

Grant ID: 2293

Title of Proposal: The "Big Fix" Spay/Neuter and Rabies Voucher Program**Agency Type:** Non-Profit**Total Funding Requested:** \$25,000.00**Check Payable To:** Humane Society of Sumter County

Application Information

Demographics

Name of Applicant Agency: Humane Society of Sumter County**Website Address:** https://hsspca.org**Person Submitting Proposal:** Pauline Garber**Position:** Director**Person Submitting Proposal Email Address:** pschwartz@newhaven.edu**Person Submitting Proposal Cell:** 352-626-1265**Organization Head:** Cheryl Courtright**Organization Head's Email:** development@hsspca.org**Organization Business Address:** 994 County Road 529A**City:** Lake Panasoffkee**State:** Florida**Zip:** 33538**Organization Business Phone (xxx-xxx-xxxx):** 352-793-9117**County:** Sumter**Organization Head's Cell:** 352-355-8740

Agency Details

EIN:0% "> EIN: 59-2999283**Date of 501(c)(3) Incorporation:** 01/20/1995**Dates of Last Fiscal Year: Begin:** 01/01/24 **End:** 12/31/24**Organization Income in Last Fiscal Year:** \$1,356,837.00**Organization Expenses in Last Fiscal Year:** \$813,610.00**Number of Paid Employees:** Full Time: 11 Part Time: 7**How did you learn of the 2009 Florida Animal Friend grant competition?**

The Humane Society of Sumter County is a past recipient of a Florida Animal Friend grant.

Year(s) of previous Florida Animal Friend grants (if applicable):**Previous Florida Animal Friend Applications:** Years Funded: 2009, 2011, 2022 Year(s) denied/incomplete: 2013, 2014, 2024**Auto-Generated (Previous Applications):**

Grant #	Proposal Year	Proposal Title	Status
36	2009	Spay/Neuter Vouchers for Low-Income Residents of Sumter County	Funded
73	2009	Spay/Neuter Services for Needy Residents of Sumter County	Denied
201	2011	Free Spay/Neuter Project	Funded

339	2013	Low Income Spay/Neuter Program	Denied (not completed)
1392	2014	Low Income Spay/Neuter Voucher Program	Denied (not completed)
1441	2015	Spay/Neuter Voucher System	Funded
1624	2007		Denied
1696	2017	Free Spay/Neuter Voucher Program	Denied
1760	2018	Spay/Neuter Voucher Program	Denied (not completed)
2039	2022	The "Big Fix" Spay/Neuter and Rabies Voucher Program	Funded
2243	2024	The "Big Fix" Spay/Neuter and Rabies Voucher Program	Denied (not completed)
2293	2025	The "Big Fix" Spay/Neuter and Rabies Voucher Program	Funded

***Type of Organization (check all that apply):**

- ☐ Municipal Agency with Shelter
☐ Municipal Agency without Shelter
☒ Private Animal Shelter
☐ Private Animal Shelter with Municipal Contract
☐ Public Spay/Neuter Services
☐ Other Public Veterinary Services
 Non-profit Agency
 ☐ TNR Group
 ☐ Rescue Group
☐ Other

List the current President of your nonprofit organization (Not required of governmental agency):

Name	Title
Tom Diss	Chairman, Board of Directors

Applicant Qualifications**For your organization, in the last complete fiscal year:**

465 cats and 122 dogs were admitted.

497 cats and 172 dogs were adopted, transferred, or other live outcome.

6 cats and 2 dogs were euthanized.

380 cats and 45 dogs were sterilized.

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 capacity to carry out this program.

The Humane Society of Sumter County, a no-kill shelter with over 44 years of service, is committed to safeguarding animals through direct intervention and multiple safety net programs in our community outreach work. Our experienced staff has a framework to continue carrying out our long-standing spay/neuter voucher program. Our shelter offers spay/neuter vouchers, a pet food pantry, and educational programs to reduce pet overpopulation and improve animal welfare across our community. We are located on a 5-acre property in Lake Panasoffkee, FL, which includes separate accommodations for cats and dogs, including 34 kennels, play yards, and specialized areas for separate dog and cat quarantine care. We have recently expanded our facilities with a larger administrative space to accommodate growing needs including pet adoption counselling, humane education, pet owner needs such as receiving our spay/neuter vouchers or pet food pantry applications. The Big Fix Spay/Neuter Voucher program continues to be overseen by Lianna Vallejo, our Shelter Operations Manager. She manages a staff of 18 full time and part time employees and helps utilize our team of approx. 100 active volunteers in a range of many animal care duties. We partner with Planned Pethood Cares (PPC), a nonprofit veterinary clinic in Lake Panasoffkee, to provide these spay/neuter voucher services and rabies vaccinations. PPC has recently opened another practice in a southern neighboring county, in the city of Brooksville, and they have agreed to our request to accept our vouchers honoring the same reduced fees as their Sumter practice. The intent is to reduce any scheduling backlogs so that any

qualifying pet owners in our county's southern region can access the benefits of our voucher program before their pets have a chance at reproducing. More immediate scheduling opportunities is our goal so that the increased number of spay/neuter vouchers redeemed will make our program more impactful. With a history of effective leadership under Shelter Director Cheryl Courtright, we are confident in our ability to expand our impact and further our mission to protect and care for animals which includes a larger number of spay/neuter vouchers being utilized for pets within Sumter County. Our Director of Development, Cindi Mainer, who joined us in late 2023, has organized a more robust grant writing volunteer team in pursuit of funding for the spay/neuter voucher program as well as our other projects.

Florida Animal Friend grants are for low-cost and/or no-cost spay/neuter programs; If you currently have such a program, please describe

The Humane Society of Sumter County has allocated an annual budget of \$34,200 for the 2025 fiscal year to support The Big Fix program, projected to cover approximately 400 vouchers. Already, many vouchers have been distributed in January and February of this year; about 50 vouchers per month. Continuously seeking spay/neuter and vaccination grants reflects our commitment to expanding our assistance to more families and their beloved pets. In 2023 we were grateful to receive a FAF Spay and Neuter Grant that allowed us to provide >500 additional spay/neuter vouchers. In 2023, The Big Fix spay/neuter voucher program provided vouchers to qualifying families across Sumter County, issuing 299 for dogs and 552 for cats. Nearly 95% of the redeemed vouchers were provided for free based on our sliding scale of household income. In 2024, there were significantly fewer (425 spay/neuter procedures) limited by available funding. We hope to secure FAF funding for 2025 so as to elevate our efforts in reducing animal overpopulation, mitigate homelessness, and alleviate unnecessary suffering in our community.

Number of animals sterilized in that program in the past year:

Cats: 380 **Dogs:** 45

Target Population

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(s) of the spay/neuter project proposed for this grant:

☒ Pets in low-income families ☒ Large mixed-breed dogs ☒ Trap-Neuter-Return of free-roaming community cats. EAR-TIPPING IS REQUIRED ☐ S/N services where demand exceeds current resources. ☐ Other

Geographical target area (name of city, county, zip codes, etc. Be as specific as possible.):

Lake Panasoffkee, Sumter County,
Zipcodes: 32162, 32159, 32163, 34785,
33513, 34484, 33597, 33538, 33585,
33514, 33521 GIS
:https://www.sumtercountyfl.gov/105/GIS

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

Our primary focus centers on the rural southern areas within our county. While Sumter County's overall poverty rate is 9.7%, this statistic can be deceiving because of the significant population concentration in The Villages, which spans across Sumter, Lake, and Marion Counties. Although The Villages is a pet-friendly community restricted by age, only a small portion of its residents fall below the poverty line. Additionally, most residents in The Villages have access to many private veterinary services. In contrast, the remaining parts of Sumter County are predominantly low-income rural communities, with many major cities reporting poverty rates exceeding 20%. This inequality underscores the urgent necessity for the services provided by the Humane Society of Sumter County in these underserved regions. Economic and employment limitations, language barriers and cultural differences in animal care and responsible pet ownership are all contributing factors in pet overpopulation in these areas. There are also a limited number of private veterinary practices and only one HQHVSN (high-quality, high-volume spay-neuter) nonprofit clinic within Sumter County which may not be as accessible either due to a lack of transportation there or due to cost.

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?

The northern area of our county is a relatively affluent retirement community well-served by veterinary practices while the southern end of our county is rural. Many of the southern area residents meet or fall below the poverty level and simply cannot afford standard veterinary procedures. To increase access of care to more pet owners in rural Sumter County, Planned Pethood Cares (PPC), a low-cost non-profit clinic in Lake Panasoffkee, will foster a collaboration with Planned Pethood Brooksville to reach lower Sumter County area residents.

Objectives

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

The Big Fix program addresses the issue of pet overpopulation by providing spay/neuter and Rabies vaccinations. Currently, budget restraints allow for about 400 vouchers for these procedures, based on the average weight/age of past voucher recipients and covering nearly 100% of most expenses in our sliding scale. Most costs have increased at our partnering nonprofit clinic, yet we still need to significantly make an impact across our targeted communities. In conjunction with FAF grant funding, our program can continue to meet the ever-growing needs. Medical requirements for bloodwork and anesthesia for older or larger pets have also changed, which will reduce the number of specific candidates who receive assistance with our current budget capability. The Florida Animal Friend grant of \$25,000 would greatly assist us in bridging this financial gap, allowing us to provide essential access to care - potentially providing at least 275 more sterilization/vaccination procedures. Additionally, veterinary procedures become increasingly costly, further reason additional funding is essential. We will continue to serve our local community effectively, but we must respond to the increasing costs with increased resources. Come September, our budget will realize a significant expense in this area, and we must allocate what is needed to meet the demand while combating the increased costs.

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

Last year approximately 425 vouchers were redeemed through The Big Fix program. Additional funding beyond our budgeted amount will allow us to promote The Big Fix program even more to those targeted communities, and more regularly. As is our objective, a measurable 275 more sterilization/vaccination procedures can be realized. In 2025, we aim for a measurable increase in the number of spay/neuter procedures that FAF support will facilitate.

Methods

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

There are two criteria for eligibility for The Big Fix program. (1) The applicant must be a resident of Sumter County to apply. (2) Financial eligibility is determined by household income as documented by receipt of State/Federal assistance or annual taxes. There is a sliding scale to cover the total cost of spay/neuter procedures and rabies vaccination. (--) Yearly Income \$ 50 – \$25,000 -----Cost for The Big Fix is \$0---Cost Rabies Vax is \$0---Total Cost --- \$0; --- (--) Yearly Income \$25,001 – \$28,000 ---Cost for The Big Fix is \$20---Cost Rabies Vax is \$15---Total Cost \$35.00; --- (--) Yearly Income \$28,001 – \$30,000 -----Cost for The Big Fix is \$35---Cost Rabies Vax is \$15---Total Cost \$50.00;----- (--) Yearly Income \$30,001 – \$40,000 ----Cost for The Big Fix is \$50---Cost Rabies Vax is \$15---Total Cost \$65.00;----- (--) Yearly Income \$40,001 or more --- our program is not available. In addition, feral/community/barn cats qualify for free spay/neuter, with a maximum of 5 cats per month per colony. A college student, with a full-time student ID, may spay/neuter their pet(s) at no charge.

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

The Humane Society of Sumter County and its programs are well known in the Sumter County area. The shelter participates in many community events and widely advertises the shelter's programs and services in frequent press releases and social media. We also share FAF posts with our followers. The Big Fix Spay/Neuter and Rabies Vaccination program is advertised on our website (<https://hsspc.org/>), our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/HSSumterCounty/>), and in many local newspapers. We distribute the FAF rack cards and bilingual fliers to targeted communities in city halls, animal services, and community services nonprofits. Word of mouth and referrals, however, are our best sources. When we have opportunities to appear on local TV and radio interviews, we highlight this program as an ongoing priority service.

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

Other than the eligibility factors noted above, we have addressed and reduced or removed barriers to participating in our programs. In recent years, we have changed our program to be a sliding scale on income qualification in order to assist more of Sumter's pet owners with some reduced costs also. With regard to transportation, Sumter County has a public transportation system. As an outreach initiative, we provide much of our written information in Spanish. Our Shelter Operations Manager who oversees our safety net programs such as The Big Fix, is bilingual and assists many who only speak Spanish. We are also recruiting volunteers who are bilingual or are fluent in ASL (American Sign Language). With regard to cultural hurdles, we do not discriminate against people for any reason, including socioeconomic status. This program, by its very nature, is meant to assist any Sumter County residents who cannot afford to have their pets spayed/neutered on their own.

Does this project involve the transportation of animals by someone other than the client? If so, describe.

No transportation is provided by our organization.

Veterinary Services

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

We have an agreement with Planned Pethood Cares, 735 E. County Rd 470, Lake Panasoffkee, to honor our vouchers at a non-profit rate. Please see their letter of support and listing of prices in the downloaded documents.

Are they: ☐ In-House Veterinarian ☒ Outside Clinic ☐ Combination

Participating veterinary practices if surgeries will not be performed in-house:

Practice Name	Address	City	State	Zip	Phone	Lead Practice
Planned Pethood Brooksville	6208 Spring Lake Hwy.	Brooksville	Florida	34601	352-691-7387	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planned Pethood Cares	735 E. County Road	Lake Panasoffkee	Florida	33538	352-568-9994	<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. This includes pain medication, ear tipping, and \$ 2 per animal for rabies vaccinations. Costs for licensing, testing, transport, etc. are not to be paid for with grant funds.

	Amount Paid by Client	Amount Paid by Project	Total Amount
Range for Male Cats	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>	<input type="text" value="\$50.00"/>	<input type="text" value="\$50.00"/>
Range for Female Cats	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>	<input type="text" value="\$60.00"/>	<input type="text" value="\$60.00"/>
Range for Male Dogs	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>	<input type="text" value="\$105.00"/>	<input type="text" value="\$105.00"/>
Range for Female Dogs	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>	<input type="text" value="\$117.00"/>	<input type="text" value="\$117.00"/>

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 type="radio"/> Required <input checked="" type="radio"/> Optional <input type="radio"/> Not Available	<input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="text" value="\$35.00"/>
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="\$13.00"/>
Other Vaccination if Due	<input type="radio"/> Required <input checked="" type="radio"/> Optional <input type="radio"/> Not Available	<input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="text" value="\$28.00"/>
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 type="radio"/> Required <input checked="" type="radio"/> Optional <input type="radio"/> Not Available	<input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="text" value="\$20.00"/>
HW Testing	<input type="radio"/> Required <input checked="" type="radio"/> Optional <input type="radio"/> Not Available	<input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="text" value="\$20.00"/>
Feline Leuk/FIV	<input type="radio"/> Required <input type="radio"/> Optional <input checked="" type="radio"/> Not Available	<input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="text" value="\$30.00"/>
County License	<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
Microchip	<input type="radio"/> Required <input type="radio"/> Optional <input checked="" type="radio"/> Not Available	<input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="text" value="\$25.00"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/> Required <input checked="" type="radio"/> Optional <input type="radio"/> Not Available	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes

*** = REQUIRED by grant**

Grant funds cannot be used for the above services except for pain medication, ear tipping, and \$2 per animal for rabies vaccination.

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

Planned Pethood Cares Veterinary Clinic charges \$50 to neuter a male cat and \$60 to spay a female cat. The range for sterilization for male dogs is \$90 to \$130 and for female dogs is \$100-\$155, and therefore we inserted a median cost in our data report above; "Other" category: dogs older than 7 years or over 100 pound must have additional procedures increasing the cost by \$100. Cost variables range from pet weights for parasite medications (estimate) and what vaccinations are chosen (average price). The cost for rabies vaccination is \$15. The Humane Society's The Big Fix voucher program reduces these costs dependent on household income

(see prior scale). The voucher covers the cost of rabies vaccination and pain medication. Please see the current PPC price list with letter of support in uploaded documents.

Is this a voucher program? Yes

If so, how will you assure utilization of the program?

We assure compliance with the program by staying in communication with recipients. We ask them to call us and tell us their appointment date. Then we call to make sure the appointment was kept. Additionally, we are able to see which vouchers were completed on a monthly basis via the veterinarian's monthly invoice. We keep periodic records to monitor the efficacy of The Big Fix program.

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

Planned Pethood Cares Veterinary Clinic conducts the necessary procedures connected to The Big Fix vouchers. We requested information related to the capacity of the clinic to conduct additional procedures that would be funded by the Florida Animal Friend grant. After discussions with the Director of Planned Pethood, Amber Burgess, she had agreed to honor the pricing of the Lake Panasoffkee practice at the new Brooksville practice to increase the number of appointments for the most vouchers rede

Will you have the ability to report the number of vouchers issued and the number redeemed for spay/neuter surgeries?

Yes, we will be able to report the number of vouchers used because we follow up with the recipients and cancel vouchers of people that don't use their vouchers in a timely manner.

Community Collaboration

Florida Animal Friend values community/inter-agency collaboration. 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
Bushnell, Webster and Center Hill City Halls	Each of these rural towns provide our bilingual fliers to residents as these communities have been some of the most consistent areas who request and redeem our vouchers each month.
Facebook Word of mouth pages	On a regular basis, we and many Sumter residents, actively promote our Big Fix program to those who ask for resources available.
Sumter County Animal Services	Referral

Other Information

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

Since 2008, the Humane Society has successfully offered vouchers for the spay/neuter program, creating a long history of support to the community. We have robust administrative procedures for providing and monitoring vouchers and usage. With a strong relationship with Planned Pethood Cares, we work in tandem to ensure we are doing everything we can to help quell the overpopulation of cats and dogs within our community. We actively pursue private donors to support the vital needs of this program and encourage our community to purchase the specialty license plate. Sumter County has many newcomers moving here and we anticipate FAF will be able to see an increase in designated counties who actively promote the plate. Please see more information about the Humane Society of Sumter County on our website (<https://hsspc.org/>) and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/HSSumterCounty/>).

Budget

Total number of sterilization surgeries projected:

Cats: 380 **Dogs:** 110

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

Average cost/surgery projected: \$52.00

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

We currently have designated a budget of \$34,200 which we anticipate will be exhausted sooner than expected due to the cost increases at our partnering HVHQS clinic, Planned Pethood Cares. Each year special events are being planned and a portion of the proceeds benefit The Big Fix spay/neuter program, such as bingo, 50/50 raffles, etc., to meet the growing need for such necessary services. We are seeking support from foundational grants and private donors throughout each year. As costs increase, we allocate additional funding during our budgeting process as much as possible.

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

42%

If not 100%, please elaborate.

Timeline

PROJECTS CANNOT BEGIN UNTIL GRANT FUNDS ARE RECEIVED, usually before September 1.

All projects must be completed within 12 months of receipt of funding, with the final report submitted no later than September 1 of the following year.

Projected start date: 09/01/25/ **Projected end date:** 08/31/26

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 Humane Society of Sumter County applies for grants on an ongoing basis through private foundations. Our individual donations account for more than 80% of our revenue, and with increased targeted awareness and a committed Development Director in place, our strategies and revenues will increase many folds. New special events and an increase in revenue from existing special events are planned, to increase our revenue by at least \$100,000 this year. Efforts are also being made to defray costs with in-kind donations, as well as in-kind services or discounted rates such as food purchases, which allows for more revenue allocated to our important programs and services.

Promotion of Florida Animal Friend Spay/Neuter License Plate

***Applicants selected for funding are expected to actively publicize their grant in support of their spay/neuter program and promote the sale of the Animal Friend license plate. Publicity efforts should include press releases, newsletters, website links, and social media posts, among other strategies. Florida Animal Friend's marketing firm will provide assistance and advice, and partner with your organization to achieve coverage. Please describe your plan to promote the Florida Animal Friend Spay/Neuter License Plate. Grantees are required to submit documentation of promotional endeavors with their final report as part of their reporting obligations.**

The Humane Society of Sumter County supports the Florida Animal Friend specialty license plates by distributing the rack cards at all tabling events year-round, on our website, across our social media, Facebook pages, and our van has the spay/neuter license plate. Between staff and volunteers, we estimate that about 25% display FAF plates.

Number of FAF specialty plates on vehicles of staff and/or volunteers:

Unknown