



**Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
April 6, 2021 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

In Attendance:

Sheri Gustafson
Kyle Baron
Michael Cahill
Dr. Lorraine O'Connor
Kara Holmquist
Ray West
Deanna Gualtieri
Laura Marwill
Dr. Martha Smith-Blackmore
David Feldman

Due to Covid-19 Social Distancing restrictions, this open meeting was held virtually over the ZOOM platform.

A Power Point presentation was shown over ZOOM to all attendees.

III. (d) Veterinary Reimbursement Rates

Due to other staff obligations, veterinary reimbursement rates (rates) were discussed first. Sheri presented a history of the Fund's rates and changes. When the voucher program started in 2014, the rates were: Tier I= \$75 cat neuter/small dog neuter, Tier II= \$150 cat spay, large dog neuter, small dog spay, Tier III= large dog spay. Since the voucher program's inception, the rates have been adjusted twice. In 2016, Small dog neuters were moved into the Tier II=\$150 bracket. In 2018, a four-tier system was created and additional reimbursements for complications were added, Tier I=\$75 cat neuter, Tier II=\$150 cat spay, small dog neuter, Tier III= \$225 large dog neuter, small dog spay, and Tier IV=\$300 large dog spay. Sheri mentioned that recently all providers were polled and the Fund's current four-tier system was not adequate to meet rising veterinary costs.

Sheri presented the current complication rates which varied from a \$10 parasite charge to a full tier bump for pyometra surgery. Sheri stated that the providers polled said some of these rates were meeting the cost of care.

The following new rate tier system was proposed: F Tier I= \$100 cat neuter, F Tier II= \$150 cat spay, D Tier I= \$200 small dog neuter, D Tier II=\$250 small dog spay/large dog neuter, D Tier III= \$300 large dog spay.

Sheri presented a proposed complication rate chart to address the rise in the cost of care. The chart also had a

line to allow MDAR to reimburse for stand-alone vaccines and to negotiate costs for emergency cases.

Martha asked if deciduous tooth extraction could be added to complications, Mike responded that it would require a statute change.

Ray asked what last year's surgeries would have cost at the new rates. Sheri presented the differences in cost for each surgery grouping and stated that the adjusted rates would have equaled only a 20 percent increase in expenses.

The committee tabled the rate increase voting until the end of the Fund's financial discussions.

I. Fund Totals and Expenditures

Sheri explained the current Fund's revenue totals. The Fund has an unexpended balance of \$334,810 as of 2/2/2021. The intake for donations to date in 2021 is \$91,967. Numbers reflect that CY21 is approximately \$7,000 down from CY20. To date, the Fund has taken in \$2,933,633. in revenue. \$2,480,343 (84.5%) has been from tax donations, \$101,259 (3.5%) from online donations and grants, \$2,031. from interest, and \$350,000 (11.9%) from line items on the state budget.

Sheri presented a spending breakdown from Fund inception to date. To date, the Fund's spending was in the following distributions: \$1,778,381 (61%) for veterinary services, \$86,119 (3%) for ACO training, \$711,047 (24%) for administration, \$23,907 (<1%) for marketing, and \$334,179 (11%) surplus. Total spending \$2,599,553 as of 3/25/21.

The CY21 budget was reviewed. CY21 Budget of \$512,000 had the following allocations: 67.3% for veterinary services, less than 1% for ACO training, 30.6 % for administration, less than 1% for marketing. To date, 24% of the CY budget has been spent.

II. Budget Line Item

The Fund received \$50,000 in additional funding from a line item in the Massachusetts FY21 budget. The FY20 line item was fully spent over 3 months for 312 spay/neuter surgeries at 15 veterinary providers.

III. Spay/Neuter Voucher Program

Sheri presented that the Fund has helped 13,920 animals to date, and has already redeemed 467 vouchers in CY21.

Kyle presented CY21 voucher distribution numbers. As of April 2021, approximately 720 have been disseminated, and there are currently about 150 animals on the waitlist. Voucher dissemination for CY21 has been for the following categories: 87% to animals in low-income households, 12% for animals in ACO care, and 1% for feral cats. Worcester County has received the largest number of vouchers, followed by Suffolk, Hampden, and Berkshire. Nantucket is the only county that has not received vouchers. Cats and dogs are almost equally represented in CY21 voucher dissemination.

In CY20, \$169,460 was issued for spay/neuter to help 1067 dogs and cats. In 2020, the Fund has issued 1772 vouchers. Voucher distribution increased in the second half of 2020 as surgery capacity increased. Since the Voucher Program's inception in 2014, the Fund has spent \$1,764,365 to help 13,600 Commonwealth cats/dogs. Emergency and priority vouchers make up 13% of the distribution.

Sheri stated the Fund currently has completed 10 Voucher Days in CY21 and is in process of planning 8 Voucher Days in the Summer.

IV. Promotions/Events

Sheri stated that the Fund was invited to a media event with ARL, Sheri attended.

The Fund will continue to run 2021 tax donation social posts through the extended tax deadline of May 17th.

V. Animal Control Officer Training Updates

Sheri stated that the 2021 Core Competencies Training was postponed until the Fall of 2021 and that an Oct/Nov run is most likely. The Fund will plan on holding 3 sessions and all training contracts will need to be renewed.

Sheri reported that the 2021 ACO Designations were mailed at the end of January 2021 and to date, 24% of municipalities were still unreported.

III. (d) Veterinary Reimbursement Rates

The veterinary reimbursement rate discussion was continued.

Laura asked if there was concern about the voucher program being abused and the screening process. Sheri commented that this year the fund has started requiring full voucher applications for each owned animal request and that we have not had reports of voucher abuse since the first year of the program. Laura asked about providing vouchers for animals in ACO care. Sheri stated that animals in ACO care are a priority and that the Fund is designed to make sure that all cats/dogs leaving an ACO facility are altered before placement. Laura asked why that responsibility would not fall on adopters. Mike stated that the Fund's statute says that one of its purposes is to offset the cost of spay/neuter for homeless animals and that animals in ACO care fall into that category. The Committee agreed that the animals in ACO fall into the homeless animal category. Laura asked for an update on the Municipal partnership program. Sheri stated that that three municipalities have signed up to date, and the Fund is just starting to be invoiced.

Sheri asked for the committee to vote on the proposed new veterinary reimbursement rates. The committee approved the proposed rates. Sheri asked for the committee to vote on the proposed new veterinary rates for complications. The Committee approved the new proposed complication rates.

Sheri said that all veterinary providers will be notified of the rate changes and that they will go into effect on 7/1/2021 when all veterinary contracts are renewed.

The next meeting date was set for
Tuesday, June 29th, 2021
10:00 AM- 12:00 PM
Zoom Platform if needed



ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

4.6.21 *at home* (FOR NOW) *edition*



AGENDA



I. Fund Totals and Expenditures

a. Review of Balance Sheet / Budget

II. Budget Line Item

III. Spay/Neuter Voucher Program

a. Numbers

b. Wait List

c. Municipal Partner Update

d. Veterinary Reimbursement Rates

IV. Promotions/ Events/ Marketing

a. 2021 Tax Season

b. Off-Season Promotions

V. Animal Control Officers

a. 2021 Designations

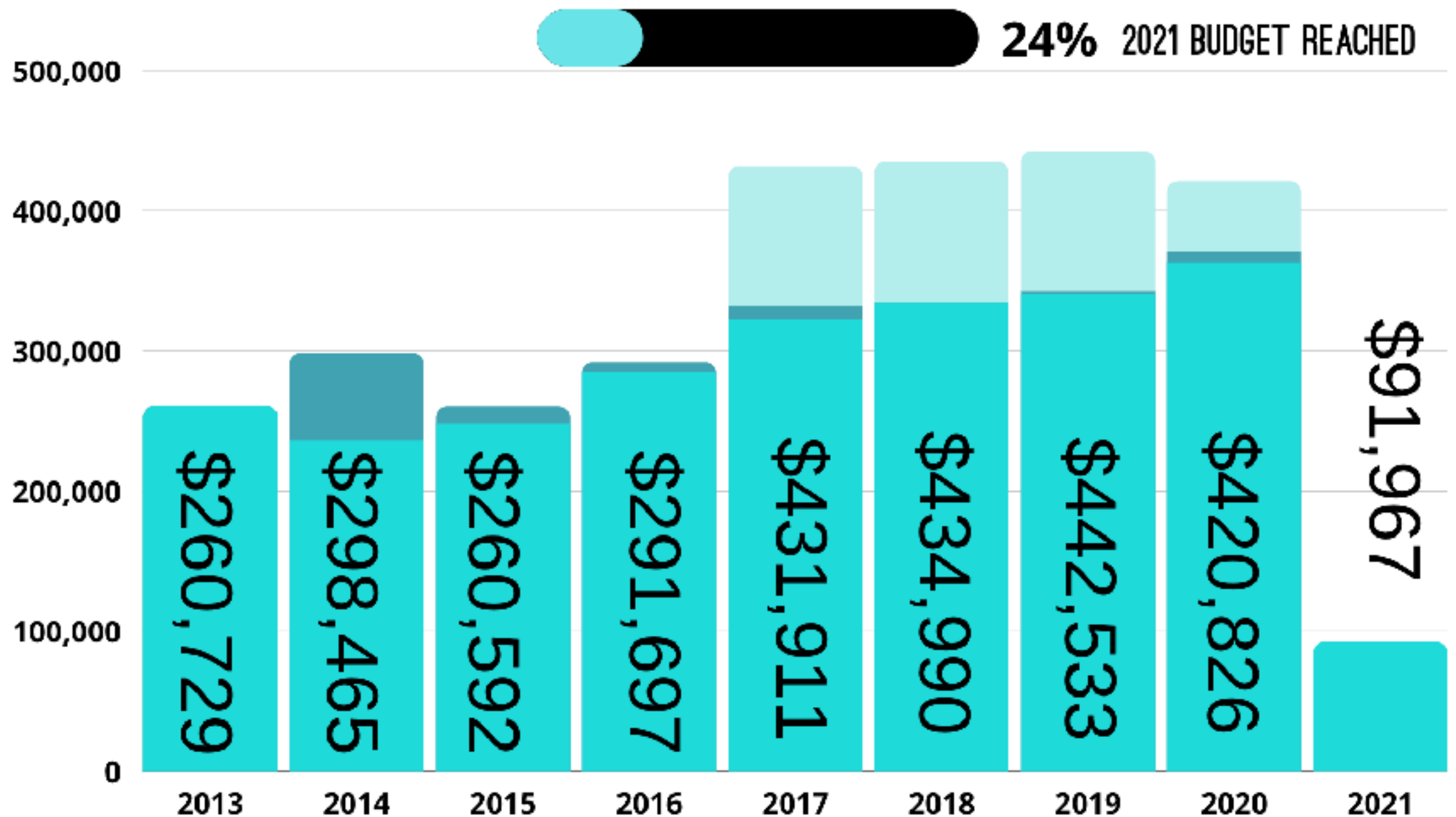
b. 2021 Core Training

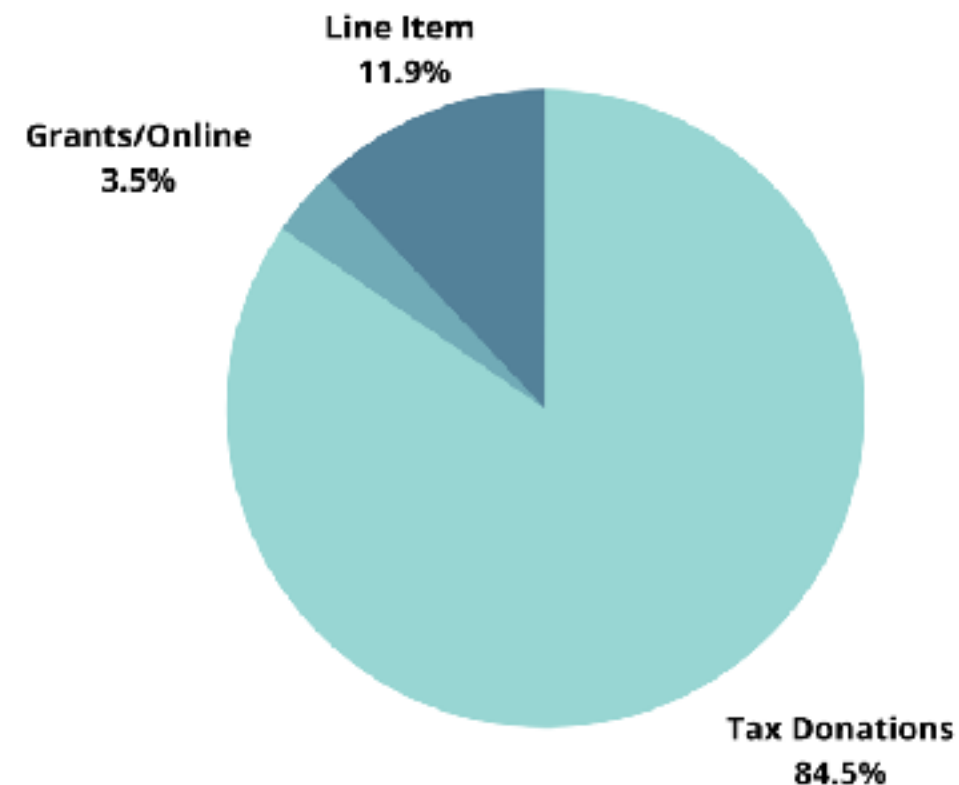
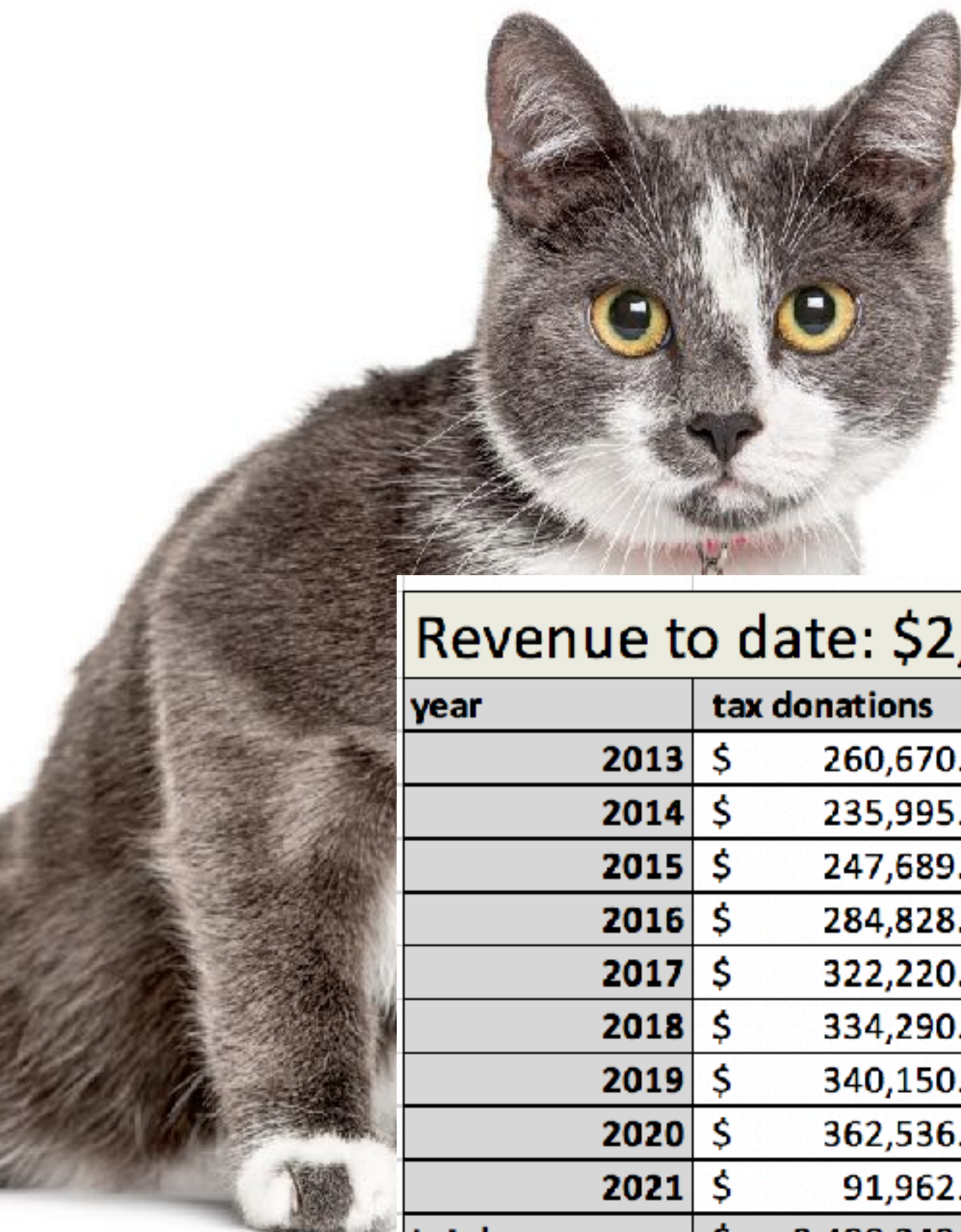
c. CE Training

FUND TOTALS AND EXPENDITURES



UNEXPENDED BALANCE AS OF 3/25/21 \$334,810. SO FAR CY21 ABOUT \$7,000 LOWER CY20





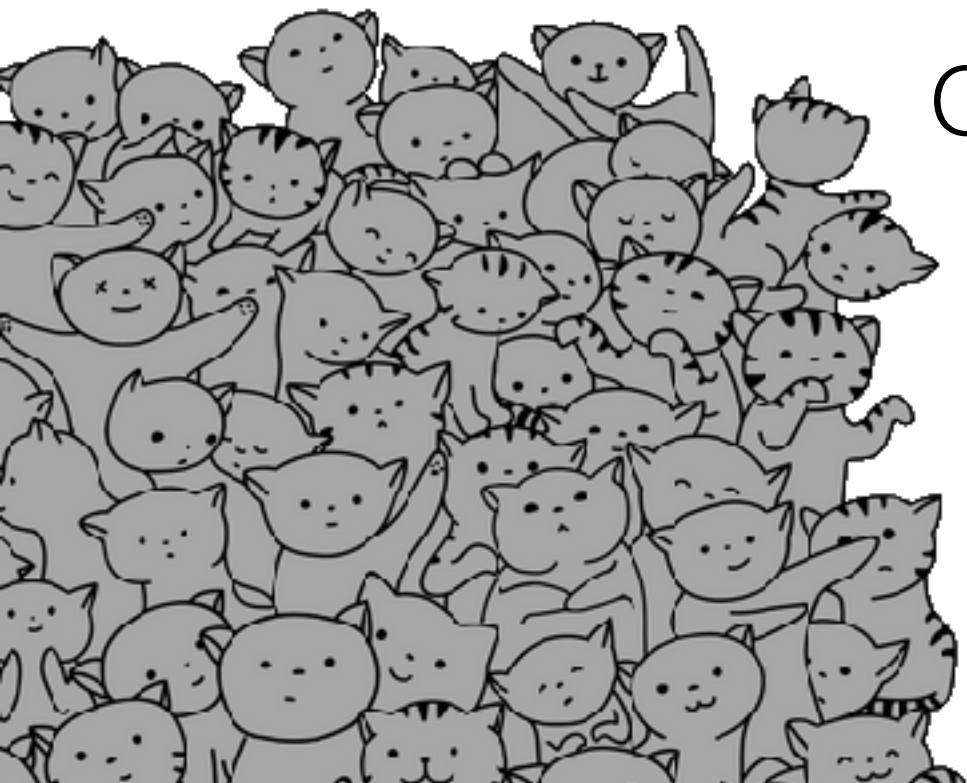
Revenue to date: \$2,933,633.90

year	tax donations	online/grants	interest	line item
2013	\$ 260,670.55	59	0	
2014	\$ 235,995.38	62091	378.73	
2015	\$ 247,689.33	12613.73	289.6	
2016	\$ 284,828.37	6665.79	123.15	
2017	\$ 322,220.04	9465.63	225.98	\$ 100,000.00
2018	\$ 334,290.90	300	399.44	\$ 100,000.00
2019	\$ 340,150.72	1914	469.06	\$ 100,000.00
2020	\$ 362,536.42	8150	139.68	\$ 50,000.00
2021	\$ 91,962.12		5.28	
total	\$ 2,480,343.83	\$ 101,259.15	\$ 2,030.92	\$ 350,000.00

Spending Breakdown

\$2,599,453 spent as of 3/25/21

to date	Percentage of Revenue	Actual Expenses
Veterinary	61%	\$1,778,381.14
ACO Training	3%	\$86,118.87
Administration	24%	\$711,047.80
Marketing	<1%	\$23,907.02
Surplus	11%	\$334,179.07

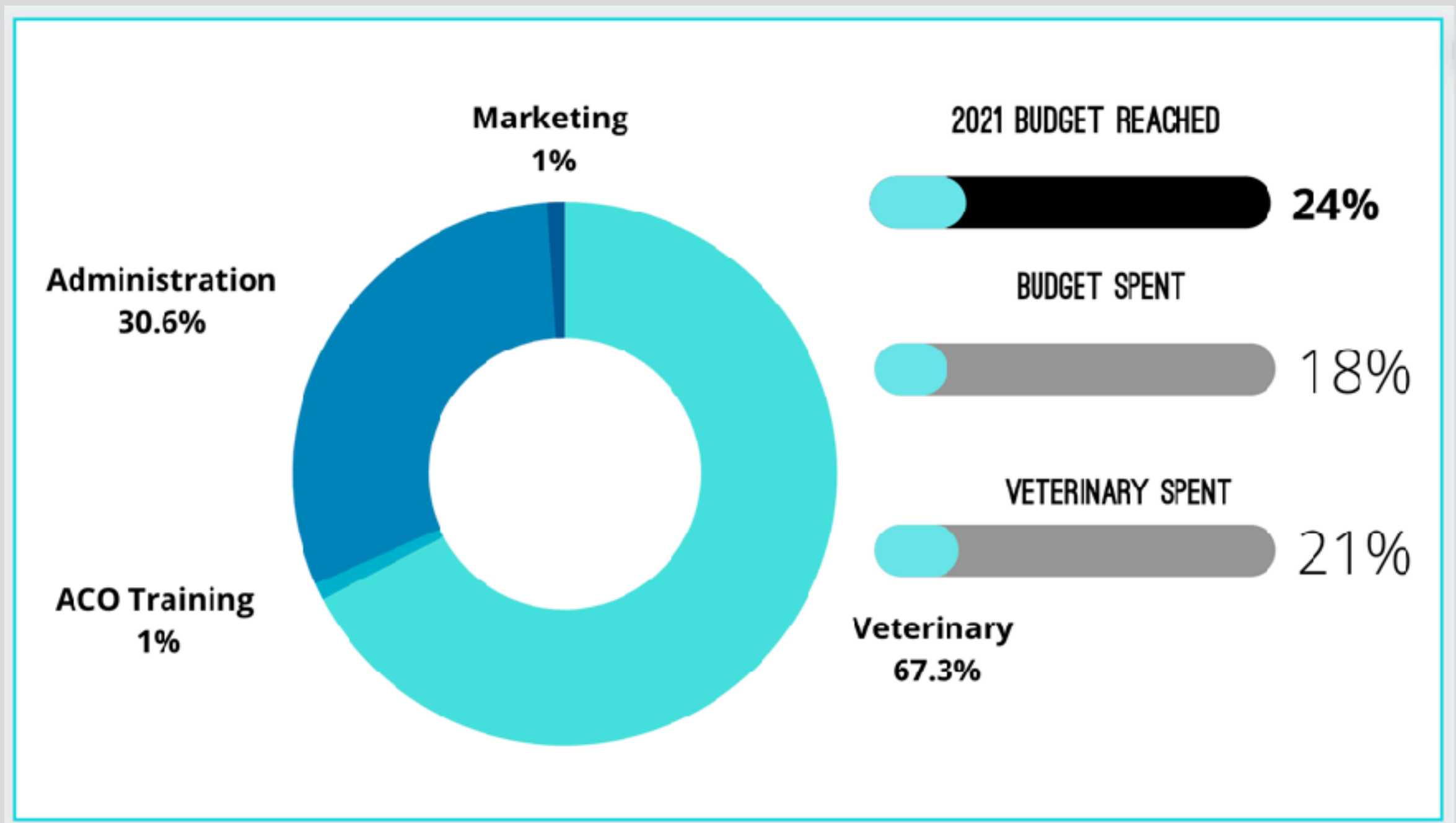


Over 13,920 local animals helped, and counting!



2021 Budget Update

\$512,000 = \$380,000 from 2021 Donations
\$50,000 2020 Line Item
\$82,000 Rollover



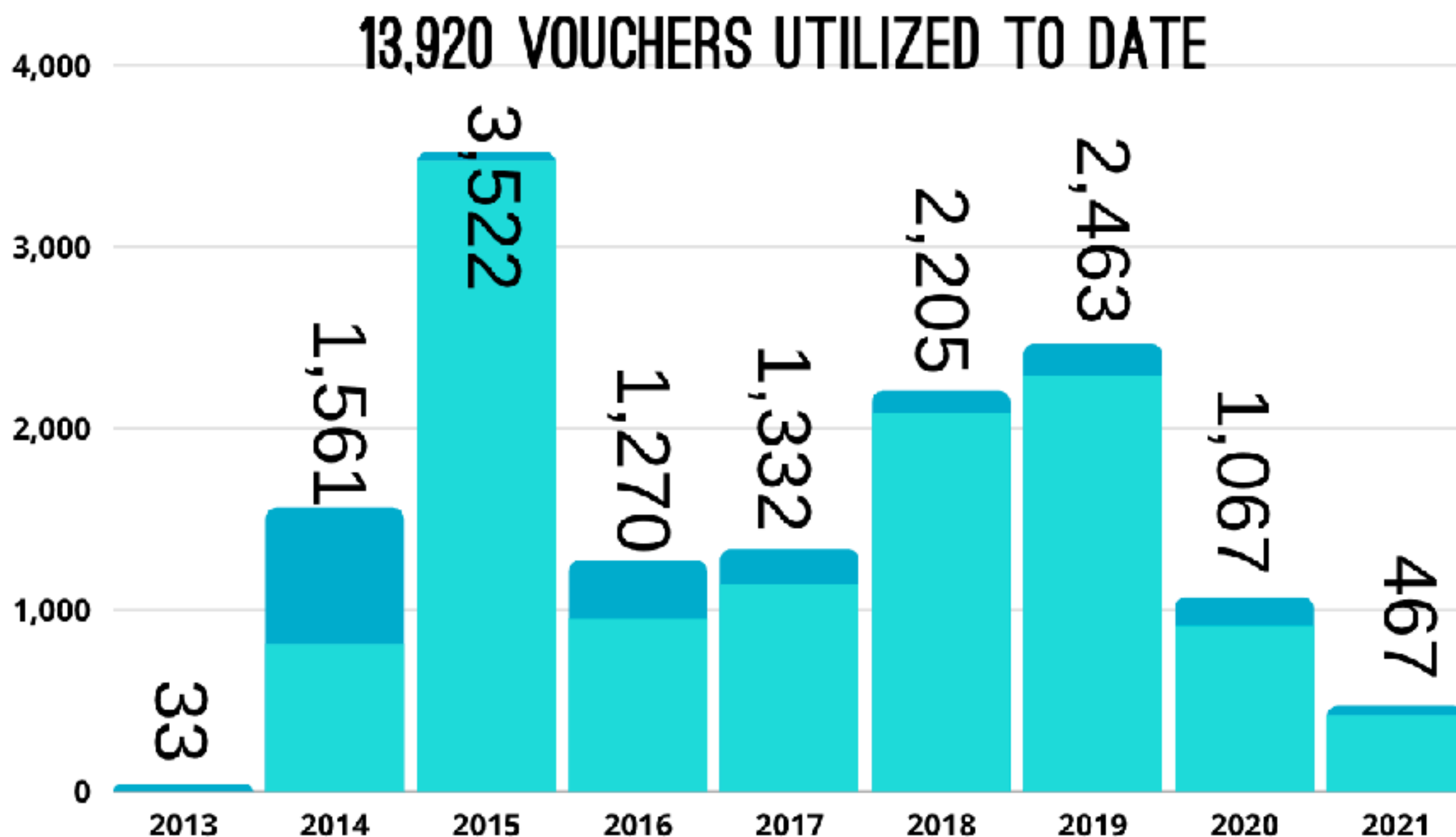
BUDGET LINE ITEM




Massachusetts FY 2021 Budget: \$50,000 included

- **2020 Line Item fully spent**
- **Utilized over 3 months, Jan/Feb/March 2021**
- **Utilized for 312 surgeries at 15 veterinary providers in 8 counties.**
- **Average cost of surgery \$160**

SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM





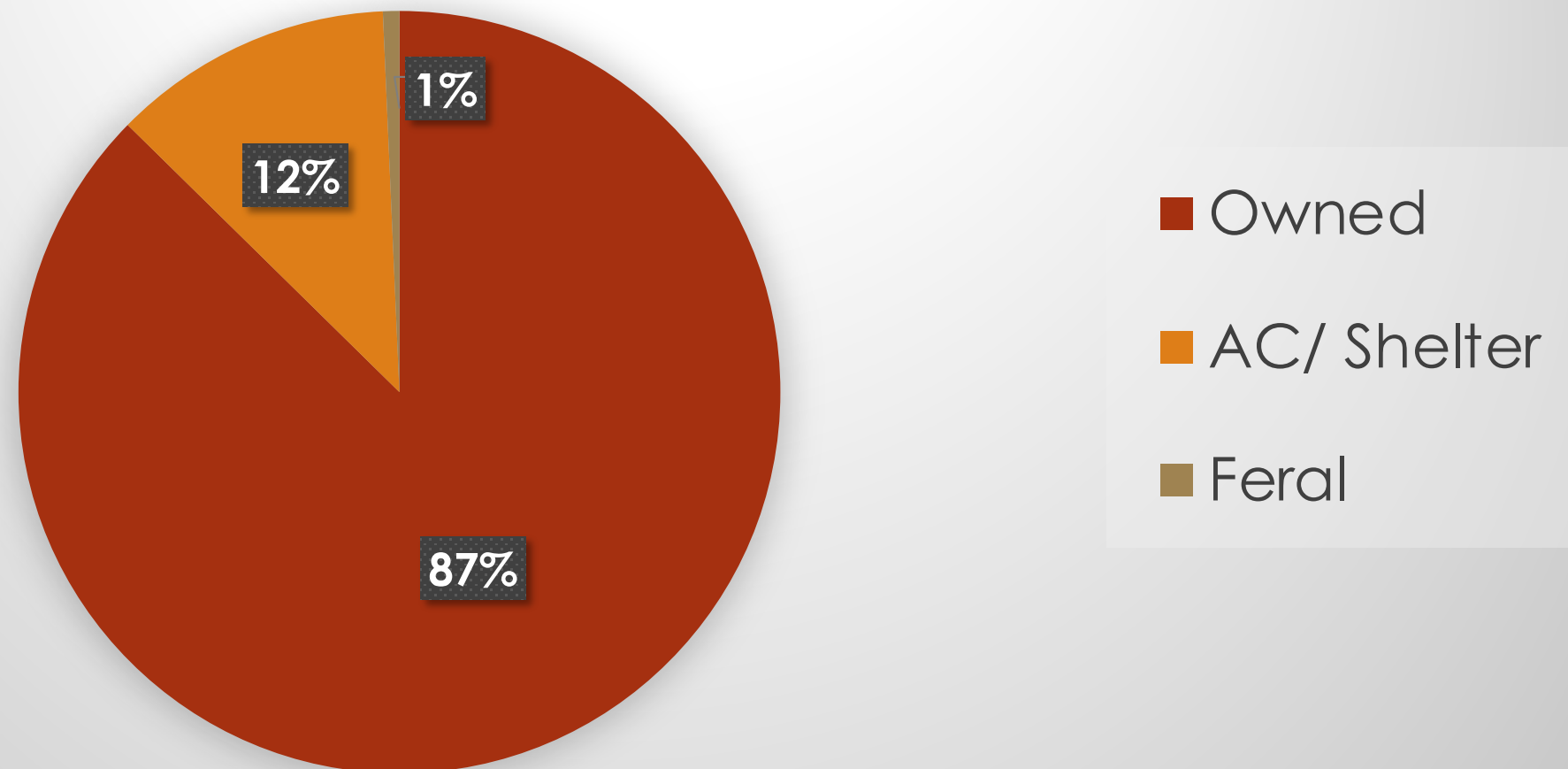
As of April 2021,

~720 Vouchers
Distributed

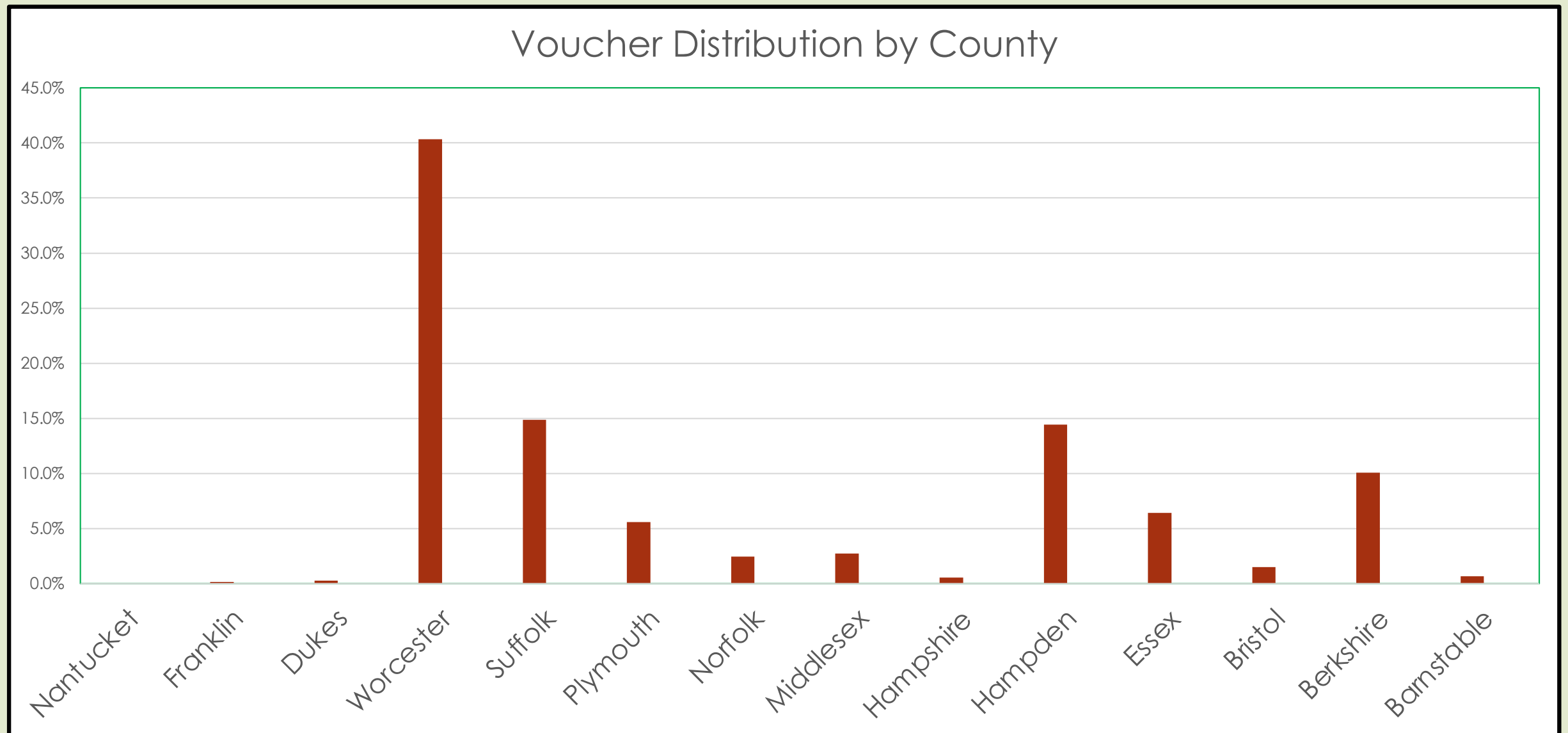
~150 Animals on
our waitlist

Ownership

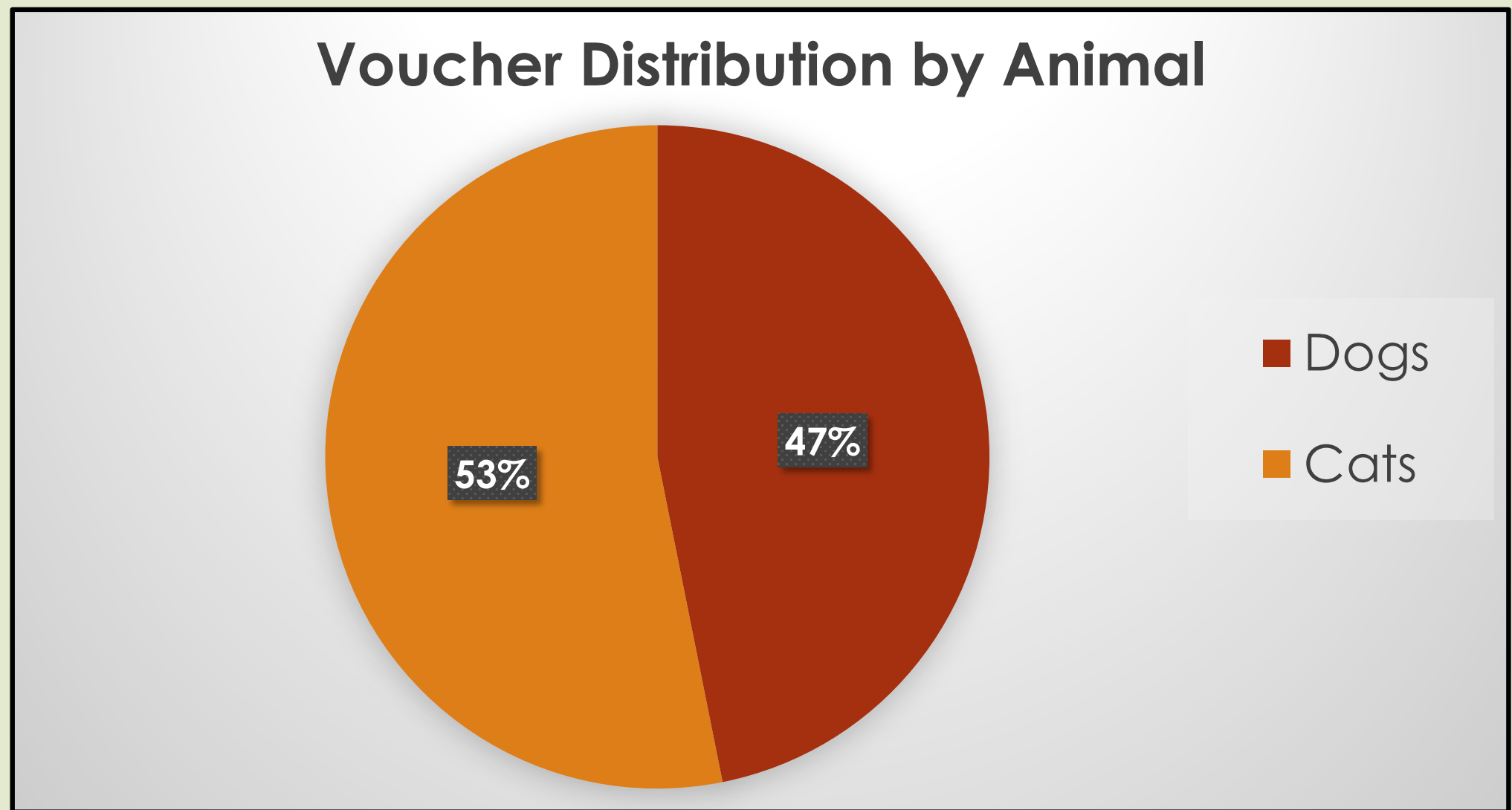
Voucher Distribution by Ownership



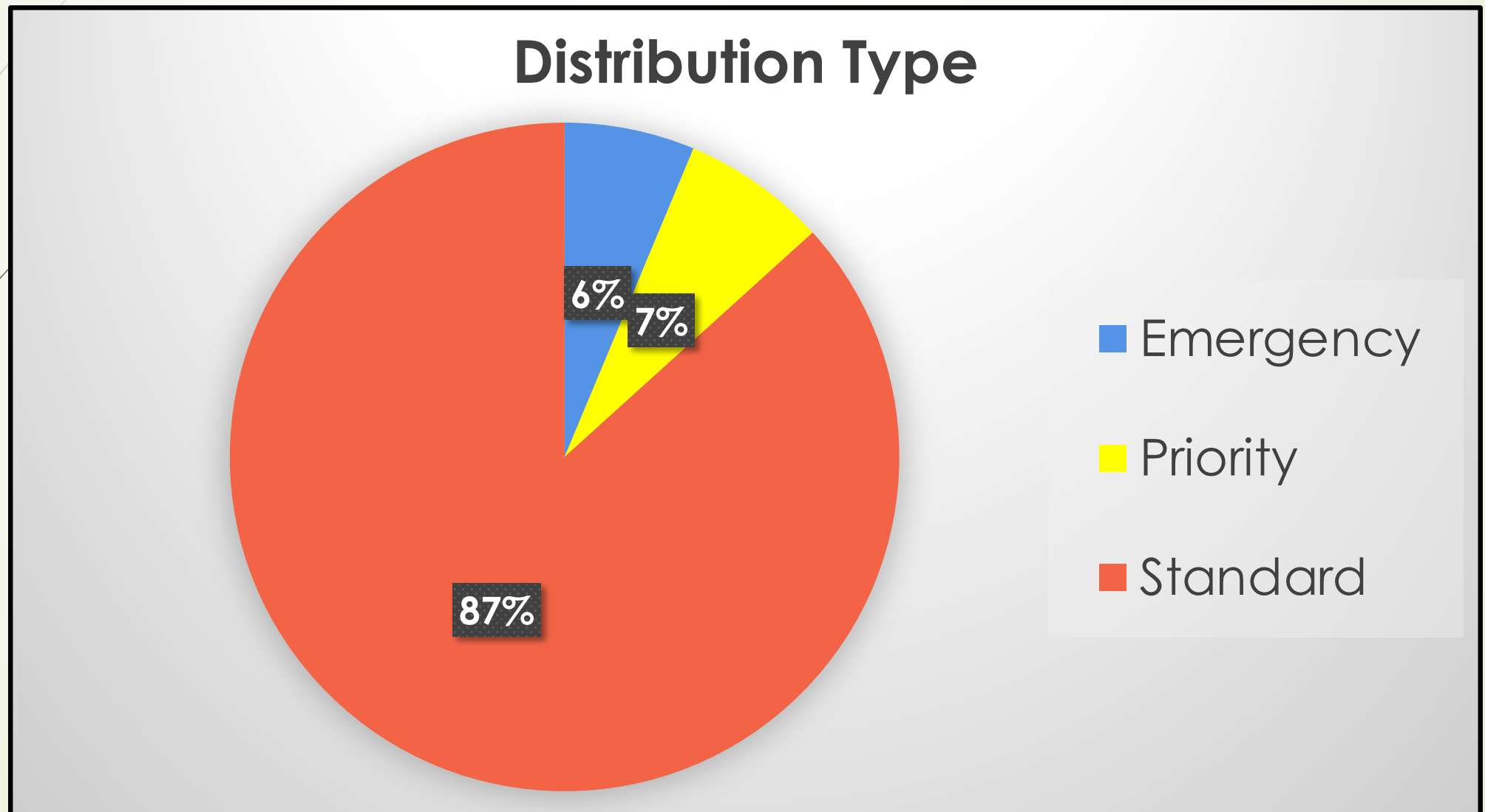
County




Animal



Type



- 
- Close provider partnerships help facilitate high distribution rates (Voucher Days)
 - Few active providers
 - Request and distribution rates leveling out (vs. 2020-covid, staff turnover, etc.)
 - South Shore: High request, low distribution (lack of providers)
 - Mail-in vs. Email requests

SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



2021 Voucher Days: Springfield x3, North Brookfield x3, Worcester, Boston x2, ARL Collaboration

Upcoming: Boston x2, Springfield x3, North Brookfield x3, Fall River



SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



Veterinary Tier Rates (History)

Original Tiers 2014-2016		
Tier I	Cat Neuter/ Small Dog Neuter (<50lbs.)	\$75
Tier II	Cat Spay/ Small Dog Spay (<50lbs.) Large Dog Neuter (>50lbs.)	\$150
Tier III	Large Dog Spay (>50lbs.)	\$300
Tiers 2016-2018		
Tier I	Cat Neuter/ Small Dog Neuter (<50lbs.) <small>Small dog neuter moved to \$150 tier</small>	\$75
Tier II	Cat Spay/ Small Dog Spay (<50lbs.) & Large Dog Neuter(>50lbs.), Small Dog Spay (<50lbs.)	\$150
Tier III	Large Dog Spay (>50lbs.)	\$300
Tiers 2018-Current		
Tier I	Cat Neuter	\$75
Tier II	Cat Spay, Small Dog Neuter (<50lbs.)	\$150
Tier III	Small Dog Spay (<50lbs.) Large Dog Neuter (>50lbs.)	\$225
Tier IV	Large Dog Spay (>50lbs.)	\$300

SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



Veterinary Tier Rates (Current)

The following Tier system shall be followed for reimbursement of the Contractor:

Tier I	Cat neuter	\$75
Tier II	Cat spay/small dog (<50lbs.) neuter	\$150
Tier III	Small dog (<50lbs.)Spay/ Large dog neuter (>50lbs.)	\$225
Tier IV	Big dog (>50 lbs.) spay	\$300

The Municipality ("Contractor") shall coordinate with licensed veterinarians to perform the following services for cats/dogs under the Program: DHPP/FVRCP and rabies vaccines, anesthesia and pain management medications, spay/neuter surgery, IV fluids (if necessary), blood tests (if necessary), additional medications (if necessary), and additional supplies or services (if necessary);

SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



Complication Rate (2018-Current)

Complication add on amounts. Current Limit 1

Parasites	1 med \$10	2 or more meds \$25
Cryptorchid	Inguinal \$25	Abdominal \$75
Hernia repair	Not Listed	
Extra Large	N/A	>100 lbs. \$25
Older >5	N/A	w/bloodwork \$25
Estrus	\$25	
Obese	\$25	
Dystocia/Pyometra	Cat \$150	Small Dog \$75 Large Dog \$150

SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



Stand Alone (Current)

Stand Alone Reimbursements: MDAR request or if animal is found to be already S/N Current

1 vaccine \$25

2 vaccines N/A

Under anesthesia add \$25

MDAR Emergency Related Medical Request

N/A

SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



Tier Rates (Proposed)

Cats (Felines)

F Tier I	Cat Neuter	\$100
F Tier II	Cat Spay	\$150

Dogs

D Tier I	Small Dog Neuter (<50lbs.)	\$200
D Tier II	Small Dog Spay (<50lbs.) Large Dog Neuter (>50lbs.)	\$250
D Tier III	Large Dog Spay (>50lbs.)	\$300

SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



Complication Rate (Proposed)

Complication add on amounts. Limit 1 per animals unless MAF approval given

Parasites	1 med \$10	2 or more meds \$25
Cryptorchid	Inguinal \$30	Abdominal \$75
Hernia repair	Simple \$30	\$75
Extra Large	>75 lbs. \$25	>100 lbs. \$50
Older >5	\$25	w/bloodwork \$50
Estrus	\$25	
Obese	\$25	
Dystocia/Pyometra	Cat \$75	Small Dog \$100 Large Dog \$150

Dystocia/Pyometra straight \$150 add on

SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



Stand Alone Rate (Proposed)

Stand Alone Reimbursements: MDAR request or if animal is found to be already S/N

1 vaccine \$25

2 vaccines \$35

Under anesthesia add \$25

MDAR Emergency Related Medical Request

Price to be determined with preapproval

SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



WHY Raise Rates?

Tier I \$75: male cat average cost \$103. <half meeting cost

Tier II \$150: female cat average cost \$160, small male dog average cost \$205 <half meeting cost

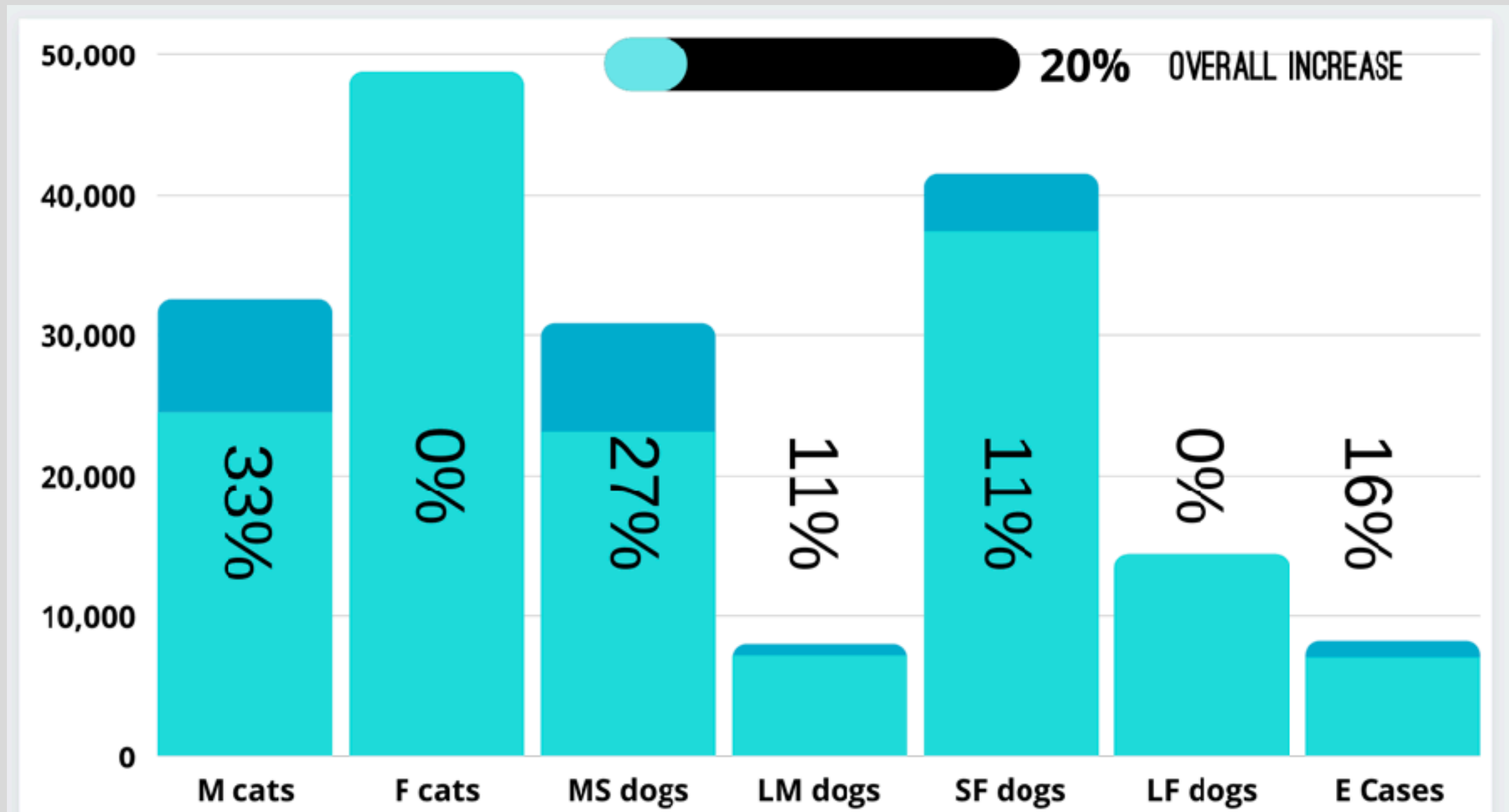
Tier III \$225: small female dog, large male dog average cost \$271 <half meeting cost

Tier IV \$300: large female dog a, average cost \$346 = half report meeting cost.

SPAY NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM



What would the proposed rates mean?





Massachusetts Department of Revenue
Form 1 Massachusetts Resident Income Tax Return

Fill out in black ink.
For a faster refund, file your return electronically at mass.gov/dor.
You must also complete and enclose Schedule HC.

2020

33 Voluntary fund contributions



Doing taxes this weekend? Don't forget..
FILL IN line 33F AND HELP ANIMALS!

f. Homeless Animal Prevention And Care.....

33f

10 0 0

Total. Add lines 33a through 33f

34

0 0

WWW.MASS.GOV/ANIMALFUND



2020 Tax Promotions and Events

- 2021 Billboards ran January through April
- Social media ads running on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, youtube. Approx. every 4 days.
- ARL media plug

ACO TRAINING



ACO Training: Core Training

Pushed back until FALL. ACO Survey set to determine interest. Oct/Nov run is ideal.

- ACOs need to retake core training= 4**
- 95 need to take Core Training for first time. 2/3 are new hires since the last Core sessions in 2019.**
- At least 3 sessions will be needed for distancing measures.**
- All ACO trainers need new contracts in 2021. Will add virtual training reimbursement options in needed.**

ACO TRAINING



ACO Training: Core Training

Alford	Boston	Cummington	Fairhaven	Harvard	Marlborough	North Andover	Shirley	Taunton	Williamstown
Aquinnah	Boston	Dedham	Fairhaven	Hatfield	Marshfield	Otis	Somerset	Tisbury	Winchendon
Ashburnham	Boxford	Dennis	Fall River	Hawley	Mattapoissett	Pembroke	Somerville	Tyringham	Winchendon
Ashland	Brockton	Dudley	Georgetown	Holden	Mattapoissett	Phillipston	Spencer	Wareham	Windsor
Becket	Cambridge	Duxbury	Gosnold	Lakeville	Middleton	Raynham	Spencer	Wareham	
Belchertown	Carver	East Bridgewater	Groton	Lakeville	Middleton	Richmond	Sterling	Wellesley	
Bellingham	Cheshire	East Brookfield	Groton	Lakeville	New Ashford	Sandisfield	Stoneham	Wendell	
Bellingham	Chesterfield	Easthampton	Halifax	Leyden	New Marlborough	Saugus	Stoughton	West Bridgewater	
Bolton	Chicopee	Egremont	Hardwick	Lowell	Newburyport	Seekonk	Taunton	Westport	
Bolton	Chilmark	Egremont	Harvard	Ludlow	Newburyport	Shirley	Taunton	Westport	

ACO TRAINING



Municipalities with Missing or Incomplete 2021 ACO Designation Forms
3/31/21

Abington	Danvers	Lawrence	Norwell	Stockbridge	West Brookfield
Alford	Dighton	Leominster	Oakham	Stow	West Stockbridge
Amesbury	Douglas	Leverett	Orange	Sturbridge	Westford
Aquinnah	Dunstable	Littleton	Peabody	Sudbury	Westhampton
Arlington	Duxbury	Melrose	Pelham	Templeton	Westport
Ashby	Fitchburg	Mendon	Pepperell	Tolland	Wilbraham
Avon	Florida	Middleborough	Phillipston	Uxbridge	Williamsburg
Beverly	Freetown	Millbury	Randolph	Waltham	Williamstown
Blackstone	Gosnold	Millis	Reading	Warren	Wilmington
Boxborough	Grafton	Millville	Richmond	Warwick	Winthrop
Boxford	Hardwick	Montgomery	Rochester	Washington	Worthington
Braintree	Harvard	Nantucket	Rowe	Watertown	
Chilmark	Hawley	New Salem	Salisbury	Wenham	
Clinton	Hopkinton	North Adams	Shirley	West Boylston	
Cohasset	Hull	Norton	Shutesbury	West Bridgewater	

**2021
Designations
due on
March 1st,
2021.
still slowly
coming in.
24%
unreported:**

NEXT MEETING.....

JUNE?



FILE TAXES.
HELP ANIMALS!

line 33F



For many 2020 was tough,
but together we can make 2021 better!

MASS.GOV/ANIMALFUND