



## MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SPAY AND NEUTER GRANTS PROGRAM



### FY26 INSTRUCTIONS FOR FERAL CAT-FOCUSED APPLICATIONS

The following information provides important instructions and examples that apply to Applicants submitting Feral Cat-Focused applications. Please thoroughly read the Program information under the **gold banners** and the Application-specific information under the **blue banners**. 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 two categories of grant applications: Pet-Focused and Feral Cat-Focused. Each focus has its own application form and focus-specific instructions.

**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.”

To see the Regulations, visit the [Division of State Documents](#) website and search for Regulations 15.01.10.00-15.01.10.10 (Spay/Neuter Grant Program).

### 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 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.
- 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.

**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 website: [MDA.maryland.gov](http://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 accompanying documents as specified in these Instructions and on the application forms, by close of business (before 5:01PM EST) on or before the posted grant deadline as it appears on the Request for Proposals (RFP) 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, their organizations, and any veterinarians/clinics used should have no history (within the last three years) of violations or fines with Animal Control authorities or the Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners in their respective state of licensure. 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 municipal shelters, which requests information about dog and cat shelter live intakes, and all outcomes. This data is used to track the impact the Program has on intake and euthanasia numbers over time. Applicants with private shelters who are not already required to submit this data should be aware that if awarded a grant, they must also submit quarterly shelter survey data to MDA.

### **ADDITIONAL SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR FERAL CAT-FOCUSED APPLICATIONS**

*There are several conditions that apply specifically to Feral Cat-Focused applications, which Applicants must be aware of before moving forward:*

For the purposes of this Program, MDA considers any unowned cat to fall under the “feral” category and is eligible to be spayed/neutered under this project type. Hence, the term “feral” will be used throughout this document and the application form but shall be equated to “unowned”.

This Program recognizes that feral cats account for a substantial portion of shelter intake and euthanasia and that the Program could not meet its legislated goal of reducing shelter intake and euthanasia through spay/neuter without including the spay/neuter of feral cats. The most common method to achieve this is through complaint-driven or colony-targeted Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR). While the Program will award funding to organizations that will employ TNR as a method to get cats altered (adhering to TNR Best Management Practices), Applicants must remember that this is not a TNR Program but a Spay/Neuter Program, and a Feral Cat-Focused application’s primary goal is to advance the legislated purpose of the Program, which is to reduce animal shelter overpopulation and euthanasia rates.

### **Prohibited Areas and Activities**

Some areas that may contain feral cats cannot be proposed as target areas by recipients of this Program’s funds. Additionally, there are specific activities that are prohibited. These prohibitions are as follows:

- **Where Prohibited by Law:** As stated in the legislation cited above, feral cat projects must not take place in those counties or municipalities where feral cat projects are prohibited by law. MDA contacted the county attorneys in each county for information on any prohibitions relating to feral cats. The responses are provided in the document: *Maryland County Laws Regarding Feral Cats* and is available on the Program webpage. *Please note: Responses in this document may not take into account any subsequent changes in policy. If an Applicant is applying to work in an area that previously prohibited such work, it is up to the Applicant to obtain a statement from the County Attorney or Animal Control Authority stating that feral cat-related projects would be allowable. This statement must be included with the application. Additionally, if an Applicant is proposing a target area where the county prohibits a feral cat project, but in a town or city that does allow TNR, they must provide a letter from a City or Town authority confirming this.*
- **Prohibited on Managed Lands:** Projects must not occur on or immediately adjacent to sensitive Department of Natural Resources (DNR) land, MD Park Service land, or in/immediately adjacent to a protected habitat supporting sensitive species or sensitive resources, unless written consent is provided by a DNR or MD Park Service representative. Applicants may find the Merlin Online Interactive Map V 2.0 helpful in identifying protected areas (<http://www.mdmerlin.net/uses.asp>).
- **Prohibition on TNR or Related Activities on Land without Prior Permission:** Applicants must be aware that prior to entering private property (whether residential or commercial), with the intent to inventory cats or perform TNR, they must first obtain a signed Permission to Enter Form from the landowner or legal tenant, allowing the activities to take place.
- **Prohibiting Release of New Cats:** MDA will only support those organizations that seek to ultimately decrease the population of unowned cats. Any organization known to increase numbers by releasing new cats (whether from a shelter or other source) will not be supported by the Program.

## OBTAINING AND SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

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

The applications must be filled out in full and submitted to MDA by close of business (before 5:01PM EST) on or before the proposal deadline, as stated in the RFP. Accompanying documents may be Word, PDF, or other commonly supported formats.

Links to the applications (along with Instruction documents and other supplemental materials) are available on the [Maryland Spay and Neuter Grants Program](#) webpage. When completing the application(s), please be as concise as possible, but without sacrificing essential detail. Please check for spelling errors, math errors or inconsistencies, and missing information. Be sure to fill out all required fields. **Incomplete applications will not be eligible for review.**

In addition to the completed application form, all Applicants must provide at least the following:

- **Price Assurance Form(s):** the MDA form filled out by the veterinarian(s) or clinic(s) identified in the application as the veterinary providers. The required form is available on the Maryland Spay and Neuter Grants Program webpage. This form must have the name of the veterinarian(s)/clinic(s) being used, their respective license number(s) and state of licensure, and the cost detailed on the form must correspond with the cost presented in the application.
- **Tax Information:** For non-government Applicants, a copy of the most recent 990 Form (if required) or other appropriate tax form confirming tax exempt status, and proof of your current Charitable Registration Permit with the State of Maryland is required.
- **Map(s)** of the target area.
- **Price Quotes** for budget items (excluding veterinary services and rabies vaccine) over \$500.00.
- **IRS W-9 Form (for all applicants).**

Applicants will receive an email from the Program Coordinator confirming receipt of the application.

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. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Program Coordinator prior to submitting their application if they have any questions.

## BUDGET BASICS

Applicants may not request more than 25% of their organization's/program's annual operating budget, with a maximum grant allowance of \$75,000, and a minimum allowance of \$5,000. Organizations with a budget less than \$20,000 may request a maximum of \$5,000.

For government shelters: You may not refer to the entire county budget to calculate this; this figure should reflect your county's budget for animal services only.

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 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. Applicants can review a [List of Funded Projects on the Program website](#) to get a sense of general funding levels and project overviews.

**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 and in most cases, justified. Additional information is included in the budget section of the application-specific information to follow.

This is a competitive grant, and while the program will consider the below listed allowable expenses, priority is often given to "clean" applications that do not require significant amounts of additional expenses and devote as much money to funding spay and neuter surgeries as possible.

### **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.

#### **STERILIZATION PACKAGE:**

The Sterilization Package should be inclusive of the cost per animal from start to finish of the procedure (with the possible exception of Rabies Vaccination-see below). Do not include detailed breakdowns of the veterinary sterilization package unless requested by MDA. MDA expects all grant recipients to meet the Maryland State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners minimum standards of care for spay and neuter procedures and care of animals altered under the Program. Your per-animal sterilization cost must include medical staff time, all equipment and medicine, including post-operative pain medicine, as the attending veterinarian deems appropriate for a spay/neuter service.

The cost per sterilization procedure should match the cost agreed to on the Price Assurance Form(s) from the provider(s) and included with the application. It is important to understand that the cost per surgery stated on the application form (both in the Project Details Section and the Budget Section) are the costs that the applicant is committing to use, if funded.

MDA understands that prices can differ greatly depending on the type of surgery, animal, location, providers available, and other factors. We expect the Applicants to look for the best prices possible but also to consider the cost benefit when transporting animals for longer distances, vs. using slightly more expensive, yet closer providers. In order to maintain flexibility and to take in multiple factors that may influence the cost per surgery, the Program has not yet set a cap on cost per surgery. The SNAB does look closely at the costs, however, and if the cost of a cat spay exceeds \$90 or a cat neuter exceeds \$70, the applicant should look for ways to reduce costs or be prepared to justify the higher cost as part of the Budget Justification Section. This is an area where cost-sharing can be very beneficial, however please remember that co-pays from the client are not an acceptable option.

***MAKE SURE the surgical cost per animal on your Price Assurance Form(s), and in the Target and Budget Sections of the application form all match.***

#### **RABIES VACCINATION:**

A rabies vaccination is required for all animals receiving a spay/neuter procedure with Program funds, if they do not have proof of a current rabies vaccination. All budgets must include the cost of rabies vaccine for each animal. This can be requested as a separate budget line item if not already built in to the Sterilization Package price.

If the Applicant proposes the cost of rabies vaccinations as a separate budget item, the cost is **capped at a maximum of \$5.00 per dose.**

If the cost of the rabies vaccinations is not listed separately, the Applicant needs to indicate how this cost is being covered whether built into the overall cost of the sterilization package or donated as an in-kind contribution.

**HIGH QUALITY/HIGH VOLUME SPAY NEUTER (HQHVSN) TRAINING FOR VETS AND SURGICAL STAFF:**

MDA encourages Applicants to prioritize increasing their efficiency and capacity, which will increase the overall availability of spay and neuter services in the State. HQHVSN training is important since this specialized training will result in long term benefits beyond the lifetime of a project or the Program. Applicants are encouraged to consider including training in their applications and special consideration may be given to Applicants who are requesting funding for this specialized training as part of their proposal. Funding requests for HQHVSN training may include travel, lodging, and course costs. This should be detailed in the budget line items justification section as to who would attend, what specific training will be taken, and cost per person per day.

**FIRST, COORDINATE with ASPCA Spay/Neuter Alliance (formerly Humane Alliance) to determine which type of HQHVSN training is best suited for your organization, and provide a statement from them documenting the coordination and explaining the choice of training.**

**NON-SURGICAL NEUTERING TRAINING:**

Training in the proper and safe application of non-surgical zinc neutering (such as neutering with Zeuterin™ injectable solution) is also allowable.

Applicants receiving funds for any training will be required to provide proof of completion to MDA.

**EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES:**

This covers medical and non-medical items (durable items such as traps and carriers which can be reused; or exhaustible items such as leads/leashes, temporary ID tags, etc.), that directly result in an increase in the number of spay/neuter procedures, and which are necessary to carry out the project. This should NOT include equipment and supplies used for the sterilization procedures (such as sutures, drugs, veterinarian and technician time, etc.) as those expenses should already be included in the veterinary cost per procedure.

Equipment requests may be part of any application type unless the cumulative total durable equipment request exceeds \$5,000. Equipment requests must only be requested if the clinic is licensed and ready for operation.

These items must be justified as necessary to achieving the goals of the project and Program. For durable items (life over 1 year), Applicants must explain how it will have a lasting benefit to the Program purpose beyond the term of the grant. Each piece of equipment must be identified and include a price quote from the supplier.

**CHECK FIRST with shelters to see if equipment can be obtained from them as donations or loans and added to your Cost Share Section. Such money-saving efforts may bolster your application's evaluation.**

**TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE:**

Travel to/from appointments is often challenging for many people and can affect a pet owner's decision to get their animals altered, and is often an important vital element to a feral cat-related project. We encourage Applicants to consider including a travel assistance element to their project and budget. If your experience has shown this is not the case in your particular area, or transportation is routinely handled by volunteers and a budget is not required, please state this in your project description narrative (and consider detailing this as a cost-share item).

Transportation assistance must be calculated using the most current IRS determined rate, and detailed in the budget line item description with a cost per mile, estimated miles per trip, number of trips, and total estimated miles. See <https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates> for the current rate.

The cost, time, and expense of travel should be weighed against the use of the closest clinic to the project area and Applicants should clearly justify the travel expense. Applicants are encouraged to communicate with local veterinarians about possible strategies to increase capacity in their immediate area (also see Training above) and hopefully reducing the need to travel great distances. Applicants are encouraged to look for ways to make transportation a cost share item, and thereby leverage grant funds to make their application more competitive.

**OUTREACH COSTS:**

This may include printing and distribution of outreach material, and other expenses related to outreach to the target community or population. These items must be directly related to spay/neuter and explained in the project outreach plan. Although there is no stated cap on the amount of funds that can be used for marketing, Applicants are encouraged to consider carefully the specific needs of the project and the percentage of the total budget that is being allocated to marketing. Outreach expenses that exceed \$1,000 must be well-justified. Applicants should provide price quotes for outreach items \$500 or more. If proposing signage, the Applicant must include a draft of the text to be used.

**NON-BUDGETED EMERGENCY MEDICAL EXPENSES, ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS:**

No more than 5% of the grant budget may be diverted to use for emergency medical expenses for animals that are receiving services under the Program purview, which must be approved by the Spay and Neuter Program Coordinator through the designated Emergency Medical Expense Request, and which must be submitted within 60 days of the service rendered. You should have a plan in place regarding how you will handle any emergency medical cases that may arise in the course of your project.

**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.

**CO-PAYS:**

Requiring a co-pay in connection with any service funded by this Program is not permitted. The cost of sterilization procedures must be all inclusive (materials, veterinary services, and all required pre- and post-operative medicines/exams related to the procedure). Be sure to keep this in mind when developing budget line items and calculating your cost per animal information in the Target section.

**OTHER PROCEDURES:**

Providing spay/neuter services paid for under this Program cannot be contingent on pet owners and animal caretakers purchasing other services. They may be informed of any additional services that would benefit the animal, but they cannot be denied services if they qualify and if the additional services are not of a critical nature.

**CONTINGENCY FUNDS:**

Proposing a separate sum of money to be set aside for use in special unforeseen medical circumstances is not a fundable expense. You should have a plan in place regarding how you will handle any emergency medical cases that may arise in the course of your project. No more than 5% of the grant budget may be used for emergency medical expenses, which must be approved by the Spay and Neuter Program Coordinator through the designated Emergency Medical Expense Request Form, and which must be submitted within 60 days of the service rendered. You should have a plan in place regarding how you will handle any emergency medical cases that may arise in the course of your project.

**FUNDING OF PERSONNEL:**

The Program funds may not be used to fund permanent or temporary staff. The cost of all surgical staff should be part of the sterilization cost per animal.

**OTHER PROHIBITED EXPENSES INCLUDE:**

- Overhead, office equipment and supplies, name tags and uniforms.
- Capital campaigns and large construction projects.
- 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).
- Web design and hosting, professional photography.
- Vaccines (other than rabies), blood tests and other tests.

- Pet licenses. It is important for government Applicants to note this and find alternative funding for licensing if a requirement for spaying/neutering.
- Education curriculum development.
- Conference attendance costs.

Applicants who need these types of items for 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 begins once the submission window has closed. During this time, MDA conducts a Due Diligence check on all Applicants to confirm eligibility, tax status, standing of project veterinarians and clinics with their respective state veterinary boards, standing with local animal control agencies, and standing with the IRS and the State of Maryland. The Spay and Neuter Advisory Board (SNAB), 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 SNAB then submits their funding recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Secretary ultimately decides on the final disposition of all applications.

All Applicants 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 grant agreements to recipients usually within 30 days following approval. 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. **MDA will not release any funds until the Grant Agreement is signed. If the grant agreement is not signed within 30 days, 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 REDUCED OR REJECTED

The most common reason for an application’s funding amount to be reduced is simply a 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 reduced simply due to stiff competition from fellow applicants.

However, there are some other reasons (often avoidable) that have resulted in 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 NOT steps to be skipped or ignored. It is obvious to MDA and the SNAB during the review process when an Applicant has not read or followed the instructions. The Program has gone to great lengths to provide comprehensive instructions that spell 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 required application fields **MUST** be filled in as stated in the Program and application instructions. An incomplete application will not pass the Due Diligence stage and may 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 rejected.

**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 language, 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 (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's funding.

**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 municipal shelter will result in a rejection.

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

**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 will affect funding.

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

**Failure to Address MDA's Prior Requests or Recommendations:** MDA keeps track of all applications, past and present. In rejection 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 FERAL CAT-FOCUSED APPLICATIONS

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

### **VERY IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE PROCEEDING:**

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 SNAB with the specific information needed to make the best possible, most effective, and responsible funding choices. Therefore, Applicants should know that **all required sections and information requests are there for a reason and are important**. Do not gloss over any section.

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 SNAB will not visit web addresses or links during their review and evaluation.

**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 SNAB with doubts about the Applicant’s abilities and level of commitment to the proposed project.

We strongly recommend that before entering text into the application, Applicants first compose the text in a separate document and perform a spell check and grammar check, correct any 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. This includes making sure that you are attaching the most recent versions of the requested and required documents, such as IRS forms, MOU, Standards of Care, etc.

**Applicants who have received grant funding in the past should avoid copying and pasting content and should expand on past applications with the results of previous grant cycles, how that experience has affected the program and how you project the program will grow during this cycle.** Some things to discuss may be why the area that you targeted in the past still needs attention, or why it is time to expand the target area, or move it all together.

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 SNAB to seek clarification and corrections in these instances, and these errors could ultimately affect the ranking of the application.

## 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. If this information is missing, inaccurate or not current, this may be a basis for removing the application from further review.

## B. POINT OF CONTACT AND ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Information in this section provides necessary administrative information should the application be funded, as well as crucial information about the applying organization that 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 may be made public.

### ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

It is important to the evaluation process for MDA and the SNAB 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 budget information in this section should be for your department or program only, not the entire county budget, for example.

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 completed with existing operating funds allocated for this purpose.

### SPAY/NEUTER PROCEDURES - HISTORY CHART

In the chart we are looking to establish a baseline of the number of surgeries your organization provides each year, either in-house or through an outside clinic, and see the increase that MDA is creating. If the number of surgeries provided annually has decreased, it is important to explain why there is a decrease.

### APPLICATION CATEGORIES, NUMBER, AND TYPES

There are two categories of applications, based on the focus: Pet-Focused and Feral Cat-Focused.

***DON'T MIX the categories! For Example: An application cannot include both feral cats and pets in the same application form.***

**Applicants are limited to one Feral Cat-Focused application per cycle.** 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 very well thought out and well-presented application, rather than two that may be more rushed, less thorough, and therefore less compelling. Applications may encompass more than one county.

◆ **Multiple Applications:**

If an Applicant chooses to submit more than one application (a Feral Cat-Focused AND a Pet-Focused application), separate category-appropriate applications with appropriate supporting documents are required for each project. Each application must be complete and stand alone. Applicants must submit separate sets of supplemental materials for each application.

If submitting both 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 applications being reduced or rejected. Do not submit multiple applications in a single grant cycle unless your organization is clearly able to establish it has the capacity to perform both of the proposed projects at the same time.

If submitting both types of applications, the Applicant must indicate whether the applications are dependent or independent of each other. Please explain whether you would be able to move forward with the Feral Cat-Focused project if the Pet-Focused 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 more than one application **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 two 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 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-I: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project description should summarize what the Applicant proposes to do: the what, where, when and how. This section should be **concise** (one to two paragraphs) **with the understanding** that more details will be provided in the subsequent sections.

Applicants that are submitting proposals to continue work funded in a previous cycle (whether completed or still in progress but scheduled to finish soon) should include a discussion in their project descriptions about what was or is being achieved, lessons/challenges they have encountered in their previous project(s) and how they plan to address them in the proposed application.

## IDENTIFY THE APPROACH

Applicants also must specify in the Project Description (and then in greater detail in subsequent sections) what approach they propose to use. For Feral Cat-Focused projects there are two approaches commonly proposed:

1. By Colony: the Applicant should know the location(s) of existing colonies that their proposed project will target.
2. Complaint-Driven: the Applicant uses complaints or requests for help from citizens in order to identify target areas.

The Program advocates the targeted colony approach for most Applicants. This requires that the Applicant already has information about specific colonies that, if altered, would benefit the local shelter(s) and the community. Applicants should either have signed Permission to Enter Forms from landowners/legal tenants already on file, or prior interactions/discussions with the landowners/legal tenants resulting in assurances that signed forms can be obtained.

The Complaint-Driven approach is mostly used in urban/suburban areas, and uses citizen complaints/requests for help as a way to pinpoint the locations of cats, which if not addressed, have a high probability of being captured by Animal Control and placed in the shelter and/or euthanized. This approach requires that the Applicant have a robust TNR program in place (which follows accepted best practices for TNR), has a strong partnership and coordination with the local Animal Control authority, and enough resources and community experience to review and evaluate complaints. They must be able to act on the specific complaint, canvas the vicinity of the complaint to determine if the complaint is an isolated cat or part of a colony, the extent of the population, and then TNR the colony.

### SECTION EXAMPLE

Here is good example of a Project Description for a Feral Cat-Focused project:

*Based on coordination with local animal control, the estimates provided by the animal control and the city shelter indicate that approximately 2,000 community cats occur within the town limits. According to County Animal Control, Feral or un-owned cats make up 80% of the cats taken in by the shelter and almost 90% of the cats euthanized. Furthermore the town has had 4 incidents of rabies (3 raccoons and 1 cat) in the past year. This project seeks to reduce this number by performing targeted TNR (capture, alter, evaluate, transport, return, and monitor) 4 colonies managed by caretakers within the area bordered by Elm St, Main St, Birch Ave, and First St.*

*Using the feral cat number estimating tool, it is estimated that 400 un-owned cats live in this specific area. Based on current information from caretakers, the more accurate number is likely to be 500+cats.*

*With permission from landowners and a team of trained volunteers, we will set traps each weekend over several months, arrange for spay/neuter (including ear tipping and vaccinations) of 500 cats located in colonies A, B, C, and D as depicted in the map with the goal to fix 100% of the unaltered animals in each colony. We will partner with two local veterinarians who will be providing in-kind contributions in the form of substantially discounted TNR services. Our organization will also contribute the cost of other vaccines not covered by grant money. This Project should help reduce the shelter intake by at least 2 percent.*

## C-2: TARGET INFORMATION

The Target Section must identify where the proposed work will take place, how many sterilization surgeries are proposed and the justifications for these decisions. In order to define and justify these choices, an Applicant will need to look at and then discuss demographics, shelter numbers, any coordination from local animal control authorities, and any other specific pertinent information they wish to include.

### C-2-A: TARGET AREA

The target area(s) should be as specific and as focused as possible. A target area should be a realistic and manageable size for the Applicant's capacity. Proposing to target an entire city, county, whole portions of the state, or a large number of zip codes may be perceived as overly ambitious for many Applicants. Large target areas can also make it

difficult to predict and evaluate impact to shelter intake and euthanasia rates. If large areas or county-wide target areas are proposed, justify this in your target area narrative.

**BE SURE your organization has the experience and staffing to address your target area. The SNAB will compare the target area, budget request, and applying organization's information in the first section to get a sense of an Applicant's capacity.**

### **Choosing a Target Area**

When choosing a target area, Applicants should look at and discuss the following factors: shelter intake, information from animal control authority, population demographics, number of unowned cats in the area, and any other sources of data, if any.

Based on the approach the Applicant has identified in the Project Description (and subsequently in the Project Details and Methods), the Applicant should provide in this section:

#### **A Description of the Colony(ies) or Complaint Area(s)**

Applicant must describe each target colony to the best of their abilities, including details such as the general make up of the colony, estimated number of cats, number of cats already altered (if known), whether or not it is a managed colony, and whether there is an identified caretaker.

If the Applicant knows the source of the colony, this information can prove valuable not only in further justifying the target area, but also in terms of tailoring an in-field strategy and an outreach plan.

Complaint-Driven projects should delineate the parameters of the complaint area (for instance; a city or town limits) and should discuss why this approach is the best for this area.

#### **Shelter Data Assessment**

Regardless of the approach, all applications must include an assessment of shelter data (based on information provided in the Shelter Statistics Section) as it relates to the target area. Corroboration from shelter staff or animal control agencies that this is a good target site, and will positively impact their shelter intake and euthanasia rates, should be sought.

#### **Map(s)**

Applications must also have a map or maps of the target area(s). For Applicants targeting colonies, the map should indicate the location of each target colony (whether by polygon or pinpoint), the address (if possible), street name and zip code, a designation for each colony, an estimated number of unaltered cats in said colony, and whether or not the colony has a caretaker.

If Complaint-Driven, the map should show the urban or suburban area of interest, and where past complaints have originated, and if possible, current complaints yet to be addressed.

Maps can be simple, such as a copy of a street or area map, with handwritten polygons/pinpoints and information that is scanned and provided as a PDF or other electronic image. Do not submit a map of an entire county with no notations unless you are proposing to work in the entire county.

#### **Cat Number Assessment**

The Target Area discussion must have an assessment of the number of cats in the target area. MDA recognizes that due to the fluidity of feral cat populations, in many cases this can only be a very rough estimate. There are several ways to get a rough estimate:

- **Nose Count:** Though not 100% exact, an actual census or "nose-count" colony-by-colony within the target area, 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.

The following two methods will only result in a rough estimate that the Applicant then must adjust, based on whatever additional experience and knowledge they have of the conditions:

- **PetSmart Charities Pet Estimation Formula:** This formula calls for simply taking the human population in the target area and dividing by 15. However, “Divide by 15” is only a starting point, not an end point. The size of free-roaming cat populations 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 Pet Estimation Tool:** This tool uses population data, along with shelter intake and euthanasia data to estimate feral cat numbers: [Outdoor Cat Population Calculator](#) (this link will download an Excel file). As with “Divide by 15” this can only give a rough estimate and does not take local conditions into account. The Applicant should take this number and then adjust up or down depending on their knowledge of the conditions of the target area.

The number assessment and adjustments to that starting number is often helped through outreach in the target area, and gaining a comprehensive understanding of the cats in the target area may require some outreach in advance of submitting an application. Support from caretakers of existing colonies is critical, and Applicants should reach out to caretakers to ensure they are agreeable to: 1) engaging in the process, 2) providing you with colony data, and 3) allowing trapping and follow-up. You will be unable to alter a substantial percentage of the cats in the target area if you do not know the location of, or have access to, the cats.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN DEVELOPING A TARGET AREA

The following are some TNR Best Practices and suggestions that may provide a roadmap and help Applicants develop a targeting strategy:

A “colony” is the basic unit of TNR. It refers to a group of free-roaming cats who share a common food source and live in the same territory. While there may be some migration between colonies in the same area, for the most part they are distinct units and can range in size from even one cat to hundreds. When targeting at a colony-level, you are targeting one or more distinct colonies, one at a time.

A “community” occurs when several colonies are in close proximity, opening up the greater possibility for migration of cats from one colony to another. Targeting at a community-level is to target multiple colonies all in the same proximity at the same time in a mass trapping.

### **FOR COLONY-LEVEL TARGETING:**

#### ***Define geographic target area:***

Targeting concentrates resources in a geographic area of high need in order to maximize impact. The goal is to reduce the size of colonies in the target area to zero, by sterilizing all of the cats.

#### ***Identify the colony/colonies:***

Applicants must identify and provide data for each colony within your target area, including nearby colonies at risk for migration into your sterilized colonies.

#### ***Commit to 100% sterilization goal:***

To achieve long-term population declines, projects must have a 100% sterilization goal, sterilizing all cats in a colony before moving on to the next colony.

#### ***Your organization’s sterilization capacity and the ticking clock:***

If colony reduction proceeds slowly or intermittently, impact is limited because the remaining cats can reproduce too quickly. Applicants must demonstrate they have adequate capacity to sterilize entire colonies quickly.



**Mass trapping:**

Mass trapping provides an effective method for sterilizing all colony cats at once, increasing your project impact, and ensuring long term results. Applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize the mass trapping method and these projects will be given priority. Instructional videos and materials can be accessed at [www.neighborhoodcats.org](http://www.neighborhoodcats.org).

**FOR COMMUNITY-LEVEL TARGETING:**

**Assess your community:**

Assessing the community and identifying untreated colonies and other sources of cats will greatly increase the long-term impact of your project.

**The Vacuum Effect:**

When a sterilized colony decreases, cats from nearby unsterilized colonies can move in to fill the vacuum created and reverse any gains made. It is for this reason that colonies should be monitored for new cats (see following point).

**Get the most impact from your efforts:**

To minimize migration between colonies and unaltered cats entering colonies from the vacuum effect, community-level targeting and colony-level targeting should go hand in hand. Either type of targeting alone will have limited long-term impact due to migration and the fast reproduction capacity of cats.

**Community “Hot Spots”:**

Finding “hot spots” with high concentrations of cats will help you locate colonies and other sources of cats, giving your project greater impact. Here are some ways you may identify hot spots:

- Shelter intake origin: If the shelter is open admission, intake patterns can provide a snapshot of the distribution of cats in the community.
- Economic indicators: Poverty is directly correlated to higher numbers of unaltered pets in households which can contribute to free-roaming cat populations.
- Intake by age: Where there are large numbers of kittens, there may be large numbers of feral cats.
- Complaints: Tracking the location of the cats when someone calls animal control with a complaint may reveal location patterns.
- Knowledge: Personal knowledge and boots on the ground data.
- Mapping tools: The patterns highlight where targeting can have the most impact.

**C-2-B: SHELTER STATISTICS**

Target areas need to directly relate to those areas identified as sources of intake for the municipal shelter in which the target areas occur. **It is mandatory** that Applicants provide shelter intake and euthanasia numbers from any shelter in a target area, covering the last three years. This information helps justify the target area, the target number of procedures, and helps the SNAB better understand the overall need in that area or county.

Omitting this data without an explanation may be a reason for **considering the application incomplete** and may be withdrawn from further review.

The shelter statistics (regardless of the type of shelter) are considered Public Information and must be made available upon request.

As it can sometimes take time to obtain this data from busy shelter staff, it is recommended that Applicants seek this information as early as possible.

**You can obtain Shelter Statistics from MDA by emailing the Program Coordinator as a “Public Information Request”, specifying from what facility(ies) and time periods the information should cover. Shelter Statistics are also published on the Spay and Neuter Grants Program webpage.**

If your proposed project could possibly impact shelters outside of your county, please include this as well. The more data you can provide, the more it helps the review of your proposal and its merits.

Applicants whose target area occurs in a county where one shelter covers several counties should ask if county or site-specific statistics are available.

◆ ***For Counties without a Municipal Shelter or with a Limited Facility:***

For any counties without a municipal shelter, or with limited facilities (i.e. county dog control agencies that handle dogs only and do not intake cats), Applicants should investigate whether their target area contributes to any shelter's intake, and provide statistics for those shelters. Applicants can also see if local Highway Patrol or Animal Control has any other statistics or information regarding the number of cats killed on roads, which will help give an indication as to the numbers and locations of populations.

**COORDINATION WITH ANIMAL CONTROL**

It is **imperative** that Applicants coordinate, or attempt to coordinate with animal control and local shelters, and confirm that their proposed target area(s) will ultimately help reduce intake at the shelter(s), or seek their direction about the most effective target area. Applicants should demonstrate this coordination (or attempts to coordinate) by providing letters or email copies, and discussing it in their narrative in their Target Area Section.

***DON'T PUT OFF coordination with shelters and Animal Control. They are often very busy and understaffed. It's best to start early so their input can be used to develop the application and so they have enough time to provide letters of support. Spring/summer is typically the busiest time for these agencies so bear that in mind.***

**C-2-C: TARGET NUMBER OF SURGERIES**

The Applicant must list how many surgeries are being proposed and the cost per surgery. This number must be consistent with both the Budget Line Item section of the application form and the Price Assurance Form(s) provided to the Applicant by the surgical providers.

If the price per surgery listed in this Section and in the Budget Line Items Section (D-1) does not match the Price Assurance form(s), **the Applicant must explain why**. MDA will only consider those prices listed on the application as the amount fundable with grant funds and that any differences between the prices on the application and the price assurance form(s) will be costs covered by the Applicant with funds from other sources.

The number of cats proposed to be altered must represent a **“net increase”** from the number of cats the Applicant currently alters (or arranges to alter) on an annual basis, and must represent a number that they have the capacity to service.

Once underway, an approved project may find that the demand for spays vs. neuters may differ from the original target number breakdown in the application. Once a project begins, if the actual conditions in the field differ from what was originally anticipated, grantees need only contact the Program Coordinator and request to adjust the surgery numbers distribution.

**RECOMMENDATION**

*If you cannot anticipate how many cats of each sex you will alter, please take the following into consideration: Generally, spay surgeries cost more than neuters. If you propose to do more spays than neuters and then actually have more neuters than spays, the savings can be used to provide even more surgeries. You can assume for purposes of the application that 50% will be male and 50% will be female. If approved, and field conditions change, this distribution can be adjusted.*

**CHOOSING YOUR TARGET NUMBER**

To ensure maximum effectiveness, the Applicant must demonstrate an understanding of the targeted approach and confirm in their narrative that their goal is to fix a substantial percentage of the cats in the target area, which should be as close to 100% as possible, in as short a period of time as possible. It is imperative that this commitment be

clear in the application. The applicant should discuss how the target numbers chosen will relate to the goal to fix 100% of a colony or population as possible.

Using the information provided in Section C-2-A on estimated feral cat numbers in the target area and/or any specifics with regards to numbers of cats per colony, the Applicant should discuss how the target number of surgeries relates to these numbers.

Assess whether your organization's resources will be able to support altering a substantial percentage of the cats in your target area so that enough are sterilized quickly enough to tip the balance in favor of future declines in population.

#### **PERMISSION TO ENTER FORMS**

Applicants may not enter a property, either private or commercial, to perform project-related activities without prior signed Permission to Enter Forms from the landowner or present legal tenant. It is preferable to have all or some of these forms included with the application. However, MDA understands that this is not always feasible and landowners/legal tenants often want assurances that the work will take place before signing. In this case the Applicant must confirm that they can obtain the required forms once a project is underway.

This form is located on the Program webpage.

If Permission to Enter Forms are not submitted at the time of the application, and your project is selected for funding, you must submit the forms for all work areas reached during that quarter. **Failure to obtain and submit these forms can result in the immediate cancellation of the remaining work to be done, requiring a refund of all unused funds, and the funds used in areas without permission forms must be returned to the Maryland Department of Agriculture at the organization's expense.**

#### **SECTION EXAMPLE**

Here is a good example of a Target Area description:

*Based on data from caretakers and residents near these colonies, the 500 surgeries proposed represents the total estimated number of cats in the 3 colonies identified in the target area section. Our intent is to TNR as close to 100% of each colony as possible. Our organization has 4 staff and 20 volunteers along with access to traps, carriers, other equipment and transportation needed for doing the proposed work the capacity to achieve 100% altered status in these 3 colonies in the project time frame. We will work with caretakers after to maintain 100% altered status through continued monitoring and alteration of additional cats that migrate to the colony before they can reproduce. We have spoken with caretakers and property owners, garnered their support and are in the process of obtaining all of the required permission forms.*

#### **C-2-D: EXPECTED IMPACTS**

The Applicant should discuss how the project will achieve the purpose of the Fund: To reduce intake and euthanasia in Maryland shelters. Applicants should discuss to what degree the specific shelters mentioned in the Target Area section will directly benefit from their project, and to the best of their abilities, the anticipated extent of the project's impact on those shelters by using real numbers and percentages. Please explain in detail how you arrived at these figures.

#### **SECTION EXAMPLE**

Here is good example of an Expected Impacts section:

*This project will result in the altering and vaccination of 100% of the 500 cats that make up 3 colonies located in the project target area, Any City. The Any County Animal shelter confirms (see attached Animal Control letter) that the target area, Any City, is a significant source of intake of unowned cats in the county. It is estimated that reduction of this breeding population will eventually decrease the intake of cats to this shelter by as much as 10% and euthanasia by 10% since approximately 20%*

of shelter intake of cats and kittens come from Any City, with approximately half of those coming from the area surrounding the targeted 3 colonies. This will also have the immediate benefit of vaccinating cats that might otherwise contract and spread rabies to neighborhood pets, other urban wildlife, and people. This will also alleviate problem behavior by the cats that have been a source of concern by residents.

Our organization has the capacity to achieve 100% altered status in these 3 colonies in the project time frame, and have adequate resources to maintain 100% altered status through continued monitoring and alteration of additional cats that migrate to the colony before they can reproduce. We have targeted these 3 colonies because they are in close proximity to each other and represent a substantial portion of intake. There are 4 other colonies in the target area that are remote from the targeted 3 colonies (see attached map) and do not represent a migration threat. We plan to apply in the future for a grant to sterilize the 4 remaining colonies in the target area.

### **C-3: PARTNERING**

If an Applicant's project involves partnering with one or more organizations (that will contribute but not share in the grant funds) please list each organization's name, brief description of their expertise, and what part they will serve in the project (any financial contributions from partners should be listed in the Cost-Sharing Section).

### **C-4-A: DETAILED WORK PLAN**

The Detailed Work Plan should list all activities and/or tasks and the sequence that will be performed to accomplish the objectives and goals of the project. Use of bulleted statements where possible should save text and provide clarity. This should include who the key personnel will be for each significant task. Failure to provide a truly DETAILED work plan may result in funding reduction or application rejection. Please include how you plan to address any emergent medical cases that may arise in the course of your project.

***DON'T SKIMP on the details. Would you consider one or two short paragraphs "detailed"? We do not. Please make sure what you present here provides enough detail so that we know exactly when, where, and how you will achieve your project goals.***

#### **SECTION EXAMPLE**

Here is an example of a good Detailed Work Plan section:

*Upon receipt of the grant:*

- Scheduling coordinator will contact all identified colony caretakers to create a tentative schedule based on priorities identified within each colony
- Staff will order marketing materials and traps
- President will schedule outreach meetings at city/town/county council meetings, events, etc.
- Vice President will contact local radio and local newspapers with press releases for the project
- Social media volunteers will begin sharing project information and continue to update monthly

*Prior to each clinic (at least monthly):*

- Scheduling coordinator will contact identified colony caretakers to continue monitoring and updating the tentative schedule
- Scheduling coordinator will schedule approximately 65 cats per clinic, allowing ample space to target one or more entire colonies during each clinic; provides clients with instructions/best practices for trapping and pre-operative care instructions
- Experienced trapping volunteers from Snip Tuck and Kitty City Rescue will visit colonies to perform mass trapping (following the best management practices outlined in the PetSmart charities TNR tactics and tools guide) and later transport cats to clinics.

*While on-site these volunteers will observe not only the known colony but also the surrounding community in an attempt to locate "hot spots" and identify risk factors for the vacuum effect.*

*During clinic:*

- President and other volunteers will complete intake interview to check-in each patient; later complete patient records, and provide discharge instructions including contact phone number for volunteer veterinarian
- MD licensed veterinarians assisted by veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants will evaluate cats to determine if they are candidates for adoption, administer anesthesia, perform a physical examination, administer rabies vaccine and other client requested or doctor recommended vaccines based on physical exam, ear tip or microchip every patient, perform spay or neuter surgery, monitor patients during recovery
- Volunteers will assist with preparing patients for surgery including shaving/cleaning surgery site, trimming nails, cleaning ears, and applying topical Revolution flea treatment
- Secretary and other volunteers will notify partners and social media coordinator of cats considered candidates for adoption and cats needing foster due to age

After each clinic:

- Once recovered, cats not eligible for adoption will be returned to their colonies by partner Kitty City Rescue and other trapping volunteers
- Veterinarian contacts clients as a post-operative follow up

Continued monitoring of colonies:

- Kitty City Rescue and scheduling coordinator will maintain contact with caretakers to monitor for new cats
- Areas identified as “hot spots” during field work will be provided outreach materials in a door-to-door fashion in order to initiate a line of personal contact with the property owner/caretaker to begin the TNR process; this could also identify low income owners of unaltered pets which may be considered for spay/neuter under the project guidelines
- For overall well being of the colony, the public, and other wildlife Dr. Lewis continues to monitor the health of colonies, providing caretakers with Revolution or Comfortis flea prevention and required rabies vaccination boosters. Both services are offered to clients at our cost or covered through donations when possible if income limits a caretaker’s ability to obtain.

During months with 5 Saturdays (June, September, December 2018 and March 2019), a second monthly clinic will be held if veterinary availability exists. These additional clinics will ensure our ability to alter the additional 300 cats being targeted by this project.

#### **C-4-B: PROJECT METHODS AND STRATEGIES**

This section should describe the specific methods that the Applicant will use both during the project, and after the grant period has concluded, to ensure the project results are long-lasting and that the most responsible methods are employed that safeguard the wellbeing of the cats, as well as wildlife and the public.

Applicants must be familiar with and adhere to Best Management Practices (BMP) for cat colony management and reduction. Examples of BMPs can be found on this website: [Neighborhood Cats TNR](#)

These BMPs will be considered in reviewing your application. It is your responsibility to make sure your application and project conform to these customarily accepted BMPs.

To ensure maximum effectiveness, the Applicant must demonstrate an understanding of the targeted approach and confirm in their narrative that their goal is to fix a substantial percentage of the community cats in the target area, as close to 100% as possible, in as short a period of time as possible. It is imperative that this commitment be clear in the application.

#### **METHODS**

The Applicant should discuss how the project will be approached to maximize effectiveness. Describe the following:

- **Collecting:** Any specific collection strategies (for example: trapping known females with litters first, mass trapping in a short period of time, etc.).

- **Transporting:** Applicants should balance the importance of a cost-effective project with the goal of reducing the time and expense of using clinics farther away from the target area – as well as the importance of increasing the availability of low/no-cost spay/neuter in all areas of the state. Applicants are encouraged to utilize the services of local veterinarians and clinics wherever possible to avoid transporting cats over long distances and to increase local capacity.
- **Evaluating for Re-homing:** Applicant should describe how they will assess felines for adoptability, and re-homing strategies for kittens. All cats sterilized under this Program must be vaccinated for rabies. Kittens 12 weeks of age and younger cannot be returned to their colonies as they are too young to be rabies vaccinated. Kittens between 12-16 weeks of age are generally easily socialized and Applicants are encouraged to include plans for fostering any kittens this age that are trapped and sterilized.
- **Returning:** Describe the strategy to return altered cats to their place of origin.
- **Monitoring and Caretaking:** Describe plans for ongoing monitoring of the colony, including sterilizing/vaccinating any new cats coming into the area before they can reproduce.

**An effective way to present this section** is to copy each bulleted bolded topic above and then state how you would address this topic.

#### SECTION EXAMPLE

Here is a good example of a Methods and Strategies section:

*\*Collecting - Experienced volunteers, our scheduling coordinator, and members of Kitty City Rescue will contact colony caretakers and train them on necessary procedures to ensure success in our mass trapping efforts, such as not free feeding cats outdoors and socializing cats when possible. Experienced volunteer trappers from Kitty City Rescue and Snip Tuck will visit the target property with more traps than the expected number of cats being targeted, ideally the entire colony. Traps may be left in advance to familiarize cats with their scent/presence. Traps will be set in the most high (cat) traffic areas of the property as identified by the caretaker. A drop-trap owned by Kitty City Rescue is available for use in trapping the hard to catch cats and for targeting specific cats such as pregnant females, colony queens, etc. Unaltered cats will be sheltered pre- and post-operatively by Kitty City Rescue, colony caretakers, or other volunteers. Each trap will be numbered and inventory taken in order to ensure cats will be returned to the exact location where they were trapped, when not considered adoptable. All cats targeted through this project will be ear tipped or receive a microchip which assists the trappers in identifying already altered cats. Statistics of total cats, altered cats, sex of cats, and vaccination status will be kept.*

*\*Transporting - Cats will be transported to clinic the following morning by the same volunteers. The clinic is located in the town of Secretary, in Dorchester County, MD. All cats will be trapped within Dorchester County to avoid transporting cats over long distances.*

*\*Evaluating for rehousing - All cats will be assessed by a veterinarian for adoptability. Snip Tuck volunteers, Kitty City Rescue, and Baywater Animal Rescue will all be notified of the cats that are considered adoptable, in order to assist in finding eligible homes. Snip Tuck will utilize its social media account (Facebook) to notify the public that applications are being accepted to rehome adoptable cats. Kittens 12 weeks of age and younger will be fostered by Snip Tuck volunteers or Kitty City Rescue until such time they may be vaccinated and later adopted. Kittens aged 12-16 weeks will also be fostered by Kitty City Rescue or Snip Tuck volunteers in an effort to encourage socialization and later be evaluated for adoption through the same methods. Once recovered from surgery any cats not eligible for adoption will be returned to the location where originally trapped, as identified by the inventory taken at trapping time.*

*\*Monitoring and Caretaking - Volunteer veterinarian, Dr. Carol Lewis, DVM will provide follow up care for all patients as necessary. Caretakers will be encouraged to promptly report new cats coming into the colony the prevent repopulation of the colony. New cats will be promptly targeted for TNR.*

## C-5: OUTREACH PLAN

This section should state how the Applicant plans to gain landowner support, neighborhood support, inform the community about their specific project (and how the community will benefit from it), and educate about feral cats in general. This may include outreach to the community on the importance of spaying and neutering cats while they are still in homes, since intact owned cats are at greatest risk for abandonment, escape, and relinquishment to shelters; communicate with individuals who have expressed interest in helping; and providing information on humane deterrents to landowners seeking to keep cats off their property.

The Outreach Plan can also include information gathering on potential sources of feral, stray, or free-roaming pet cats that may be adding to or may actually be the cause of a feral cat issue. Interacting with residents or leaving helpful material and contact information is a good way to not only educate the public on the benefits of altering cats, but also help locate new or undocumented colonies for future targeting. A price quote should be included for outreach items costing \$500 or more. If any signage is proposed, the draft of at least the text needs to be provided.

Applicants may find additional helpful resources here: [Neighborhood Cats TNR](#)

### SECTION EXAMPLE

Here is good example of an Outreach section:

*President Tiffany Geib, Vice President Amy Craig, and Volunteer (former President) Cindy Smith have prepared a Power Point in order to educate the public about our mission, this project, and feral cats in general. This will be presented at local government council meetings, at fire halls, and other public gatherings/events.*

*Print materials from Alley Cat Allies will be made available to educate the public about free roaming cats, TNR, the vacuum effect, etc.*

*Postcards, posters, and brochures announcing the project will be distributed to the following locations: Department of Social Services, Delmarva Community Services (community center and life crisis assistance), Local Management Board, Baywater Animal Rescue, Kitty City Rescue, food banks, pet stores, grocery stores, retirement communities, places of worship, veterinary clinics/hospitals, and libraries.*

*Printed marketing materials will also be distributed door-to-door in areas that are considered "hot spots", based on referrals, based upon on-site observation of unaltered cats, and based upon complaints. This will be an effort to open a line of personal communication with the property owner/caretaker in order to begin TNR of the colony.*

*On September 23, 2018 volunteers will attend the Dorchester Center for the Arts Showcase where print materials will be distributed and face-to-face contact will be made with the general public as an outreach for this project.*

## C-6: 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 that the proposed project would be helpful in reducing shelter intake and euthanasia numbers. Should an Applicant be unable to coordinate with or gain support of Animal Control, it is important to provide details of your attempts and results in the application.

In addition to coordinating efforts with local animal control and shelter staff to ensure that the target area is a source of intake (and detailed in the Expected Outcomes section), Applicants are encouraged to provide endorsements from other organizations or local governments that can confirm the value of their proposed project in reducing shelter intake and euthanasia.

Examples of ways to demonstrate support may include:

- Letter(s) from the animal control agency servicing the project area (if this is not possible, Applicant should explain why it is not included).
- Letter from local health department or other relevant county agency.
- Support from county/city council – especially if the city or town that allows TNR is in a county that does not support TNR.
- Letters from other organizations, community groups, other animal welfare organizations, etc.

### C-7: KEY PERSONNEL

This section should very briefly identify the key project personnel and their role. This section need not contain lengthy biographical information but names, title, and task or role they will take in the project. It should **exclude** veterinarian(s) as this information is covered in its own section.

### C-8: VETERINARIAN PRACTICE /CLINIC CAPACITY

It is important that any veterinarian(s)/clinic(s) proposed as veterinary service providers can handle the workload if the application is approved. By submitting this application, the Applicant is indicating that a discussion with the proposed vet/clinic has taken place and assures that this commitment can be met, if funded. It is also important for the Applicant to explain the purpose of the Price Assurance Form and that it represents a commitment to adhere to the stated prices for the duration of the project. Any price increase must be absorbed by the Applicant.

The name and license number of any veterinarian and/or clinic proposed to be used must be provided in this section so that MDA may confirm the provider's standing with their state's respective veterinary oversight board. All veterinarians and clinics proposed must be in good standing with their state's veterinary oversight board.

## D. BUDGET AND ADDITIONAL FUNDS INFORMATION

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

### D-1-A: BUDGET LINE ITEMS

This specifies how the grant dollars are to be used and consists of an itemized list of expected expenditures. It is important to be as clear as possible. **Lumping items using vague descriptions** (such as “handout materials”, or “transportation”) **is not acceptable**, and vague budget items will be redlined and not considered, nor will MDA seek clarification during the review process. Vague budget items can also impact your application funding. Please be precise.

While some employ the “shotgun strategy” (i.e.: throw everything in and let the SNAB delete what they don't like), **we do not recommend this** as it makes more work for the SNAB and can negatively impact the application review. Please review the previous sections relating to Allowable and Prohibited Expenses.

Applications should demonstrate a thoughtful effort by the Applicant to limit expenses to those that most effectively and efficiently increase spay and neuter services. While there are currently no set percentages other than for Emergency Medical Requests, the bulk of a grant request should go toward funding sterilization procedures.

Ensure that the total amount in this section matches your total request in Section A. If these amounts do not match, it may result in your Application being removed from consideration.

### SECTION EXAMPLE

Here are some examples of Budget Line Item descriptions:



**Travel/Transport (cost/mile):** 278 miles x 24 trips x \$.54.4/mile, + Bay Bridge Tolls for 24 trips - \$3,730.00  
**Printing costs (number and price):** 250 8.5"x11" Fliers - Two *Don't Pay to Spay* fliers on each page - \$80.00

## D-I-B: BUDGET ITEMS JUSTIFICATION

With the exception of a rabies vaccine, **and in most cases**, the Veterinary Services Cost, all other budget line items greater than \$500 must be justified. Explain why the items listed are necessary to achieving the goals of the project and Program, and how this item is the best price and most effective use of the funds.

For durable items (life over one year), Applicants must explain how it will have a lasting benefit to the Program purpose beyond the term of the grant. For equipment, identify each piece of equipment and include quote from supplier.

### SECTION EXAMPLE

Here are some good examples of justifications for Outreach expenses:

*The SPCA will design and print 7,500 promotional flyers to be distributed through various marketing channels. We have found great success with distribution of these flyers at community events, through our Wellness Clinic, and through distribution to animal service providers and farmers that are located in or adjacent to the zip codes that we target with the MDA.*

*Direct mail postcards to 2794 low-income households in zip code 12345. This is the poorest area of ABC County with the largest number of unowned cats coming into the ABC County shelter. Although direct mail is costly, it puts the information into the hands of residents. Direct mail is one of the most efficient ways to deliver information. This could be the only way we can reach some of the very low-income residents because they don't have transportation to go to public outreach events, or public buildings. If we find this method of outreach is as effective as we expect it to be, we can decide on a new district each year until all low-income residents of ABC County have been reached.*

## D-I-C: TRAP REQUEST JUSTIFICATIONS

Traps are the most common equipment request made. Because these are a necessary component for meeting the TNR BMP, and achieving the goals of the project, they are an allowable expense. However because this can also be a costly expense and be an asset to the Applicant well beyond the project completion, it is important that this expense be well-justified.

Under this subsection, the Applicant must provide information on the number of traps the Applicant currently owns or has access to, and the number of traps needed for the project, if funded.

Because there can be alternate sources for traps that an Applicant may not have considered (such as borrowing from a trap bank, or a shelter that may have loaners), or ways to reduce the cost, the Program would like to confirm that the Applicant has investigated any alternatives.

### SECTION EXAMPLE

Here is a good example of a Traps Justifications section:

*# Traps you current own or have ready access to (number and type): 25*

*# Traps needed for this project (number and type): 85*

*Additional Information. What steps have you taken to obtain or borrow traps from other sources (example: trap banks, other similar organizations to yours, etc.) before making this request. If you are requesting special traps, such as fat cat traps, please explain why:*

<Applicant's Organization> is significantly expanding its trapping effort with the additional newly identified 152 colony locations in the target region and the 60 traps are imperative for success. An average of 5 cats at each location underscores the trap necessity as a resource for residents. The additional 60 traps will have a direct effect on project productivity and success. <Applicant's Organization> has secured a discount on the traps from Trucatch saving \$1,200 shown in cost sharing.

## D-2: COST SHARING AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

Cost sharing is strongly encouraged and can positively affect the funding 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 to detail, and should be quantified to the extent possible. A best guess of the value can suffice.

## D-4: 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.

## FINAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS SECTION

In this section, double check that you have attached all of the required documentation. Once your application is submitted, it cannot be altered. If you have any questions, it is recommended that you contact the Program Coordinator prior to submitting your application.

By submitting the application, the Applicant is acknowledging that all information provided in the application and in the supplemental documents accompanying the application is complete, accurate, and truthful.