



# BARCS and the Maryland SPCA: Partnering to Provide Free Spay/Neuter Services for Low Income Residents in Baltimore City

Project #  
FY16-122

County: Baltimore City

Number of Cats Spayed:	513	Number of Dogs Spayed:	126
Number of Cats Neutered:	487	Number of Dogs Neutered:	124

Amount Received: \$110,450

Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): \$0

**Project Synopsis:**

The Maryland SPCA and BARCS partnered again in 2016 to address the proliferation of unwanted animals that often become homeless or abused by providing free spay/neuter services for owned cats and dogs in low-income areas. We offered free spay/neuter vouchers and provided humane education for underserved communities in six targeted zip codes. Jointly, the Maryland SPCA altered 1,000 owned cats and BARCS altered 250 owned dogs.



**Project Description:**

The Maryland SPCA and the Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter (BARCS) continued its partnership to address the proliferation of unwanted animals by providing free spay/neuter services to low-income pet owners. The grant targeted underserved neighborhoods in Baltimore City, where 20% or more of the citizens are living at or below the poverty level. We collaborated to provide free spay/neuter services for both cats and dogs through a voucher program, as well as offering humane education for low-income residents through community outreach. BARCS provided free spay/neuter vouchers for dogs (including rabies and distemper vaccinations and microchipping) and the Maryland SPCA provided free spay/neuter vouchers for cats (including rabies and distemper vaccinations) to some of the most poverty-stricken zip codes in Baltimore City. Jointly, we anticipated spaying/neutering 250 dogs and 1,000 cats that would not otherwise be altered.

Both agencies provided in-kind contributions of staff and volunteer time to assist with the voucher program.

**Summary of Approach:**

The primary goal of this grant funding is to spay/neuter an additional 1,000 owned cats and 250 owned dogs which will decrease the homeless animal population and number of animals coming into shelters. This goal was reached ahead of schedule in less than the 12-month grant period. As part of this program, we also included free rabies and distemper vaccines which helped to protect the health of Baltimore City's residents and its animals. Plus, by including free microchipping for the dogs, it helped to prevent them from coming into our shelters and/or from staying for very long.



Critical to the success of the joint voucher program is the part-time position of the Spay/Neuter Outreach Coordinator. The Maryland SPCA provided this employee with a desk, phone and computer support and the critical staff member was on the Maryland SPCA's payroll for the duration of 2016. The Outreach Coordinator spent approximately 32 hours per week attending community events and by going door-to-door promoting our services with spay/neuter vouchers, as well as promoting the services at the low cost clinics held by both the Maryland SPCA and BARCS. The coordinator also assisted with animal transport and was responsible for administration (i.e. returning phone calls, emails and scheduling appointments).

The Maryland SPCA has identified "hot spots" using surrender data submitted by Baltimore public and private shelters. We have established various free and low fee spay/neuter community outreach events and initiatives throughout the years and targeted these "hot spots" for the free cat spay/neuter voucher program. By engaging the citizens of low-income Baltimore City neighborhoods and populations that lack access to medical care for their pets, we reached our goal of altering 1,000 cats for this grant in July and BARCS reached their goal of 250 dogs by April.

Aside from the Maryland SPCA and BARCS, there are very few resources in Baltimore City to assist low-income residents who wish to spay/neuter their owned cats and dogs. With two years of experience and awareness-building, the popularity of this voucher program continues to grow and funding runs out before the end of the grant cycle. In August, the Maryland SPCA sent out an appeal for additional funding to bridge the gap through December. We were able to alter and vaccinate 387 cats and 34 dogs.

#### **Accomplishments:**

Once again, our proudest accomplishment was that both agencies reached their spay/neuter goal for this grant ahead of schedule, therefore 1,250 additional animals in Baltimore City were spayed/neutered as a result.

The position of Outreach Coordinator, that was created and funded by the previous year's grant, continues to be invaluable in promoting the importance of pet spay/neuter to the underserved population of Baltimore City. Community outreach has generated significant interest in the spay/neuter voucher program and the increased awareness about the program will assist in reaching the goal for 2017.

#### **Lessons Learned:**

##### **Funds**

As expected, the demand for subsidized spay/neuter far exceeded available funding. BARCS finished their 250 dogs in April and the SPCA finished spaying/neutering 1,000 cats in July. The MD SPCA's development team put together a plea and raised just over \$25,000 to continue providing services to Baltimore's pets. In addition to requested funds from the Department of Agriculture in 2017, the MD SPCA reached out to even more organizations. As the Spay/Neuter Advisory Board knows, the need is great throughout Maryland's counties.

##### **Volunteer/staff time**

The MD SPCA, unfortunately, struggled to attract volunteers specifically for outreach. The SPCA pulled from other departments whenever possible, including adoption and admissions counselors.

##### **Weekly Journal**

Marc Brown, the Outreach Coordinator, was asked to keep a weekly journal to help track the number of surgeries scheduled vs. the number of surgeries performed (i.e. the 'no-show' rate). A line for 'notes' was included to provide a narrative glance of activities/tasks performed by the Outreach Coordinator. For example, Marc Brown recorded for the first week of February:

##### **BARCS:**

# of surgeries scheduled:28

# of surgeries performed:21



**MDSPCA:**

# of surgeries scheduled: 42

# of surgeries performed: 36

Notes during week (Tu-S): This past week has been busy due to all the people that has just been freed from their homes after the record snowfall. Also, I received a call from Ms. Tynasha about her dog, Diamond. While at work, Diamond, was crated and appeared to have scratched her incision. She was one of my transports from BARCS on January 30th. She wanted to take her dog to Falls Road Animal Hospital, but had no transportation or enough money to cover the cost of the visit. However, she was able to find transportation to bring her dog in to the MD SPCA's Spay/Neuter Clinic, and we gave Diamond a few staples and a cone to help prevent any further damage. She will have to return in two weeks to have the staples removed.

I also asked for 500 flyers for the March for the Animals 2016 to help promote whenever I am/we are doing outreach. My plans are to promote as many low cost/free services and fundraisers as available. I have noticed that a lot of the promotions we have are not reaching every community. Hopefully, these extra efforts will help bring awareness to our shelters. I also provided transportation for a couple of cats as well as cat carriers. I did not have to provide transportation for dog owners, but I did have a volunteer come out and assist me with the vaccine clinic. Together, we tackled the line twice and still managed to go out to do some outreach at some local businesses in the 21216/21217 area.

**Attachments:**

Surgery List

**For More Information Contact:**

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**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
**SPAY AND NEUTER GRANTS PROGRAM**

