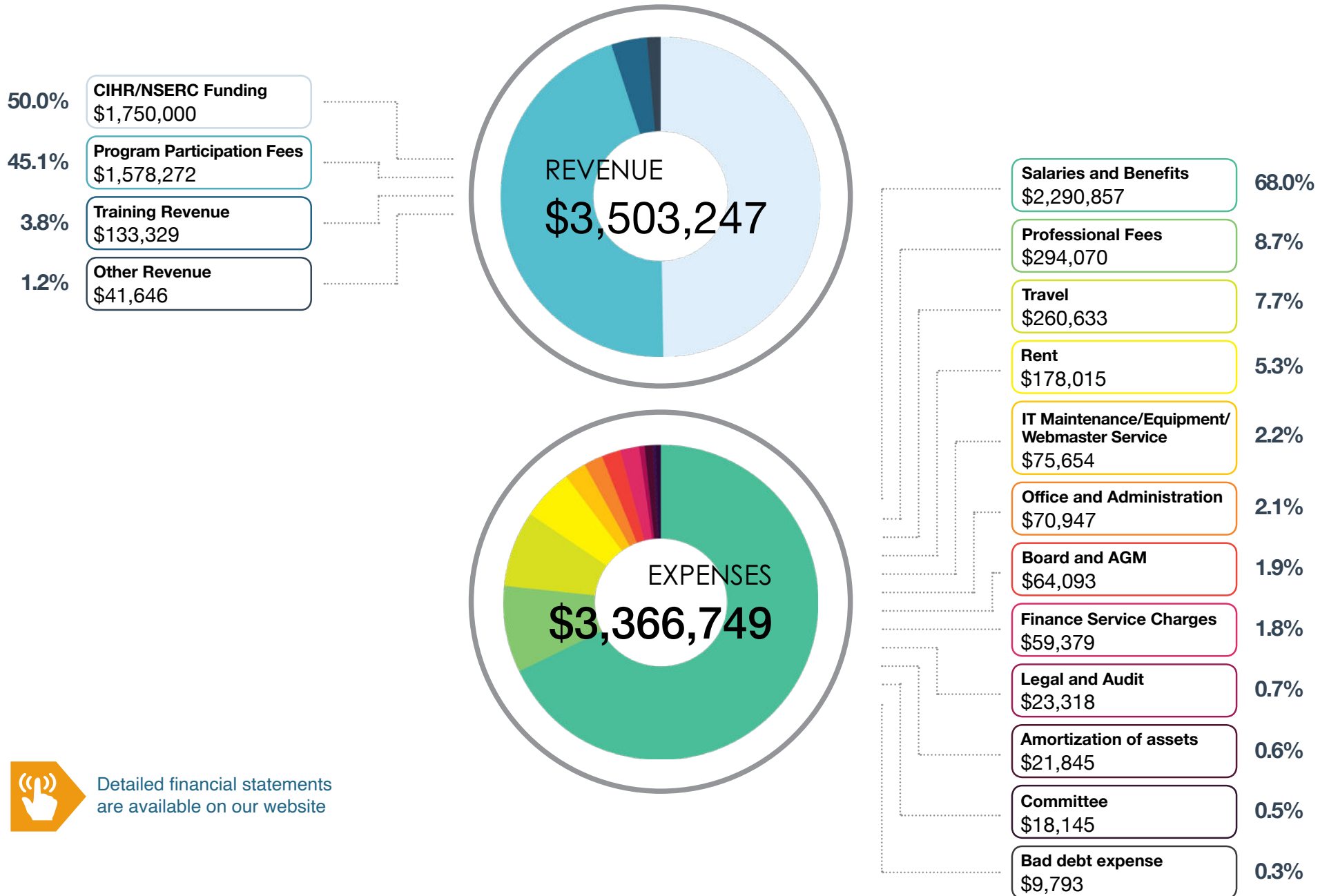
More information about our governance structure is available on our website

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!



Learn more about joining the CCAC membership

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



Detailed financial statements are available on our website