MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SPAY AND NEUTER GRANTS PROGRAM

2019 INSTRUCTIONS FOR CAPITAL EXPENSE/EQUIPMENT REQUESTS APPLICATIONS

The following information provides important instructions and guidance that apply to Applicants submitting Capital Expense/Equipment Request applications. Please read the Program information under the **gold banners** and the Application-specific information under the **pink banners** thoroughly. A clear understanding of the legislated purpose of the Program, the requirements, and the Program specifics is crucial to a successful application.

The Program has 3 categories of grant applications: Pet-Focused, Feral Cat-Focused, and Capital Expense/Equipment Requests. Each focus has its own application form and focus-specific instructions document.

MAKE SURE you use the correct application form and correct Instructions for your specific category of project before going further.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) is offering grants pursuant to MD. AGRICULTURE Code Ann. § 2-1602 (2013). The law stipulates the purpose of the Program as the following:

"The purpose of the Fund is to reduce animal shelter overpopulation and cat and dog euthanasia rates by financing grants to local governments and animal welfare organizations for programs that most efficiently and effectively facilitate and promote the provision of spay and neuter services for cats and dogs in the State."

THE PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

This is a competitive grants program. Applications are not only judged on their own merits, but also against all other applications.

ELIGIBILITY AND FUNDING CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS
The following list the eligibility criteria that must be met to apply for this grant:

- Municipal or county governments or non-profit animal welfare organizations with tax exempt status under 501 (c)(3) are eligible to apply to facilitate and promote the provision of spay and neuter services for cats and dogs.

- A competitive grant proposal (quoting Agriculture Article, §2-1602, Annotated Code of Maryland):

  1. Shall target low–income communities and populations to the maximum extent possible and detail how that goal is to be accomplished;

  2. May target feral cat populations if MDA determines that this targeting does not violate local law;

  3. Shall efficiently and effectively facilitate and promote and increase the provision of spay and neuter services for cats and dogs; and

  4. May include public education and outreach components.

- Grant projects must meet the purpose of the Fund. Grant projects that most effectively and efficiently facilitate, promote and increase spay and neuter services for cats and dogs in Maryland will be given priority.

Applicants must comply with all other statutory and regulatory requirements pertaining to the Maryland Spay and Neuter Grants Program. Applicants should familiarize themselves with those provisions of the Maryland Code. **Program Regulations** Link.

The Program does not provide support to organizations that have lost their IRS tax-exempt status, have unusually high administrative expenses, or show indicators of financial mismanagement. Applicant organizations must be in compliance with the state by submitting the Annual Report and Personal Property Return with the State of Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation-Personal Properties Division (see the Program webpage for more information and a copy of the form required).

MAKE SURE your organization is in good standing with the IRS and the State of Maryland before starting your application.

As of April 2016, county or municipal animal control facilities, organizations that are contracted by a county or municipality to provide animal control, or any organization that shelters animals and receives funds from the Program must meet the requirements of Sections 2-1701 through 2-1705 of the Agriculture Article of the Code of Maryland. This law requires shelters have available to the public a "written veterinary care protocol" consistent with the Association of Shelter Veterinarians' Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters, as well as a "written protocol for reclaiming animals". A copy of the law, the guidelines and an example of a Standards of Care Plan are posted on the Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners and Spay and Neuter Grants Program webpages on the MDA website: **MDA.maryland.gov.** Applicants with shelters must be in compliance with the law.

The Applicant and personnel described in the application must have the qualifications and resources necessary to perform and complete the project proposal.

Applicants must complete and submit the grant application, with any required accompanied documents as specified in these Instructions and on the application forms, by close of business (before 5:01 PM EST) on or before the posted grant deadline as it appears on the Request for Proposals (RFP) and on the Program webpage: **Maryland Spay and Neuter Grant Program**.

Applicants must only propose projects that **result in a net increase in spay and neuter procedures** above the level of service they normally provide or accomplish. These funds cannot be used to maintain the organization's status quo or replace other funds.

Applicants and their organizations should have no history (within the last 3 years) of violations or fines with Maryland Animal Control authorities or the Maryland Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners. Any history of violations may be a basis for denying funding. If prior violations exist, the Applicant must provide a thorough explanation in the application of the violation and how it has been rectified.

As part of the Program legislation, MDA is required to collect quarterly shelter survey data from all county shelters. This data is used to track the impact the Program has on intake and euthanasia numbers over time. Applicants should be aware that if awarded a grant, organizations with private shelters must submit quarterly shelter survey data to MDA until the Program sunset in 2022.

OBTAINING AND SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

A Request for Proposals (RFP) will be posted on the Program webpage at **Maryland Spay and Neuter Grants Program**, Governor's Grant Office-Maryland Grant Opportunities site at grants.maryland.gov and announced on the MDA website and social media sites.

The applications are downloadable fillable WORD forms that must be filled out in full and submitted to MDA in the original WORD format by close of business (5:00 PM EST) on or before the proposal deadline, as stated in the RFP. Accompanied documents may be in WORD, PDF or other commonly supported formats.

The application forms (along with Instruction documents and other supplemental materials) are available on the Maryland Spay and Neuter Grants Program webpage. Download the appropriate document and enter the information requested. Please be as concise as possible, but without sacrificing essential detail. Please check for spelling errors, math errors or inconsistencies, and missing information. Save your completed form on your computer as the Program does not have an online grants application database. Be sure to fill out the entire application form. **All fields are mandatory**. If an Applicant feels a field does not apply, the Applicant must indicate this by entering "N/A". Blank fields may be interpreted as incomplete. **Incomplete applications will not be eligible for review.**

In addition to the completed application form, Applicants for Capital Expense/Equipment Request must provide at least the following:

- **Tax Information**: For non-government Applicants: a copy of most recent 990 Form (if required) or other appropriate tax form confirming tax exempt status and proof of registration with State of Maryland is required, as detailed in the *Eligibility and Funding Criteria and Requirements* section above.
- **Map(s)** of the target area.
- **Price Quotes** for budget items (excluding veterinary services and rabies vaccine) over $500.00.
- **Business Plan.**

Applications are submitted by email with the completed form and any additional pages or documents as attachments, to **mda.spayandneuter@maryland.gov**. Applications must be sent to this email address to be considered. The time and date MDA receives this email will be considered the official submittal date and time of the application. Applicants will receive a notice from the system confirming the receipt of the email with attachments.

Applications submitted to any other email address (including that of the Program Coordinator), faxed, or mailed will not be accepted.

Once received by MDA, no changes or updates may be made to the application and no additional information may be added, except at MDA's request or with MDA's approval. Applicants may only request a submitted application be withdrawn.

BUDGET BASICS

The minimum amount that can be requested for Capital Expense requests is over $5,000.00

There is no maximum grant cap at this time. However, please be aware that the overall Program budget is limited each year and the total request for grants always exceeds available funds. MDA strives to maximize these funds to the greatest extent possible by funding (to the extent possible) those projects that can most efficiently and effectively achieve the purposes of the Program throughout the State. We caution against asking for a substantial percentage of the total Program budget.

> *PLEASE REVIEW the RFP to see the projected overall Program budget for the cycle and take that into consideration when developing your budget.*

Also, consider the amount of funds requested relative to your organization's current operating budget and capacity. Applications should clearly establish an organization's capacity to undertake a project and the ability to handle increased staffing and resource needs associated with the project.

Budget items must be detailed. Additional information is included in the budget section of the application-specific information to follow.

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

The following are items or services that may be paid for with grant dollars. If there is an expense that an Applicant wishes to add but does not see here or under the Prohibited Expenses, contact the Program Coordinator for guidance and advice. Here are expenses that the Program considers allowable expenses.

CAPITAL EXPENSE ALLOWABLE EXPENSES:

- Durable surgical equipment for outfitting a new low cost spay/neuter clinic or the expansion of services at an existing low cost spay/neuter clinic.
- Durable surgical equipment to retrofit a vehicle to serve as a mobile low-cost spay/neuter clinic.
- Purchase of a new or used equipped mobile clinic to be used as a low-cost spay/neuter clinic. (See Section C-2 below for more information on mobile clinics.)
- Purchase of upgraded equipment if the proposed upgrade will substantially increase surgical capacity.
- Medical supplies needed to operate a new clinic for the first 3 months.
- High Volume/High Quality Spay Neuter Surgical Training in connection with a new or expanded clinic. (See the Specific Instructions Section below for more on this topic.)

> *FIRST COORDINATE with the Humane Alliance to determine which type of HQ/HV training is best suited for your organization and provide a statement from the Humane Alliance documenting the coordination and explaining the choice of training.*

OTHER ALLOWABLE EXPENSES THAT PERTAIN TO PET- OR FERAL CAT–FOCUSED APPLICATIONS:

In addition to the above, Pet and Feral Cat applications may also apply grant dollars to veterinary services costs, rabies vaccines, transportation assistance, outreach/transportation/scheduling coordinator, marketing/outreach costs, and limited surgical equipment. For a full discussion of these items please refer to the Instructions for Pet-Focused or Feral Cat-Focus applications.

PROHIBITED EXPENSES

The following are items that, while they may have value, are either not necessarily a good allocation of the limited Program funds, or are deemed counter to the policies of the Program and will not be considered.

Items not fundable on a Capital Expense Application include:

- Equipment for clinics not yet constructed or currently just under construction.
- Office equipment, office supplies, computers, and anything else not required to perform spay/neuter procedures.
- Leases or rentals.
- Building construction and building leases or other capital campaign expenditures.
- Reimbursements for equipment already purchased.
- Cost of replacement of old equipment (unless an upgrade will increase capacity).
- Other vehicles.
- Equipment primarily for sheltering animals or maintaining feral colonies after spay or neutering.
- Personnel costs and salaries for staff.

In addition to the above, the following are expenses prohibited for any grant regardless of the category:

- Co-pays.
- Other Procedures.
- Contingency Funds.
- Giveaways (such as promotional items other than pamphlets, postcards and other educational materials).

- Flea treatments, de-worming, ear-cleaning, bathing, e-collars, and microchipping (unless part of a surgical package).
- Vaccines (other than rabies), blood tests and other tests.
- County pet licenses.
- Education curriculum development.
- Conference attendance costs.

Applicants who have these types of items as part of their project should find ways to fund them through other sources and can list such items in the "Cost-Sharing and In-Kind Contributions" section of the application (provided they are related to the project and Program purpose).

> *STILL NOT SURE if something is allowable? Think something should be considered or reconsidered?*
> *Contact the Program Coordinator for guidance.*

REVIEW AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS

The grant review process from the submittal deadline to notification of approval or denial is usually takes 3 to 4 months. During this time, MDA conducts a Due Diligence check on all Applicants to confirm eligibility, tax status, standing of project veterinarians and clinics with MDA Vet Board, standing with local animal control agencies, and standing with the IRS and the State of Maryland. The Advisory Board, with input from the Program Coordinator, reviews and evaluates each grant application **competitively** in relation to all applications, with focus on how well the application meets Program requirements and goals, the potential beneficial and measurable impact on shelter intake and euthanasia rates, Applicant experience and capacity, and cost effectiveness of the proposed effort with respect to Program purpose. The Advisory Board then submits their funding recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Secretary ultimately decides on the final disposition of all applications.

All Applicants (whether approved for funding by the Secretary or turned down by the Secretary) are notified by email as promptly as possible after the Secretary's final funding decision. Emails to Applicants approved for funding will include any changes in scope or budget MDA wishes to implement. At that time the Applicant must notify MDA if they accept the changes and wish to accept the grant, as modified or wish to decline. Emails to Applicants not approved for funding will include reasons for being turned down with any recommendations for future submissions.

MDA sends out grant agreements to recipients usually within 30 days following approval. MDA will notify the recipients by email when the grant agreements have been mailed out. Grant recipients must return their signed agreements to MDA (by mail or delivery only) within 30 days after this notification**.** Recipients must not commit any funds until the grant agreement has been fully signed by both MDA and the recipient, and the recipient has received their signed copy back**.**

If the grant agreement is not returned to MDA within required time, MDA may choose to withdraw the grant offer and reallocate the funds.

> *REVIEW the grant agreement example that appends the posted RFP and make sure your organization's officers (including any legal staff) are aware of the agreement terms and the 30 day limit for signing and returning the agreement to MDA.*

SOME COMMON REASONS APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN TURNED DOWN OR REDUCED IN RANK

The most common reason for an application to be turned down is simply lack of available Program funds. Applicants should keep in mind that this is a competitive grants program with a limited annual budget. Unfortunately for this reason it is quite possible that good applications could still be turned down simply due to lack of Program funds.

However, there are some other reasons (often avoidable) that resulted some applications being turned down or adversely affected an application's overall ranking and funding level.

AVOID THESE SITUATIONS

Sloppy Numbers: Math errors or inconsistencies in budget items, cost of surgeries, or other areas in the application may be perceived as a tendency towards carelessness and hinders the review process. **This is the most commonly made error to date and tolerance for this has been exhausted.** Applicants should be aware that carelessness of this nature **will adversely** affect an application's ranking.

Disregarding the Program Instructions and Resources: MDA considers reviewing (and adhering to) the Program's instruction documents as part of the application process and are NOT steps to be skipped or ignored.

It is obvious to MDA and the Advisory Board during the review process, when an Applicant has not read or followed the instructions by what is included or omitted from their submission. The Program has gone to great lengths to provide comprehensive instruction that clearly spells out the purpose of the Program, what is fundable, required information, specific caps on some costs, and prohibited items and activities. Additionally the Program Coordinator is available to answer any questions and offer guidance and clarification. A reduction in ranking has resulted for applications where it is obvious that the instruction documents and help were disregarded or not utilized.

Incomplete Application or Incorrect Format: All application fields MUST be filled in and returned to MDA in the required format as stated in the Program and application instructions. Each section must be filled out or given an "N/A" if not applicable with a reason, if necessary, for the N/A. An incomplete application will not pass the Due Diligence stage and be removed from further consideration. Providing an application and its documents in an incorrect format greatly hinders all the many subsequent steps MDA must take in processing the application for the review phase.

Fines and Violations: Applicants with a history of violations with local animal control agencies may be considered ineligible if any history is not addressed in the application, not truthfully indicated in Section A of the application, or is not yet resolved to the satisfaction of the Animal Control Authority.

Lack of Clarity or Details: Applications that, by the use of emotional or vague language and lack of specific information, do not clearly convey a specific purpose for their proposed project as it relates to the goals of the Program will be reduced in ranking. Applicants must provide adequate explanation, information, or shelter data necessary for determining the extent to which it will impact shelter intake and euthanasia are reduced in rank.

Limited Ability: An application that fails to establish Applicant's ability to complete the project will be reduced in rank and most likely turned down.

Poor Presentation: An application that is vague or incomprehensible, or contains highly emotional language or excessive errors will be reduced in rank. Errors can be perceived as a lack of attention to detail. Also, errors (such as misspellings, incomplete sentences, outdated boilerplate or cut and paste, etc.) and putting information in the wrong section of the application greatly hinders the review process.

Irrelevant Information: Applicants providing too much information that is irrelevant to the task proposed can frustrate, stall, and muddle the review process.

Does Not Increase Capacity: An application's review and rank will be affected if the application does not clearly demonstrate that the funds would be used to increase their capacity (I.e.: does not show a net increase in sterilizations above what they normally do).

Poorly or Unjustified Budget Items: Poorly described or unjustified budget items result in many questions during the review process and can lead to cuts of budget items and may also contribute to a reduction in the application ranking.

Coordination Not Discussed: Applications that fail to demonstrate any attempt to coordinate with animal control and/or correlation between their project and the intake and euthanasia data from the county shelter will result in a turn down.

Too Few Spay/Neuters for Overall Budget: The bulk of a proposed project's funds should go toward sterilization procedures. If an application does not and is not well justified, then the application is likely to be reduced in ranking.

Poor Performance History: Applicants with a poor performance on previously funded projects (such as late reporting, unresponsive to requests from MDA, unapproved changes in project scope and expenditures of funds, failure to reach target number of animals without discussion with the Program Coordinator as to reason, etc.) will be considered during the review process and could affect ranking.

Duplication: If an application appears to duplicate an existing effort without explanation or justification, it is likely to be turned down.

Using Outdated Boiler Plate or Cut and Paste: Applications that contain old text cut from previous submissions or other sources may be reduced in rank by causing confusion during the review process and a lack of confidence in the applicant's attention to detail.

Late or Partial Submissions: Late submissions are not allowed and any application time-stamped after the submittal deadline will not be reviewed. Applications submitted on time but missing substantial required supplemental material may result in a turn down.

Failure to Address MDA's Prior Requests or Recommendations: MDA keeps track of all applications, past and present. In turn down notices, MDA provides recommendations if an application was deficient in some way and what should be addressed if the Applicant reapplies. Failure to demonstrate that the Applicant has addressed MDA's previous recommendations is noted during the review process and will impact the ranking of the application.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR CAPITAL EXPENSE/EQUIPMENT REQUEST APPLICATIONS

The following details each section that must be filled out in order for the application to be considered complete and qualify for review. Before proceeding please review the following carefully.

ALL SECTIONS ARE IMPORTANT-BE CAREFUL OF BLANKS AND USING SHORTCUTS

A great deal of thought and work has been put towards the development of each application form and its requirements in order to provide MDA and the Advisory Board with the specific information needed to make the best possible, most effective and responsible funding choices. Therefore Applicants should know that **all sections and information requests are there for a reason and are important**. Do not gloss over any section and avoid blanks. If a part does not apply indicate this with an N/A (and explain why if instructed to).

Regardless of whether an Applicant has received funding in the past, each application must be filled out completely, as if a new effort. If the Applicant has received previous funding from this program and is applying for funds to continue or expand on a past effort, **DO NOT** refer to a previous application as a way to address a section. For example, addressing a section with a statement such as "*our work plan will follow that stated in our FY18 project*" is not sufficient and may even be considered as a failure to address the information request and can adversely affect the review and ranking of the application or even result in application being categorized as "incomplete".

Likewise Applicants **must not** use a web link or require visiting a website as a way of responding to an application section (example: "*We use standard methods as detailed on our webpage: www….*"). The Program does not accept information such as websites or links as part of an application and the Advisory Board will not visit web addresses or links during their review and evaluation.

SUBSTANCE AND PRESENTATION MATTER

Attention to detail is important, both in substance and presentation. Errors (misspellings, incorrect math, incomplete sentences, etc.) can hinder the review process, be interpreted as a lack of attention to detail, and leave the Advisory Board with doubt about the Applicant's abilities and level of commitment to the proposed project.

The application forms do not have spell check capabilities. We strongly recommend that before entering text that Applicants first compose the text in a separate document and perform a spell check and grammar check, correct the errors and then copy the text into the form. We also strongly recommend that Applicants (or another person) re-read the applications to look for any lingering errors or confusing text before submitting.

Some Applicants find that reusing text from a previous submission or boilerplate is a time saver. However, caution should be exercised when doing this. Make sure the information is up-to-date, pertinent, and addresses the information requirements of the current application and instructions. Far too often reused text has been found to contain out of date information or errors that lead to confusion and frustration during the review process.

The Applicant bears the responsibility to make sure ALL information is correct and error-free and must bear the consequences if it is not. It is not up to MDA or the Advisory Board to seek clarification and corrections in these instances, and could ultimately affect the ranking of the application.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR CAPITAL EXPENSE APPLICATIONS:

Because Capital Expense request can often represent a substantial amount of Program funds for equipment with lasting utility and value, there are some additional requirements that an Applicant should note.

Equipment requests will only be considered if the intended clinic ready or near ready for operation, and will be ready for operation once surgical equipment is obtained. Clinics still in the construction stage will not be considered.

Capital Expense/Equipment Requests must result in an increase of no/low cost spay and neuter services to low-income communities or feral cats, and must result in a reduction in shelter intake and euthanasia consistent with the purpose of the Program. It is imperative that any Capital Expense/Equipment Request demonstrates the request will be an effective and efficient use of the Program funds, with well-defined targets and goals, and supported by a strong business plan with adequate financial data. As a way to demonstrate this, Applicants must make a 5-year commitment to provide low/no cost service for their target area. See Section E-2 below for more details about this requirement.

A new or expanded clinic funded with the Program dollars must be used primarily for the spay/neuter of pets of low income Marylanders and feral cats. .

All capital expense projects must also provide a Business Plan (with an Operation and Maintenance Plan section, if proposing funds for a mobile clinic), and quarterly reporting until the end period of their grant.

A. PROPOSAL ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

This section provides not only information needed to administer the grant if funded, but also includes important information that is necessary for the Due Diligence portion of the review and the review itself. If this information is missing, inaccurate or not current, this may be a basis for removing the application from further review.

The total budget request must be greater than $5,000. Equipment requests $5,000 or less should be part of a pet or feral cat-focused application.

B. POINT OF CONTACT AND ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Information in this section provides necessary administrative information should the application be funded. However, information here about the applying organization is also important to the review process and will be factored into the review and ranking of the application.

POINT OF CONTACT
Applicants must provide a name and contact information of the individual who will serve as the overall project manager and Point of Contact (POC) for all matters relating to the project. The POC must be available to not only MDA and respond to MDA requests throughout the project life, but to the public with regards to questions pertaining to the project. The POC needs to provide an email and/or phone number that can be made public.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION
It is important to the evaluation process for the Advisory Board to understand the capacity of the applying organization to perform the work proposed. The number of personnel (both paid staff and volunteers), annual operating budget and number of procedures done in past years are all indications of capacity. This information is used to not only help determine if an application will be recommended for funding but also at what level. It is the Program's goal that all funded Applicants, both large and small, have obtainable goals and succeed.

A concise description of the applying organization is needed in this evaluation. When an organization was established, where the organization has worked and the type of services provided in the past is helpful to the capacity evaluation. **Do not include non-pertinent information.** An applying government agency or organization that provides more services beyond animal welfare services should not expend critical application space detailing work, budget and resources that will not apply to this application.

The number of surgeries that an Applicant's organization has provided or facilitated is also important. This Program wants to see an overall increase in surgeries over time, especially if an Applicant has received any MDA grants in the past. Program funds are intended to increase surgeries, not fund surgeries that would otherwise be done with existing operating budget allocated to this purpose.

If the number surgeries provided annually have decreased, it is important to explain why there is a decrease.

APPLICATION CATEGORIES, NUMBER, AND TYPES

There are 3 categories of applications, based on the focus: Pet-Focused, Feral Cat-Focused and Capital Expenses/Equipment Requests.

> *DON'T MIX the categories! For Example: An application cannot include both feral cats and capital expense requests (over $5,000) in the same application form.*

Generally, the Program encourages Applicants to limit their submissions to one, although multiple applications are permitted. Because there is limited time to submit an application and limited funds available, it is often the best strategy to devote time and resources to preparing one really tight, well thought out and well-presented application rather than two that may be more rushed, less thorough and therefore, less compelling.

✦ *Multiple Applications:*

If one chooses to submit more than one application, separate category-appropriate application forms with appropriate supporting documents are required for each proposal. Each submission must be complete and stand alone. Applicants cannot submit one set of supplemental materials expect the Program to apply it to both.

If submitting two applications, the Applicant must provide sufficient evidence of the qualifications, personnel, experience, and resources that would be necessary to perform and complete all work proposed in each application as well as all the applications combined. Failure to do so will result in both applications being downgraded. Do not submit multiple applications in a single grant cycle unless your organization is clearly able to establish it has the capacity to perform all of the proposed projects at the same time.

If submitting two applications, the Applicant must indicate whether the applications are dependent or independent of each other. For example, if you are applying for funding for an equipment request as well as and pet project, please explain whether you would be able to move forward with the pet project if the equipment grant is not funded. If you are relying on MDA funding for **both applications** in order to proceed, you must clearly explain and justify this in BOTH applications.

Organizations submitting two applications **must indicate which application has the highest priority**, if the Program decides to only fund one. If your project proposals are dependent on each other and one of the projects is not funded, neither project will be funded regardless of ranking.

✦ *Joint Applications:*

Joint applications are those projects where 2 or more organizations will work together on the same project **and** both utilize the funds (as opposed to a partnership where another organization may offer assistance in some way but not receive any of the funds). In this case, a LEAD organization must be specified in the application. If funded, the Lead will receive the funds and will have the responsibility of allocating funds to the secondary organization. All joint applicants must provide information for Sections A-Proposal Administration Information and Section B-Point of Contact & Organization Information for all organizations, listing the LEAD first. If funded, all organizations must be signatories on the Grant Agreement.

✦ *Applications Dependent on Other Grants:*

If the tasks detailed in the application are contingent on receipt of another grant or grants from another source, this must be disclosed and a detailed discussion of the terms of the other grant(s) must be included on the application in the **Matching Grants/Funding** section, together with copies of any other grant application or agreement. If another grant is dependent/contingent on Applicant receiving the MDA grant, this must be clearly stated, and a detailed explanation provided on how the 2 grants relate to each other and the overall project proposal.

C. PROJECT DETAILS

The Project Details Section and all the subsections it contains serve to give a clear and detailed picture of what exactly an Applicant is proposing to accomplish with the funds.

C-1-THE PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The period of performance is the length of time the capital expense will be used to provide no cost/low cost procedures for pets of low income Marylanders and feral cats under the grant. The period of performance for all capital expense grants is a minimum of five years. The start date is month/year of the acquisition of the capital expense item(s), and the next 4 years should entail the use of the equipment and the fulfillment of the Commitment to Provide Services requirement (detailed in Section E-2).

C-2- EXPENSE TYPE

In this section the Applicant must identify the type of expense by checking the appropriate box and then describing the nature of the request. Examples of some request types can include durable medical equipment and expendable medical supplies (allowable only for the first 3 months of operation) for a new or expansions of an existing clinic, equipment for retrofitting a van or RV to serve as a mobile clinic, a new or used mobile clinic, etc.

This section should be brief: one or two paragraphs that summarize your intent. More specific details are asked for in other sections of the application form.

While applications for mobile clinics will be considered, because these can represent a sizable commitment of Program dollars, it is important that Applicants explore all options available, such as considering whether to purchase a new or used vehicle or retrofit a vehicle the organization already has. Finding ways to cost-share the project, including working with partner organizations and other grant opportunities, could make your application stronger.

For those considering a mobile clinic, helpful information s found in The Guidebook to Mobile Spay/Neuter Clinics (from SpayUSA.org.) a compilation of information, reports, flyers and other materials from programs from across the country. http://www.spayusa.org/assets/pdfs/guidebook-mobile-spay-neuter-clinics.pdf

C-3-STATE OF READINESS

The Program wishes to avoid awarding funds that are not immediately put to use and benefit. In this Section, the Applicant seeking funds to expand an existing clinic must confirm that if awarded funds, that the clinic or space intended for the requested equipment is ready for the immediate installation.

Applicants seeking funds for equipment of a new clinic need to discuss at what stage they are in any construction phase and permitting. Since securing a veterinarian is particularly challenging in many cases, Applicants should discuss their staffing efforts.

D. NEED FOR REQUEST

In this section the Applicant must identify their request by clicking the appropriate box in subsection A, B, or C and then provide the appropriate text that describes the need for this cost. Check and fill in only the section that applies to your specific request. Your discussion of need in your target area (the area where you plan to provide or currently provide service and how your service area may possibly expand if funded) should include the demographics (and how it relates to the Program's mandate to serve low income pet-owners and feral cats), the currently available resources (or lack thereof), and a discussion of the shelter statistics.

Applicants should include an estimate of the unaltered pets or feral cats in their target area. This provides useful information to demonstrate need and justify the request for funding.

Applicants should estimate the unaltered pets in their targeted area by using the **Pet Estimate Tool**, available on the Program webpage (MD Spay and Neuter Grants Program link) under the Application Materials Section. Please follow the instructions to this easy to fill-out tool provided in Excel and provide a legible printout of your

calculation with your application. Please remember, <u>this tool is based on a few parameters</u>. If after filling out the tool, you feel the numbers don't reflect the true conditions of your target area (based on other data, personal experience, demographic specifics the tool may not take into account, etc.), it is important to detail this on the tool page in the space provided.

To estimate feral cats, MDA recognizes that due to the fluidity of cat populations, in many cases this can only be a very rough estimate. There are several ways to do get a rough estimate:

- **Nose Count**: Though not 100% exact, an actual census or "nose-count" colony by colony within the target is the best. However this is not always possible. If the large size of a project makes a census impractical, an Applicant may provide a rough estimate of the numbers.

- **PetSmart Charities Estimation Formula:** This formula calls for simply taking the human population in the target area and dividing by 15.

  However, the "divide by 15" is only a starting point, not an end point. The size of free-roaming cat population may vary according to local conditions. For example, in dense urban areas or areas where prior TNR work took place, there will be fewer cats per capita and so you will want to take the estimate and reduce it down. Conversely if the target area is largely rural, the estimate should be increased. How much of a decrease or increase is up to the Applicant and their knowledge of the conditions.

- **Million Cat Challenge.org Estimation Tool:** This tool uses population data, along with shelter intake and euthanasia data to estimate feral cat numbers. <u>Outdoor Cat Population Calculator</u> As with the "Divide by 15" this can only give a rough estimate and does not take into account local conditions. The Applicant should take this number and then adjust up or down depending on their knowledge of the conditions of the target area.

Applicants, regardless of type of request, must include **a Map**, delineating where service will be, or currently is offered. The map should be on a separate document and included with the completed application form. This can be a PDF with the area indicated by a hand-drawn or computer generated polygon.

D-1-A-EQUIPMENT FOR EXPANSION OF EXISTING CLINICS

Applicants must clearly demonstrate a need for additional low-cost spay neuter services in the target area. They should also discuss how many no/low cost procedures they have performed for the last 3 years, any backlog and wait time they currently have, and how the requested equipment will help to address the need.

D-1-B-EQUIPMENT FOR NEW CLINICS (STATIONARY OR MOBILE)

Applicants must clearly demonstrate the need for additional low-cost spay neuter services in the target area. Applicants should discuss the present availability of no cost/low cost spay and neuter facilities and services in the target area, and provide an assessment of currently available services and the need for additional services in the target area. Identify existing low-cost clinics and providers, and discuss the proximity of these existing clinics to the targeted low income populations and feral colonies. To the extent possible, applicants should discuss the backlog or wait period of those clinics in the area, if any, to demonstrate the need for additional spay/neuter services. Applicants should coordinate with local Animal Control and shelters to verify that additional low-cost services are needed and the areas of most need.

Applicants must demonstrate a need for additional spay/neuter services in the target area that is not being met and how this impacts shelter intake and euthanasia numbers.

D-1-C-OTHER

The Program encourages innovation. If you have a concept for providing spay and neuter to pets and/or feral cats that require equipment but don't exactly fit under D-1-A or D-1-B above, discuss it here. Use the guidance in the previous paragraphs above as guides to the information that should be discussed.

D-2-REVELANT DATA

It is required that Applicants provide statistics from the shelter or shelters in their target areas. Statistics on a county level are a must. Statistics drilled down to a more specific area (if this is doable by the shelter) is most desirable and helps the Applicant justify the need even more. Organizations that also collect their own can discuss it here. This information helps in the Need for Request Section and the Expected Benefits Section and should be part of both discussions.

Shelter Statistics are Public Information and is obtainable from the county shelters upon request.

> *YOU CAN obtain Quarterly Shelter Survey data sheets from MDA by emailing the Program Coordinator as a "Public Information Request", specifying from what facility(ies) and time periods the information should cover.*
>
> *Caveat: Only county level data is available from MDA. Any information drilled down to a more specific level must be sought by the shelter.*

It is understood that some counties do not collect data on cats, may not have county shelters, and rely on private organizations to provide animal sheltering. In cases such as this it is recommended Applicant query these private organizations for information and adjacent counties be contacted to determine if cats from the target area or county end up in other county shelters. If this is the case please provide their shelter data with estimates or numbers of how many of these cats are from the Applicant's target area.

Applicants should also consider asking Animal Control Departments for any statistics pertaining to the number and location of citizen complaints about cats/dogs and cat/dog road kills, both of which can help identify problem areas that can be proposed as target areas.

E. EXPECTED BENEFITS FROM REQUEST AND COMMITMENT

E-1-EXEPCED BENEFITS

The Expected Benefits is a way to measure the success of your project and how your project helps meet the goal of the Program: to reduce intake and euthanasia in Maryland shelters. It is important that benefits be quantified to the extent possible.

Discuss the overall increase of services that are needed in the target area in terms of how the proposal will increase your capacity and efficiency, and the provision of spay/neuter services to low income Maryland pet owners and/or feral cats. Explain and identify to what degree you expect this project to impact intake and euthanasia at shelters in your target area. To what extent will this increase your capacity? Your annual spay/neuter numbers? Your efficiency? Your service area? To what extent will this address the identified community needs for low-cost/no-cost services?

Discuss coordination efforts with local shelters and animal control agencies to confirm that the target area is a source of intake for the shelter, and explain how the project is expected to impact shelter numbers. Applicants must attempt to coordinate with Animal Control and attempt to obtain a letter of support confirming the project is expected to decrease shelter intake and euthanasia. If, despite your efforts, you are unable to coordinate with Animal Control or obtain a letter of support from Animal Control, please detail your attempts to coordinate and provide your own analysis of the impact of the project on shelter intake and euthanasia based on the available data. If your project would benefit shelters in other counties, include them in both Section D-1 and D-2 also.

E-2-A-COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE SERVICE

Capital expense items are often expensive durable items that have a use and value well beyond the funding year. In order to justify allocating funds for clinics or mobile clinics, Applicants must commit to provide a minimum of 3,000 low cost/no cost procedures over the first 2 years of operation (year 1 and 2 of the period of performance) and at least 3,000 low cost/no cost procedures every year thereafter until the completion of their period of performance (i.e. years 3, 4 and 5).

E-2-B-MEANS TEST

When committing to provide service to Low Income pet owners, the applicant must state what their criteria will be for the service and how they will verify that the criteria are met. The Means Test is made up of 2 parts: 1- what are the requirements that must be met by the pet owner, and 2- how the applicant will verify those requirements, should they be funded. If funded the Means Test will become part of the application you develop for your S/N clients if your proposed project gets funded.

HERE ARE 3 APPROACHES TO VERIFYING THAT THE FINANCIAL PART OF THE MEANS CRITERIA IS MET

By proof receiving government assistance:
Eligibility may be determined if an applicant is receiving assistance, such a WIC and therefore by meeting their standards, have met those of this program. Pet owners may provide proof of assistance such as a WIC card, food stamps card, proof of unemployment benefits, or other government assistance.

By proof of household income:
Pet owners must show proof of annual income (most recent 1040 or pay stubs from past 2 pay periods) that is qualifies as "low income" or below 200% of poverty level.

By proof of residence in low income target area:

If the whole target area where you propose to work is a low income community, and you do not plan to screen individual Applicants as long as they live in the target area (i.e., proof of residence in the low income area will be your means testing), please explain how you have determined your entire target area to be low income.

You must provide reliable demographic data (not anecdotal) and explain in detail how the data relates to your target area and project. This is not a reliable means test unless a substantial portion of the residents in your target area are low-income households.

<div align="center">SECTION EXAMPLE</div>

Here is an example of a Means Test (numbers used in this example here are not actual rates):

Our criteria for service will be:
The applicant must reside in the 21229 zip code.
The applicant must have an income level of the following or lower:
Single $19,431
Family of 2 $26,191
Family of 3 $32,951
Family of 4 $39,711
Additional Family Members: Add $6,750 per family member to the income threshold listed for a family of 4

We will verify by:

-Proof of residency by inspecting a current driver's license or other government ID card or a copy of most recent utility bill or other government mail to applicant showing address.

-Proof of income bracket by visual verification of most current income tax statement or pay stubs, or by visual verification of receipt of government assistance, unemployment insurance, or disability benefits.

F. QUALIFICATIONS

F-1-SPECIFIC QUALIFICATIONS

Applicants applying for funds for capital expenses should demonstrate to MDA that the Applicant is qualified to make use of the equipment in the request and has the capacity to be self-sustaining for the period of performance (5 years) without additional funding from MDA.

In addition to what has been provided in Section B (and without repeating this information), please discuss your organization's specific capabilities or experience with regards to this proposed capital expense. For instance, if you are applying for equipment for a new clinic, please discuss your prior experience or knowledge with the operation of a clinic. If applying for a mobile clinic, discuss your organization's experience using and maintaining this type of equipment. This discussion need only be several paragraphs with details to be presented in the required Business Plan.

F-2-BUSINESS PLAN

The Business Plan demonstrates to MDA that the Applicant fully understands what is involved in the operation of a clinic and has realistic expectations of what is required. Applicants must provide a Business Plan with detailed financial data for the establishment and the first 12 months of operation of the clinic. Financial estimates for the term of the project (minimum 5 years) must also be provided. This plan should include details about the progress of any building or retrofitting/updating of any existing structures that will house the clinic, including a description of what has been accomplished up to the date of the application, a timeline for completion, and financial details. Buildings and retrofits must be completed prior to releasing any funds for equipment purchase.

WHAT A PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE

The project business plan should include, among other things:

1. A copy or summary of your organizational business plan and mission statement.
2. Project details, work plan, and marketing/outreach plan.
3. A discussion of the proposed target area and why it's in need of additional low cost/no-cost spay neuter services. This must include demographic data (people, dogs, and cats), shelter data for all impacted shelters, and an explanation of how the project is expected to impact shelter intake and euthanasia.
4. Detail how the organization will fund the startup of the new clinic or expansion of existing services, and how the ongoing operation of the clinic will be self-supporting during the 5 year period of performance and beyond the 5-year period of performance if the equipment life span is in excess of 5 years.
5. Provide a clear understanding of the Applicant's current finances, including balance sheet, the amount of funds in reserve, detailed current budget and projected budgets, fundraising plans, and other relevant organizational financial information.
6. Provide a clear understanding of the Project financials, including project balance sheet, project budgets (5 years), and a complete summary of all project financial information regarding startup costs and ongoing operational costs.
7. Detail how the clinic will be financially self-supporting without additional funding from MDA.
8. If construction or retrofitting is required before Applicant will be ready for the funds to begin the project, the Business Plan must clearly explain the timetable for completing the work and when the Applicant will be ready for receipt of the grant funds.
9. The plan must discuss obtaining an inspection and license by the Maryland Board of Veterinary Examiners.
10. Business Plans for Mobile Clinics must provide an Operation and Maintenance Section that discusses how and where the vehicle would be used and stored, identify insurance, inspection certificates, maintenance schedule, and how operation and maintenance costs will be covered for the duration of the project.

Providing a Business Plan is a requirement and failure to provide this will mean your application is incomplete and will be removed from consideration.

HELPFUL INFORMATION and resources regarding Business Plans and Marketing Plans are available on the Program webpage.

F-3-HIGH QUALITY/VOLUME (HQHV) TRAINING REQUIREMENT

High Quality/High Volume Spay Neuter (HQHV) training is essential to the efficient and effective running of any spay/neuter clinic. This specialized training helps veterinarians and support staffs maximize the number of procedures they can perform and thus increase capacity. Therefore, for any capital expense request the Applicant must provide documentation that one or more of their personnel has training (with at least one of these personnel being a vet) or the equivalent skills. If none of the staff has had this training, it must be included in the application.

Applicants can propose funding for training costs (including travel, expenses and course costs) for up to three people (one of which must be a vet if there is no vet with training on staff already). If the veterinarian does not have a certificate of attending a specialized training, but otherwise has experience in providing high quality high volume spay neuter services, that experience can be detailed in a letter from the veterinarian in lieu of attending a specialized training program. The letter should state the average number of cat spays and neuter surgeries and dog spay and neuter surgeries that they can perform per hour.

Important Note: Applicants proposing funds for this training first must coordinate with the Humane Alliance to determine which type of HQ/HV training is best suited for them. They must provide a statement from the Humane Alliance documenting their coordination and explaining the choice of training: Humane Alliance at http://humanealliance.org/vet-training.

G. BUDGET AND OTHER FUNDS

Section G requires information regarding all items an Applicant wishes to see funded, and any other sources of funds or contributions that may add to the project or may relate to the project.

G-1-BUDGET LINE ITEMS

This specifies how the grant dollars are to be used and consists of an itemized list of desired equipment. It is important to be a clear as possible.

The Budget Line Items section should also include the cost of HQHV Training if being included as per Section F above. Applicants should include the name and position of each candidate proposed for training, course fee, travel and lodging.

G-2-EXPENSE RESEARCH

The fiscal goal of the Program is to ensure that every dollar is spent wisely and ultimately increases spay and neuter state-wide to the maximum extent possible. Applicants must use Program funding as efficiently as possible. In this section, Applicants should discuss why they chose a specific vendor or equipment option.

These types of consideration should be included in this section:
- An Applicant requesting funds for a mobile clinic may have located a good used clinic that would fit their needs and be more cost effective than a new clinic, even if it means going out of state to purchase it.
- An Applicant may already have a vehicle that can be retrofitted as a clinic.
- An Applicant may have a discount agreement with an equipment supplier.

With each budget line item, the Applicant must also provide a vendor quote for that item.

G-3-EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLE OWNERSHIP DISPOSITION AGREEMENTS

MDA must ensure that equipment purchased with Program funds is used for the purpose and term stated in the grant agreement. If for any reason a recipient cannot fulfill the obligation in the grant agreement, the equipment (including any mobile clinic vehicle purchased with Program funds) must revert back to MDA. The sale, transfer, donation, or disposal of any equipment is strictly prohibited. Equipment or mobile clinics that are not used for a period more than 3 consecutive months may be signed over and returned to MDA.

G-4-COST SHARING

Cost sharing is always encouraged and can positively affect the ranking of a proposal. A "cost-sharing" item should be anything that directly affects or will be used to implement the proposed project. Any expense or contribution that directly relates to the proposed project (such as donated equipment, vehicle or use of vehicles, space, personnel, etc.) is important and should be quantified to the extent possible. A best guess of the value can suffice.

G-5-MATCHING GRANTS/FUNDING

If an application is dependent on another grant or additional funding from another source, details and copies of documentation (including the amount of additional requested funding, funding source, any requirements or parameters related to that additional funding source, and whether the funds have already been secured) must be included. If the applicant is being sought to meet a Matching Funds requirement of another grant, this must also be discussed.

H. PROJECT SUPPORT

This section should document how the Applicant has made an effort to gain support for their project. Applicants must attempt to coordinate with Animal Control Agencies and shelters, and others as appropriate for their endorsement and concurrence that the proposed project would be helpful in reducing shelter intake and euthanasia numbers and increase capacity for low cost spay/neuter in the target area. Applicants are encouraged to provide endorsements from other organizations, or local government.

Examples of ways to demonstrate support may include providing the following with the application:

- Letter from animal control agency servicing the project area.
- Letter from local health department.
- Support from county/city council,
- Letters from other government representatives,
- Letters from other non-profit organizations.
-

FINAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS SECTION

The Applicant must carefully review this section and check off each box provided, then provide the name of the submitter and the date. By doing so, the Applicant is acknowledging that all information provided in the application and in the supplemental documents accompanying the application is complete, accurate, and truthful. Failure to tick each box may be a basis to deny funding.