

To: Dan Ehrenfeld
From: Gabrielle Sobolewski
Subject: A Report on the Feasibility of Writing and Submitting a Proposal to Seek Funding for a Trap-Neuter-Return Program in Emporium, PA on Behalf of the Cameron County S.P.C.A.
Date: November 1, 2016

Purpose:

The purpose of this memo is to determine whether or not a grant proposal to fund a Trap-Neuter-Return program located in Emporium, Pennsylvania would be accepted, funded, and fulfilled.

Summary:

The proposed project would serve in assisting to control the rising problem of feral cats in Emporium, PA. The project would be headed by the Cameron County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which is located in Emporium, PA. The number of feral cats in specific areas of Emporium, PA is increasing at an alarming rate, raising distress amongst both the citizens of Emporium as well as its felines. The funding from this grant will first and foremost help establish a Trap-Neuter-Return program, which is the most humane solution to the growing problem. The grant will additionally fund educational programs in the surrounding communities in order to inform its citizens about the problem, how to address it, and how to prevent from contributing to it. The proposed total funding for this project will be roughly \$25,000, which will allow the program to vaccinate, feed, and spay/neuter approximately 160 feral cats over the span of 2 years as well as educate the public in appropriate and affirmative ways to help mediate the problem.

Background/Discussion:

Emporium is a borough located in the northern Cameron County of Pennsylvania. In 2014, Emporium's population was estimated to be at approximately 1,963 people. The only animal shelter facility in the county is the Cameron County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or CCSPCA, which is located in Emporium.

The growing feral cat population in Emporium, PA was deemed a problem back in 2013, which was when the borough's council members initially heard the citizens' mounting concerns pertaining to the growing population of feral and stray cats around the community. While feral cat communities are mainly made up of strays, these colonies are also diversified by domestic cats that are unwanted, lost, or left behind by their owners. The rising number of cats in these areas produces three major problems. The first problem pertains to the wellbeing of the community's citizens, who are increasingly disturbed by the cats' use of their lawns and back yards as litterboxes. The cats also like to use porches as wooden scratching posts. Unwanted cat urine and the excessive destruction of personal property leads to uneasiness within the community. The second problem pertains to the environment itself. Emporium is known for its various types of trees, which, in turn, attracts many different birds. The feral cats prey upon these birds as an easy meal, along with chipmunks, squirrels, and other small mammals, killing off wildlife. The third major issue pertains to how quickly cats can reproduce. According to SpayUSA, an unsprayed female cat, her mate, and her offspring can produce up to 400 kittens in just three years, assuming that she has 2 litters a year with 2.8 kittens surviving per litter. With an unsprayed and unneutered colony of feral cats, that number can get out of hand very quickly, especially considering that a cat can start reproducing at as young as six months.

With the proposed Trap-Neuter-Return project, or TNR, these free-roaming feral cats will be trapped, spayed or neutered so that they can no longer reproduce offspring, vaccinated, and then returned to the area where they were found. Friendly strays and kittens may be adopted out into loving homes and families through the CCSPCA, but cats who are used to living on their own in the outdoors are able to continue to do so after TNR is completed. This way, the growing feral cat population is contained yet respected at the same time. The TNR program also supports feeding the feral cats in targeted locations as to move the cats away from residential areas. Finally, educational programs will be implemented in order to inform the community on how discarding domesticated cats contributes to the rising stray cat population, and what other measures they can do to help mediate these issues.

It costs approximately \$100 to spay/neuter and vaccinate a cat. Therefore, at \$1,000 a month, ten cats can be safely spayed, neutered, vaccinated, and returned back to their colonies. Within two years' time, it is estimated that approximately 160 feral cats can be safely assisted through the proposed TNR program. To complete this project, I would need to assess whether or not this proposed number would be enough to control the number of feral cats in Emporium and how quickly the TNR program should be implemented/executed (i.e. one year versus two years). These numbers will then help me assess how much food would be needed to be purchased per month in order to adequately feed the feral cats and lure them away from residential areas. I would additionally need to consider the cost of both a veterinarian to perform the operations and an instructor for the community education program. Lastly, I will need to contemplate how many different resources will be needed in the program's implementation (i.e. pamphlets, presentations, lectures, etc.). I would then be able to write the grant proposal asking for the specific funding needed to implement the TNR program in Emporium, PA. As it stands now, the

preliminary research I have done places the cost of the project at roughly \$25,000.

This project could realistically appeal to a wide variety of animal welfare organizations. Three possible organizations include the Petco Foundation, The BISSELL Pet Foundation, and PetSmart Charities.

The Petco Foundation is known to be one of the nation's largest funders of animal welfare causes, and it has a longstanding relationship with TNR grants. A recent grant the foundation awarded was to the Central Pennsylvania Humane Society's Service and Therapy Animals, which was a \$25,000 grant that included the funding of a TNR program in order to control the community's feral cat population. This example is very similar to our county's proposed grant, making this organization a primary target in our search for TNR funding.

The BISSELL Pet Foundation is another huge contributor in funding animal welfare organizations. In the summer of 2016 alone, the organization distributed over \$400,000 worth of grants to 30 organizations, with awards ranging from \$1,000 up to \$54,500 per organization. Some of these recent grants included funding for spay/neuter efforts, TNR projects, and vaccinations for animals in need. Based on the generous funding they have since contributed for similar projects, it is reasonable to assess that The BISSELL Pet Foundation would therefore provide the necessary funding for the completion of the proposed project.

PetSmart Charities has a specific fund dedicated especially towards TNR grants. They provide grants of up to \$100,000 for one to two years, specifically targeting TNR programs. Their requirements include: 1.) Making a big difference in your community by getting most of the free-roaming cats in your target area spayed or neutered, 2.) Having a geographically defined target

area, such as a town, city, county or ZIP code, 3.) Being primarily focused on free-roaming cats, and 4.) Measuring for impact with objective data, such as intake, complaint calls, requests for assistance or a before/after census of the free-roaming cat population. Our proposed project can meet all of these requirements, making the program a strong candidate for the grant's approval.

Further research would be done in order to specifically tailor the TNR project's need for each organization. For example, I would carefully read over the guidelines for each foundation to see specifically what they would cover. The Petco Foundation and BISSELL Pet Foundation seem to be more flexible in their grants than PetSmart Charities, making them stronger targets for acquiring funding for the entirety of the project's feeding and educational aspects as opposed to strictly just the spay/neuter aspect. However, looking at past successful grants given by each of the organizations, it seems likely that the proposed TNR program for Emporium, PA would be a successful contender in any of the prepositioned funding options.

Conclusion:

Based on my research, it seems that there is a vast amount of foundations willing to fund animal welfare projects such as Trap-Neuter-Return. The proposed TNR project would implement a long-term solution to a rapidly growing problem. Implementing such a project in Emporium, PA would ease the worries of concerned citizens and wildlife while humanely controlling the quickly reproducing colony of feral cats within the community. The Cameron County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is eager and highly prepared to meet all requirements for the grant applications of the aforementioned organizations. A draft proposal for this project can be completed in a timely manner and is projected to have a high probability of success based on previously awarded grants by the researched foundations.

Sources:

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2. "Our Work in Action." BISSELL Pet Foundation. N.p. Web. 01 Nov. 2016. <<http://www.bissellpetfoundation.org/grants/>>.
3. "Petco Foundation Grant." Blair County PA Animal Shelter. N.p. Web. 01 Nov. 2016. <<http://www.centralpahumane.org/petco-foundation-grant/>>.
4. "The Petco Foundation: Grant Opportunities." Petco. N.p. Web. 01 Nov. 2016. <http://www.petco.com/content/petco/PetcoStore/en_US/pet-services/petco-foundation/grant-opportunities.html#>.
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6. "Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Grants." PetSmart Charities. N.p. Web. 01 Nov. 2016. <<https://www.petsmartcharities.org/pro/grants/spayneuter-grants/free-roaming-cat-spayneuter-grants>>.