

Grant ID: 2441

Title of Proposal: Expanded Community Cat Subsidy

Agency Type: Non-Profit

Total Funding Requested: \$25,000.00

Check Payable To: Operation Catnip

Application Information

Demographics

Name of Applicant Agency: Operation Catnip of Gainesville, Inc.

Website Address: ocgainesville.org

Person Submitting Proposal: Audrey Garrison

Position: Executive Director

Person Submitting Proposal Email Address: admin@ocgainesville.org

Person Submitting Proposal Cell: 941-720-4539

Organization Head: Zoe Haraden

Organization Head's Email: Zharaden13@gmail.com

Organization Business Address: 912 N.E. 2nd Street

City: Gainesville

State: FL

Zip: 32601

Organization Business Phone (xxx-xxx-xxxx): 352-380-0940

County: Alachua

Organization Head's Cell: 352-262-6054

Agency Details

EIN:0%"> EIN: 59-3522372

Date of 501(c)(3) Incorporation: 06/25/1998

Dates of Last Fiscal Year: Begin: 01/01/25 **End:** 12/31/25

Organization Income in Last Fiscal Year: \$1,135,450.00

Organization Expenses in Last Fiscal Year: \$1,062,443.00

Number of Paid Employees: Full Time: 11 Part Time: 18

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

Our founder, Dr. Julie Levy, was an original contributor to the legislative effort that established the license plate funding.

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

Previous Florida Animal Friend Applications:

Years Funded: 2010,2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022, and 2024 Year(s) denied/incomplete: 0

Auto-Generated (Previous Applications):

Grant #	Proposal Year	Proposal Title	Status
129	2010	Operation Catnip	Funded
285	2012	Spay More to Save More	Funded
1427	2014	Spay More to Save More	Funded
1678	2016	Rural Spay-Neuter Expansion	Funded

1775	2018	Spay Neuter Capacity Builder	Funded
1890	2020	Capacity Building Clinics	Funded
2034	2022	Community Cat Outreach Program	Funded
2236	2024	Rural and Low-Income TNR Outreach	Funded
2441	2026	Expanded Community Cat Subsidy	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
Zoe Haraden	President

Applicant Qualifications

For your organization, in the last complete fiscal year:

161 cats and 0 dogs were admitted.

145 cats and 0 dogs were adopted, transferred, or other live outcome.

71 cats and 0 dogs were euthanized.

8341 cats and 0 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.

Operation Catnip has been reducing the community cat population and mitigating suffering with various programs that include multiple spay-neuter clinics every week; a Kitten Shelter Diversion Program that has significantly reduced shelter intakes at Alachua County Animal Resources & Care (ACARC), the local Humane Society and other local rescues; a trap depot for free trap loans; a Working Cat Program for spicey cats not suited for traditional adoptions; a Critical Care Program to provide ill or injured community cats and their caregivers emergent care relief; a food bank; and occasional deployments to underserved areas in collaboration with other rescue groups. Operation Catnip has our own fully equipped building that allows us to efficiently hold clinics several days every week, thus providing consistently reliable services to the entire community of free-roaming cats. Our Medical Director is Dr. Lanie Velasquez, DVM. Lanie has extensive experience in shelter medicine, is a graduate from the UF College of Veterinary Medicine with a certificate in Shelter Medicine. Dr. Velasquez was a part of Catnip's very first Fellowship class. Prior to joining Operation Catnip, she was the lead veterinarian at Tally Spay in Tallahassee. Also, Dr. Simone Guerios, DVM, MS, PhD is on our board of Directors. She is the current holder of the endowed chair for the Grevior Shelter Medicine Community Outreach Professorship at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine.

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

Operation Catnip has been providing our North Central Florida region with subsidized and donation-supported spay-neuter surgeries for community cats since our inception in 1998. This past July, we celebrated a milestone with the 100,000th cat sterilized by our organization. The total number through the end of 2025 is 103,398 cats, which does not include dogs or other species that are occasionally served in partnership with other local rescue groups.

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

Cats: 8341 Dogs: 0

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.):

Alachua County, FL

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

Unowned free-roaming cats represent a substantial portion of the total cat population in Alachua County. Programs aimed at reducing cat overpopulation must include provisions for neutering unowned free-roaming cats. These efforts should target the public, not just pet owners. This application will support our methods of providing additional assistance to those members of the public who care for the cats but cannot afford the service fees required for surgeries. Without viable free spay-neuter programs, even low-cost services are prohibitive for most people in these neighborhoods, especially when they need to spay-neuter multiple cats.

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?

Alachua County has a few low-cost spay-neuter facilities or programs. But combined they are lacking in capacity and flexibility to meet the area's needs for community cats. The Humane Society of North Central Florida offers services to the public for both companion pets and community cats. They are low-cost but the fees for community cat spay-neuters are \$100. There are a couple of private animal hospitals in the area that offer low-cost surgeries but since they are full service animal clinics as well, their spay-neuter capacity is very limited. One clinic, St. Francis Pet Care, aka Remedy, has just recently closed.

Objectives

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

There are no other life-affirming organizations in this area that offer humane programs exclusively for community cats. Surgical capacity in Alachua County outside of our clinic is insufficient to accommodate the demand for spaying and neutering community cats. This grant will allow us to increase our surgical capacity by expanding reach for those residents who cannot afford our very low everyday surgical fees. Those fees are \$60 per cat, male or female, with no additional costs for common complications, such as pregnancies, in-heat or cryptorchids. We provide third-party subsidized surgeries for anyone who cares for community cats and cannot pay this low fee. This grant will provide fully subsidized spay-neuters by paying for those surgeries for caregivers in Alachua County with financial hardships that would otherwise create a barrier to care. Cats that might not be trapped or neutered due to the resident's hesitation to even try, affordability being the primary barrier to this hesitancy, will be able to bring their cats to our clinics without charge.

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

Since opening our own clinical facility in August of 2024, we have altered over 8,000 community cats annually. We operate at least three clinics per week but add an additional clinic day where feasible. Over the course of the year, beginning with the September 1st start of your grant cycle, we will be able to add another 7 to 8 clinic dates to our schedule. We will be able to fully subsidize 500 additional community cats from Alachua County with grant funding.

Methods

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

Operation Catnip recognizes that caregivers provide ongoing care for community cats. Consequently, our focus is the welfare of the cats, the caregivers, and the community through the humane control of free-roaming community cats. We strive to remove barriers to quality medical care and sterilizations, allowing caregivers the quality medical services their cats need.

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

We educate the public on cat issues with flyers, door hangers, social media, and several brochures depending on the type of program promoted in the area. All of these are in collaboration with the open admission municipal shelter. This request highlights the extension of programs that use enhanced caregiver assistance methods to reach more people and, therefore, the cats in their care. This has resulted in an increased level of cats now coming to our clinics for services, and to the demand for even more clinical dates.

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

Operation Catnip directly addresses those barriers as part of our primary mission. In some cases, caregivers are not physically or financially able to trap and transport on their own as they are either elderly or handicapped. When caregivers need assistance, trapping, transportation, and return of the cats to their colonies are provided by Operation Catnip staff or volunteers, mostly utilizing our own climate-controlled van. It has been outfitted for the safe transport of many community cats in one trip. We have a few Spanish-speaking staff members who are available to jump in on phone calls or in-person discussions when required.

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

Most of the cats that come to our clinics are brought to us by their caregivers. Our transporter is available for pick-ups and returns when needed. Liability releases are signed by the caregivers upon intake.

Veterinary Services

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

Operation Catnip opened our own fully-equipped clinical facility two years ago. We have the staff and volunteers that allow us to run a minimum of three clinics every week.

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
Operation Catnip	912 N.E. 2nd Street	Gainesville	FL	32601	352-380-0940	☒

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	\$0.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
Range for Female Cats	\$0.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
Range for Male Dogs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Range for Female Dogs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$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 ☒ Required ☐ Optional ☐ Not Available

☒ No ☐ Yes

Rabies Vaccination if Due ☒ Required ☐ Optional ☐ Not Available

☒ No ☐ Yes

Other Vaccination if Due ☒ Required ☐ Optional ☐ Not Available

☒ No ☐ Yes

Pain Medication* ☒ Required ☐ Optional ☐ Not Available

☒ No ☐ Yes

Parasite Medication ☒ Required ☐ Optional ☐ Not Available ☒ No ☐ Yes

HW Testing ☐ Required ☐ Optional ☒ Not Available ☒ No ☐ Yes

Feline Leuk/FIV ☐ Required ☐ Optional ☒ Not Available ☒ No ☐ Yes

County License ☐ Required ☐ Optional ☒ Not Available ☒ No ☐ Yes

Ear tipping* ☒ Required ☐ Optional ☐ Not Available ☒ No ☐ Yes

Microchip ☐ Required ☐ Optional ☐ Not Available ☐ No ☐ Yes

Other ☐ Required ☐ Optional ☒ Not Available ☒ No ☐ 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:

We have one, all-inclusive fee for service. This covers everything, regardless of what might be required, including complications.

Is this a voucher program? No

If so, how will you assure utilization of 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 number redeemed for spay/neuter surgeries?

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
Alachua County Animal Resources & Care	ACARC shelter staff will help identify and refer cats for TNR services and work with our Community Cat Coordinator on community issues including proper care and education. Operation Catnip is a proud partner with and collaborates on all cat related issues. In addition, Operation Catnip takes unadoptable adult cats that cannot be returned to the field and places them in our Working Cats Adoption Program.
Puppy Hill Farm Animal Rescue	They also refer caregivers for TNR and for our Kitten Shelter Diversion Program.
The Humane Society of North Central Florida	They also refer caregivers for TNR and for our Kitten Shelter Diversion Program.

Other Information

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

As a result of our cornerstone spay-neuter clinics and all the related programs, we have reduced feline intakes at our municipal shelter to an annual, minimal number. Feline live release rates have been well over 90% every year since 2017. We know it is imperative to continue providing spay-neuter community cat caregivers without barriers to service. Without this subsidized program, affordability becomes a barrier that will allow the feline populations to increase with a subsequent increase of untreatable cats to the municipal shelter.

Budget

Total number of sterilization surgeries projected:

Cats: 500 Dogs: 0

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

Average cost/surgery projected: \$50.00

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

This is still early in the year and we have not yet secured any other dedicated subsidy monies. Several grants are pending from dependable and recurring grant makers. As of this writing, we have other requests outstanding for \$50,000. We are reasonably expecting to receive about \$40,000 in total, not including this request to the Florida Animal Friend grant.

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

40

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: 09/01/26/ **Projected end date:** 08/31/27

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.**

Operation Catnip has prospered and grown through our 28-year history, primarily through our local fundraising efforts. As an example of our local base, and a sign of the support we generate from those who know us best, Operation Catnip's participation in our Community Foundation of North Central Florida's annual Amazing Give Social Media fundraising event earned us \$63,000 last April. Operation Catnip collected the third most money during the event and had the second highest number of individual donors. We have consistently placed in the top three in both categories every year. These continuing results attest to Operation Catnip's local presence, acceptance, and ability to harvest financial support from our community. Additionally, last year we added a full-time Development Director to ensure our continued growth and long-term sustainability so we can continue to provide critically needed services to our local region.

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.**

Our programs offer multiple opportunities for display and signage. We will display your brochures in card stands in our front lobby where people queue to borrow traps, drop off their cats for surgery and during discharge. We have hundreds of traps that are made available to anyone needing to trap cats for our clinics. Florida Animal Friends receives mentions in our social media postings. Our

Facebook pages alone have over 19,000 followers who are treated every day to a new and informative post on upcoming events or helpful topics on humane care for free-roaming community cats.

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

24