



Wicomico Spay and Neuter

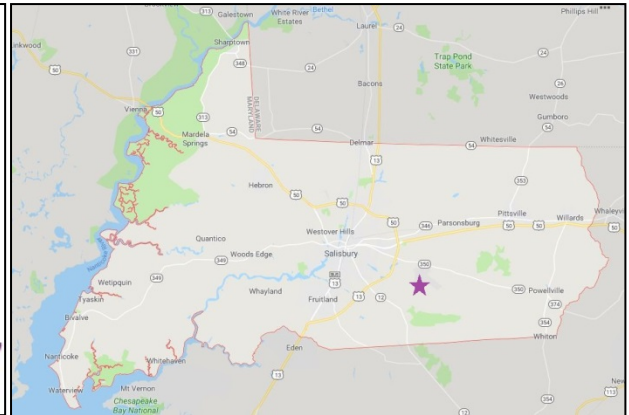
Project #
18-302

County: Wicomico County

Number of Cats Spayed:	101	Number of Dogs Spayed:	67
Number of Cats Neutered:	84	Number of Dogs Neutered:	76
Amount Received: \$16,400	Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA):	\$3,848.50	

Project Synopsis:

The project provided free spay/neuter and rabies vaccinations for low income, under \$48,000 combined household income, residents of Wicomico County with the goal of providing 100 cat neuters, 100 cat spays, 100 dog neuters and 100 dog spays.



Project Description:

The Humane Society of Wicomico County was founded in 1969. We are a 501(c)(3) and our mission is to adopt all adoptable animals. We offer a low cost spay/neuter clinic, rabies clinic and microchipping. The Humane Society also holds the animal control contract for Wicomico County. The goal of the project was to provide 400 free spay and neuter surgeries for low income residents of Wicomico County to help reduce the number of homeless and unwanted animals entering the shelter each year.

Summary of Approach:

We chose to target households with combined gross income less than \$48,000 since this demographic is the least likely to spay and neuter their pets and ultimately abandon or surrender unwanted litters to the shelter. Even with a low cost spay/neuter clinic, many residents of Wicomico County live under the poverty line and are unable to afford the reduced fee surgery. Pet over population is further exasperated by the stray and feral cat population in the county.

In August 2017, we began marketing the grant by posting information and a link to the application on our website. We also used social media to promote the grant and took applications to major events in the community. The grant was also promoted twice per week at two different radio stations. Due to the anticipated demand, we allowed three pets per household to be altered as part of the grant.



The goal of the project is to reduce the number of stray and surrendered animals entering the shelter each year and to ultimately see an increase in the live release rate across dogs, cats, puppies and kittens.

Accomplishments:

We were able to perform 328 sterilization surgeries for low income residents of Wicomico County. Although we marketed the grant, many individuals heard about it through word of mouth. Also, individuals who enter the shelter to reclaim or surrender their pet were made aware of the grant and asked to complete the application to help prevent their pet from wandering or becoming pregnant. We were able to prevent dozens of animals from being surrendered to the shelter by offering the opportunity for free spay/neuter to their owners. We were also able to educate the public of the immediate and long-term benefits of spaying or neutering their pet; this information helped many pet parents make the decision to submit the spay/neuter grant application.

Altering 195 cats will eliminate a significant number of kittens from entering the shelter this coming spring. This will also have an impact on the number of animals surrendered to the shelter in future years.

Lessons Learned:

The cost of materials needed for surgery were not accurately accounted for and the cost per animal should have been slightly higher. Also, a veterinarian with a consistent schedule needs to be secured. Without a regular surgery schedule we quickly fell behind and a backlog of surgeries occurred. This backlog led to further issues such as dogs going into heat, cats becoming pregnant, animals escaping or being rehomed. Many applicants' contact information was no longer valid and as a result we were unable to schedule their pet for surgery.

In addition, I would recommend lowering the income cap for applicants to accommodate those individuals truly in need opposed to those who did not want to pay their regular veterinarian. Also, many individuals who submitted an application never returned the necessary income documentation or resided outside Wicomico County.

Wicomico County has a significant problem with feral cats and this grant was only available to pets. We would like to provide surgery to those individuals who feed unaltered feral cats to prevent overpopulation because 90% of the cat and kitten intakes are feral.

Attachments:

Excel spreadsheet of all applications submitted through the grant.

For More Information Contact:

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Organization Name and Address:

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