

Grant ID: 2435

Title of Proposal: Spay and Neuter Polk 2026**Agency Type:** Non-Profit**Total Funding Requested:** \$25,000.00**Check Payable To:** SPCA Florida

Application Information

Demographics

Name of Applicant Agency: SPCA Florida**Website Address:** www.spcaflorida.org**Person Submitting Proposal:** Millenia Cadet-Wells**Position:** Marketing and Strategic Initiatives Coordinator**Person Submitting Proposal Email Address:** mcadetwells@spcaflorida.org**Person Submitting Proposal Cell:** 954-681-6116**Organization Head:** Shelley Thayer**Organization Head's Email:** sthayer@spcaflorida.org**Organization Business Address:** 5850 Brannen Road S**City:** Lakeland**State:** Florida**Zip:** 33813**Organization Business Phone (xxx-xxx-xxxx):** 863-577-4600**County:** Polk County**Organization Head's Cell:** 941-525-8035

Agency Details

EIN:0%"> EIN: 59-1939655**Date of 501(c)(3) Incorporation:** 06/06/1980**Dates of Last Fiscal Year: Begin:** 06/01/24 **End:** 07/30/25**Organization Income in Last Fiscal Year:** \$6,717,703.00**Organization Expenses in Last Fiscal Year:** \$7,511,573.00**Number of Paid Employees:** Full Time: 70 Part Time: 4**How did you learn of the 2009 Florida Animal Friend grant competition?** Through Florida Animal Friend E-blast.**Year(s) of previous Florida Animal Friend grants (if applicable):****Previous Florida Animal Friend Applications:** Years Funded: 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023 Year(s) denied/incomplete: 2009, 2010, 2006, 2025**Auto-Generated (Previous Applications):**

Grant #	Proposal Year	Proposal Title	Status
108	2009	Florida Animal Friend Grant Proposal	Denied
182	2010	Feral Cat Round Up	Denied (not completed)
354	2013	Community Cats	Funded
1466	2015	Spay/Neuter of Low-Income Residents	Funded

1594	2006		Denied
1695	2017	Low Income Spay/Netuer	Funded
1840	2019	Pets of Polk	Funded
1986	2021	Pets of Polk 2021	Funded
2160	2023	Pets of Polk 2023	Funded
2314	2025	Spay and Neuter Polk 2025	Denied (not completed)
2435	2026	Spay and Neuter Polk 2026	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
Karen Mitchell	President of the Board of Directors

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

2990 cats and 828 dogs were admitted.

3012 cats and 816 dogs were adopted, transferred, or other live outcome.

62 cats and 10 dogs were euthanized.

8539 cats and 2281 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.

SPCA Florida has the infrastructure, expertise, and resources to successfully carry out high-volume spay/neuter services. Our full-service, low-cost veterinary clinic is staffed by veterinarians, and supported by a team of skilled technicians, which allows us to efficiently perform a large number of procedures each day. With two dedicated surgical suites, we can manage high caseloads and ensure timely, quality care. Our capacity is further enhanced by being open five days a week, maximizing our ability to serve the community.

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

SPCA Florida currently operates multiple targeted spay/neuter programs that align with the objectives of this grant, including: Backyard Cat and SNAP Programs, which focus on sterilizing community and outdoor-owned cats to prevent overpopulation. Mom's Last Litter Program, which allows pet owners to bring in their litter for adoption in exchange for low or no-cost spay/neuter services for the parent animals. Pitties & Kitties, an annual event providing 120 free spay/neuter surgeries in a single day to increase accessibility for pet owners in need. AniMeals & Food Assistance Program, which helps low-income pet owners by providing pet food assistance while ensuring their animals are spayed/neutered.

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

Cats: 3841 Dogs: 201

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.):

Polk County has 17 municipalities; however, we've narrowed our target area down to just 4 of the 17, Lakeland, Winter Haven, Bartow, and Fort Meade. We selected these as they are at the highest risk of euthanasia and have the highest rate of unsterilized animals. These four municipalities have a combined population of over 200,000 people.

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

The most substantial sources of dog and cat overpopulation in Lakeland, Winter Haven, Bartow, and Fort Meade, stem from a combination of unsterilized pets and financial barriers to veterinary care. Many pet owners struggle to afford spay/neuter procedures, leading to unplanned litters that further increase the stray and shelter populations. Additionally, a significant number of community cats that are not spayed or neutered continue to reproduce, contributing to the cycle of overpopulation. Limited access to affordable veterinary services, particularly in rural and underserved areas, exacerbates the issue by preventing spays and neuters of the animals. Without intervention, shelters and rescues become overwhelmed, resulting in higher euthanasia rates.

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?

There are three low cost spay/neuter services accessible to Lakeland, Winter Haven, Bartow, and Fort Meade that include SPCA Florida in Lakeland, TLC Petsnip in Lakeland, and Paws Plus Veterinary Clinic in Lakeland. However, demand far exceeds available resources, with cost remaining a significant barrier for many residents. The issue is particularly severe for "Backyard Cats" (outdoor/colony cats). Once fed for just four days, these cats are legally considered owned, yet they have even fewer affordable sterilization options than other pets. Backyard Animals significantly contribute to overpopulation, and their roaming behavior increases the number of animals they breed with. Financial constraints, lack of awareness, and rising costs hinder access, especially given Polk County's 13% poverty rate. This funding is critical to us reducing overpopulation, lowering shelter intake, and ensuring these vital services remain accessible in Polk County.

Objectives

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

With this grant, we aim to provide spay/neuter surgeries for at least 384 Backyard Cats in Lakeland, Winter Haven, Bartow, and Fort Meade, reducing overpopulation and shelter intake. This funding will cover the \$65 fee per surgery, already far below Polk County's average cost of \$200, further easing the financial burden on pet owners and increasing sterilization rates. Each procedure includes a rabies vaccination, pain injection, and ear tipping, ensuring comprehensive care. Expanding our spay/neuter efforts led to a 17% increase in Polk County's save rate, made possible through grants and donations. With continued funding, we can maintain this momentum, providing essential veterinary care while working toward our 90% save rate. By sterilizing 384 cats, we conservatively estimate that we will prevent at least 4,608 unwanted kittens in one year, assuming half the cats we spay and neuter are female, making a lasting impact on Polk County's animal welfare. We will continue to track these statistics on a monthly basis.

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

This program expands access to low and no-cost spay/neuter services, increasing the number of sterilization surgeries beyond the existing baseline. With a larger team of veterinarians and technicians and a clinic operating five days a week, more than other providers, we have the capacity and capability to perform a higher volume of procedures, maximizing our impact. An example of this is our Pitties and Kitties event that takes place twice a year, and recently took place on March 6, where we spayed and neutered 120

animals in a single day, demonstrating that we are capable and prepared to handle a large quantity of spays and neuters. By focusing on Backyard Cats and Spay/Neuter Assistance Program cats, we help prevent thousands of unwanted litters, reducing pet overpopulation and unnecessary euthanasia. These two populations represent the highest at-risk cats and kittens in terms of unchecked reproduction. To further increase accessibility, we prioritize efficiency and affordability, providing comprehensive services at no additional cost, including a flea comb, rabies vaccine, pain injection, and ear tipping. Our dedicated team is committed to performing as many procedures as possible, targeting those with the highest need in the 4 cities. Additionally, through strategic marketing efforts, we will educate the community on the importance of sterilization, encouraging participation in the program. By increasing the availability of these services and eliminating financial barriers, we are taking critical steps toward improving the animal welfare in Polk County.

Methods

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

Grant funds will be allocated specifically for cats of residents in the four target areas, Lakeland, Winter Haven, Bartow, and Fort Meade, as they represent the greatest need in our community. We also ask that they bring proof of public assistance to qualify, verified with a valid award letter for one or more of the following items: • State or federally funded welfare program • Food Stamps • Social Security • SSI Disability • Disabled Veteran • Unemployment

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

To reach pet owners in need, we will employ a multi-channel outreach strategy: • Social media posts targeted at Polk County pet owners. • Bilingual flyers and posters in our hospital and shelter. • Bilingual flyers posted in communal areas such as laundromats, apartment complexes, convenience stores, and Social Security offices. • E-blasts, newsletters, and other creatives to be sent to current SPCA Florida supporters. • A press release to be sent out immediately upon receiving funding • Program promotions at the various events we attend, as well as promotion during our key fundraisers like our 5K run and Annual Auction for Animals

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

To ensure accessibility for all Polk County residents, we offer bilingual (English and Spanish) materials and assistance through our veterinarians, technicians, customer service representatives, and adoption counselors. Our intake instructions are designed to be clear and easy to read, accommodating pet owners with literacy challenges. We prioritize education on the benefits of spay/neuter procedures, approaching conversations with sensitivity to individual circumstances. Additionally, for pet owners without transportation, we can provide rides to appointments through Florida SARC, a program of SPCA Florida, ensuring that lack of mobility is not a barrier to essential veterinary care.

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

Typically, clients transport their own animals to and from the appointment, however if transportation is an issue, five days a week we can enlist individuals from our Florida SARC program to transport clients who do not have a means of transportation.

Veterinary Services

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

We always strategically plan with the veterinarians and vet technicians to ensure we have a plan in place to meet the increased demand.

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

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

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	\$65.00	\$65.00
Range for Female Cats	\$0.00	\$65.00	\$65.00

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:

N/A

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
Polk County Animal Control	Polk County Animal Control provides us with animals in need of spay or neuter.
Polk County No Kill Coalition	Polk County No Kill Coalition provides us with up to 30 animals every Tuesday that are in need of a spay or neuter.
Saving Paws Rescue of Florida	Saving Paws Rescue of Florida provides us with up to 30 animals every Tuesday that are in need of a spay or neuter

Other Information

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

SPCA Florida has a demonstrated history of successfully launching and expanding spay/neuter programs, consistently achieving measurable improvements in animal welfare and community impact. This grant will allow us to spay and neuter 384 cats, bringing us closer to our goal of sterilizing at least 3,000 animals through our Backyard Cat and SNAP programs this year. By reducing the number of unwanted litters, we will help alleviate overcrowding in local shelters, prevent the suffering of homeless animals, and increase Polk County's live release rate. Proper funding enables us to expand our resources, ensuring we can provide sterilization services to more pet owners in need. This not only reduces stress on families struggling to afford veterinary care but also prevents future litters from contributing to overpopulation. Our intake and outcome data strongly support the connection between targeted spay/neuter efforts and the reduction in shelter intake and euthanasia rates. Previous data has shown that when we increase access to affordable sterilization services, fewer animals enter the shelter system. This grant will directly enhance our ability to reach underserved populations, providing essential services that keep more animals in loving homes. We will continue to monitor and track the program's effectiveness, collecting data on intake trends, spay/neuter completion, and animal outcomes, which will allow us to refine our efforts and share the program's success with the community. By doing so, we can better assess the impact of our services and identify additional areas of need. Our initiative will also provide crucial support to the municipalities of Lakeland, Winter Haven, Bartow, and Fort Meade by offering food assistance to qualifying pet owners, ensuring that financial hardship does not prevent them from caring for their animals. Additionally, through targeted programs like Mom's Last Litter and Pitties & Kitties, we will engage both existing and new participants, expanding our reach to pet owners who may not yet be familiar with our services. This comprehensive approach not only increases access to essential veterinary care but also strengthens our connection with the community, helping to prevent pet surrender and keeping animals in loving homes. We are confident that these initiatives will serve as a significant step toward reaching a 90% save rate for Polk County.

Budget

Total number of sterilization surgeries projected:

Cats: 384 **Dogs:** 0

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

Average cost/surgery projected: \$66.00

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

In addition to this grant, our spay/neuter program is supported by contributions from other competitive community foundations, organizations, and individual donors who support our mission and animal welfare programs. We also utilize our relationships with Polk County Animal Control, and other organizations to pool resources to address Polk County's overpopulation crisis. These combined efforts ensure that we can continue offering affordable sterilization surgeries while maintaining high-quality veterinary care.

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

12.8

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:** 11/01/26

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.**

SPCA Florida is committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of our spay/neuter program beyond this grant. Our funding strategy includes actively pursuing funding from organizations that have supported our spay/neuter efforts in the past, as well as reaching out to organizations that we have not previously collaborated with. Our plan also includes engaging local businesses and donors through fundraising campaigns that emphasize the impact of spay/neuter services on Polk County's No-Kill efforts. By diversifying our funding sources, we aim to keep these critical services accessible and affordable for pet owners and maintain our progress toward saving more lives in our county.

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 organization will actively promote the Florida Animal Friend Spay/Neuter License Plate through our various platforms. We will issue a press release announcing the grant award and highlighting the impact of the Florida Animal Friend program on expanding spay/neuter services in Polk County. In doing this, we will promote the license plate. Florida Animal Friend and the license plate will be mentioned in our newsletters, on our website, and on all of our social media platforms, incorporating visuals, success stories, and direct calls to action encouraging license plate purchases. Additionally, we will integrate promotional messaging into the paperwork we provide our Veterinary Clinic clients, which on average is about 100 clients a day, and on the paperwork we give our adopters in the Adoption Center. We will continue to promote the Florida License Plate at the community outreach events we attend within Polk County to ensure continued awareness. This includes adoption events, fundraisers, and community centers. All activities will be documented and submitted with our final report to demonstrate our commitment to fulfilling grant requirements.

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

About 45