

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



Department of Agricultural Resources

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Dear Veterinarian,

Do you have clients who need financial assistance to be able to obtain basic care for their animals? The ongoing pandemic has negatively impacted many families in the Commonwealth. Unemployment and poverty rates have increased across the state. Adding to financial strain, the prices of everyday necessities such as gas and food have also risen dramatically. Many Massachusetts families are currently struggling to find ways to make ends meet, so we would like to offer assistance to you and your clients to make sure that even during a pandemic these families can still obtain basic care for their pets.

Since Covid-19 hit the Commonwealth, the Massachusetts Animal Fund has received hundreds of requests like the ones below:

"Jinxy is a 6-month-old female kitten which I received from a family friend in May 2021. I am desperately seeking to get her spayed before she goes into heat. We are a family of 5 living in Salem ma for 3+ years now and trying to make ends meet. Both my husband and I have been hit dramatically by covid-19, affecting our income."

"About a month ago I took in a stray kitten that lived in my backyard. I bathed him because he was dirty and started taking care of him. He's become a huge part of my household. I noticed recently he's been super chatty with meowing and yowling mainly at night or early mornings. He's also been determined to go back outside. I really want to get Sticker (his name) neutered but, financially I cannot afford to get him neutered during this time because of COVID. I really want to take the best care of my cat. Are there any assistant opportunities I can take? That would be huge for both him and me."

Becoming a participating spay/neuter provider for the Massachusetts Animal Fund Spay/Neuter Voucher Program lets you be part of the solution for ending animal homelessness. You will be helping give animals like Jinxy and Sticker an option, so they don't end up having or creating an unwanted litter or worse yet, intact and out on the street. We hope you will join us in our mission.

The Mass Animal Fund no-cost spay/neuter/vaccination voucher program is funded by donations and state support but depends on local veterinary participation to get services out to animals in your community. Over 15,700 animals in need across the Commonwealth have already been helped through the collaborative efforts of the Massachusetts Animal Fund, participating veterinary providers, and animal control officers, but many more are still in need of assistance. There are currently 26 veterinary practices in Massachusetts and Rhode Island that are registered providers, but the Fund is looking to gain additional providers to help more animals and address gaps in coverage.

We know the pandemic has also put a financial strain on veterinary practices, so in 2021 we increased our reimbursement rates to providers. Additionally, veterinarians can elect to perform voucher surgeries for a single assistance category or otherwise restrict which services they are willing to offer in the voucher program. Prior participation in the Voucher Program required veterinarians to accept the voucher for cats and dogs in all spay and neuter categories.

The Fund truly appreciates any services veterinarians can provide for at-risk community animals and has removed barriers to make it easier for veterinarians to participate in a way that aligns with their available resources and philosophy. If a practice only wants to provide surgeries for homeless animals in animal control

shelters, they can do that. If a provider would like to limit their contribution to providing just dog spays, or assistance in emergency cases, they can do that, too. There are no minimum surgery/service requirements to participate.

The Massachusetts Animal Fund is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources with the assistance of an advisory committee and seeks to end the problem of animal homelessness in the Commonwealth. The Fund provides no-cost spay/neuter vouchers to our state’s most vulnerable animals: cats/dogs in municipal animal control officer care, cats/dogs owned by low-income residents, feral cats being trapped/neutered/returned, and animals in emergencies. The Fund partners with municipal animal control officers to issue these vouchers for local animals who are eligible under our guidelines.

Participating veterinarians provide the following services to identified animals at no cost to the voucher recipient: DHPP/FVRCP and rabies vaccines, anesthesia and pain management medications, and spay/neuter surgery. A flat-fee reimbursement from the Massachusetts Animal Fund is made to participating veterinarians using the following rate schedule:

Cats (Felines)		
F Tier I	Cat Neuter	\$100
F Tier II	Cat Spay	\$150
Dogs (Canines)		
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

Complication add-on amounts are available and range from \$10 for medications to \$150 for more complex issues.

Stand Alone Vaccine Reimbursements: By MDAR request or if an 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

Our current network is seeing the impact this program is making in their communities, and we would love your practice to join our provider team!

For more information, visit our website at www.mass.gov/animalfund. If you have questions or would like to schedule a time for us to come and speak with you and your staff about the program, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



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