



The Maryland SPCA Free Spay/Neuter Program

Project #
FY20-516

County: Baltimore City

Number of Cats Spayed:	328	Number of Dogs Spayed:	69
Number of Cats Neutered:	521	Number of Dogs Neutered:	66

Amount Received: \$50,400	Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): \$0
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Project Synopsis:

The Maryland SPCA completed 1,127 spay and neuter surgeries for owned pets of residents living in low-income neighborhoods located in eight Baltimore zip codes- 21215, 21216, 21217, 21218, 21223, 21224, 21225, and 21229.



Project Description:

The MD SPCA, in partnership with the Maryland Department of Agriculture, provided free spay/neuter surgeries for qualifying residents living in targeted, low-income neighborhoods where at least 20% of residents live at or below the federal poverty line. In 2020, we focused on eight zip codes that met these qualifications and also represented high intake and euthanasia rates for city shelters. Since 2015, our partnership with MDA has provided 6,712 surgeries. Together, we keep pets healthy, happy, and in their homes.

Summary of Approach:

Prior to COVID-19, the MD SPCA's 2020 approach relied on community partnerships and a proven marketing campaign to identify, educate, and assist qualifying residents in obtaining free surgeries for their pets. As in year's past, we planned to participate in four B-More Dog pop-up clinics held in April, May, September, and October to distribute information outlining the importance of spaying and neutering pets, in addition to scheduling surgeries for cats and dogs. We coordinated with Charm City Companions to transport pets using a MD SPCA vehicle to assist clients without transit. Our marketing campaign included flyers distributed to local animal services located in and around each zip code, such as veterinarians and groomers. While COVID-19 prevented the MD SPCA from completing the above initiatives, it did not stop the need for surgeries.

COVID-19 spread led to temporary closures, event cancellations, and reduced capacity for care on the MD SPCA campus. Following the MD SPCA's temporary closure (March 23 to April 27), our clinic suspended public spay/neuter procedures until June 2020. Once open, we instituted new safety protocols, slowly increasing our daily procedures. Our clinic staff fielded hundreds of calls and emails requesting surgical appointments. While



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our pace continues to improve, we are still servicing a waitlist due to sustained demand. We provided appointments for Baltimore City pets, whether or not they qualified for the MD SPCA's free spay/neuter program. People living in the surrounding counties were directed to their local providers.

Accomplishments:

Despite the impact of COVID-19, the MD SPCA completed all surgeries under our agreement, while prioritizing the safety of our staff, volunteers, and clients. As an organization, we pivoted operations to provide continuity of care throughout 2020 for shelter pets and returned to continuity of public services as soon as possible. Consequently, our Spay and Neuter Clinic completed 2,512 surgeries owned and shelter pets, community cats, and rescue organizations, in addition to our MDA grant-funded procedures.

Lessons Learned:

Safety protocols dictated a limited surgical schedule until October 2020, when we returned to six days a week at reduced capacity. Due to sustained demand, we continue to direct residents living outside of the city to surgery providers in their county and to focus our efforts on Baltimoreans. However, closures, reduced hours of operation, and winter weather made it clear that the MD SPCA would not complete all surgeries by December 31, 2020; concerns we address in our Q2, Q3, and Q4 reports. In December, Nathaniel Boan recommended that the MD SPCA submit a request for change of scope to extend our work into February 2021, and the MDA granted change of scope approval on January 4. By late February, we completed all scheduled feline surgeries and identified schedule openings for additional canines. Although the team provided seven fewer surgeries overall, the MD SPCA was able to focus on residents living in qualifying neighborhoods, and by February 28, we expended all remaining MDA funds.

Attachments:

No attachments.

For More Information Contact:

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