

Nine Model Programs for Highly Successful Spay/Neuter



Best Friends
ANIMAL SOCIETY

Introduction

Spay/neuter is crucial if we are to reach a day when there are no more homeless pets. There are many types of spay/neuter programs, though, so it's hard to know where to start. How do you know what type will work best for your community? In this publication, we profile nine successful models to help you explore different types of programs and how they work.

You will find a wide variety of options and programs that operate in all regions of the country: MASH-style clinics, programs that use volunteer vets and shuttle services, voucher programs, stationary clinics, and partnerships with vet schools and vet tech schools.

These profiles include such helpful information as startup and annual costs, sources of funding, annual surgery totals, a description of services, and marketing strategies. Contact information is provided for each program so that you can follow up for more details.

These programs represent only a handful of the countless types and sizes of spay/neuter programs across the country. They are included here to give you an idea of what is out there and help you determine where to start in your own community.

– Karen Green and Aimee St. Arnaud

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VET TECH SCHOOL

Program Name: Stautzenberger Veterinary Medical Technician School, Toledo, Ohio

Startup Date: May 2002

Type of Program: Partnership with humane organizations to perform surgeries during surgery quarter and also on spay days.

Description of Program: The program partners with humane organizations in three counties to offer free surgery for shelter animals and for qualified low-income pet owners.

Cost to Client: No cost to the shelters or the public

Species Covered: Dogs and cats

Number of Staff/Volunteers: 4 paid staff and up to 15-20 students

Limitations of Program: Shelters and low-income public

Startup Costs: No costs are incurred because any program that involves the students is paid for entirely by the school.

Annual Operating Costs (Including Staff): Covered by the school as well.

Source of Funding: Private, tuition-based. All supplies are purchased through the school.

Surgery Totals: 200 through the surgery quarter. This amounts to 20 a week for 10 weeks. The school also allows a cat spay/neuter clinic to be held there once a month and students participate.

Marketing of Program: It is the shelter's responsibility to coordinate the delivery of the animals. They send shelter animals from three area counties and screen calls from the public to determine who qualifies.

Comments: Have a good system in place in case there are any problems with liability waivers, and be very upfront about risks. Decide if the school will pay for additional post-op care.



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VOLUNTEER VETS (in Vet Clinic)

Program Name: Catnippers, Los Angeles, California

Startup Date: 1999

Type of Program: Spay/neuter clinics and sponsored vet program for feral cats

Description of Program: Callers to a community hotline are screened for clinics and/or sponsor program. Clinics use an existing vet hospital but they bring their own equipment and supplies. For sponsor programs, vets are paid to sterilize feral cats and provide post-op vaccines and medications. Caregivers can go to a participating vet only if a reservation has been made.

Cost to Client: No cost to caretakers

Species Covered: Cats

Number of Staff/Volunteers: Clinics: Typically, 7 vets, 5+ techs, 8 team leaders, and 30+ lay volunteers. Sponsor program: 4 on hotline, including 1 supervisor and 1 scheduling coordinator. Others handle fundraising, marketing, and serve as trap depots.

Limitations of Program: Ferals only

Startup Costs: \$10,000

Annual Operating Costs (Including Staff): Not available

Source of Funding: Funded entirely by private contributions – about 33% from Best Friends Animal Society and the balance from other nongovernment sources (grants, private donors, local fundraising efforts).

Surgery Totals: Clinics are held quarterly on the first Sunday of February, May, August and November at donated facilities. Current average is 70-80 per clinic and 90-100 per month in sponsor program. Totals in 2002: 909 (11 clinics, vet referrals and sponsor program). Totals in 2003 to date: 538 (2 clinics, vet referrals and sponsor



program). Grand total of 2,309 since the start of the program.

Marketing of Program: Best Friends Los Angeles hotline, website, magazine and newsletter, and member network, listing in Pet Press, word of mouth.

Comments: Combination of programs is working well, offering volunteering opportunity at clinics, while sponsor program offers caregivers timing flexibility and greater frequency as to vet access. This has created greater demands on telephone staff for screening and responding to calls and sponsor-vet reservations. More personnel in this area would help. Addition of sponsor program created need for more funding on an annual basis.

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MASH-STYLE CLINIC

Program Name: Operation FELIX (Feline Education and Love Instead of Extermination), Toledo, Ohio

Startup Date: July 2002

Type of Program: MASH spay/neuter clinic and transportation for cats

Description of Program: They set up in the auditorium of a school that is an animal sciences career center or in a vet tech school. They sterilize 70 cats per month with volunteer vets and bring all the necessary equipment. They also provide transportation. This was a pilot program for the first year.

Cost to Client: No cost

Species Covered: Cats

Number of Staff/Volunteers: 40 volunteers total, with 5-7 volunteer vets, 6-7 techs

Limitations of Program: For feral cats and owned cats of low-income people in certain areas screened by census tracts.

Startup Costs: \$15,000 (to purchase a year's worth of medical supplies, traps, and office supplies). A lot of this won't need to be repeated since they have supplies now.

Annual Operating Costs (Including Staff):
\$50,000

Source of Funding: Private and public match (\$25,000 private, \$25,000 public). Public funding is from City Council Discretionary Funds and Community Development grant.

Surgery Totals: 800 total (400 feral, 400 owned, low-income) the first year (July 2002 to July 2003). They hope to expand the totals next year.

Marketing of Program: Flyers distributed to apartment buildings, mailer through the Housing Authority to people in subsidized housing, block watches, referrals from shelters.



Comments: Do advance research on areas you are offering clinic to – FELIX had 3 census tracts but couldn't find any cats. They had to go back to the city (they had just convinced the city that there was a HUGE cat problem) and tell them that they couldn't find any cats in the area and needed to expand the area of service. Definitely talk to other programs and visit one in advance to learn from their experience!

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MOBILE CLINIC

Program Name: Emanci-Pet Spay/Neuter Clinic
Austin, Texas

Startup Date: February 2000

Type of Program: Mobile van

Description of Program: Low-cost spay/neuter and vaccination services in a mobile clinic.

Cost to Client: Dog spay \$30, dog neuter \$25, cat spay \$20, cat neuter \$15, rabies \$6. They see a lot of pregnant and in-heat dogs, but don't charge extra, for fear that people will not have the surgery done if it costs more.

Species Covered: Dogs and cats

Number of Staff/Volunteers: 2 veterinarians (1 full-time, 1 contract/part-time), 3 surgery techs, 2 support staff (part-time administrative), 1 contract accountant (part-time)

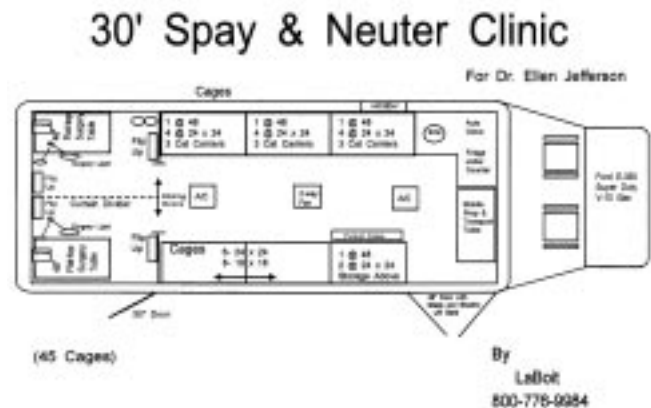
Limitations of Program: They target lower-income citizens by parking in locations that are most accessible to them. They don't screen except on the one day per week that surgeries are sponsored by the city. (The city only pays for surgeries of animals owned by people who live in certain neighborhoods.)

Startup Costs: Donated by an individual donor. Van cost \$125,000. Startup cost was \$37,000 for equipment, advertising, special fees, insurance, etc.

Annual Operating Costs (Including Staff):
\$285,000

Source of Funding: 100% client fees and contract. The City of Austin sponsors one day each week to perform free surgeries and rabies vaccines for residents. An animal shelter in another city pays one-half of all surgery costs, so residents only pay 50%.

Surgery Totals: Operating goals are 25-40 surgeries per day, 10 hours per day, 4 days per



week, 50 weeks per year, and approximately 6,000 surgeries per year. In two years, they have done 14,000 surgeries.

Marketing of Program: Local newspapers, animal shelters. Austin Pets Alive advertises for them.

Comments: Hope to have a program soon where people can visit the van to see how it operates. Operating a van is hard work so make sure you find motivated people and compensate them well. Don't expect them to do this for free or for very cheap.

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VOUCHER PROGRAM (Public)

Program Name: Animal Population Control Program (APC), state of New Hampshire

Startup Date: Funded in 1993, started July 1, 1994

Type of Program: Publicly funded low-cost spay/neuter for low-income households

Description of Program: Individuals who qualify receive vouchers for use with local vets.

Cost to Client: Cost per surgery to the program: \$55 on average. Cost per surgery to client: \$15 for low-income, \$30 for shelter adopters.

Species Covered: Dogs and cats

Number of Staff/Volunteers: 110 clinics work with the program (75% of all vets in the state). One person administers the program (\$35,000 salary). STOP and 7 other groups (one in each city or county) promote, transport, educate. Managed by the department of agriculture.

Limitations of Program: Low-income and adopters from shelters. Four-part application. Provide proof of eligibility by Medicaid and 6 others.

Startup Costs: Volunteers from participating groups did the work to get the program approved.

Annual Operating Costs (Including Staff):
\$260,000

Source of Funding: Funded by \$2 surcharge on all dog licenses.

Surgery Totals: 5,000

Marketing of Program: People get applications through spay/neuter groups and community action programs (that run the welfare system).

Comments: If someone gets the voucher and doesn't use it within 60 days, there is follow-up from volunteers. Euthanasia rate dropped by 30%



the first year. By 2000, their euthanasia rate had dropped to 2.2 per 1,000 people – 634 dogs euthanized statewide. Their advice: It is not as hard as it appears, so don't be scared off!

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VOUCHER PROGRAM (Private)

Program Name: Spay/Neuter All Pets, Inc. (SNAP), Louisa County, Virginia

Startup Date: 1996

Type of Program: Low-income assistance with spay/neuter

Description of Program: There are several "sub" programs: "Certificates" for low-income people to use at participating vet of their choice; "Fix the Mamas" program, where anyone surrendering juveniles to the shelter can get the mother animal fixed for free; the "Spay Shuttle," which transports animals belonging to low-income people or animal rescue agencies to low-cost spay/neuter clinics.

Cost to Client: Cost to program: About \$40 per surgery, up from about \$30. Cost per surgery to client: \$0-\$30 (usually).

Species Covered: Dogs and cats

Number of Staff/Volunteers: Volunteers are recruited as needed. Calls are taken by a machine. No paid staff.

Limitations of Program: Restricted to low-income citizens of Louisa County, Virginia. They are working on a regional effort.

Startup Costs: \$300 – funded mostly by local fundraising efforts.

Annual Operating Costs (Including Staff): Budget first 6 years: \$3,000 per year. Budget for 2003 (a year of rapid growth): \$20,000. For next year: \$50,000?

Source of Funding: Mostly local donations; they're working on getting grants (PETSMART, DJ&T).

Surgery Totals: First 6 years: 100 per year. This year, they will reach around 300.



Marketing of Program: Flyers, newsletter, frequent press releases and outreach booths.

Comments: Lots of growth recently.

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LITTER PATROL

Program Name: Planned Pethood, Toledo, Ohio

Startup Date: February 28, 2003

Type of Program: Spay/neuter for kitten and puppy litters

Description of Program: Puppies and kittens are taken into the adoption program, on the condition that the adult animals are spayed/neutered.

Cost to Client: Free

Species Covered: Dogs and cats

Number of Staff/Volunteers: Volunteers transport animals to/from the vet (many people don't have reliable transportation). Sometimes it is difficult to get transporters.

Limitations of Program: Open to anyone with puppies/kittens. If there is no room in the adoption program, and no other rescues are available, they offer spay/neuter of puppies and kittens at 8 weeks, and the owners can adopt them out or place them.

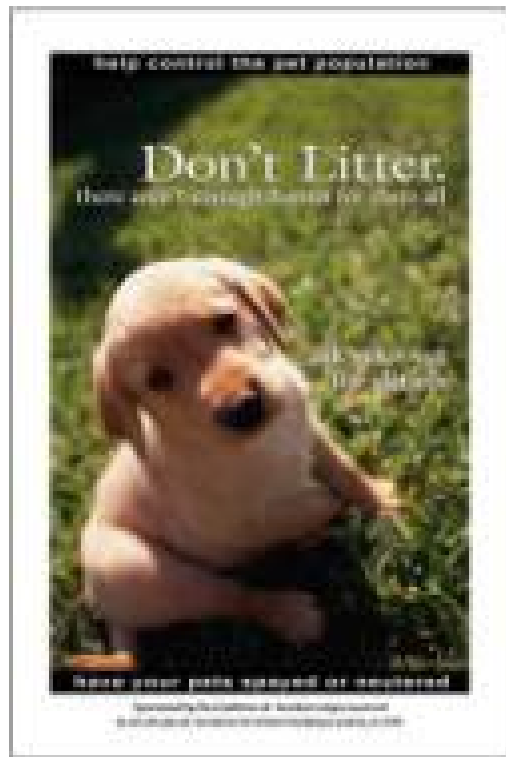
Startup Costs: They set aside \$6,000 initially.

Annual Operating Costs (Including Staff): As much as they can raise for this program. The only costs are to pay the vets for surgery (ranges from \$28-72, depending on weight, age, sex).

Source of Funding: They just started applying for grants and individual donations. Paw Hoorah silent auction earmarked a portion of funds.

Surgery Totals: February 28, 2003, through April 11, 2003: 36 puppies and 61 kittens came into adoption program; 23 adult dogs and 22 adult cats were altered and remain with their owners. This is in one month!

Marketing of Program: Website, newsletter, word of mouth. They are looking at doing a flyer.



Comments: Everyone has been happy with this program – no complaints. Just do it! Even if you start with just a few hundred dollars, you can help some people.

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STATIONARY CLINIC

Program Name: Project Spay/Neuter, Cumming, Georgia

Startup Date: 2000

Type of Program: Low-cost spay/neuter clinic; low-income owners subsidized via voucher.

Description of Program: Low-cost clinic open to the public. Specializes in pediatric spay/neuter. Low-income individuals with proof of public assistance qualify for \$15 spay/neuter. Rescue groups/shelters receive discount for spay/neuter before adoption.

Cost to Client: Cost per surgery to program: average of \$45. Cost per surgery to client: \$15 with proof of low income. Also need to have rabies shot (\$12, which is waived if necessary). For low-income pet owners, subsidized spaying of female dogs and cats only (because of budget constraints). Regular prices: \$29-\$59. Rescue groups and shelters get lower prices if sterilization is pre-adoption. If rescues bring in animals post-adoption, discounts do not apply.

Species Covered: Dogs and cats (including ferals).

Number of Staff/Volunteers: Difficult to quantify, due to overlap in staff duties between the non-profit spay/neuter clinic and the for-profit outpatient clinic. Average 4 hours per day for vet; 3 full-time staff – about 65% of their time is in spay/neuter clinic.

Limitations of Program: Individuals must provide proof of public assistance. Rescues and shelter animals must be spayed/neutered before adoption.

Startup Costs: Dr. Land's private practice clinic already existed. Spay/neuter clinic evolved from the general practice, which has now been reduced to outpatient only.

Annual Operating Costs (Including Staff):
\$218,000



Source of Funding: Spay/neuter fees; grant money and private donations; subsidized by outpatient clinic.

Surgery Totals: Did 20,000th sterilization in March 2003. Over 600 low-income in 2003.

Marketing of Program: Put flyers in public offices (health department, Catholic social services), work with rescue groups (local humane society and private rescues). Animal control hands out vouchers.

Comments: Recently moved from 800 to 3,000 square-foot building. Now have three exam tables instead of one, two surgical tables instead of one. Euthanasia rates in the county have remained static, despite doubling of human population.

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SHUTTLE FOR SPAY/NEUTER

Program Name: Humane Alliance Spay/Neuter Clinic, Asheville, North Carolina

Startup Date: 1994

Type of Program: Full-time stationary clinic with transport program (2 transport vans)

Description of Program: They work with shelters and rescue groups to provide transport and spay/neuter for animals from 20 counties in North Carolina. They also allow people in the community to call them directly and make appointments for surgery. They travel a 120-mile radius to pick up and drop off animals.

Cost to Client: Cost to program: approximately \$42 per surgery (depends on total number of surgeries). Goal is to do enough surgeries to afford program. Cost to client: male cats \$35, female cats \$50, all dogs \$55. Vaccines are \$6 (rabies and all in one).

Species Covered: Dogs and cats (they do accept ferals).

Number of Staff/Volunteers: 3.5 full-time vets, 1 licensed vet tech, 5 vet assistants, 1 person in charge of kennels, 1 full-time transport driver, 1 full-time office person and 2 volunteers, 1 executive director.

Limitations of Program: No restrictions but they primarily serve low-income people. They survey at least 10% of their clients every year – 88% of their clients have never taken their pets to the vet. Statistics are available on their website.

Startup Costs: \$70,000 (in 1994), funded by private donations

Annual Operating Costs (Including Staff): \$770,300

Source of Funding: \$50,000 in grants and \$10,000 donations. Rest is clinic income.

Surgery Totals: Approximately 15,000 in 2003.



Marketing of Program: Do not advertise at all. People find out about the program through word of mouth and the organizations they work with.

Comments: When they started, they realized they could only stay open with a high volume of surgeries. In 1994, they did 3,000 surgeries. This year, they will do 15,000 surgeries. They offer vaccines, but only with surgery.

In the beginning, private vets were not supportive, but now they have the support of the NCVMA. To avoid competition, the clinic only provides spay/neuter and vaccines. Keeping statistics helps show vets that the clinic is not taking their clients.

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