

Grant ID: 1663

Title of Proposal: Community Cats Program TNR

Agency Type: Non-Profit

Total Funding Requested: \$25,000.00

Check Payable To: Sheltering Hands, Inc.

Application Information

Demographics

Name of Applicant Agency: Sheltering Hands, Inc.

Website Address: www.shelteringhands.org

Person Submitting Proposal: Kathleen Fleck

Position: Director/Treasurer

Agency Head: Kathleen Fleck

Agency Head Email: shelteringhands@embarqmail.com

Organization Business Address: PO Box 843

City: Williston

State: FL

Zip: 32696

Phone (xxx-xxx-xxxx): 352-840-0663

Fax:

Cell: 352-817-1752

Email Address: shelteringhands@embarqmail.com

Agency Details

Dates of Last Fiscal Year: Begin: 04/01/15 **End:** 03/31/16

Organization Income in Last Fiscal Year: \$522,379.00

Organization Expenses in Last Fiscal Year: \$282,328.00

Number of Paid Employees: Full Time: 2 Part Time: 1

Number of Active Volunteers: 30

Total Volunteer Hours per Week: 400.00

How did you learn of the 2009 Florida Animal Friend grant competition? previous receiptent

Year(s) of previous Florida Animal Friend grants (if applicable):

Previous Florida Animal Friend Applications: Years Funded: 2009,2012,2014 Year(s) denied/incomplete: 2011

Describe your agency:

Services Provided

- Unlimited Intake Shelter
- Limited Intake Shelter
- Foster Network
- Animal Control
- Spay/Neuter Services
- Other

Organization Structure:

- City, county, or tribal agency
- Private nonprofit agency
- Other
- TNR Group
- Rescue Group

List your current board of directors:

Name	Title	Phone	Occupation	Email
Deborah Wabbersen	President	352-427-9521	Police Officer	debwab@cox.net
Gina Evers	education director	352-622-8867	retired school principal	gevers@aol.com
Kathleen Fleck	Treasurer	352-817-1752	Veterinarian	kittyvet79@icloud.com
Shelley Chatman	Secretary	352-427-9541	bank employee	shelteringshelley@gmail.com
Susie Fromm	Director at Large	352-465-0640	Veterinarian	susie.fromm@gmail.com

Applicant Qualifications**For your organization, in the last complete fiscal year:****145 cats and 0 dogs were admitted.****159 cats and 0 dogs were adopted.****12 cats and 0 dogs were euthanized.****995 cats and 0 dogs were sterilized.****Briefly describe your animal programs:****If your program performs adoptions, are all animals sterilized before adoption?**

Yes

If not all, what percentage of animals are not currently sterilized before adoption?**If not all, how are animals selected for sterilization before adoption?****If not all, describe your sterilization policies and procedures for assuring sterilization after adoption:****Give additional background information on your organization's programs as they relate to this application and the qualifications of the personnel who will be in charge of this program. Show that you have the ability to carry out this program.**

The mission of Sheltering Hands is to improve the lives of cats through Adoption, Spay/Neuter, Education and Support Services. In respect to this grant program, Sheltering Hands has been involved with spay/neuter services for stray and feral cat populations since being founded in 2007. The program began in a small area of Levy County and continues to grow. Sheltering Hands is now doing spay/neuter surgeries for stray and feral cat populations through our Community Cats Program for registered colonies as well as a low cost voucher program for non colony cats. Both programs serve cat owners/caregivers in both Levy and Marion counties. Since January 2012 a total of 4550 cats have been sterilized. We have been fortunate to maintain a strong support of the veterinary community and have 2 veterinarians on our board and a part time veterinary surgeon employee. Board member, treasurer and past president, Kathleen Fleck, DVM acts as the program medical director. She has 35 years experience with spay/neuter programs, operated her own veterinary clinic for 20 years, is a member of the Association of Shelter Veterinarians and HSVMA and conducts the 2-hour monthly colony caregiver workshops to educate the public about the TNR program. Full time employee, Susan Nastav is the Community Cats Program director and acts as the colony caregiver liaison and surgery schedule coordinator. She has 20 years of experience as a veterinary assistant and also serves as the surgical head technician. Her other duties include training volunteers, assisting with educating the public and caregivers of our TNR program and counseling cat owners on behavioral concerns to help keep cats in their homes. The program also has a strong following of volunteers including veterinary surgeons willing to give of their time to help the plight of homeless cats in both Marion and Levy counties. Thanks to a generous benefactor, Sheltering Hands has now been able to purchase an affordable surgical facility in a central location to the service area that further indicates the commitment of the organization to the mission of improving cat welfare in the community. The new facility now allows for multiple weekly surgery days and with the additional space the number of surgeries for 2016 is expected to be nearly double previous year totals.

If you currently have a program for sterilization of cats and/or dogs, describe your current level of funding and productivity and why additional resources are needed?

The Sheltering Hands Community Cats surgical unit is a year round program that is currently providing 10-11 surgical days per month. In previous years there was an average of 3 days per month and an average of 1000 surgeries/year. With the new facility and an ability to increase the surgical numbers to an estimated 2000/yr the limiting factor will be funding for surgical supplies. Because the expense to the caregivers is kept at a minimum the need for alternate income is essential to accomplishing the goal. Grant sources are only one of the alternatives being sought but are very important in order to meet the demand for the program.

Target Population

Geographical target area (name of city, county, etc.):	32686, 34432, 34474, 34476, 34481 & 34482 in Marion County
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Total human population in target area:	94,236
Percent of residents living below poverty in target area:	16.8
Estimated number of pet cats in target area (human population divided by 3.3):	28557
Estimated number of pet dogs in target area (human population divided by 4.0):	23559
Estimated number of feral cats in target area (human population divided by 6.0):	15706
Number of cats admitted to animal control shelters in the target area last year (if known)	unknown
Number of dogs admitted to animal control shelters in the target area last year (if known)	unknown
Number of cats euthanized in animal control shelters in the target area last year (if known)	unknown
Number of dogs euthanized in animal control shelters in the target area last year (if known)	unknown

Please explain if you believe your target area animal population is significantly different than above.

We believe the number of "free roaming " cats to be higher than population based estimates for feral cats. In our experience there seems to be a high percentage of stray but not necessarily feral cats in the colonies within the target area. Many of these cats may have at one time been pet cats or are currently considered "owned" but lack responsible owners. The socioeconomic nature of the area has led to frequent abandonment of kittens and non-sterilized adult cats that have greatly increased the overall stray populations. The "owners" of many unwanted city cats choose not to relinquish them to the county shelter and are relocating them to this more rural targeted area. We believe the number of "community cats" to be much higher than the calculated estimate. Based on the observations of local animal groups we believe the estimated target cat population is closer to 18,000.

Please explain what you believe are the most substantial sources of dog and cat overpopulation in the target area:

Most of the overpopulation occurs due to irresponsible/uneducated pet ownership and the abandonment issues associated with socioeconomic factors in the area. This is especially true of the cat populations who are often treated as disposable pets versus treasured family members. With many families there are limited financial resources that prevent many of these cats from being spayed/neutered or even seeking veterinary services at available clinics. Many owners allow their cats to roam without having been spayed or neutered thus producing large numbers of unwanted kittens. We find that many of the cat colonies we deal with started with either a stray having kittens or cats abandoned when previous owners moved away or died. The same situation occurs for the dogs but a little less so due to more restricted county ordinances with "dangerous dogs" and also increased regulated management of licensing for dogs.

What kinds of spay/neuter services are currently available in the target area and in what ways are these resources currently insufficient to meet community needs?

Currently Marion County does have a "Neuter Commuter" unit for spay and neuter of dogs and cats in Marion county. Although helpful the program does not do stray/feral cat populations, is limited to 2 animals per owner yearly and appointments can take months to be scheduled. Current costs are lower than area veterinary clinics but still not affordable for most families living below poverty level or colony caregivers with limited funds. Several local veterinary clinics will do stray cats but not generally at reduced rates making it financially difficult for most people to individually keep their populations under control.

Florida Animal Friend is highly supportive of proposals that are focused on animal populations that are identified as substantial sources of dog or cat overpopulation rather than being diluted over too broad of a geographic area or diverse animal populations. Describe the specific target animal population of the spay/neuter project proposed for this grant:

- Pets in low-income families
 Pit Bull / large breed dogs
 TNR managed colonies of feral cats
 Community cats (free-roaming and/or owned)
 Other

TNR Managed Colony Feral Cat Program/Community Cats (Free-Roaming and/or Owned) Program

Define the precise boundaries of the colony or targeted area, including estimate of square miles.

Geographic area- Zipcodes 32686, 34432, 34474, 34476, 34481 & 34482 which is approximately the western third area of Marion county bounded by I-75 to the East, Levy county line to the West, County Road 316 to the North and Marion County line to the South. The total area is approximately 235 sq. miles

What is the criteria used for determining the target area(s) and/or eligibility for this program?

All cats being done through the Sheltering Hands Community Cats Program are part of a managed colony approach. Caregivers

feeding 2 or more homeless cats submit a registration application and attend a 2-hour workshop in order to be eligible for services. Registrations are renewed annually to continue service eligibility. The area was chosen due to an above average percentage of homeless cats within the rural areas compared to other more urban areas within the county.

Describe whether the targeted area is rural, suburban, or urban. Is it commercial, residential, agricultural, or a designated special land use?

The area is primarily rural with both small commercial and residential land use. There are 2 gated communities within the area that comprise less than 25 sq. miles of total area. These communities currently have limited need for the spay/neuter services but are a source of volunteers and financial assistance for the program.

Estimated number of cats in the target colony area : 15000

Estimated number that are currently sterilized: 2500

Projected reduction after utilizing the grant: 850

For TNR program, describe the ability to maintain lifelong care for remaining cats, commitment level of volunteers/organizations, etc.

Sheltering Hands, Inc. has made the Community Cats Program a mission priority. All board members are very supportive of the program and the number of volunteers becoming involved has greatly increased because of the program priority. Colony caregivers are already committed to the cats in their care and are providing shelter and food in addition to managing their welfare. In our registrations we require an alternate caregiver to provide back up in case the primary caregiver becomes unavailable.

Detail any public education/outreach, adoption programs, etc.

Do current city/county ordinances address TNR or free-roaming cats?

Yes

Please explain what is allowed:

The county ordinances state there is not a feeding ban and special exceptions for licensing are given to "non owned"/feral cats. Sheltering Hands has a good working relationship with the Marion County Animal Services and they support the Community Cats Program. To confirm their commitment to TNR they are referring problem colonies to us for mediation and education. An arrangement exists between MCAS and Sheltering Hands for return to field of cats having microchips from the program.

(NOTE: FAF will not fund any program this is inconsistent with local ordinances.)

For TNR program, list any groups or government agencies who support this TNR effort:

The Sheltering Hands Community Cats program is supported by the Marion County commissioners, Marion County Animal Services, Humane Society of Marion County, University of Florida Shelter Medicine Program, Best Friends and is a part of the Alley Cat Allies Feral Friends Network.

Describe any effort to lessen the negative impact on local wildlife.

Because colonies are registered with Sheltering Hands we are able to make sure colonies are not being managed in sensitive wildlife areas and are relocated to safer areas when cats are discovered to be populating such areas.

Describe efforts that will be made to mitigate current or potential nuisance issues.

A network of trained volunteers is in place to work with caregivers, county officials and neighbors when nuisance issues arise. We have an excellent working relationship with the Marion County Animal Services staff to identify and address the complaint issues in a timely manner to effect good outcome for both the cats and the complainer. Use of management changes, fencing, deterrents, car covers etc are all utilized. In the 2-hour caregiver workshop there is a section on preventing problems.

Will the cats be ear-tipped? Yes

Will the cats be microchipped? Yes

Provide any additional information that will help the grant selection committee understand how this program will operate to achieve its goals.

This program has helped many cats and caregivers in our community. It is a well organized and managed program that strives to make a difference for the community. It has the support of local government and businesses. The commitment of the volunteers, board and donors is evident in all aspects of the program. Having a dedicated surgical facility that is not reliant on outside veterinary services helps us cut costs, provide stability for the program and encourage community involvement.

Objectives

What do you hope to accomplish with these funds (objectives should be specific and quantifiable)?

In previous years we have done approximately 1000 surgeries per year. With the new facilities we will have the ability to double that number with supporting funding. With this grant program we hope to increase the number to at least 1850 surgeries total for 2016. The goal of our program is to maintain at least a 5% population growth reduction annually with a long term goal to achieve zero population growth within the next 20 years. The grant will help us to guarantee the 5% reduction and hopefully allow closer to 10% improvement within this year.

How does this program increase the number of sterilization surgeries above the existing baseline?

Because the Sheltering Hands Community Cats program is the only organized program addressing the sterilization of homeless cats in the county, it is the existing baseline. The facility and volunteer resources are already in place. This program is expandable only by having more available funds to be able to provide more surgeries. The funding from this grant program helps to make this possible.

Methods

What criteria will you use to determine eligibility for your program?

All cats being done through the Sheltering Hands Community Cats Program are part of a managed colony approach. Caregivers feeding 2 or more homeless cats submit a registration application and attend a 2-hour workshop in order to be eligible for services. Registrations are renewed annually to continue service eligibility.

How will you advertise the program? Explain how the advertising will reach the target audience.

Advertising is primarily through referrals and information available on our website and Facebook and Twitter pages. Referrals are from veterinary clinics, feed stores, other animal rescues, county health and animal services departments as well as from caregivers who are involved with the program. The target audience is already accessing these sources and so word of mouth is also a powerful way to advertise the program for little to no cost. We take advantage of any opportunity to utilize newspaper and other print advertising.

How will you address barriers to full use of the program such as transportation, illiteracy, and cultural hurdles?

Transportation and information transfer protocols are already in place to help make sure that all persons needing the TNR services will be provided access. Vehicles belonging to Sheltering Hands and bilingual volunteers are available to overcome any obstacles.

Does this project involve the transportation of animals by someone other than the client? If so, describe the vehicles, methods for confinement, personnel training, liability releases used to assure the safety of the animals and handlers.

Most of the cats are transported by the colony caregivers. When necessary an enclosed 2009 Dodge minivan and a 2001 Toyota Sequoia can each transport up to 25 traps. All cats are required to be in a humane trap when being brought to the surgical center. Sheltering Hands has a trap loan program to provide traps for those caregivers who do not have their own. All caregivers sign a liability waiver with their registration application and a surgical liability waiver at the time of surgery. Volunteers doing transports are experienced in handling humane traps and feral cats. The 2 hour workshop that includes training and information on safe handling of the cats is required for caregivers and all volunteers involved with the TNR program.

Veterinary Services

Objectives

What arrangements have you made with veterinarians to perform the surgeries?

The existing program and the new facility have the veterinary director (Dr Kathleen Fleck), 1 part time veterinary employee, several local volunteer veterinarians and also utilizes UF veterinary students looking to expand their surgical experiences.

Are they: In-house Private Vet(s) Combination

Veterinary Practices

Practice Name	Address	City	State	Zip	Phone	Lead Practice
Sheltering Hands Community Cats Program	10397 N US Highway 27	Ocala	FL	34482	352-840-0663	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Fee Range

What is the fee range to be paid for spay and neuter and what is the distribution to be paid by the client vs. the grant program? Keep in mind that Florida Animal Friend grant funds may only be used for costs directly associated with sterilization surgery

(including anesthesia and pain control) and not for other items such as vaccines, testing, licensing, and capital purchases.

	Amount Paid by Client	Amount Paid by Project	Total Amount
Range for Male Cats	<input type="text" value="\$10.00"/>	<input type="text" value="\$22.50"/>	<input type="text" value="\$32.50"/>
Range for Female Cats	<input type="text" value="\$10.00"/>	<input type="text" value="\$35.00"/>	<input type="text" value="\$45.00"/>
Range for Male Dogs	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>
Range for Female Dogs	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>

Please check each item below to indicate additional services offered at the time of surgery, whether the client is required to pay for them, and if so what the fee is. For example, if an examination is required for surgery but is not charged to the client it would be marked: Required Yes, Fee to client No

	Required, Optional, or Not Offered	Fee to Client?
Examination	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Required <input type="radio"/> Optional <input type="radio"/> Not Available	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes
Rabies Vaccination if Due	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Required <input type="radio"/> Optional <input type="radio"/> Not Available	<input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="text" value="\$2.50"/>
Other Vaccination if Due	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Required <input type="radio"/> Optional <input type="radio"/> Not Available	<input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="text" value="\$2.50"/>
Pain Medication	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Required <input type="radio"/> Optional <input type="radio"/> Not Available	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes
Parasite Medication	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Required <input type="radio"/> Optional <input type="radio"/> Not Available	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes
Testing	<input type="radio"/> Required <input type="radio"/> Optional <input checked="" type="radio"/> Not Available	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes
Licensing	<input type="radio"/> Required <input type="radio"/> Optional <input checked="" type="radio"/> Not Available	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes
Ear tipping	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Required <input type="radio"/> Optional <input type="radio"/> Not Available	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes
Other	<input type="radio"/> Required <input checked="" type="radio"/> Optional <input type="radio"/> Not Available	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes

If necessary, please explain the procedures and fees described above:

Each cat coming through the surgical center receives sterilization surgery including pain management, ear tipping, microchip, rabies and FVRCP vaccinations, flea and ear mite treatments. Caregivers are charged \$10.00/cat to help cover costs of microchips and vaccines but if unable to pay due to financial constraints we utilize colony sponsorships to fund those colonies.

Is this a voucher program? No

If so, how will you assure compliance with the program?

For your voucher program, how have you determined the capacity of the veterinarians listed above to handle the projected capacity?

Will you have the ability to report the number of vouchers issued and the percentage that result in S/N surgeries?

Community Collaboration

To assure the success of your program, are there any local groups (such as rescue groups, animal control agencies, TNR groups, local businesses, local media, social service agencies, etc.) other than your organization and your cooperating veterinarians who are committed to assist?

Yes No

Please list them and detail their level of involvement with the proposed effort.

Name	Level of Involvement

For Our Friends The Animal	Provide support through grant funding to help pay for payroll for part time veterinary services so that the number of surgery days/month could be increased above last years level.
Humane Society of Marion County	Referral for colonies in need and assistance with supplying food for colonies when available.
Marion County Animal Services	Referral and assistance in return of TNR cats brought to their shelter. Also work with our program for mediation with neighbors To help keep cats in their colonies.
Multiple commercial facilities and businesses	Business that permit and financially supports colonies on their properties including bank, realtor, gas/quick mart stations, restaurants, medical & warehouse businesses.

Other Information

Provide any additional information that will help the grant selection committee understand how the program will operate to achieve its goals.

With a phone line dedicated to the TNR program we continue to educate and encourage the residents who are feeding stray cats to participate in the program. We also continue to grow the program by soliciting for donations and volunteers in the day to day interactions of our Board members, employees and volunteers. The 2015 bequest we received has provided us with the new facilities and its maintenance. That allows for an increased ability to grow the program. The continued support of grant funding will provide us the ability to continue to offer these services affordably to the caregivers and general public. The combined efforts will help achieve the goal of providing for the welfare of the cats in our community.

Budget

Total number of sterilization surgeries projected:

Cats: 850 **Dogs:** 0

Total budget requested (Budget should not exceed \$25,000): \$25,000.00

Average cost/surgery projected: \$30.00

Describe any expenses that are not included in the grant and how they will be paid for:

A fee of \$10.00/cat is assessed to the caregiver to cover costs of vaccines & microchips and is paid at time of surgery. There are sponsors supplied for those caregivers not financially able to pay their fee. Other expenses for non surgical costs and for other medical treatments at the time of surgery are covered through the Sheltering Hands Community Cats Program operational funds.

Describe any expenses that are not included in the grant and how they will be paid for (for example, vaccines, microchipping, ear notching, etc.):

A fee of \$10.00/cat is assessed to the caregiver to cover costs of vaccines & microchips and is paid at time of surgery. There are sponsors supplied for those caregivers not financially able to pay their fee. Other expenses for non surgical costs and for other medical treatments at the time of surgery are covered through the Sheltering Hands Community Cats Program operational funds.

Describe any other funding sources for this program, i.e. other grants, targeted fundraising efforts, budget allocation, etc.

A grant from For Our Friends The Animals Foundation is being received for 2016 to be used for payroll expenses for a part time veterinarian to increase the weekly surgery schedule to 3 days instead of 2. In the past the program has been assisted with a Petsmart Charities grant. In addition there are 2 special event yard sale fundraisers annually and multiple small projects conducted to raise funds for the Community Cats TNR program specifically. Business and personal sponsorships are regularly sought as well. With the new facility there is now income also being collected for the Community Cats Program at the onsite Gift Shop that specializes in gifts for cat lovers and cats.

What percent of the total cost of the program would this projected grant cover?

30

Timeline

All projects must be completed within 12 months of receipt of funding. Any unexpended funds must be refunded to Florida Animal Friend within 30 days of the end of the project. Requests for time extensions must be made in writing at least 30 days prior to the end of the project. Funding for accepted projects will be available after August 1, 2009.

Projected start date: 08/01/16/ **Projected end date:** 07/31/17

Unexpended funds

Any unexpended funds must be refunded to Florida Animal Friend within 30 days of the end of the project.

Requests for extensions

Requests for time extensions are discouraged and not often granted. If it is imperative to request an extension, such request must be made in writing at least 30 days prior to the end of the project. It is FAF's policy to seldom grant more than a 30-60 day extension.

Failure to submit reports and requests within the required time period will impact your agency's future grant applications.

Future Funding to Sustain Public Spay/Neuter

***Explain how the organization plans to fund this program in the future. Having sustainable plans including other grants, local donations and other services generating revenue enhances the chances of receiving this grant.**

The Community Cats Program is an ongoing mission of Sheltering Hands and as such receives funds generated through 2 annual special events and multiple ongoing fundraisers such as book sales, bake sales and boutique sales. Regular donors are encouraged to support the TNR program and both sponsorship and endowment programs are available for future funding. Grants such as this one, Best Friends, Petsmart Charities and others are applied for to help supplement and increase the program efforts.

Promotion of Florida Animal Friend Spay/Neuter License Plate

***Applicants selected for funding are expected to publicize their grant in support of their spay/neuter program and promote the sale of the Animal Friend license plate via press releases, newsletters, website links, social media, etc. Please describe your plan to promote the Florida Animal Friend Spay/Neuter License Plate. Grantees are required to submit documentation of promotional endeavors.**

Since we have received previous awarded funding we continue to provide information brochures for the specialty plate at our surgical center, with our adoption packets, in our quarterly newsletters, monthly volunteer newsletters and at our monthly caregiver workshop presentations. In addition we provide a link on our website, Facebook and Twitter pages. Any opportunity for press coverage is also utilized. Both vehicles owned by Sheltering Hands and vehicles belonging to board members use the plate to promote the license plate in our community.