



Free Spay/Neuter at HSCC

Project #
15-025

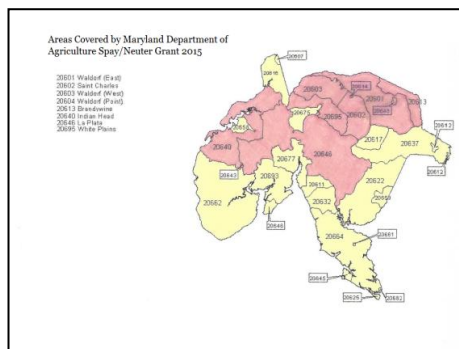
County: Charles County

Number of Cats Spayed:	45	Number of Dogs Spayed:	43
Number of Cats Neutered:	51	Number of Dogs Neutered:	53

Amount Received: \$18,347.50	Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): \$0.00
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Project Synopsis:

This project targeted low-income pet owners in the Charles County Zipcodes of 20601, 20602, 20603, 20604, 20618, 20640, 20646, and 20695 and sought to provide no-cost spay/neuter surgeries and rabies vaccines dogs and cats.



Project Description:

The Humane Society of Charles County is a 501(c)(3) registered non-profit animal shelter that has been in operations since 1978. We pride ourselves on sheltering and rehoming over 1500 animals each year. We are a local organization and receive no funding from national Humane Society organizations. We currently have a vibrant Humane Education Program that goes into the community and teaches both young and old the value of caring for animals and the importance of Spay/Neuter Practices on controlling the animal population.

Our project for 2015, began January 1, 2015 and ended December 31, 2015. In the beginning of the project we had proposed to offer Spay/Neuter Services to owned pets for families considered to be "low income" in Waldorf and Indian Head. By the third quarter of the project we had noticed that there were several people requesting services in the surrounding areas but were having to be turned away. Due to this we were approved to increase the project area to include White Plains, Brandywine, and LaPlata.

While Charles County and the surrounding Southern Maryland area are continually growing as suburbs of the National Capital Area and the average income level is fairly high for this area, the cost of living has also increased significantly. The cost of living in Charles County Maryland is approximately 16% higher than the national average. This can cause people to not have the disposable income to provide care for their animals and in particular provide surgeries that many may consider to be non-essential, like Spaying and Neutering. More than 10% of the persons turning their animals into our shelter do so because of the financial burden that having a pet can cause. By providing free spay/neuter surgeries for these families we are helping to not only decrease the overall population of unwanted litters of animals in the area but also help decrease the number of animals turned into shelters by assisting in the decreasing the overall cost of owning a pet.



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SPAY AND NEUTER GRANTS PROGRAM



Summary of Approach:

To receive services through the Maryland Department of Agriculture Spay/Neuter grant interested parties inquired about the the services. We would then take their information and give it to our Grant Service Coordinator. She would then contact out to the person/persons interested to give them the detailed information and request proof of annual income and residency. If they qualified for the program they were given a voucher and their surgery date was scheduled. The voucher was then presented at time of payment on the day of the surgery and the fee's were waived for them.

Timeline Summary:

In January 2015 we began our project by having all of our promotional and project materials printed. To promote the project we printed flyers and road signs using the art work displayed above. Due to the harsh weather early this year we were only able to get some of the signs placed before March and some of those were destroyed by the heavy winds. Flyers were given to organizations that we partner with, home owners associations, community centers, the health department, and distributed at our events throughout the year.

In January we had our first surgery but it wasn't until March that the program really began to take off.

In the second quarter of the program we got approval to begin covering the cost of Bloodwork for senior animals that is a requirement by our veterinarian. This bloodwork is expensive and this allowed families who would not be able to get the surgeries done otherwise to qualify and not have to pay for bloodwork to have the surgeries done.

Over the summer one of our Board of Directors began going door to door in trailer parks and low income communities to give out information about spay/neutering pets and promoting the Maryland Department of Agriculture Grant services.

Beginning in the Third Quarter of the project we received approval to expand our services from just Waldorf and Indian Head into Brandywine, White Plains, and La Plata. Due to this change we had new flyers printed that included the expanded areas and began distributing these into the newly covered areas. With this increase in area we saw October bring in more surgeries than any other month this year.

On October 7th we were invited to attend the United Way of Charles County's Community Resource Day. This event was intended to target persons in the community who are either homeless or of very low income. This was a perfect opportunity for us and we had people sign up for surgeries on the spot.

In October we held our Mutt Madness event where we had a table setup to provide information about our organization and the programs we offer. We gave out promotional materials at this event.

By mid December we had expended all Grant Funds for this year and began rolling over the remaining certificates that had not been used into the 2016 Maryland Department of Agriculture Spay/Neuter Program that began November 1st 2015.

Throughout the year the Spay Neuter Grant has been promoted on our website at humanesocietycc.org and periodic posts made to our facebook page and other social media groups.

We have included information about the program biweekly through our ad space that is donated by the local newspaper.

Accomplishments:

We are pleased to report that we were able to Spay/Neuter 193 animals and provide them with Rabies Vaccinations through the 2015 Maryland Department of Agriculture Spay and Neuter Grant Program.

One of the major goals of any Spay/Neuter program is to decrease the number of homeless/unwanted animals in a given area. A good way to measure this is by analyzing shelter intake statistics. We are happy to report that in 2015 we have had a 8% decrease in animals surrendered by their owners and 5% decrease in animals turned in that were found stray. This comes to a 6% overall decrease in animals turned over at our Shelter. While many different things can factor into this we are certain that our continued diligence in Spaying/Neutering animals has had a significant impact.



Another of our biggest accomplishments was being able to help the community. During most of our programs we do not hear much feedback after the person has received services. During this Grant period our project coordinator received 2 letters thanking us (and by extension the Department of Agriculture) for providing this service and helping them to have their animals spayed/neutered. It shows just how much we are not only affecting the lives of the animals that we help to save each and every day but also the people in the community that we serve.

Lessons Learned:

While the Spay/Neuter Taxi service was offered and included on all of our Flyers and Signs, only one person expressed interest in using this service. That person was not located in an area that was covered by the grant service. Due to this in the upcoming grant we have removed that service but plan to still offer it on a case by case basis to people who truly need the assistance.

Early in the project we had difficulty tracking the surgeries. We developed a form for the project coordinator to use to report surgeries that broke costs into the budgeted categories. This was used in the second half of the project.

In September our Veterinarian went on vacation for 2 weeks and we were unable to schedule surgeries for this time. In future projects we are trying to secure a backup veterinarian to perform surgeries so that the project may continue in his absence.

Early in the year we had to deal with very nasty weather while attempting to advertise and many of our signs got destroyed. In the future we may wait until later in the year to place road signs out to advertise or attempt to retrieve the signs when we know bad weather is imminent.

In the grant proposal we had expected to have more cats entered into the program than dogs. Dog surgeries are much more expensive to perform and take more time. In actuality we did almost the same number of cats as dogs which caused us to use our funds up on much fewer surgeries than we would have liked. In next years grant we have accounted for this so we hopefully are more prepared for that type of situation.

Attachments:

End of Project Budget with Corrections to Previous quarterly Budgets
List of Surgeries Performed

For More Information Contact:

Name:

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Organization Name and Address:

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