



The MD SPCA Free Spay/Neuter Program for Owned Pets

Project #

22-7013

County: Baltimore City

Number of Cats Spayed: 110

Number of Dogs Spayed: 152

Number of Cats Neutered: 190

Number of Dogs Neutered: 148

Amount Received: \$33,000.00

Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): \$0.00

Project Synopsis:

The Maryland SPCA completed 600 grant-funded spay and neuter surgeries for owned pets of residents living in low-income neighborhoods located in the following Baltimore zip codes: 21201, 21202, 21205, 21206, 21213, 21215, 21216, 21217, 21218, 21223, 21224, 21225, 21229, and 21231.



Maryland Department of Agriculture
Spay and Neuter Grants Program



Project Description:

The Maryland SPCA used funding from the Maryland Department of Agriculture to provide free spay and neuter surgeries to qualifying pet owners. “Qualifying pet owners” are defined as those who live in Baltimore zip codes where at least 20% of residents live at or below the state-wide poverty line of \$26,500 for a family of four or \$12,800 for an individual. In 2022, we focused on fourteen zip codes that met this criterion – and represented high intake and euthanasia rates for city shelters.

Summary of Approach:

The MD SPCA makes referrals to our free spay and neuter initiative through our community veterinary clinics – PAW (Prevention and Wellness) Plus – and our pet food pantry, Kibble Connection. Our team then fields phone calls and emails from potential clients requesting information about surgeries and schedules appointments for eligible clients. Eligibility for MDA-funded surgeries is determined using pay stubs or 1040, verifying income or proof of government assistance. We inspect documentation at their appointment. Pets receive a physical exam from the surgery doctor and receive flea treatment and/or rabies vaccination as needed. Surgery doctor conducts spay or neuter surgery, and the pet recovers under the supervision of our technicians. All clients receive discharge instructions, medical records, rabies certificate and tags, and medications. Our team record MDA recipient's data to track grant spend-down. Through this approach, we met our FY22 grant goal of 600 surgeries.

Accomplishments:

With the support of the Maryland Department of Agriculture, we reached the following accomplishments: •Met programmatic goals: We successfully met our proposed grant goal to spay and neuter 600 pets. Overall, we performed 1,125 spay and neuter surgeries in fiscal year 2022 – a 12% increase from fiscal year 2021 – despite staff shortages. •Fully expended grant: We fully expended funding from Maryland Department of Agriculture, and we did so nearly entirely before the fourth quarter.



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Lessons Learned:

This is the second year that our team made spay and neuter referrals through our Paw Plus Clinic events and Kibble Connection events. We believe these referrals – compounded by inflation and the rising cost of pet care – contributed to the surge in awareness of and demand for our free and low-cost spay and neuter program. This increased demand forced us to decrease public surgery numbers temporarily (Q2-3); however, this decrease did not affect us reaching our grant-funded goal. And, as noted above, we saw a 12% year-over-year increase in our surgery numbers. The increasing demand consistently exceeds available funding. Despite supplementing funding from MDA with Spay-it-Forward funds and other small grants, the MD SPCA is unable to fully meet the needs of the public. We are very grateful for the year-over-year increase in support from MDA, and we recognize the need to focus fundraising efforts on supplement MDA support to better meet our community's needs in 2023 and beyond.

For More Information Contact:

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