



# AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLGY

*Dedicated to the Understanding and Prevention of Suicide*

## **AAS Accreditation Board of Forensic Suicidology**

### **Certification Program in Forensic Suicidology**

**Purpose:** To establish standards to assess and to, thereby, certify professionals claiming expertise in Suicidology for purposes of offering testimony in legal cases involving suicide.

**Background and Rationale:** For many years a number of AAS members have raised the question of how one might distinguish oneself as having credentials as a Suicidology expert witness when (a) membership in AAS did not necessarily confer meaning to that term, (b) there has been no graduate degree or specialty training program in Suicidology, and (c) anyone claiming experience in working with suicidal patients and possessing a clinical degree, but lacking in an understanding and appreciation of the Suicidology research literature, could offer themselves to the courts as an expert.

Accordingly, the AAS **Accreditation Board of Forensic Suicidology** was established by the Board of Directors of the AAS in December, 2008, with a charge to develop minimum professional standards for -- and a process to provide -- certification as a **Forensic Suicidologist**. By establishing policies, procedures, and agreed-upon criteria to validate and vet the credentials of those seeking such a designation, AAS now can enable the courts and lawyers to better identify expertise in the field of Suicidology.

#### **Criteria and Procedures for Board Certification in Forensic Suicidology:**

**Criteria:** The following criteria are those that have been adopted by the AAS Accreditation Board for consideration for Certification in Forensic Suicidology.

- Education, certification, and licensure
- Board certification, if available in field of practice
- Training/knowledge transfer/contributions to Suicidology
- Health care provider or other relevant experience
- Forensic testimony experience and evidence of knowledge in Suicidology
- Compliance with ethical and legal standards

**Procedures:** The Accreditation Board of Forensic Suicidology is comprised of three senior Suicidologists who are charged with reviewing an applicant's submitted credentials and documentary evidence per the criteria established for certification. Applicants must complete an application and submit requested supporting documentation and pay a non-refundable fee for the Board's review of submitted credentials. Applicants who are certified pay no additional fees, but must, thereafter, pay a small renewal fee and submit ongoing attestations (and evidence of continued licensure) annually by the anniversary date of their initial certification to maintain that certification. Applicants who are denied certification may appeal that determination in writing and may be asked to submit additional evidence pertinent to the Board's reasons for the initial denial. There is no additional fee for this reconsideration.

**For copy of the Forensic Suicidology Accreditation Application:** Contact AAS at [info@suicidology.org](mailto:info@suicidology.org) or write to Forensic Suicidology Accreditation Program, AAS, 5221 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20015.