



**Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
September 7th, 2023 | 10:30 AM**

In Attendance:

Sheri Gustafson
Kyle Baron
Michael Cahill
Dr. Smith-Blackmore
Kara Holmquist
ACO Gualtieri
Katie Foote
Preyel Patel

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

I. Advisory Committee Empty Seats

Gustafson opened the meeting and stated that there are currently two empty seats on the Mass Animal Fund Advisory Committee: an interested member of the public, and a member in the pet industry.

Holmquist asked the Committee if there were any suggested candidates, and the Committee had no suggestions. Holmquist stated she will look into developing a short list of candidates and Gustafson said she will try to compile names as well.

II. Fund Totals and Expenditures

Gustafson explained the current Fund's revenue totals. The Fund has an unexpended balance of \$576,857.79 as of 9/6/23. The revenue intake in CY23 to date is \$507,470. Gustafson presented the FY numbers, in FY23 the Fund took in \$596,780. Gustafson explained that the significant increase in FY23 revenue is due to the two grants received by The Stanton Foundation in FY23 of \$75,000 and \$30,000. Since its inception in 2013, the Fund has taken in \$4,444,923.52.

\$3,791,810.65 has been from tax donations/ online donations/ grants, \$3,112.87 from interest, and \$650,000 from line items in the state budget.

Gustafson presented a spending breakdown from Fund inception to date. To date, the Fund's spending was in the following distributions: \$2,713,096.14 (61%) for veterinary services, \$109,476.87 (3%) for ACO training, \$1,001,535.80 (23%) for administration, \$27,857.79 (<1%) for marketing. Gustafson stated that the recent influx of revenue will be utilized to reduce the voucher wait list.

III. Budget/Grant Spending

Gustafson presented the Fund's CY23 budget. CY23 budget of \$590,000 had the following allocations: 67% for veterinary services, 1% for ACO training, 28% for administration, and less than 1% for marketing. The budget

planned to utilize \$60,000 in rollover revenue from CY22 and estimated revenue from \$430,000 in donations and \$100,000 from a state budget line item. The CY23 budget would leave an operating buffer of \$275,000 in the trust fund.

Gustafson presented the adjusted CY23 budget for the Fund. Gustafson explained that the new proposed budget is \$650,000. This new total is from \$406,770 in tax donations/grants, \$100,000 FY24 state line item, \$25,000 MDAR admin adjustment, and \$88,750 rollover from 2022 (year correction from slide). The new proposed CY23 budget has the following allocations: 78% for veterinary services, 1% for ACO training, 20% for administration, <1% for marketing. Gustafson explained that the Fund is able to reduce the administration allocation thanks to MDAR absorbing \$76,159 of payroll expenses into their admin account.

The Advisory Committee had no questions or objections to the proposed CY23 budget.

Gustafson presented that the \$75,000 the Fund received from The Stanton Foundation grant was 100% spent and that it was utilized to help 293 canines from August 2022 through January 2023. The Stanton Foundation granted the Fund an additional \$30,000 in June 2023 which they specifically wanted used to help canines in need of emergency surgeries related to the reproductive system such as pyometras, and dystocias. Since these surgeries are significantly more expensive than routine procedures, the 56% of this grant that has been utilized since June 2023 has assisted 33 canines.

IV. FY23 Line Item

Gustafson stated that the FY23 budget line item of \$100,000 is 100% spent and had helped 719 animals with the help of an additional \$25,715 in revenue from the MDAR admin account. Gustafson stated that the Fund has also received an FY24 budget line item of \$100,000 that will start to be utilized soon.

V. Spay/Neuter Voucher Program

Gustafson presented that the Fund has helped 19,315 animals to date equaling 2.7 million spent. The Fund is on track to hit 20,000 animals helped in late December or early in 2024. Gustafson stated that in CY23 1,186 vouchers have been paid for. Gustafson noted that the Fund has had a steady increase in emergency cases since 2021.

Baron gave information on the Fund's spay/neuter voucher program. In CY23 the program welcomed Lowell Humane Society, Come Together Animal Clinic, and the Town of Norwood as new providers/municipal partners. The program lost North Shore Animal Hospital, and JM PetVet as providers and Potter's League is suspending voucher surgeries for an undetermined period. Baron is hopeful that Potter's League will continue as a provider once they address the backlog of spay/neuter surgeries needed for Rhode Island residents. Baron presented that as of 9/6/23, over 1,800 vouchers have been disseminated, and there are currently 636 plus animals on the MAF waitlist. Vouchers are currently being issued for requests as far back as January 2023. Voucher dissemination for CY23 is currently at approximately \$38,000 a month, but that rate could be increased to \$60,000 a month if the spay/neuter provider network can handle the increase. Gustafson hopes that this increase in distribution can rapidly reduce the waitlist.

Gustafson mentioned that the current voucher redemption rate is approximately 61% for 2023 and that this is a reduction from the historic redemption rate of 70%. Gustafson asked Baron if he had gotten feedback from owners who did not use vouchers. Baron stated that some owners have not used vouchers due to the long wait time and low number of providers. Baron said he would like to revisit extending voucher expiration dates to 3 months again. Gustafson asked to see data on whether the past voucher expiration extension was successful in increasing the redemption rate.

Gustafson asked if the Fund has utilized the voucher use predictor tool developed by The Stanton Foundation yet. Baron responded that he has not used the tool, but will explore its use.

Gustafson presented the Voucher Program's veterinary rates. The Voucher program has raised reimbursement rates and the new rates apply as of July 1st, 2023. All rate tiers increased by \$50. The current tier 1 rate is \$150 for a male cat, tier II rate for female cats is \$200, tier III rate for small male dogs is \$250, tier IV rate for small female dogs and large male dogs is \$300, and tier V rate for large female dogs is \$350. Gustafson stated that many of the complication add-on rates also increased and that providers are now receiving additional reimbursements for vaccines. Gustafson asked Baron if he was getting feedback on the new rates. Baron responded that feedback so far has been positive.

Gustafson paused the slideshow to open a discussion on how to recruit new veterinary partners. Gustafson suggested that the Committee consider annual reimbursement increases or even alternate rates for private practice veterinary providers. Dr. Smith-Blackmore agreed that we consider increasing rates annually. Dr. Smith-Blackmore suggested that we reach out to the AVMA to see if members of their economic team could help create an index of veterinary expenses. Gustafson stated she would help with this project. Holmquist said she could help as needed. The Committee agreed that increasing veterinary and municipal partnerships is a priority.

VI. Promotions/Events/Marketing

Gustafson presented recent marketing campaigns including a dog licensing initiative and donation cards. Gustafson stated that while social media marketing has seemed to lose momentum lately there appears to be an increase in interest in physical marketing material such as cards, and flyers. Gustafson commented that coworkers at MDAR are assisting in language translations for marketing material.

Gustafson said she will be developing the 2024 tax donation billboards in the next month.

VII. Animal Control Officer Training

Gustafson stated that the 2023 ACO Core Competencies Training starts next week. The Fund initially scheduled two sessions but had to add a third session to meet the need. Gustafson discussed that in 2022 the Core training was held in-person and virtually for each session, but that overall knowledge retention seemed to drop. The Fund is focusing on in-person training this year and only session three will have a virtual option. The Fund is also splitting the third course's days by utilizing a Thursday/Thursday schedule versus having the session consecutive on Monday/ Tuesday. Another change to the 2023 core training is the development of a 20-page interactive training guide that will create knowledge checks throughout the presentation. The training guide will replace the past training binders and in turn, reduce the training materials by over 25,000 sheets of paper per course year.

Gustafson mentioned that to comply with the department's effort to reduce paper the Fund also created online portals. A continuing education submission portal for ACOs, and an ACO designation portal for municipalities. Gustafson stated that while the CE portal is working as intended, the designation portal has not been successful. 2023 Designation emails were sent multiple times to ACO supervisors over the last year and reporting compliance is currently around 50%. Gustafson suggested that paper designation might need to be sent for the 2024 cycle. ACO Gualteri stated that emails often get shuffled, and that paper seems like a more effective option. Holmquist agreed that ACO designation compliance is essential and if the Fund needs to go back to paper it should. Cahill commented that the decision to move department projects to paper-free was to not only reduce paper but also due to the department's move to a new building and lack of storage space. Cahill agreed that if the new system isn't working adjustments should be made for the cycle.

Gustafson stated that we reached the end of our agenda topics.

The Committee decided to set the next MAF AC meeting date of:
Wednesday, January 10th at 10:30 AM



Advisory Committee Meeting

9/7/23 *Crunch time...*



AGENDA



- I. Advisory Committee Empty Seats**
- II. Fund Totals and Expenditures**
- III. Budget/Grant Spending**
- IV. FY23 Line Item**
- V. Spay/Neuter Voucher Program**
 - A. Numbers**
 - B. Wait List**
 - C. Provider Recruitment**

- VI. Promotions/ Events/ Marketing**
- VII. Animal Control Officers**
 - A. 2023 ACO Designations**
 - B. 2022 Core Training Summary**
 - C. CE Training**

ADVISORY COMMITTEE EMPTY SEATS



Mass Animal Fund Advisory Committee Seats

Interested Member of the Public (Vacant)

Member in the Pet Industry (Vacant)

Member In Animal Control

Member from Animal Shelters/Rescues

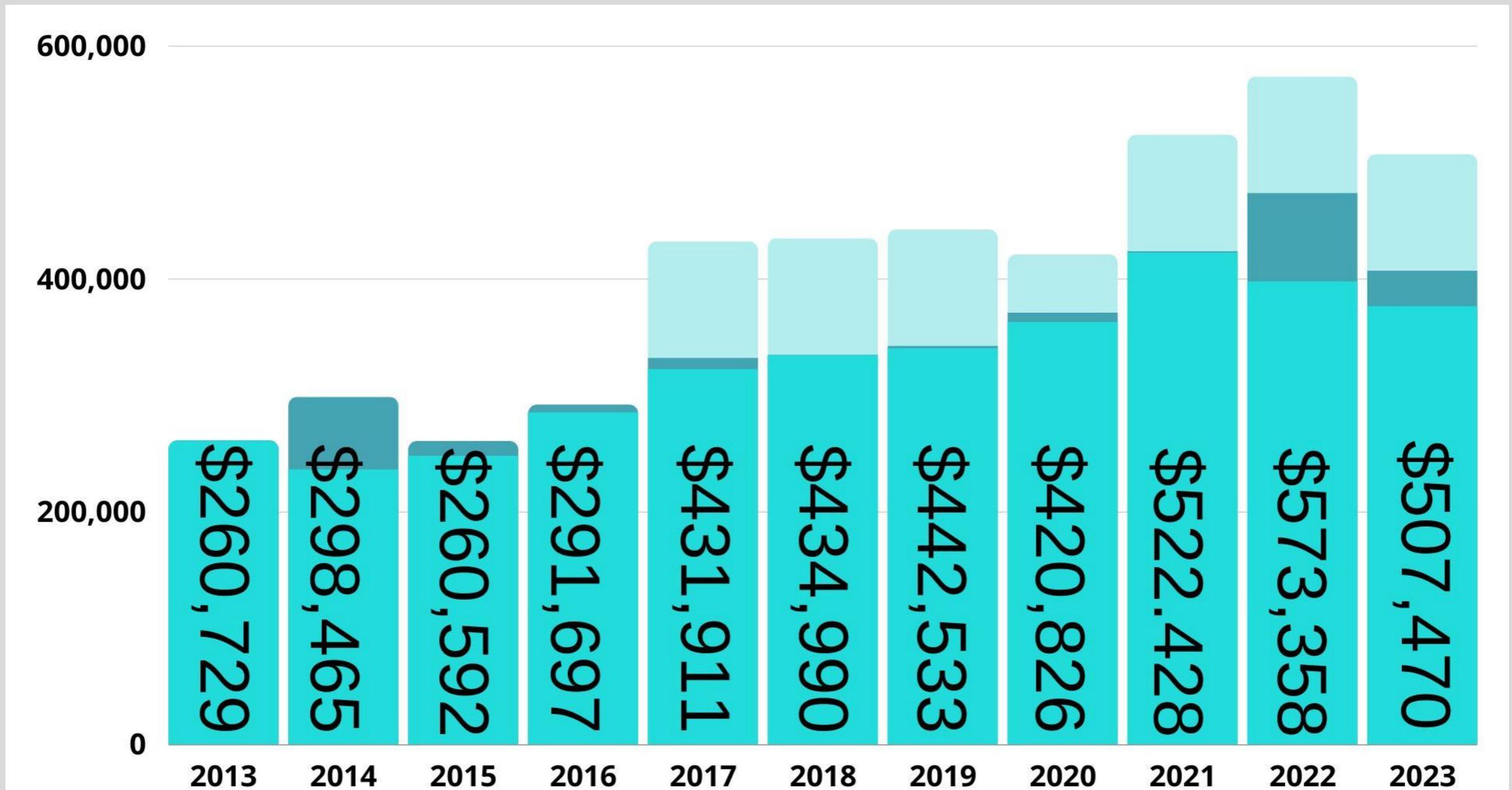
Member from the Veterinary Field



FUND TOTALS AND EXPENDITURES



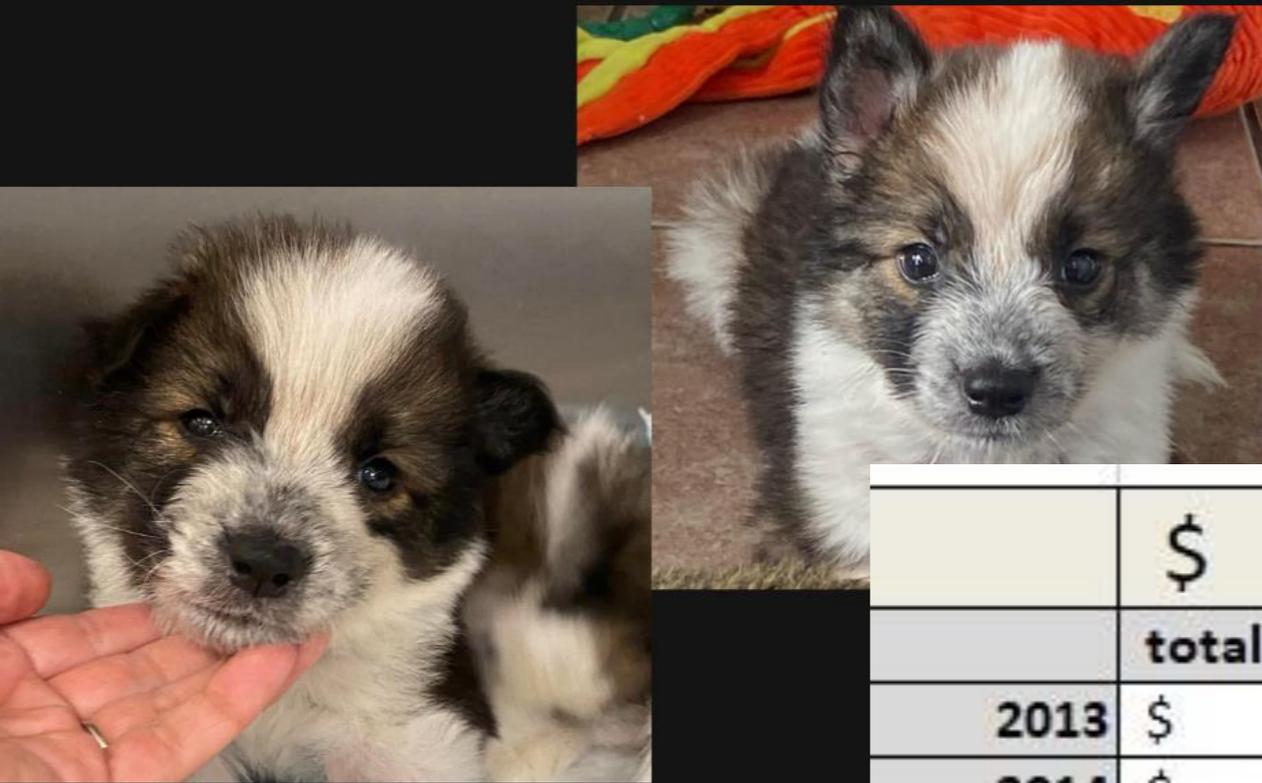
Unexpended balance as of 9.6.23 \$576,857.79



FUND TOTALS AND EXPENDITURES



How our donations have grown....

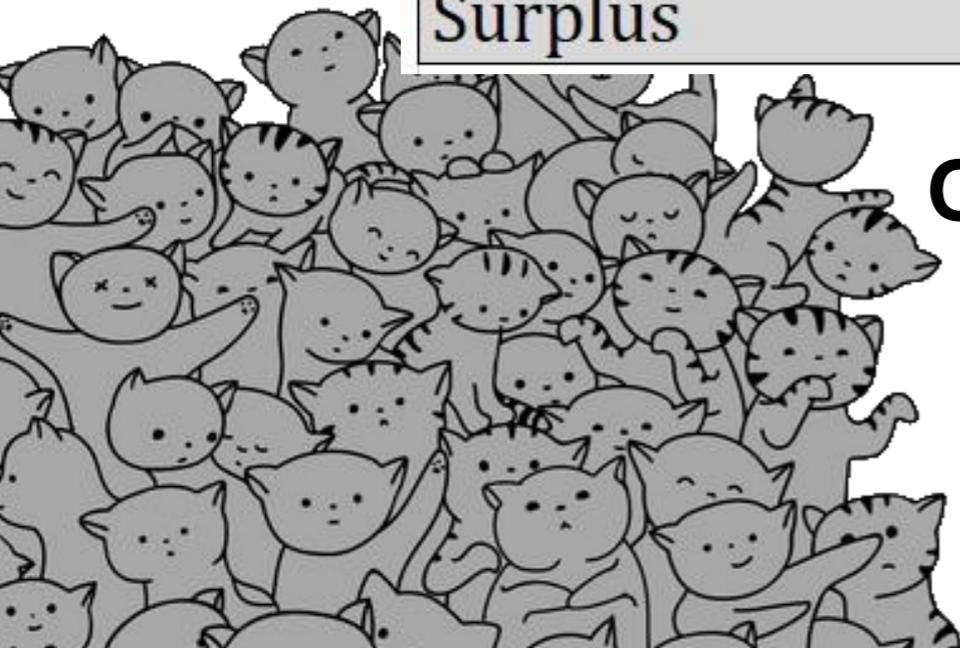


	\$ 4,444,923.52		
	total donations/grants	interest	line item
2013	\$ 260,729.55	0	
2014	\$ 298,086.38	378.73	
2015	\$ 260,303.06	289.6	
2016	\$ 291,494.16	123.15	
2017	\$ 331,685.67	225.98	\$ 100,000.00
2018	\$ 334,590.90	399.44	\$ 100,000.00
2019	\$ 342,064.72	469.06	\$ 100,000.00
2020	\$ 370,686.42	139.68	\$ 50,000.00
2021	\$ 422,405.32	22.89	\$ 100,000.00
2022	\$ 472,994.17	364.27	\$ 100,000.00
2023	\$ 406,770.30	700.07	\$ 100,000.00
	\$ 3,791,810.65	\$ 3,112.87	\$ 650,000.00

FUND TOTALS AND EXPENDITURES



Inception to date	Percentage of Revenue \$4,444,924	Expenses to Date \$3,851,855
Veterinary	61%	\$2,713,096.14
ACO Training	3%	\$109,476.87
Administration	23%	\$1,001,535.80
Marketing	<1%	\$27,102.27
Surplus	13%	\$576,857.79



Over 19,315 local animals helped!
Over 23,500 vouchers have been distributed.





2023 Budget

\$590,000 = \$430,000 from 2023 Donations
 \$100,000 FY24 Line Item
 \$60,000 Rollover from 2022

* would leave a buffer of approx. \$275,000
 in the Fund

2023 Proposed \$590,000	% of Proposed	Proposed Expenses = \$587,740
Veterinary	67%	\$400,000.00
ACO Training	1%	\$18,400.00
Administration	28%	\$160,000.00
Marketing	<1%	\$11,600.00
Surplus		(\$60,000.00)



2023 CY Current Budget

\$650,000 = 406,770 from donations and grants
 \$100,000 FY24 Line Item, \$25,000 from MDAR
 \$88,750 Rollover from 2023
 * would leave a buffer of approx. \$300,000
 in the Fund

In 2023, \$76,159 in payroll expenses were rolled out of the Fund and into MDAR Admin.

2023 Working \$650,000	%	Proposed Expenses	to go
Veterinary	78%	\$500,000.00	\$269,185.00
ACO Training	1%	\$18,920.00	\$18,920.00
Administration	20%	\$121,040.00	\$74,761.00
Marketing	<1%	\$11,600.00	\$11,600.00
Surplus		(\$88,750.00)	

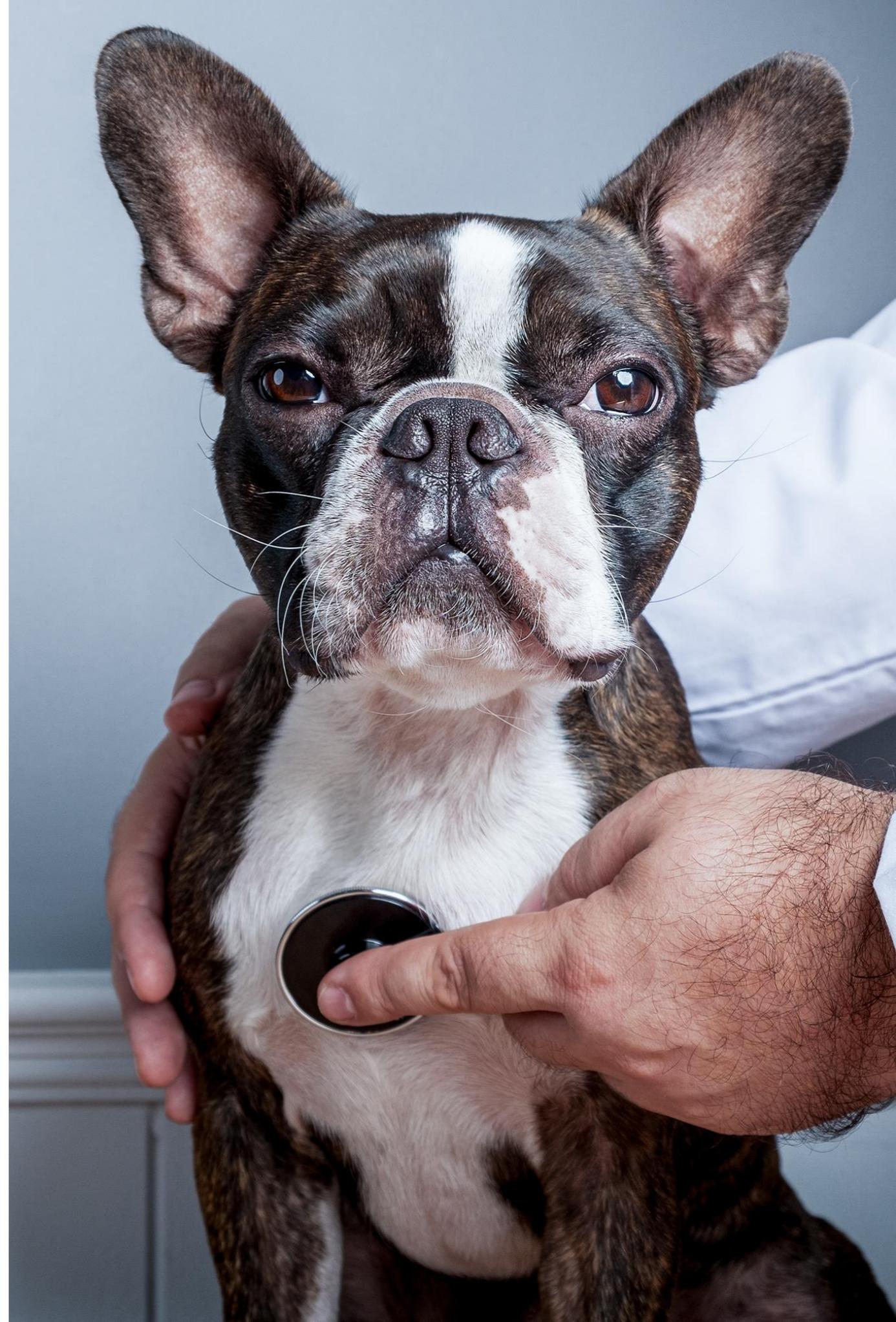
FY23 Budget Line Item
\$100,000 plus an additional
\$25,715 from MDAR Admin

100% spent.

Released for use in
increments.

Average cost of surgery
\$175

Utilized for 719
surgeries.



The Stanton Foundation Grant \$75,000

100% spent.

Utilized from Aug. 2022 through
Jan. 2023

Average cost of surgery \$256

Utilized for 293 Canines

The Stanton Foundation Emergency Grant \$30,000

56% utilized

Utilized from June 2023 through
current

Utilized for 33 pyometra /dystocia
canines to date



The Stanton Foundation Grant *Final Report 1.28.23*

Support

In August of 2022, the Massachusetts Animal Fund received a very generous grant in the amount of \$75,000 from The Stanton Foundation to be able to help canines in need across the Commonwealth!



Canines Helped

To date, 293 canines in need in Massachusetts have received FREE spay/neuter surgeries through this grant. 141 males and 152 females. 34 dogs in ACO care, 259 owned by low-income MA residents.



Areas Supported

To date, this grant has provided FREE services to canines in 103 municipalities through the collaborative effort of the Fund and 29 veterinary and 5 municipal partners.



Program Impact

Through the support of the Stanton Foundation, the Fund was able to reduce the wait time for vouchers from over 5 months to less than 45 days. 162 dogs even received vouchers on the same day requested.

Lives Saved



Thanks to the Stanton Foundation support, 35 Canines in Massachusetts were able to receive FREE emergency services. 21 of these canines needed immediate spay/neuter for a life-threatening medical condition. 9 canines received immediate FREE spay/neuter services to be able to keep them in housing with their families and 5 received immediate FREE spay/neuter services to help get them out of a potentially dangerous situation.

Grant Utilized

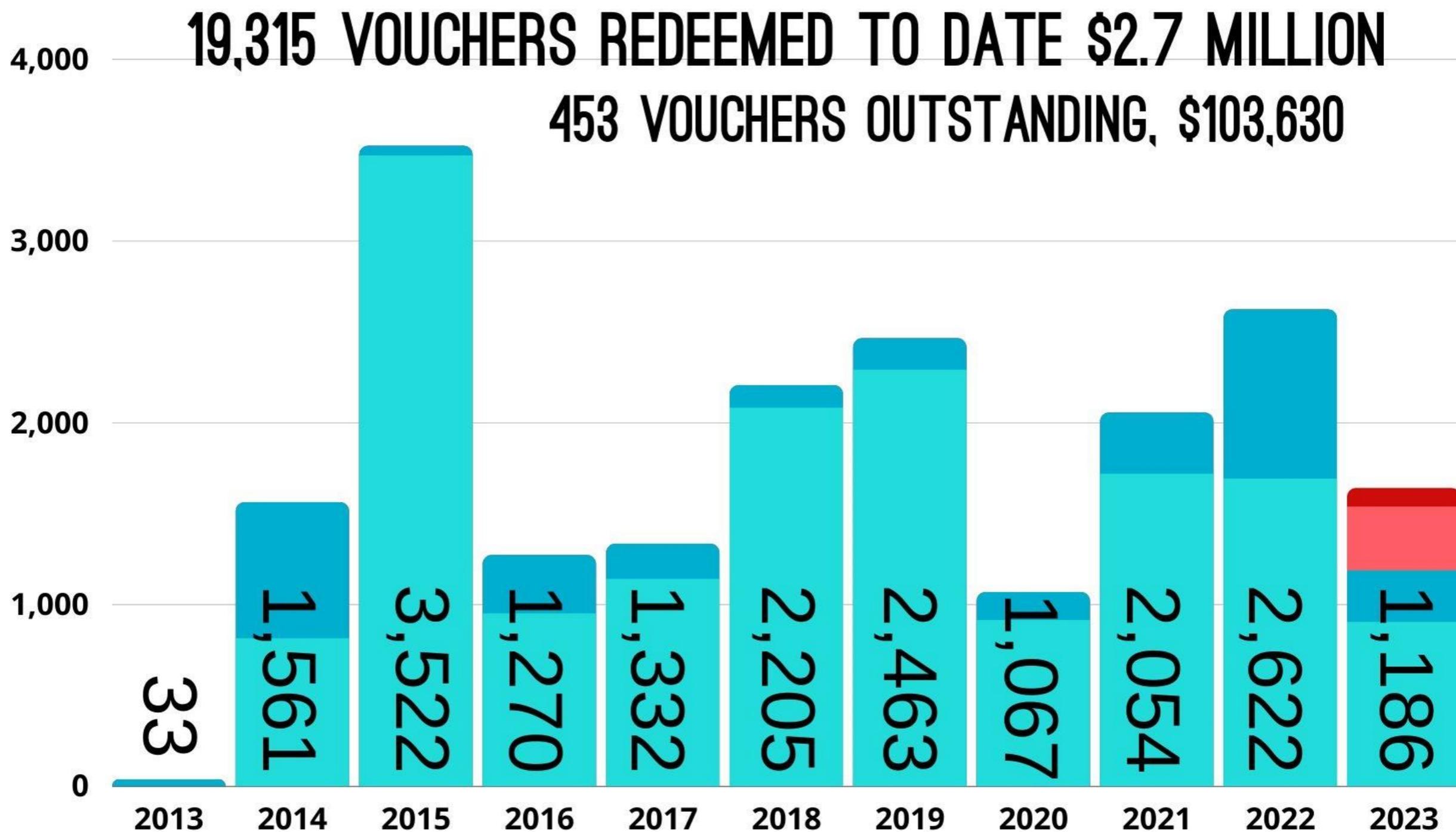
Through Aug. 2022-Jan.2023

\$75,000

100%

279 canines have received spay/neuter services, \$256 average cost of care.

SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



S/N Quick Notes:

Newest Providers-

**Lowell Humane Society,
Come Together Animal Clinic,
Town of Norwood**

Lost Providers-

**North Shore Animal Hospital,
Potter's League (temporary hold)
JM Pet Vet**

Current Waitlist-

- 636 plus providers lists (\$143,350)**
- requests currently being issued from January.**
- current distribution rate approx. \$38,000 a month (go to \$60,000?)**
- over 1800 vouchers already issued in 2023**

Currently redemption rate for 2023 vouchers is around 61% approx. 460+ vouchers issued in 2023 unused.

SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



2023 Voucher Days

1/9/2023 Second Chance Worcester
1/12/2023 Second Chance NB
2/1/2023 Second Chance NB
3/1/2023 Second Chance NB
3/7/2023 Second Chance Springfield
3/10/2023 Second Chance Worcester
3/23/2023 MSPCA Boston
4/18/2023 Second Chance Springfield
4/25/2023 ARL Fall River
5/1/2023 Second Chance Worcester
5/8/2023 ARL New Bedford
6/14/2023 Second Chance NB
6/15/2023 MSPCA Boston
7/17/2023 Second Chance Worcester

7/20/2023 Lowell Humane Society
8/9/2023 **Second Chance NB Cancelled**
9/13/2023 MSPCA NEAS
9/18/2023 MSPCA Cape Cod
9/27/2023 Second Chance NB
10/10/2023 Second Chance Springfield
10/25/2023 Second Chance NB
11/29/2023 Second Chance NB
12/4/2023 MSPCA Cape Cod

SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



WHY Raise Rates for dogs?

**Tier III \$200: small male dog average cost \$231
(highest cost reported \$580)
< half meeting cost**

**Tier IV \$250: small female dog, large male dog
average cost \$290 (highest reported \$630)
< a quarter meeting cost**

**Tier V \$300: large female dog a, average cost \$350
(highest reported cost (\$630)
< a quarter meeting cost**

SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



New Rates

	Proposed New Rates	
Tier 1	Cat Neuter	\$150
Tier II	Cat Spay	\$200
Tier III	Small Dog Neuter	\$250
Tier IV	Small Dog Spay/ Large Dog Neuter	\$300
Tier V	Large Dog Spay	\$350

SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



New Complication Rates

These new rates have increased ave. cost to \$256

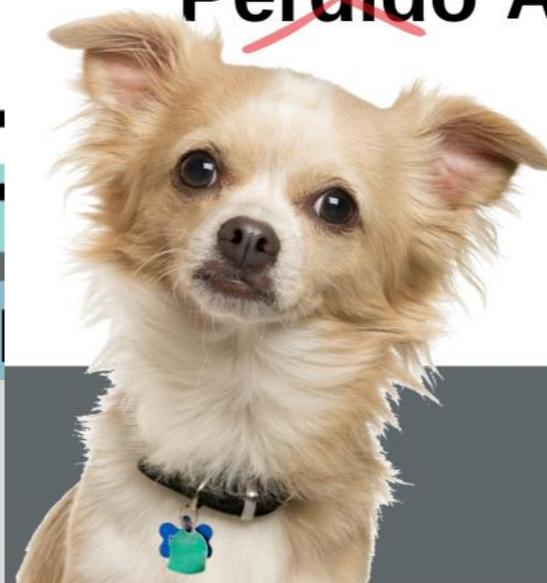
	Complication Add-on Rates	
Parasites	1 med \$20	2 or more meds \$35
Cryptorchid	Inguinal \$40	Abdominal \$75
Hernia Repair	simple \$40	\$75
Extra Large	> 75 lbs \$50	>100 lbs. \$75
Older >5	\$40	with/bloodwork \$75
Estrus	\$35	
Obese	\$40	
Dystocia/ Pyometra	Cat \$150	Dog \$200
Stand Alone Reimbursements: MDAR Request or if animal is found to already be S/N		
1 vaccine \$25	2 vaccines \$35	Under Anesthesia extra \$50
MDAR Emergency Related Medical Request: \$Determined at preapproval		

~~Lost~~ Loved & Licensed
in (your Town/City)



address of your town's website will

~~Perdido~~ Amado y Licenciado
en Lawrence



www.cityoflawrence.com/464/Dog-Licensing



Donate today!



Help us
HELP ANIMALS!

Find out more

www.mass.gov/AnimalFund

ACO TRAINING



- **Core Training starts next week!**

3 sessions 120 ACO signed up

- **Northampton (in-person)**
- **Dedham (in-person)**
- **Oxford NEW Location (in-person and virtual)**

2023 Core Changes

- Focusing on in-person learning**
- Moving towards paperless**
(saving roughly 25,000 sheets of paper)

New CE submission Portal (going well)

New designation Portal (not great)

2022 Core

- **Updated and Reprinted MA Law book.**
- **NEW final exam video**
- **Held two sessions**
- **Chelmsford (virtual & in person)**
- **Dedham (in person only)**

2023 Training Guide

In an effort to reduce waste and save paper the Core Competencies Slides, MA lawbook, and handouts are now available online on our ACO Resources page.

Each ACO does have a training guide, please complete the activities as we train, and use these answers to complete the open book testing.

Please take this time to look over the study guide and fill in “My Answers” on page 4



**ACO Core
Competencies
Training Guide**



Training Guide Pause

Let's take a
minute and
review guide
pages 4, 5, & 6

All dogs require licenses when they reach what age?

To get a license all dogs need proof of what?

If a six-month or older dog is acquired, the owner has how many days to obtain a license?

What animals must be vaccinated for rabies?

If a municipality doesn't have its own shelter, where can they hold their animals?

Under the MGLs what are three things that could lower a license fee?

When determining kennel capacity for licensing, what things should you take into consideration?

Which of the following are valid reasons for a veterinarian to issue an exemption for the rabies shot?

- a. Immune mediated disease
- b. Owners don't believe in vaccinations.
- c. Anaphylaxis - severe allergic reaction
- d. Animal is fractious at the time of the exam

Foster parents must license a dog individually if they have the dog for _____ days or more

(True or False?) Dogs must have a license, but it is not necessary for them to wear it in public.

A Kennel license is required if they are __ or more dogs over 3 mo. on the property.

What is the maximum fine for an unvaccinated dog, cat, or ferret?



2023 ACO Designations emailed, and were due back on Feb 1st, 2021, ½ are still being tracked down.

Why such bad compliance?

May need to revisit mailed designations for 2024?



Next Meeting....

January?

