

Animal Welfare League of Alexandria Continues Enhancing Accessibility, Renews Autism Training and Certification

AWLA has been recognized as a Certified Autism Center by IBCCES since 2023

ALEXANDRIA, VA, UNITED STATES, May 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) proudly renews the [Animal Welfare League of Alexandria's](#) (AWLA) designation as a [Certified Autism Center™](#) (CAC) after staff completed up-to-date training. This autism-specific training ensures staff understand best practices, skills, and resources to best welcome and support autistic and sensory-sensitive individuals.



Animal
Welfare
League
of
Alexandria



"We strongly believe that everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy the love and companionship of animals. We are incredibly proud of our team for their commitment to the IBCCES Certified Autism Center™ training, ensuring all guests feel welcome and included at the AWLA," says Stella Hanly, Chief Executive Officer, Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

"IBCCES is excited to renew the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria's credential as a Certified Autism Center™, highlighting their commitment to welcoming every guest that visits, especially autistic and sensory-sensitive individuals and their families," says Myron Pincomb, IBCCES board chairman."

In addition to staff training to support those with sensory sensitivities, the AWLA is proud to provide free sensory bags that include a pair of noise-reducing headphones, sunglasses, fidget devices, and an "I need/I feel" card, which may facilitate communication with non-speaking individuals. Sensory bags are available for checkout at the shelter's front desk. The AWLA also

provides a low-sensory quiet area for visitors who want to decompress. For potential adopters, the league offers the option of a virtual meeting with adoptable animals through Zoom if a visit to the shelter may be difficult to manage.

For more than two decades, IBCCES has been a leader in providing autism, sensory and neurodiversity training and certification for professionals worldwide, including those in healthcare, education, public safety, travel, and corporate sectors. As the only credentialing board offering these programs, IBCCES provides training from subject matter experts and autistic self-advocates, along with long-term support, continuous learning, onsite reviews, and renewal requirements to ensure continued growth and lasting impact.



To further support inclusivity efforts, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria featured on the [IBCCES Accessibility App](#), which is free to download. This app provides individuals with a variety of disabilities real-time guidance on certified destinations, sensory-friendly spaces, and tailored recommendations. By connecting users to accessible locations worldwide, the app helps ensure seamless, enjoyable experiences for everyone.

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Stella Hanly, Chief Executive Officer, AWLA

IBCCES also provides access to resources such as [CertifiedAutismCenter.com](#) and [AutismTravel.com](#), free online tools for families that list certified locations and professionals. Each organization listed on the site has met Certified Autism Center™ (CAC) requirements.

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About Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

Since 1946, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) has been a resource for our community and a shelter for homeless animals. Through adoptions, spay and neuter assistance,

education, community service and outreach, the AWLA plays a key role in promoting responsible pet care across Northern Virginia. The AWLA has worked with the City of Alexandria to provide animal care, control, protection and sheltering services since 1989. AWLA operates the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, an open-admission facility accepting any and all animals brought to them from within the jurisdiction. They have made a commitment to help animals in need with the help of our amazing and animal-loving community. We care for more than 2,000 animals per year, including dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, birds, iguanas and chinchillas. Their specially-trained staff also assist area wildlife that have been injured or are in distress, with the ultimate goal of releasing them back into their natural habitat or transferring them to licensed wildlife rehabilitators for care and eventual release.

About IBCCES

Delivering the global standard for training and certification in the fields of autism, neurodiversity, and accessibility – IBCCES provides a series of certification programs that empower professionals to be leaders in their field and improve the outcomes for the individuals they serve. For over two decades, IBCCES has been a global leader, setting the industry standard in autism and cognitive differences training. IBCCES works in over 111 countries and provides training in 8 languages, and its programs have been recognized around the world as the leading benchmark in training and certification.

In addition to individual certification programs, IBCCES partners with cities, destinations, and organizations on initiatives like the Certified Autism Destination™ (CAD) and Autism Certified City™ (ACC), ensuring autistic and sensory-sensitive residents and visitors feel welcomed and safe. Destinations that achieve the CAD designation have completed a specialized program that ensures a multitude of recreation, hospitality and entertainment organizations have completed an autism and sensory-sensitivity training, certification and IBCCES facilities review process. The ACC designation expands on that program and includes IBCCES training and certification for the public safety, education, healthcare and workplace sectors.

IBCCES also created the Accessibility App, AutismTravel.com, and CertifiedAutismCenter.com – free resources for individuals with a variety of neurodiversities and disabilities, listing certified locations and connecting individuals to other resources and each other.

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