

Animal Welfare Community Investment Deep Dive

A Live Release Rate above 90% is Achievable for Open Admission Shelters:

With progressive programming focused on community support, large communities are able to achieve this “no kill” level of statistics. Communities like Austin and Dallas, Texas, the ARL in Des Moines, Iowa and even New York City! Cedar Valley Humane Society contracts with 47 municipalities and routinely maintains a 90% Live Release Rate or higher and has since 2016. In some cases, entire states are able to achieve above a 90% Live Release Rate; these include New Hampshire and Delaware. Iowa City is also incredibly close to achieving this milestone at 86.39%. Reaching this milestone is not only possible for our local organizations; it is imperative to our success as a community.

Here is what historical stats say for Cedar Rapids:

In recent history the euthanasia rates for cats range of about 33% - 54% within the department. If we look at Iowa counties like Polk and Black Hawk, which have similar populations, we see they are maintaining a feline euthanasia rate between 5% - 19%. This is a detrimental difference. ** Detailed statistics can be provided from 2002 - 2006 and from 2015 - 2023 upon request.

Community Impact Statement

The human-animal bond and its benefits socially, emotionally, and physically are well demonstrated in peer-reviewed literature. In addition to scientific evidence, culturally, animals are more important in our lives than ever before. They are not just residents we are charged with caring for, they are family and community members. With the evolution of animal welfare to lean into pet displacement prevention practices and diversion efforts, there is an amazing amount of opportunity before us. The potential to empower the public, increase community resources, and restructure intake protocols could dramatically decrease admissions and revolutionize animal welfare in Cedar Rapids.

To illustrate the financial resources saved, let's look at some budgeting factors. An estimated \$78 is the cost of resources required to intake, house, and euthanize each feral community cat who enters Cedar Rapids Animal Care and Control. Picking a conservative number of 300 euthanized feral cats would cost \$23,400 in resources annually. An additional impact is that this practice does nothing to solve the crisis of community cat overpopulation; in fact, statistics point to this practice exacerbating the problem. Trap-Neuter-Return and Return-to-Field programs decrease shelter intake numbers and euthanasia of cats by 30 - 94%.* Surprisingly, this type of programming also tends to lead to a decrease in dog euthanasia because of increased public awareness of resources. Additionally, savings and increased efficiency will be found in greater retention of Animal Control Staff and volunteers; along with increased public support.

Proposed Budget:

Spay/Neuter Program	
Income	Goal
Grant Funding	\$30,000.00
1% Local Option Sales Tax on Luxury Pet Items	\$44,785.00
0.5% Local Option Sales Tax on Brand Name Pet Food	\$241,150.00
Matching Partner Donations	\$30,000.00
In kind Donations	\$800.00
Total	\$345,935.00
Expenses	Goal
Spay/Neuter Vouchers (\$100 each)	\$100,000.00
Emergency Medical Support	\$35,935.00
Investment Toward Endowment	\$200,000.00
Pet Food Pantry Support	\$10,000.00
Total	\$345,935.00
Net	\$0.00

Budget Narrative (Cause I am a grant-writer)

As a leader, I aspire to advance our community toward solving the animal over-population crisis and reaching a commonly accepted goal of 90% "Live Release Rate" or higher. The Live Release Rate is the percentage of animals who leave the shelter alive, versus not alive. The above budget outlines one pathway toward a safer community, with healthier pets who are more likely to get to stay in the homes where they are loved.

With a 1% tax on luxury pet items, 0.5% tax on brand name, non-prescription pet food, grant funding, and funds raised through non-profit partnerships would generate an estimated \$345,935 annually. To create additional long-term stability of the program, a \$200,000 portion could be allocated to go toward an endowment fund through Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation. There, it would begin generating a larger interest rate, and after approximately 5 years the fund would be fully endowed. At that time, the minimal tax rates may be able to be lowered due to additional funding possible through the endowment.