



**Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
January 29, 2025 | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM**

In Attendance:

Sheri Gustafson  
Kyle Baron  
Michael Cahill  
Dr. Martha Smith-Blackmore  
Deanna Gualtieri

This open meeting was held virtually over the ZOOM platform. A PowerPoint presentation was shown over ZOOM to all attendees.

**I. Fund Totals and Expenditures**

Sheri explained the current Fund's revenue totals. The Fund has an unexpended balance of \$220,110.49 as of 1/17/2025. The revenue intake in CY24 to date was \$555,218. Sheri presented the FY numbers, in FY24 the Fund took in \$601,190. Since inception in 2012, the Fund has taken in \$5,117,049. \$4,337,357 has been from tax donations/ online donations/ grants, \$4,692 from interest, and \$750,000 from line items in the state budget, \$25,000 from the MDAR admin budget.

**II. Budget and End of Year Report**

Sheri presented a spending breakdown from Fund inception to date. To date, the Fund's spending was in the following distributions: \$3,489,445 (71%) for veterinary services, \$122,170 (3%) for ACO training, \$1,222,097(25%) for administration, \$13,377 (<1%) for marketing, and there is currently a \$220,110 surplus in the Fund that will be factored into the 2025 spending.

Sheri presented the Fund's CY24 approved budget and the final CY24 allocations. CY24 approved budget of \$658,020 had the following allocations: 73% for veterinary services, 3% for ACO training, 25% for administration, and less than 1% for marketing. The budget planned to utilize \$168,020 in rollover revenue from CY23. Sheri recommended no change to the CY24 approved budget now that tax season numbers have been reported.

Sheri Presented the draft 2024 Annual Review which contained the Fund's final 2024 spending allocations. In 2024 the Fund spent \$732,043. \$547,679 (74%) was on veterinary services for 1,982 animals, \$180,523 (25%) spent on administration and programming costs and \$6, 775 (less then 1%) was spent on ACO Training.

Sheri explained that the main difference between the proposed allocation for veterinary services and the actual spending was due to increased voucher costs due to the number of complicated emergency cases. The Fund is

currently spending an average of \$265 per regular voucher and an average of \$390 per emergency voucher. In 2024, one out of every 6 vouchers redeemed were for an animal needing urgent services. Mike mentioned concern about the number of emergency care cases the Fund was receiving and asked if there was a way to reduce it. Dr. Smith Blackmore asked if we should consider getting a picture or similar to help verify a diagnosis of pyometra. Sheri suggested that we table the discussion until May and for the next AC meeting, she would have a full report of the animals that are getting emergency services for review.

Sheri stated that the ACO training allocation was lower than proposed since ACOAM did not ask for an ACO subsidy from the Fund in 2024.

Sheri listed the highlights from the 2024 Annual Review as follows: the Fund received another \$75,000 in support from The Stanton Foundation, the Fund reached the milestone of assisting 20,000 local cats and dogs, the Fund's Voucher Program celebrated its 10th anniversary, the Fund completed the 8th round of ACO training and has now trained over 900 ACOs, and the Fund's outreach campaigns reached 10,000 followers/subscribers.

Sheri stated that the 2024 Annual Review was still in draft form and that she was planning to have it completed and posted by the end of the week once she adds in information about our veterinary partnerships, updates any necessary graphics, and does a final content check.

Sheri jumped ahead on the agenda to discuss the status of grant funding and the FY25 line item before proposing the CY25 budget.

Sheri presented the proposed 2025 Budget. The Fund would need to be very conservative in its spending for 2025. In 2024, the Fund utilized more of its buffer than expected and that tax donations in the last couple of years have started to trend downward. The proposed 2025 Budget was based on a projected total spending of \$500,000. This number will be a marked decrease in the CY 2024 spending of \$732,043. Sheri explained that she reduced the spending limit because she estimated that the Fund would receive a max of \$400,000 from tax donations. Sheri was also concerned that the state would be tighter with budget line items than in previous years and that while she is hoping that one is secured, she wants to make sure the Fund keeps enough money in the trust to be able to cover administration costs before the next tax season if they don't.

The proposed 2025 Budget had the following allocations: \$300,000 (60%) in veterinary costs, \$195,000 (39%) in administration, and \$11,500 (1%) in ACO training and marketing. Sheri explained that the reason the administration costs are high is due to union-negotiated salary increases based on job descriptions and an increase in the cost of fringe benefits. The fund only has 2 employees on its staff. The community liaison position's salary is 100% paid for by the Fund and the program coordinator's salary is 75% paid for by the Fund and 25% paid for by the MDAR administration budget. Sheri expressed concern that if additional funding mechanisms aren't found for the Fund, the administration % will be too high to support 1.75 staff members. Mike mentioned that he hopes that a higher percentage of the program coordinator's salary could be taken on by the MDAR administration budget since the position does a lot to assist animal health. Sheri commented that the \$300,000 allocation is only \$25,000 a month and will do little to dent the already 1-year long waitlist.

Dr. Smith-Blackmore and ACO Gualtieri both expressed concerned with the small budget but agreed that a conservative approach is what is currently needed. Sheri asked to hold off on fully approving the budget until after the Fund receives the 2025 tax donation numbers. It was agreed to table the approval until the next AC meeting when tax numbers should be received, until then the Fund will continue to try to restrict any no priority spending.

### **III. FY24 Line Item/ Grants**

Sheri stated that the FY225 budget line item of \$100,000 is 66.2% spent, she said the line item would be fully spent already if it was released in full, however it has been getting released for use in increments. Sheri considering the rate of disbursement the line item will be completely expended by the end of February, 2025.

In May 2024, The Stanton Foundation gave the Fund a grant of \$75,000, designated to helping canines in municipal shelters and at 501c3 organizations. To date, the grant has fully paid for \$49,265 dollars in care, and has \$22,905 in care pending so it is 95% utilized. Sheri mentioned that The Stanton Foundation will not be available in 2025 for funding since it is ending its grant programming.

**Sheri returned to Agenda section 2 to discuss the CY25 proposed budget.**

#### **IV. Spay/Neuter Voucher Program**

##### **a. Animal Eligibility Updates**

Sheri showed slides of the current animal eligibility guidelines. She suggested that if our 2025 tax donations are low, we may need to make adjustments to eligibility moving forward. Sheri reminded the Committee that in 2024 the eligibility guidelines for animals in ACO care were adjusted due to discovered misuse. While the vast majority of ACOs were utilizing the program correctly, a small handful of ACOs were discovered to be taking in owner requests only to obtain vouchers for animals that were waiting to be received by shelters/rescues, so owner surrenders were no longer eligible for vouchers unless an exception is made.

Mike stated that if further restrictions needed to be made he would want us to consider restricting emergency cases over ACO animals since the emergency cases cost the Fund more per animal and ultimately reduce the number of animals we can help. Sheri said she will have a report ready for the next AC meeting.

##### **b. Numbers**

Sheri presented that the Fund has helped 22,210 animals to date equaling 3.5 million spent. The Fund currently has 307 vouchers outstanding equaling \$75,120 of which 69 are emergency case vouchers and 98 are for animals in ACO care. 111 vouchers were already redeemed in 2025, and over 80 have been sent.

Kyle presented information about the Voucher Program. Tufts has joined a as long awaited veterinary provider, and have already been utilizing the program to help with emergency cases.

Kyle stated that he has been working on a project to start to collect completed animal intake (animal records) for every animal in ACO care that has used the voucher program. The information received will give us data that can help us better understand the voucher programs' effectiveness and impact. Kyle mentioned that ACOs will be asked to submit the completed forms around 3 months after the issue and if they do not submit the information, voucher distribution to them may be suspended until documentation is received.

Kyle presented that CY25 voucher distribution is currently limited to just animals in ACO care and priority or emergency cases. Waitlist vouchers are temporarily on hold while we wait for tax donation numbers.

Sheri pointed out that even though we are temporarily restricting voucher distribution to only the two categories, we have still surpassed the proposed CY25 monthly voucher cap of \$25,000 by over \$3,000.

The Committee discussed the trends. Sheri mentioned that the need for affordable spay/neuter assistance in MA is huge and that the Fund is getting flooded daily with requests and pleas for help and that we are anxiously awaiting tax donation numbers for this season. Dr. Smith-Blackmore mentioned that she tried to use the donation portal on

the state site and it didn't appear to be working. Sheri confirmed that we are working with the contracts department to get a new vendor but with Commbuys changes the system is backed up, she was hoping it would be back up by now. Sheri mentioned that she will redo the "How you can Help" page and again talk to contracts.

### **c. Wait List**

Kyle mentioned that the current waitlist is over 700 animals and that the Fund is currently issuing vouchers requested back in April/May 2024. He also stated that with the extended wait time he is referring many applicants to low-cost services first and checking in with them before he sends a voucher to see if the service is still needed. Kyle said many people are still joining the waitlist even though they know the wait time will be extensive due to a lack of options across the state, he stated that the Fund is one of the only free options available.

### **d. Providers**

Sheri stated that 2025 will be a full provider, training, and vendor renewal year. All providers will need to resubmit bids in the new Commbuys system for contract renewals this year. Sheri mentioned that she was concerned about this process since she has been trying to get trainer contracts up since January of 2024 and instead, they had to be paid as incidental. Dr. Smith-Blackmore echoed her concern over the Commbuys process and that it is a deterrent for veterinarians to join and renew. Sheri said she would be talking to the contracts manager after the meeting to get more information.

### **V. Promotions/Events/Marketing**

Sheri presented the 2025 billboard designs and stated that the Fund had tabled at the recent MMA Conference in Boston. Sheri also highlighted the Ollie's Law resources including a guidance document, webpage and meetings.

### **VI. Animal Control Officer Training**

#### **a. 2025 ACO Designations**

Sheri reported that the 2025 ACO Designation Forms were emailed to all supervisors during the final week of December 2024 and are due back on February 2nd, 2025. To date, about 50% have been received.

#### **b. ACO Core Training**

Sheri reported that the Fund held two sessions of the Core Competencies Training in 2024. Session I was Sept. 23rd and Sept 30th in Palmer, MA and was held in person and virtually. Session II was Oct. 6th and 7th in Dedham, MA and was in person only. In total the Core had 92 attendees in 2024 sessions.

Sheri said she considered having a spring Core session in 2025 but has decided against it due to timing and budget constraints.

**Sheri will send out a doodle poll to schedule the next AC meeting for some time in mid/late May.**



# Advisory Committee Meeting

1/29/2025 *Hold on to your hats*



# AGENDA



- I. Fund Totals and Expenditures**
  - A. Review of Balance/ Budget**
- II. Budget / 2025 Tax Donations**
- III. FY25 Line Item/ Grants**
- IV. Spay/Neuter Voucher Program**
  - A. Animal Eligibility Updates**
  - B. Numbers**
  - C. Wait List**
  - D. Providers**

- V. Promotions/ Events/ Marketing**
- VI. Animal Control Officers**
  - A. 2025 ACO Designations**
  - B. 2024/2025 Core Training**



# TOTALS AND EXPENDITURES



Unexpended balance as of 1/17/2025 \$220,110.49



# FUND TOTALS AND EXPENDITURES





# How our donations have grown....



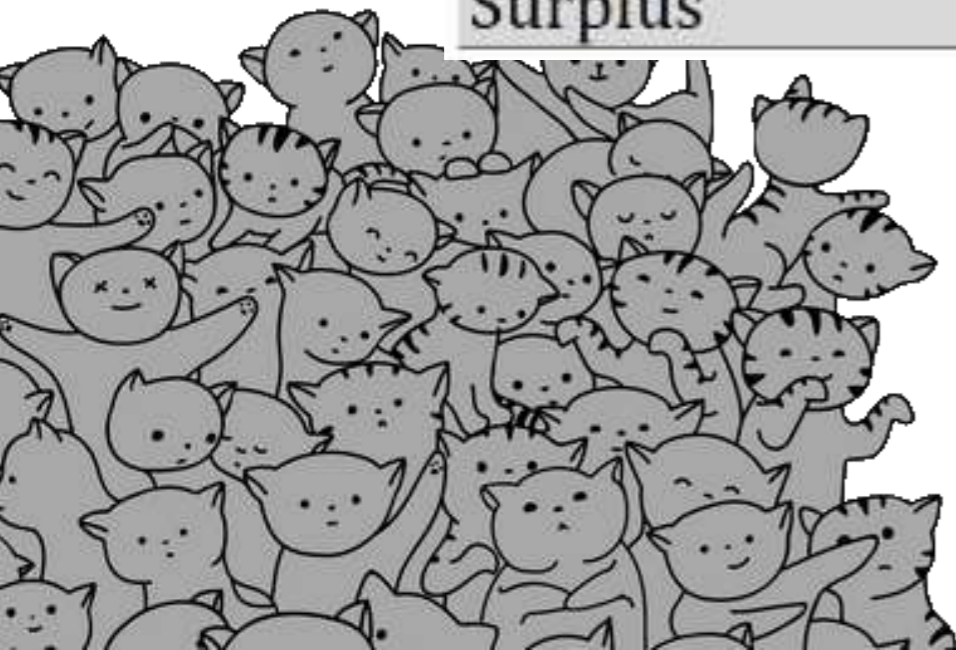
	\$ 5,117,049.91				
year	total donations/grants	interest	line item	tax donations	online/grants
2013	\$ 260,729.55	0		\$ 260,670.55	59
2014	\$ 298,086.38	376.64		\$ 237,086.38	61000
2015	\$ 260,303.06	289.6		\$ 247,689.33	12613.73
2016	\$ 291,494.16	123.15		\$ 284,828.37	6665.79
2017	\$ 331,685.67	225.98	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 322,220.04	9465.63
2018	\$ 334,590.90	399.44	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 334,290.90	300
2019	\$ 342,064.72	469.06	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 340,150.72	1914
2020	\$ 370,686.42	139.68	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 362,536.42	8150
2021	\$ 422,405.32	22.89	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 421,415.32	990
2022	\$ 472,994.17	366.36	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 397,994.17	75,000
2023	\$ 497,098.44	1098.25	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 392,098.44	105,000
2024	\$ 455,218.40	1181.67	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 380,218.40	75,000
	\$ 4,337,357.19	\$ 4,692.72	\$ 775,000.00	\$ 3,981,199.04	\$ 281,158.15
\$	5,117,049.91	85%	<.0001%	15%	



# FUND TOTALS AND EXPENDITURES



Revenue to date \$5,112,315	% of Spent	Expenses to Date \$4,849,715
Veterinary	71%	\$3,489,445.14
ACO Training	3%	\$122,170.00
Administration	25%	\$1,222,097.22
Marketing	<1%	\$13,377.28
Surplus	4% total intake	\$220,110.00



**Over 27,8600 vouchers  
have been distributed.**







# Proposed 2024 Budget

\$688,020= \$420,000 from 2024 Donations

\$100,000 FY25 Line Item

\$168,000 from rollover from 2023

\* would leave a buffer of approx. \$280,000  
in the Fund

**APPROVED BY ADVISORY COMMITTEE 1.10.24**

<b>2024 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Estimated Revenue</b> <b>\$550,000</b> <b>(\$555,218)</b>	<b>Proposed Expenses</b> <b>\$688,020</b>	<b>Actual Spent</b> <b>\$732,043</b>	<b>Differences</b>
Veterinary	73%	\$500,000	\$547,679	-\$47,679
ACO Training	3%	\$21,920	\$3,625	\$18,295
Administration	25%	\$162,000	\$180,540	-\$18,540
Marketing	<1%	\$3,100	\$117	\$2,983
Surplus	24%	-\$168,020	\$176,825	-\$8,805



# 2024 Annual Review

## Highlights

Over ½ million spent on animals



## 2024 REVIEW

The Homeless Animal Prevention and Care Trust (Mass Animal Fund), administered by the Division of Animal Health, seeks to respond to the Commonwealth's ongoing problem of animal homelessness by providing no-cost spay/neuter/vaccination resources for homeless dogs and cats in municipal animal control facilities, for dogs and cats owned by low-income Massachusetts residents and for feral cats.

The Mass Animal Fund also provides free training opportunities and support to Massachusetts Animal Control Officers (ACO) so they can better serve their communities and provide uniform enforcement of animal control laws.

Since its inception in 2012, the Mass Animal Fund has spent over 3.5 million to assist more than 21,900 cats and dogs throughout the Commonwealth. The Mass Animal Fund relies on donations from Massachusetts taxpayers, who have contributed 86% of this revenue is through voluntary donations on Line 33f of the Massachusetts Income Tax Return.

File taxes. **HELP ANIMALS! line 33f**





# 2024 Annual Review

Sheri is planning to modify this section slightly still to add in a note about Veterinary Participation



## 2024 REVIEW

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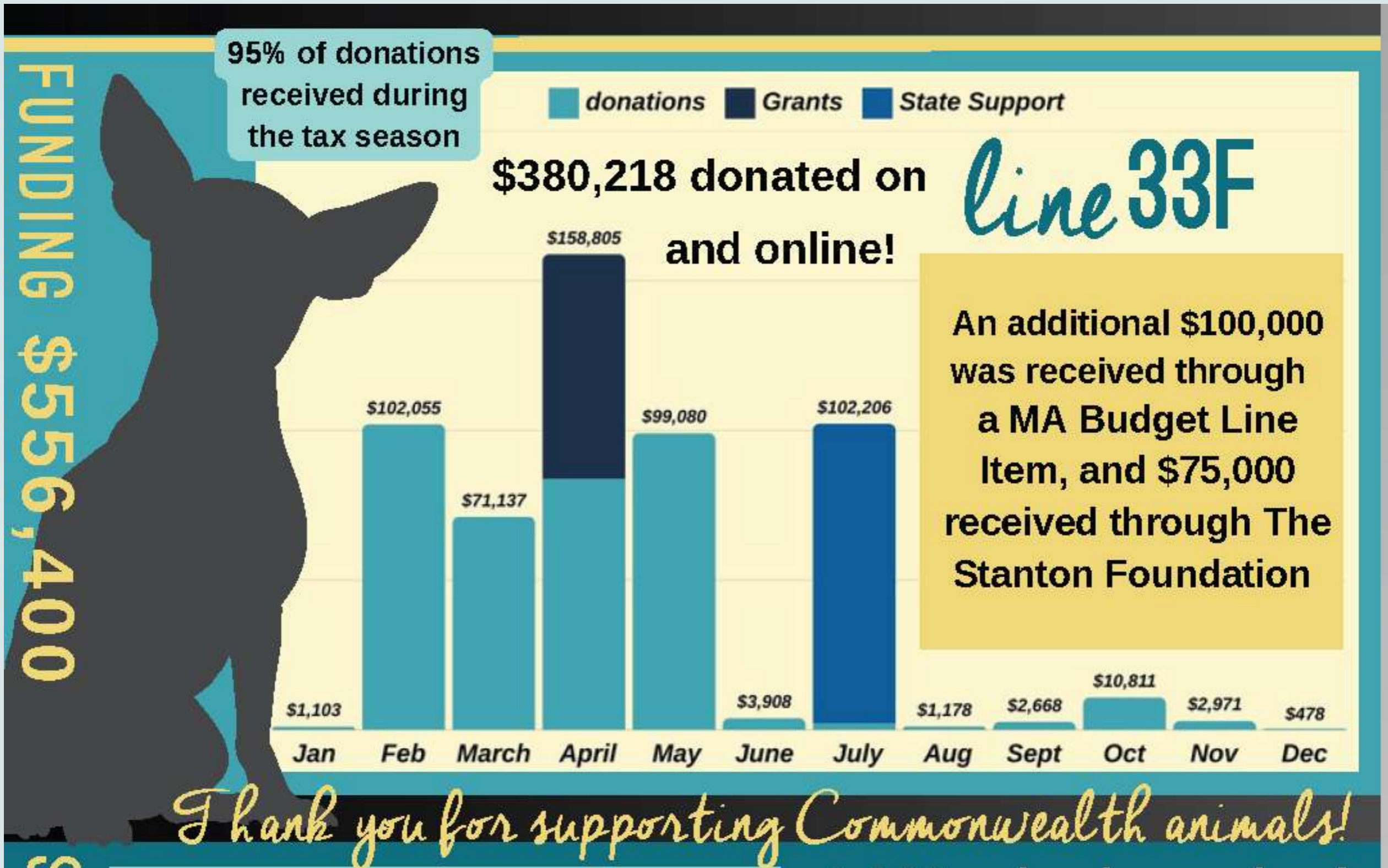
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**File taxes.**

**HELP ANIMALS!** *line 33F*



# 2024 Annual Review





# 2024 Annual Review

**SPENDING \$732,043**

## 2024 Spending Breakdown

74% on Veterinary Assistance  
25% on Administration and Promotion  
1% on ACO Training

**\$547,679** spent helping animals!

68 Animals needed urgent ACO assistance

61 Animals needed urgent care to stay in their home

166 Animals received emergency medical care

**\$115,310** was spent helping animals in emergency situations

**1,982 animals received spay/neuter assistance!**

639 animals in ACO care & 1,343 animals in low-income MA households.

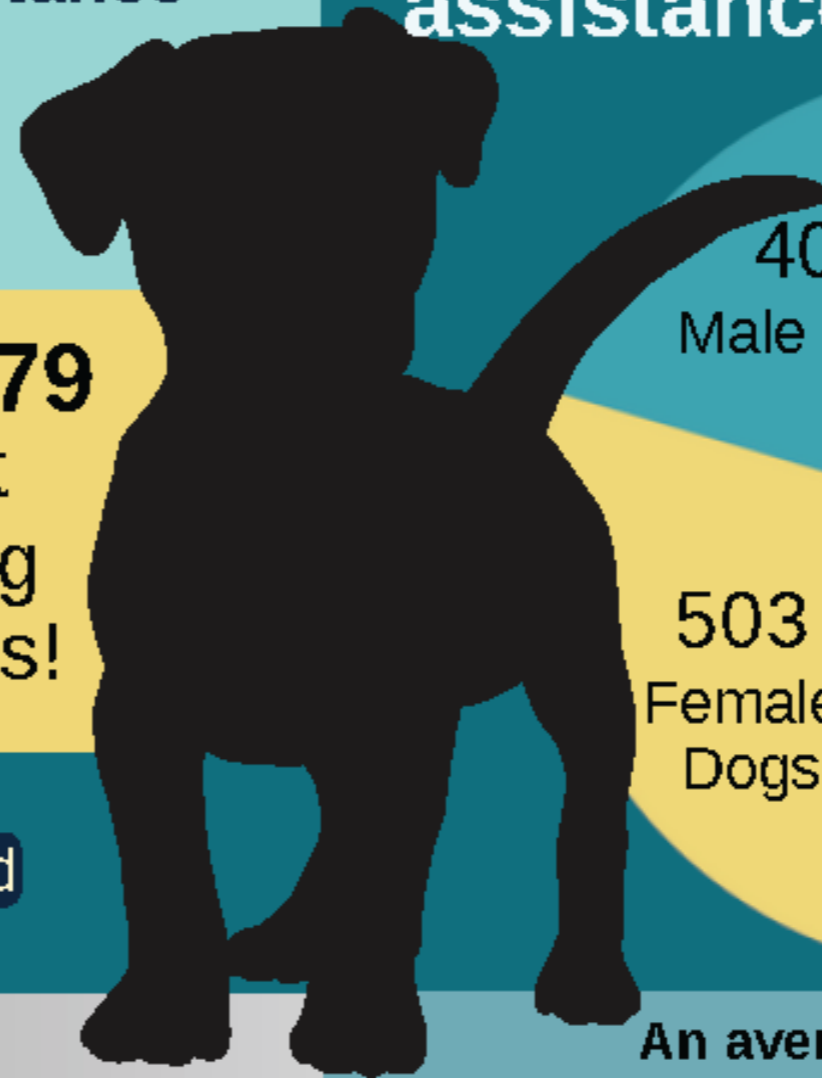
406 Male Dogs

580 Female Cats

503 Female Dogs

493 Male Cats

An average of \$390 was spent per animal for emergency voucher assistance, verses an average of \$265 for regular voucher services. 1 out of every 6 vouchers sent was for an animal needing urgent services!



# 2024 Annual Review

## 2024 MILESTONES

- In January of 2024, the Fund reached the milestone of having provided assistance to 20,000 local cats and dogs in need!
- In July of 2024, the free spay/neuter voucher program had it's 10 year anniversary!
- In October of 2024, the Fund completed the 8th round of ACO Core Competency Training. Over 900 animal control officers have been trained in areas of: animal laws, wildlife, animal behavior, officer safety and report writing & record keeping since the program started in 2016.
- In November 2024, the Fund's outreach campaigns reached 10,000 followers/subscribers.



## CONTACT INFO

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[fb.com/massanimalfund](https://www.facebook.com/massanimalfund)

[WWW.MASS.GOV/ANIMALFUND](http://WWW.MASS.GOV/ANIMALFUND)



## Budget Line Items and Grants

---

FY25 Budget Line Item secured \$100,000.

**IN PROCESS**

**\$66,139 paid out**

-being released to the Fund increments- otherwise would have been fully spent!

Should be fully paid out by the end of Feb. 2025.





The Stanton Foundation Grants  
 2022= \$75,000  
 2023 = \$105,000  
 2024 = \$75,000

22' \$75,000 for dogs in Commonwealth  
 ( no restrictions)

May 23' \$30,000  
 Emergency Grant (for E surgeries)

November 23' \$75,000 for dogs in  
 Commonwealth (no restrictions)

May 24' \$75,000  
 Designated for canines in  
 municipal shelters or at  
 501c3 organizations.

Current: Paid \$49,265  
 Pending \$22,905  
 95% utilized



**The Stanton Foundation Grant**  
*Interim Report 8.1.24*



**Support**

In May of 2024, the Massachusetts Animal Fund received a very generous grant in the amount of \$75,000 from The Stanton Foundation to provide canines in shelters free spay/neuter services across the Commonwealth!



**Canines Helped**  
 To date, 85 canines in municipal shelters have received FREE spay/neuter assistance through The Stanton Foundation Grant. Of the canines helped so far, 46 are receiving FREE spays and 39 are receiving free neuters. The grant is open to all types of canines and has already helped over 19 different breeds from tiny chihuahua/yorkie mixes to gigantic cane corsos and great pyrenees.



**Areas Supported**  
 This grant has already sent vouchers to provide FREE services to canines in 35 municipalities through the collaborative effort between the Fund, 27 veterinary providers and 6 municipal partners.



**Program Impact**  
 Since the grant period started, 85 canines housed in municipal shelters received immediate spay/neuter/vaccination vouchers as soon as eligibility was verified, saving their municipality an average of \$320 per animal for their care and allowing Mass Animal Fund to send out additional vouchers matching one for every animal covered by the grant.



**Lives Saved**  
 Thanks to The Stanton Foundation support, 12 canines (out of the 85 helped) received vouchers for FREE spay/neuter services after they ended up in a shelter because of a critical animal welfare issue, such as hoarding or abuse. 14 canines received vouchers for FREE spay/neuter services because their family could not keep them due to a housing issue. 1 canine received a FREE spay voucher after their owner passed away. 49 canines who were found as strays and were not claimed received FREE spay/neuter vouchers.

All of the canines spayed/neutered through this grant have been fast tracked towards adoption through their municipalities or through transfers to local shelters/rescues.

**Grant Utilized** **\$25,925 expended** **34.6%**  
*From May 1, 24' - August 1, 24'* 85 canines have received vouchers. \$320 average cost of care for redeemed vouchers.

# Proposed 2025 Budget



\$500,000= \$400,000 from 2024 Donations

\* \$100,000 FY25 Line Item

\$100,000 from buffer if no Line item in FY26

\* would leave a buffer of approx. \$150,000 in the Fund, otherwise \$50,000

2025 Proposed Budget	Estimated Revenue \$500,000	Proposed Expenses \$508,500	
Veterinary	60%	\$300,000	Only \$25,00 a month!
ACO Training	1%	\$11,000	
Administration	38%	\$195,000	PC (75/25 split)
Marketing	<1%	\$500	
Surplus	50%	\$100,000	if needed

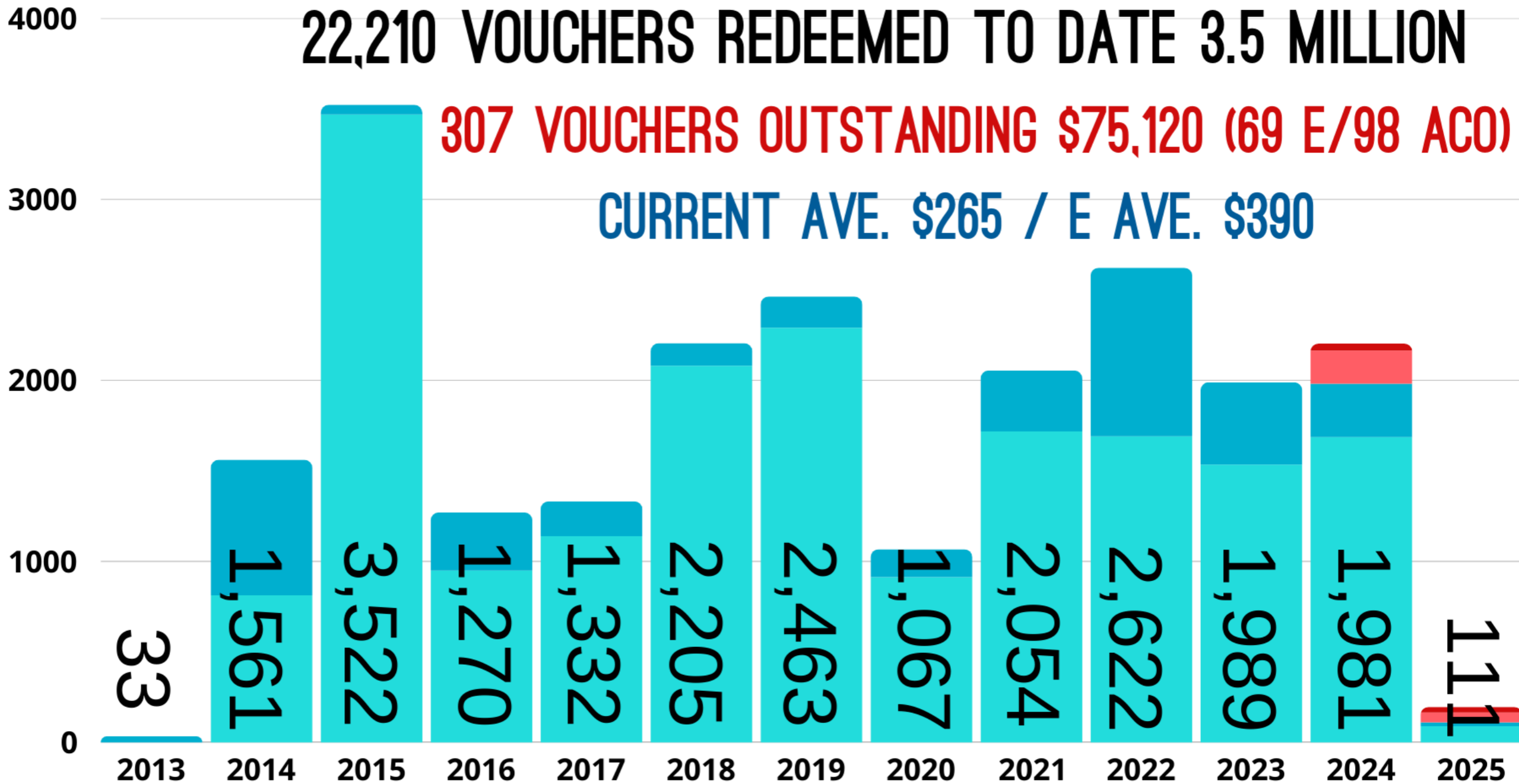
\*Admin increases due to union negotiations and fringe increase For 1.75 staff.



# SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



**\*AS OF 1/29/25**





# SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



## Quick Notes-

Tufts has joined as a  
Veterinary Provider!

Unless we have an AMAZING  
tax season, this year will be  
TIGHT! We will need to  
explore new funding streams  
to meet the Commonwealth  
need.

ALL Provider contracts expire  
in June 2025, it's a full  
renewal year.

## Current Waitlist-

- **700 plus** already on waitlist!  
Estimating over 1 year wait time for  
new applications. Referring to low-  
cost first.
- Requests currently being issued  
from ~~Jan/Feb 24.~~ March/April 24
- Current distribution rate approx.  
Only ACO animals and Emergency
- **(this month still over proposed 2025  
monthly budget by \$3,000!)**

# SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



**Current Rates for FY25 went into effect July, 2024**

Tier 1	Cat Neuter	\$150
Tier II	Cat Spay	\$200
Tier III	Small Dog Neuter	\$300 <del>\$250</del>
Tier IV	Small Dog Spay/ Large Dog Neuter	\$350 <del>\$300</del>
Tier V	Large Dog Spay	\$400 <del>\$350</del>

# SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



## ACO CARE ANIMALS (priority)

Complete and accurate ACO Assistance Request Form and Animal Intake Forms required.

### *Eligible*

Unclaimed stray dogs and cats that are housed in a municipal shelter/ holding facility.

Return to owner (RTO) dogs and cats that are housed in a municipal shelter/holding facility, the owner is claiming the animal and qualifies as a low-income resident of Massachusetts.

Dogs and cats that are being housed in a municipal shelter/ holding facility as part of a law enforcement case and custody has been relinquished.

Dogs and cats that are being housed in a municipal shelter/holding facility due to an involuntary abandonment and remain unclaimed after claim time frame (official notice must have been given).

Part I and Part II of the voucher is completely filled out prior to dropping off the animal for surgery.

### *Ineligible*

Dogs and cats that have been voluntarily surrendered to a municipal animal control facility for the purpose of rehoming.

Dogs and cats whose custody has been transferred to a private shelter, rescue, or foster group.

Return to owner (RTO) dogs and cats that are being housed in a municipal shelter/holding facility, the owner does not meet eligibility requirements.

Part I and Part II of the voucher is completely filled out prior to dropping off the animal for surgery.



# SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



**OWNED (waitlist, unless priority is indicated)**  
Completed and accurate Owned Animal Assistance Form required.

*Eligible*

Dogs and cats that are owned by low-income Massachusetts residents. To determine low-income eligibility, we recommend that the animal control officer verify enrollment in a state or federal assistance program, such as TAFDC, SSI, VS, SNAP, WIC, Section 8, etc.

Part I and Part II of the voucher is completely filled out prior to dropping off the animal for surgery.

*Ineligible*

Dogs and cats owned by Massachusetts residents who do not meet income eligibility requirements.

Dogs and cats owned by non-Massachusetts residents.

Part I and Part II of the voucher is completely filled out prior to dropping off the animal for surgery.

**FERAL CATS (voucher availability currently limited)**  
Completed and accurate At-Large Cat Request Form required.

*Eligible*

Cats that are homeless, un-owned, free-roaming, unsocialized, and appear healthy. These cats must be released back into its home colony, which will be managed, and must receive a 3/8" ear tip at the time of surgery.

Part I and Part II of the voucher is completely filled out prior to dropping off the animal for surgery.

*Ineligible*

Cats that are owned or possibly owned, or those that will be adopted out or are in foster care awaiting possible placement. Socialized cats being evaluated for placement, and cats that do not appear healthy.

Part I and Part II of the voucher is completely filled out prior to dropping off the animal for surgery.



# Other Project Updates

- **Animal Outcome Tracking**
- **Billboards**
- **Intern unpaid Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> through Dec 5th. Voucher program data scrub and ACO training assistance.**
- **ACO Guidance documents**





Help animals **FUR REAL!**

Visit tax line

**Line 33F**



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

[Mass.gov/AnimalFund](http://Mass.gov/AnimalFund)

*massDOT*  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Visit the warm and  
fuzzy tax line...



**Line 33F**



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
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[www.Mass.gov/AnimalFund](http://www.Mass.gov/AnimalFund)

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Turn taxes into TAIL WAGS


donate on

Line 33F



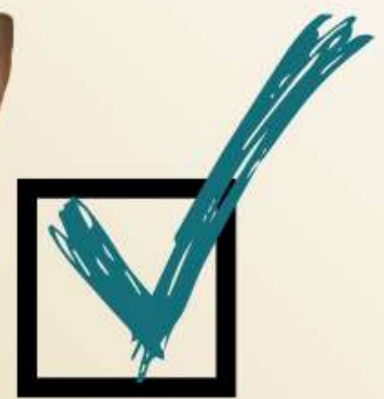
[Mass.gov/AnimalFund](https://Mass.gov/AnimalFund)

**massDOT**  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

 Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Help animals! Leave your mark

on **Line 33F**



at tax time!

[Mass.gov/AnimalFund](https://Mass.gov/AnimalFund)

**massDOT**  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

 Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs



# Other Projects



The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) Division of Animal Health is responsible for licensing and inspecting shelters/rescues, inspecting municipal animal holding facilities, and for providing training and guidance to animal control officers (ACOs). We want to provide shelters/rescues and ACOs with information on the changes created by the passing of Ollie's law, how the changes will affect them, and a timeline of when the changes will take effect, so we developed this document.

In 2020, a 7-month-old labradoodle by the name of Ollie was severely mauled by other dogs at an East Longmeadow boarding facility. Ollie spent two months in a veterinary hospital before ultimately succumbing to his injuries. Ollie's death could have been prevented if proper care and safety measures were in place at the boarding facility. Unfortunately, stories like Ollie's are not unique. It was clear to advocates that there were significant gaps in kennel oversight and that legislative changes were necessary to help prevent tragedies like Ollie's.

On September 20th, 2024, an Act to Increase Kennel Safety (AKA Ollie's Law) was signed by Governor Maura Healey. The passing of Ollie's law gives the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) the ability to work with an appointed advisory committee to create standards and enact regulations for commercial boarding and training kennels, including dog daycares. Ollie's Law also clarifies existing kennel license requirements, requires municipalities to report kennel licenses to MDAR, requires kennels to report any injuries that occur to the municipality, and establishes enforcement protocols for the municipality, which allow the state to assist when necessary.

## Committee Appointment

Letters of interest currently being accepted!

The MDAR Commissioner is responsible for appointing the advisory committee that will assist the Department in developing these regulations. Among the members of the committee are an owner of a licensed boarding or training kennel with a capacity of less than 50 dogs; an owner of a licensed boarding or training kennel with a capacity of more than 50 dogs; two animal control officers; a licensing authority representative; a veterinarian; an interested member of the public; a dog owner that uses the service of a licensed boarding or training kennel; a certified animal behaviorist; a person with five years of experience in training people about dog behavior; and a representative from a licensed shelter or rescue. Because each of you are qualified to serve on the committee and may work with others who meet the descriptions above, we are asking for your recommendations for members of the advisory committee.

Anyone that is interested in participating should send an email to Commissioner Ashley Randle, at [Ashley.Randle@mass.gov](mailto:Ashley.Randle@mass.gov). We appreciate your interest and assistance.

## Kennel License Requirements

Did not Change

MGL Chapter 140 Section 137A. (a) A person maintaining a kennel shall obtain a kennel license. Private kennels (more than 4 dogs), commercial kennels (1 or more dogs, held for boarding, holding, daycare, overnight stays, or training), commercial breeder kennels, domestic charitable kennels, and veterinary kennels (holding dogs for non-medical reasons) must have kennel licenses. Dogs under 3 months of age do not count for licensing purposes. Full definitions can be found in MGL Chapter 140 Section 136A.

## Key Changes

Effective December 19, 2024

- Commercial boarding or training kennels shall maintain records of individual dog licenses for all dogs in its care that are required to be licensed under Chapter 140 Sec. 137.
- All dogs over 6 months of age must wear rabies tags at all times and individual dog license tags (when required under Chapter 140 Sec. 137).
- All municipalities **must** have a process for issuing and revoking kennel licenses.
  - A municipality cannot choose to not issue kennel licenses, if kennels (by definition) are allowed in the municipality.

## OLLIE'S LAW LUNCH & LEARN SERIES

On September 20th, 2024, an Act to Increase Kennel Safety (AKA Ollie's Law) was signed by Governor Maura Healey. Find what the changes are and how they will affect kennel licensing and enforcement



**JAN 30, 2025 ZOOM MEETING FOR NOON - 1:30 PM ACOS & SUPERVISORS**

**FEB 11, 2025 ZOOM MEETING FOR TOWN CLERKS NOON - 1:30 PM & OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS**



MDAR, Mass Animal Fund, MSPCA and ARL representatives are hosting these ZOOM meetings to present the current and future changes created by Ollie's Law, and to answer your questions.

To allow us to answer as many questions as possible, please register and submit your questions ahead of the meeting through the QR code or email [Sheri.Gustafson@mass.gov](mailto:Sheri.Gustafson@mass.gov)

**REGISTER TODAY**

**SCAN ME**







# 2024 ANIMAL CONTROL CORE COMPETENCIES TRAINING WRAP UP

**COST TO RUN= \$3,625**

**TRAINERS: ACO FLYNN & ACO MACIEL**



MA Animal Laws, Emergency Preparation, Animal Behavior and Safe Capture, Wildlife, Communications and Officer Safety, Reports and Recordkeeping

FREE training is required for all municipal animal control officers in Massachusetts who did not previously complete the Core Competencies Training.

**In-person=48**

**IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL**  
 Session I:  
 Palmer Police Station  
 9/23 & 9/24

In-person= 20  
 virtual = 24  
 New ACOs =16  
 Refresh= 9  
 All passed ( that completed testing )

**IN-PERSON ONLY**

Session II :  
 ARL Dedham  
 10/8 & 10/9

~~In-person= 20  
 virtual = 24~~  
 New ACOs =22  
 Refresh= 11  
 Non passing= 2

Core sessions are in-person, but online access will be made available for Session I. Any ACO who previously completed the Core training was welcome to retake the course as a refresher for CE credit.







Next Meeting....

May?

Finalize Budget

Sheri will send out  
Doodle poll

33. Voluntary Fund Contributions

f. Homeless Animal Prevention and Care.....

\$ 1 0 . 0 0

Visit **Line 33F**

the warm and fuzzy  
tax line!



[www.mass.gov/AnimalFund](http://www.mass.gov/AnimalFund)