



The MD SPCA FY23 Free Spay/Neuter Program for Owned Pets

Project #

23-8013

County: MD

Number of Cats Spayed: 430

Number of Dogs Spayed: 168

Number of Cats Neutered: 557

Number of Dogs Neutered: 138

Amount Received: \$69,814

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

Project Synopsis:

With the support of the Maryland Department of Agriculture, the MD SPCA completed 1,293 grant-funded spay and neuter surgeries for owned pets of economically struggling families living in the following zip codes: 21201, 21202, 21205, 21206, 21213, 21215, 21216, 21217, 21218, 21223, 21224, 21225, 21229, and 21231.



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Project Description:

The Maryland SPCA takes life-saving measures to give unwanted pets in our care every opportunity to thrive and find their forever home. We are proud of our 94% live-release rate for 2023 that demonstrates our commitment to this goal. The Maryland Department of Agriculture's support of our free spay and neuter program contributed substantially to the more than 5,359 surgeries performed in our Spay and Neuter Clinic in 2023 and remains one of our most sought out services. In 2023, with support from the MDA, the MD SPCA provided 1,239 free spay/neuter services to residents from 14 Baltimore City zip codes: 21201, 21202, 21205, 21206, 21213, 21215, 21216, 21217, 21218, 21223, 21224, 21225, 21229, and 21231.

Summary of Approach:

The MD SPCA has a proven track record of promoting our spay/neuter services in underserved neighborhoods. In 2023, we distributed flyers within targeted neighborhoods, particularly through our mobile PAW (Prevention and Wellness) Plus clinics. As needed, qualifying PAW Plus clients were scheduled for spay and neuter services when they visited one of the 12 clinic events. In 2023, we completed a survey of more than 1,000 Baltimore City pet owners in MDA-targeted zip codes regarding their access to affordable vet care. Of the total surveyed, 56% reported yes, their pets were spayed/neutered and an additional 10% said they have multiple pets, some of which have been spayed/neutered – demonstrating the success of our outreach efforts. In addition to our outreach efforts, we seek out supplemental funding each year to have a greater impact through our free spay/neuter program. Between MDA's support and additional funding, we completed a total of 5,359 spay/neuter surgeries in 2023.

Accomplishments:

Met Revised Goal: With email approval from Jen Swanson on October 31, 2023, we completed an additional 30 dogs for a total of 306 dogs and used the remaining funds to complete 987 cats instead of 1,040. Powered through staff shortages: On Mondays and Tuesdays, we only had one staff veterinarian on-site who shares a commitment to caring for our shelter pets. When this vet was the only vet working that day, we limited the public Spay/Neuter schedule to accommodate the vet's split time/responsibilities. Despite the ongoing vet shortage, we met our revised MDA goal, and completed 5,359 spay /neuter surgeries (MDA + others) overall in FY23.



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Lessons Learned:

•New Procedure: Starting in Q2 of FY24 (roughly May 2024), the MD SPCA's spay and neuter team will be performing Spay/Neuter surgeries at 6 weeks and 1.5 lbs. for kittens. This will not only keep us aligned with nationwide best practices for spay/neuter, but it will also help us reduce pets' length of stay. •Fundraising Efforts to Continue: While there is a strong awareness of our free and low-cost spay and neuter program, there is an equally strong demand for our program – especially with inflation and the rising cost of pet care. Unfortunately, the increasing demand for free spay and neuter surgeries consistently exceeds available funding. Despite supplementing funding from the Department of Agriculture with “Spay-it-Forward” funds and other small grants, the MD SPCA is unable to fully meet the needs of the public. We will continue prospect research to find additional funds to supplement MDA grant.

For More Information Contact:

Meg Davis

Organization Name and Address:

3300 Falls Road

Baltimore, Maryland 21211

Phone: 443-832-6859

Email: mdavis@mdspca.org



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