



# Spay and Neuter At Risk and At Large Pets

Project #  
17-210

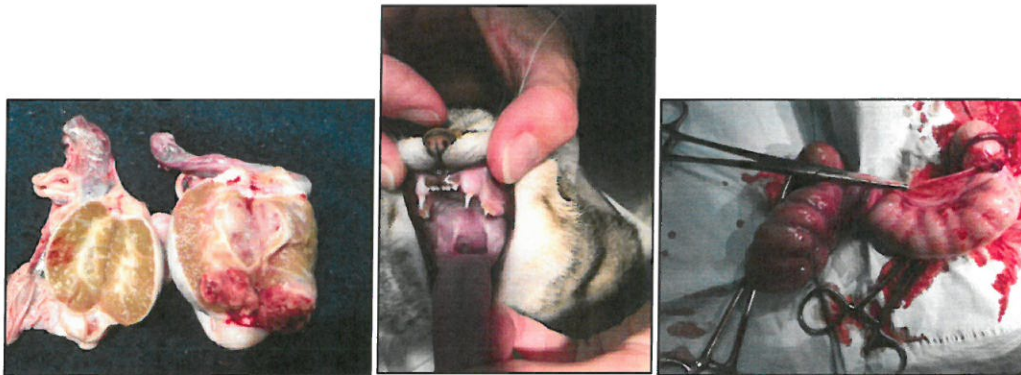
County: Anne Arundel County

Number of Cats Spayed:	46	Number of Dogs Spayed:	43
Number of Cats Neutered:	28	Number of Dogs Neutered:	34

Amount Received: \$9,950.00	Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): 0.00
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### Project Synopsis:

The project targeted animals that we believed to be at risk of coming to the shelter or that could have increased intake at the shelter based on factors relating to the animal or owner. The goal was to spay and neuter 150 animals, thereby reducing sheltering intake/euthanasia.



### Project Description:

Anne Arundel County Animal Control is a municipal shelter located at 411 Maxwell Frye Rd. in Millersville MD. Our Agency is responsible for the enforcement of animal laws, the welfare of animals and the sheltering of homeless animals. We take in approximately 5,000 live cats/dogs each year.

Our period of performance was November 1, 2016 - October 31, 2017. We targeted pets known to us to be at risk by either their zip-code (our highest areas of animal intake) or those already having interactions with our shelter and/or our staff in the field. Our enforcement is complaint based, so our field staff's interactions with the public are generally about animals of concern, most commonly because they are at large (roaming freely and able to reproduce) or because of the number of animals or offensive smell from the animals at a location. At the shelter, our intake of animals is either animals found by citizens roaming at large or pets that for some reason owners say they no longer can keep. All of these animals are either at risk of entering the shelter themselves, have offspring who are entering or at risk of entering the shelter or animals that have entered the shelter but are being reclaimed by owners.

The project was/is still greatly needed because even with our active adoption programs and our programs to reunite lost pets with owners we are still having to euthanize animals at our shelter. Our hope is to keep animals in their homes, prevent animals known to run at large from reproducing and decrease our intake by preventing reproduction in situations where we knew animals were likely to reproduce and owners didn't have the means to prevent it.



We did not need to perform any outreach/advertising for our program because the animals/people we planned to assist were individuals we already were in contact with.

We know 44 of the pets spayed/neutered with these funds were pets that were kept instead of surrendered due to this program. We know we prevented litters from being born. At least 47 animals were animals that were at risk by situation of producing litters, pregnant or had already produced litters that were surrendered to the shelter; they now cannot reproduce and remained in their home rather than coming into the shelter. We know 37 animals that were found roaming the community and potentially reproducing because they were not altered now are unable to reproduce due to this grant. It is our hope that this will also reduce their urge to roam and keep them safer. Of the 151 animals spayed/neutered, 22 were referrals from our Animal Control officers in the field. In many of these cases, the ACOs were encountering situations where individuals were overwhelmed by the number of animals in their care. In addition to spaying/neutering multiple animals to prevent things from becoming out of control again, we also took in animals to get their numbers down to a legal/more manageable number.

### **Summary of Approach:**

Our Agency targeted the owners of pets that we believed were an immediate/direct risk of adding to the intake at our shelter. Our goal was to keep pets in their homes, prevent litters, reduce animals' tendency to roam and help the low income members of our community take advantage of these services. We did not need to advertise because we focused on people we already had contact with.

We received funding in November of 2016. We completed a staff training on October 6, 2017 going over the details of qualifying, the paperwork and the general process so staff would be aware of what was expected of them and who was eligible. Staff were trained to ask individuals reclaiming pets if they were interested in spay/neuter and if so, to offer the low-cost option first. If they weren't interested in low cost, they were offered free. Our incoming animal staff were prepared to offer low cost or free spay/neuter to people bringing in pets if it would mean they would keep the pets and/or if they were surrendering litters so we hopefully wouldn't see them return with more litters. Our Animal Control officers always were thinking about the option of low cost or free spay/neuter when they assisted citizens with pets that were at risk of surrender or reproducing. We did periodic reminders throughout the project to make sure staff was informed.

We had no shortage of interested people. In fact, we had some people who heard we had received funding, contacted us but because they didn't meet our qualifications for referral could not be assisted. These individuals we tried to refer to other programs or local low cost spay/neuter. We scheduled surgeries as soon as possible after application. We did experience some no-shows (8 in total), but the bulk of the scheduled surgeries arrived as planned or re-scheduled in advance.

### **Accomplishments:**

We were able to meet our goal total number of 150 surgeries (we did 151). The breakdown of cats/dogs was different than expected, which meant to meet the goal number from the initial project proposal we had to approach a co-sponsor to provide more funding than initially planned. The co-sponsor, Friends of Anne Arundel County Animal Control, ended up paying for 23 surgeries because we had completed more dog surgeries than initially anticipated and dog surgeries cost more money. We wanted to ensure we still met our goal number of surgeries and thankfully Friends of AACAC was on board. We know we reduced intake by AT LEAST 44 animals (because these were pets that were going to be surrendered), but we have confidence that because of the other surgeries we performed we reduced intake numbers further by preventing the birth of litters (unfortunately, those numbers are unquantifiable).

From November 2015 through November 2016 Anne Arundel County Animal Control took in 1,979 live dogs and 2,906 live cats. Our grant cycle began in November 2016. From November 2016 to November 2017 we took in 1,936 dogs and 2,870 cats. That is 43 less dogs and 36 less cats taken in during the grant period. We hope this is due to more people keeping their pets and fewer litters being born thanks to this program.



**Lessons Learned:**

We have some work to do on organizing our documentation to hopefully reduce the amount of work required later for accountability. We are using Google Drive spreadsheets for tracking and have adjusted our instructions for staff as well as our organization of information to hopefully help in the next cycle. We had an IT person work on this for the next grant cycle to help with auto calculating to reduce work by hand and hopefully correct inaccuracies.

We had a much more even spread, about 50/50, of dogs/cats receiving surgery through this grant cycle than we anticipated during the application process. We adjusted our next grant application to reflect equal numbers across species and sex.

We had a lot of people who would have qualified based on our financial/location requirements but who didn't meet our options for referral type into the program based on our application. We have added referrals from MDA into our next grant cycle so that we can hopefully help those individuals. We know that any animal reproducing in our jurisdiction can impact our intake/euthanasia rates, even those belonging to individuals we have yet to have contact with.

We were skeptical about how "needy" one individual was, so we adjusted our pet owner application to ensure owners qualified based on two categories instead of just one, and one of those had to be meeting the financial qualifications. We wanted to make sure those receiving assistance were truly in need and not just frugal.

We had, and thankfully had anticipated, numerous medical issues with animals discovered in surgery. Since our preparations included securing funding from Friends of Anne Arundel County to cover the costs of surgical complications, this did not affect our use of MDA grant funds. We encountered animals with pyometra that would have died would it not have been for this program (picture far right above is a uterus with pyometra from an animal belonging to a person on disability); animals with cancer (picture far left shows a normal testicle and a cancerous testicle) and a cat with a polyp that caused difficulty breathing that belongs to a homeless individual in our county. These are just a few of the special circumstances we encountered during this period. The grant funding and funding from other sources made it possible to help all these pets and their owners.

**Attachments:**

List of animals surgery was provided for is attached.

**For More Information Contact:****Name:**

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