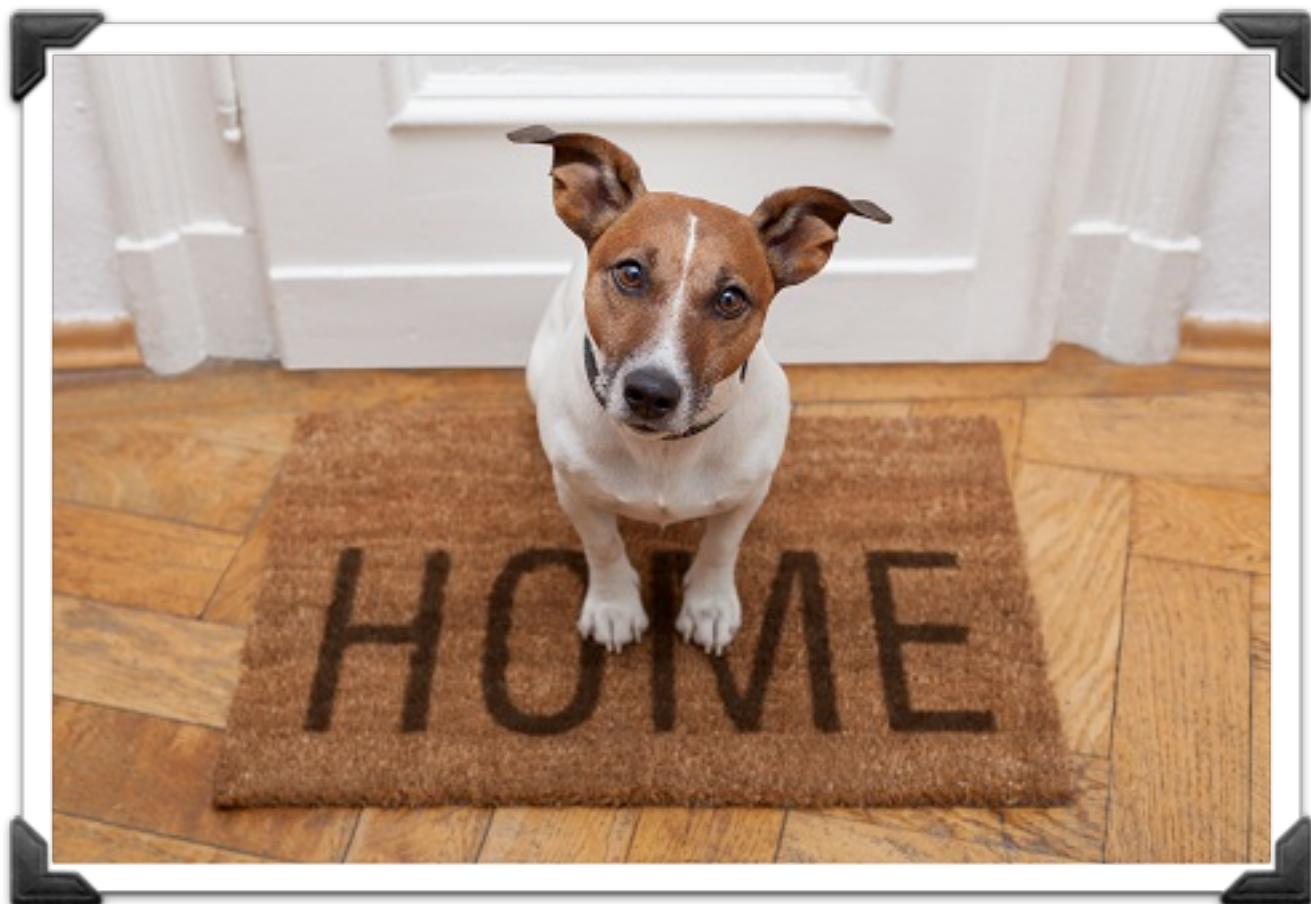


A Proposal to the BISSEL Pet Foundation Requesting \$50,000 for the Expansion of the Humane Society for Greater Nashua's Microchipping Program



Rachael Smith

December 12, 2014

24 Ferry Road
Nashua, NH 03064

December 12, 2014

Danielle West
Grant Administrator
BISSEL Pet Foundation
2345 Walker Avenue NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49544

Dear Ms. West,

I am writing on behalf of the Human Society for Greater Nashua to request financial support in the amount of \$50,000 from the BISSEL Pet Foundation. The Human Society for Greater Nashua (HSFN) is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization run by a volunteer Board of Trustees and staffed by a group of volunteers dedicated to the care of over 2,000 pets that come through the shelter each year. HSFN is always working to promote the welfare of abandoned, abused, neglected, and unwanted animals—we are an open admission shelter and will never turn away a stray or injured animal. In addition, all animals put up for adoption will remain with us until they find a new home.

Although HSFN currently spays, neuters, and vaccinates all adoptable pets, we are looking to expand our microchipping program. We believe that increased awareness concerning the importance of microchipping and greater efforts towards making microchipping services accessible to all pet owners will increase the number of pets returned to their families after being lost and in doing so, decrease the number of homeless pets who have been presumed missing by their owners. This will reduce crowding in local shelters, work towards decreasing stay pet populations, and help pets that do not already have forever homes be adopted. The proposed program would last for one year, with potential for further continuation and growth if successful.

Thank you for considering this proposal. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me via email at resmith@umass.edu or by phone at (978)846-4520.

Sincerely,

Rachael Smith

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1. Statement of Problem

Like the BISSEL Pet Foundation, the Humane Society for Greater Nashua is looking to address the problem of homeless pet populations. We believe that insufficient microchipping efforts significantly add to this populace, and are working to combat the issue by addressing what we feel to be the two main contributors to the problem. Lack of public knowledge on the subject and cost concerns are the two major roadblocks on the way to ensuring that all pets are microchipped. These setbacks in turn lead to overcrowding within shelters, which continue to exacerbate pet homelessness.

1.1 Public Misinformation and Lack of Education

For many pet owners, the concept of microchipping their pet may seem like a novelty service; something that could be nice but isn't necessary and is even a little useless. The fact is, 1 out of every 3 pets will become lost at some point during its lifetime, and without ID, 90% of lost pets are never returned home. The odds of losing a pet are a serious possibility—one that affects not only the pet's family and the animal itself, but potentially even all of the homeless pets looking to be adopted in local shelters.

Many people are also unaware that just knowing or ensuring that their pet has a microchip is not enough. The chip must be registered in a database under their personal information for it to be of any use in recovering the animal. If a stray pet is found with a microchip but there is no contact information associated with that ID, animal shelters have little choice but to take the pet in and put it up for adoption since there is no way for them to get in touch with the original owner.

Some pet owners also believe that if their pet wears a collar with identification information, getting a microchip is redundant as it serves the same purpose as a collar. While it's true that a microchip has the same function as a collar with ID tags, it is the only form of pet identification that cannot be removed or fall off. Break-away collars are designed to come off if the collar is caught on something so that dogs and cats are protected from strangulation and other dangers

posed by their collars being ensnared. There is no doubt that these collars have the potential to save a pet's life, but if the collar comes off, so does the ID. Cats are also less likely to wear any form of identification or collar, and therefore carry an increased risk of being difficult to identify. A stray pet that loses its collar or doesn't wear one is almost impossible to trace back to its owner, but with a microchip as a backup, shelters have contact information readily available to them on otherwise seemingly-unidentifiable pets.

There are also people who have reservations about the safety of microchips. They believe that the microchip will harm their pet in some way, when in reality the process of inserting a microchip is as simple as administering a routine shot or vaccination, and just as painless. The

procedure requires no anesthetic, and can be done within a few seconds. The chip itself is inserted under the skin between an animal's shoulder blades, and carries little to no chance of migrating elsewhere inside the animal as it is designed to bond with the animal's tissue within 24 hours of insertion. Microchips will last the lifetime of the pet and do not ever need replacing because they do not operate on any power source. They are also made with biocompatible materials, meaning they will not degenerate over time.

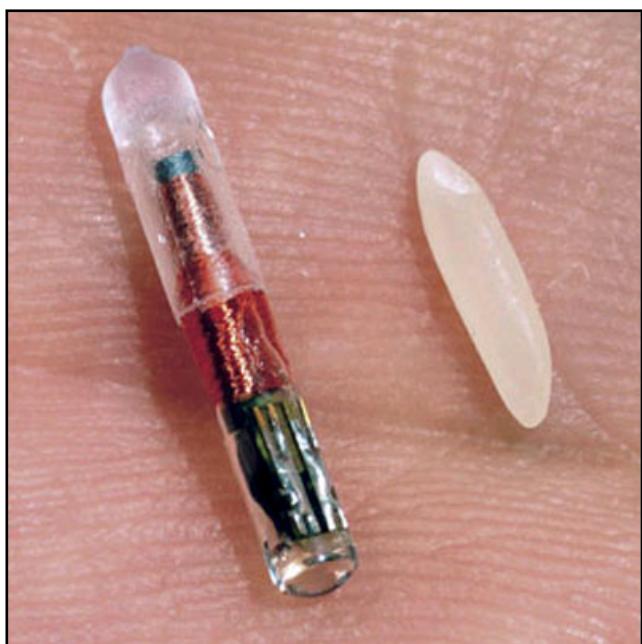


Fig 1. A size comparison between a microchip and a single grain of rice. Source: HowStuffWorks.com

Even more pet owners believe that their pet could never get lost, or that because their animals are always inside the house or on a leash, there is no way for them to go missing. These pet owners may believe they are being responsible, but even the most conscientious of pet parents are not infallible. It is impossible to account for all the unforeseen circumstances that may come up throughout the course of a pet's life. Accidents do happen, and without sufficient knowledge on

the subject, pet owners are incapable of making informed decisions that could save the lives of their pets.

1.2 Associated Expenses

For some families, the cost of microchipping can also be a concern. With the typical cost of microchipping services coming in at around \$45, it may be dismissed as an unnecessary expense by many pet owners who feel their money would be better spent elsewhere. As this cost does not always include potential registration fees for microchip databases, which can come in at around \$20 depending on the database, microchipping can be inaccessible or unfeasible for owners who are doing their best just to get by in low-income jobs and do not see it as a must-have for their dog or cat.

1.3 Overcrowding In Shelters

At HSFN alone, more than 2,100 pets come through our doors each year. While we will never turn away an animal or euthanize a pet to make room in our shelter, not all shelters are able to make this kind of promise. Although HSFN is not considered a no-kill shelter, we will only ever put down animals that have fatal injuries or illnesses, or animals that are too aggressive to ever be re-homed; we would never euthanize a healthy, happy animal. However, of an approximately 3.9 million dogs and 3.4 million cats to enter shelters nationwide each year, 1.2 million dogs and 1.4 million cats are euthanized annually.

Even no-kill shelters must make some form of compromise in return for their stance against euthanasia: most have a maximum capacity and must begin to turn away pets in need once this number is reached. As noted in the HFSN volunteer handbook:

In anticipation of reaching a maximum capacity and having to turn away pets, many shelters become selective when accepting pets and only take ones they think will have the best chance at adoption. Then the question lies, what happens to the ones they won't take? Does the owner find another shelter, let the pet loose or find

alternative ways to get rid of the pet? Or, once a “no-kill” shelter has taken a pet, what becomes of it if it doesn’t get adopted right away? What if the pet is sick, injured, aggressive or geriatric? Will it be caged in the shelter indefinitely?

In this way, overcrowding and ‘maximum capacities’ can contribute to animal homelessness and become ineffective at assisting pets in need. In shelters without sufficient resources to care for all the incoming animals, overcrowding can even contribute to the problem of shelters euthanizing otherwise healthy, adoptable pets.

Springtime is considered breeding season for feral cat populations and as such, many shelters experience severe overcrowding during this time of year. In 2009 HSFN experienced its worst overcrowding to date and was overwhelmed by 252 cats and kittens in the shelter. This prompted us to waive adoption fees for the month of August that year in order to return to a more manageable population. However, not all of these cats were feral—many were strays either lost or abandoned by their owners.

As about 99% of our cats are never reclaimed by their owners, stray cats are typically put up for adoption within seven days after arriving at HSFN. If all of the lost pets that came into our shelter were microchipped and registered with up-to-date contact information in a database, there would be significantly more room in the shelter for truly homeless pets.

Cats in general are less likely to be found by their owners. At the time of submission, HSFN had 24 cats and 3 dogs up for adoption—eight times as many cats as dogs. Where there are other contributing factors to this disparity, these numbers are supported by statistics found from studies

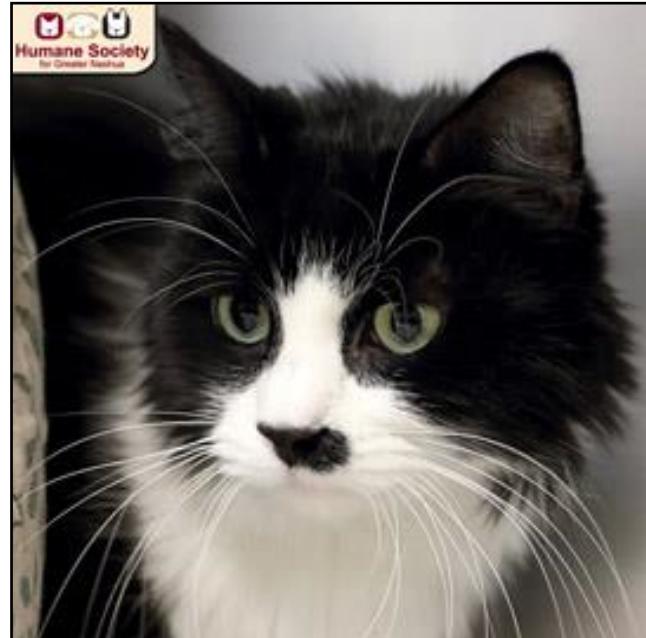


Fig 2. Oreo the cat, a five year old male up for adoption at HSFN. Source: HSFN.org

done by multiple organizations throughout the country. The HomeAgain Lost Pet Program, a prominent microchip database, used their own website's statistics and conducted a survey of national shelters to find that "less than 2% of cats without microchips were returned home. [...] If a cat is microchipped, the return-to-owner rate is 20 times higher than if the cat was not microchipped." In addition, the ASPCA estimates that, of the animals that come into shelters as strays, 26% of dogs and only 5% of cats are successfully returned to their owners.

If greater efforts are made by shelters across the country towards increasing the number of microchipped pets, fewer animals will be turned away by shelters or put down due to overcrowding, and more pets will be successfully returned to their owners.



Fig 3. A veterinarian scanning a dog for the presence of a microchip. Source: hondenwoordenboek.nl

2. Statement of Request

If the BISSEL Pet Foundation were to approve our grant proposal, all of the funding would go directly towards working to reduce the homeless pet population in the greater Nashua area. We would do this by spreading awareness about the benefits of microchipping through social media and local advertisements, as well as providing low-cost microchipping services for local pet owners. The program would be fully funded for the first year, and if it is successful the program could be continued in subsequent years through local, tax-deductible donations and additional grants.

Although we currently microchip all of our available cats and dogs, this grant would allow us to extend our reach outside the shelter. Microchipping is becoming more and more of a common practice amongst shelters, but there are still many more pet owners who did not obtain their animals from a shelter and therefore their pets remain un-chipped. We are aiming to target these families in order to increase the total number of microchipped pets in the greater Nashua region and, in doing so, give all pets a greater chance of being returned to their homes if they are ever lost, so that they are not put up for adoption in shelters.

Encouraging microchipping and registration helps reduce homeless pet populations in other ways as well. In New Hampshire, there are laws in place to protect animals from abandonment. Anyone who “Negligently abandons any animal previously in his possession or custody by causing such animal to be left without supervision or adequate provision for its care, sustenance or shelter” can be found guilty of a misdemeanor and sentenced to up to one year in prison and/or required to pay a fine. Second offenses are considered class B felonies and carry more severe sentences of 3-7 years in prison. If microchipping were to become a more common practice, it could help catch these criminals by tracing their animals back to them. These consequences could help deter people from abandoning their pets and push them to find less cruel ways of surrendering their animals.

We believe that this program can truly make a difference in the lives of pets all across the greater Nashua area and beyond. Each lost animal that a shelter is unable to return to their family takes up space or takes away an adoption from a homeless pet that would otherwise be living on the streets. Ideally, our efforts towards increasing the number of microchipped pets would ensure that no pet already living in a safe and happy home would ever have to be permanently separated from their family.



Fig 4. Hocus Pocus, a two year old male and one of the many pets at HSFN that were separated from their owner and is now up for adoption because they were unable to be found. Source: HSFN.org

3. Project Objectives and Methods

The goal of the project is ultimately to reduce the number of homeless pets and the number of animals living in shelters within the greater Nashua area. If funded, HSFN will achieve this goal by fulfilling two objectives: to establish a low-cost microchipping service at the shelter, and to spread awareness about the benefits of microchipping via social media websites and printed advertisements.

3.1 Establishing a Low-Cost Microchipping Service

Once funds are granted, HSFN will set \$25,000 aside to cover the costs of discounted microchipping services. The microchipping procedure normally costs \$45, but with the funding from this grant we would be able to offer the service for only \$20, a 56% discount. At that discounted rate and with the funds we are requesting for this purpose, we would be able to provide 1,000 currently-owned individual pets with reduced cost microchip implants.

Once we establish the exact details concerning what hours our veterinarian will be available and related information, we will add information on how to make an appointment for this service to our website. We will also educate our staff on how to answer questions related to making an appointment, and prepare our receptionist to create appointments over the phone and via email.

In addition to the service itself, part of the grant funding will go towards the purchase of a HomeAgain Universal Microchip scanner. As noted in Section 1.2, there are many companies that produce microchips and not all scanners can read them all. In order to avoid such tragic situations as a pet who has been implanted with a microchip still remaining lost because the shelter's scanner is unable to read their specific chip, we will purchase a universal reader.

By providing this service, 1,000 pets that would not otherwise have been microchipped will be safer from the dangers of being lost and unable to be found by their owners. Their chances of being returned home if picked up as a stray by a shelter will be significantly boosted, and effort

will not be expended to find them new owners. Instead, abandoned and surrendered pets can be adopted by those prospective owners, therefore reducing the number of pets in shelters as a whole.

3.2 Advertising and Education

HSFN plans to hire a Social Media Copywriter in order to garner attention for our Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube accounts so that we can more effectively bring information on microchipping and other ways to reduce homeless pet populations to a larger audience. To further expand our current audience and spread awareness about the benefits of microchipping and the misconceptions that surround it, we will also hire a graphic designer to create flyers and that contain educational information on the subjects. These flyers will include advertisements to our website and accounts as resources they can use to learn more information and will be distributed to local veterinary hospitals, shelters, pet stores, and businesses with community bulletin boards.

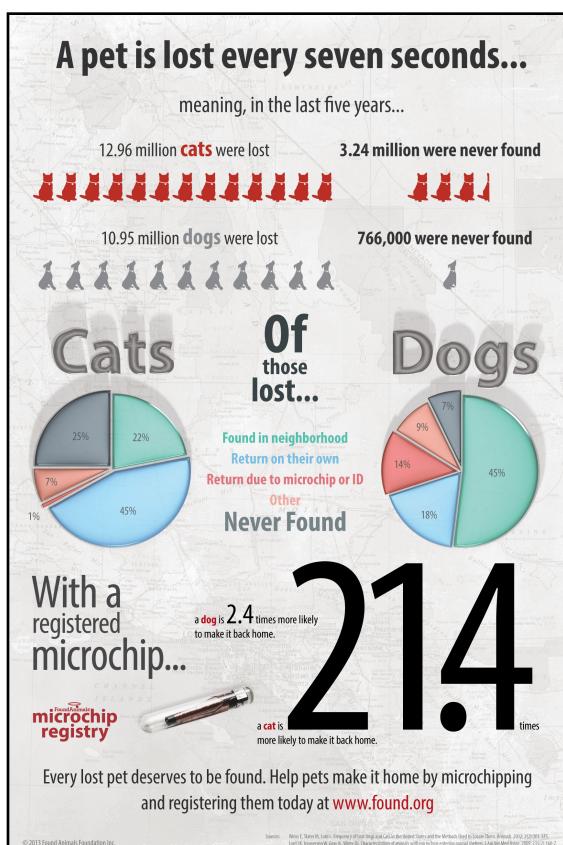


Fig 5. An example of the kinds of flyers that HSFN will commission. Source: AdoptAndShop.org

Our efforts towards completing this objective will clear up a great deal of existing misinformation and misconceptions about microchipping, and hopefully increase the likelihood that pet owners will take their pets to get microchipped to protect them from permanent loss. We hope to reach pet owners all across the greater Nashua area and potentially even beyond. Even if they do not come to our shelter to have microchipping done, the most important part of this portion of the project is changing opinions about microchipping for the better and encouraging people to protect their pets. We hope to make our audience as passionate about the benefits of microchips as we at HSFN are.

3.3 Project Outline

This section contains a general month-to-month outline of the actions HSFN will take to fulfill the project's objectives and work towards the goal of reducing pet homelessness. Specific weeks are not numbered in order to account for unforeseen circumstances that may arise during the course of the year.

- Initial Actions (Month 1)
 - Hear back from BPF about grant approval and begin preparing to start up the project.
 - Set aside and distribute funds as outlined in the grant proposal.
 - Hire Social Media Copywriter.
 - Order HomeAgain Universal Microchip Scanner.
- Starting Up (Months 2 - 3)
 - Establish protocol for microchipping appointments.
 - Educate staff on these new procedures.
 - Add information on the program to HSFN's website.
 - Begin accepting clients.
 - Design promotional material advertising low-cost microchipping services at HSFN.
 - Begin attracting a larger audience to HSFN social media pages.
- Ongoing Actions (Months 4 - 12)
 - Continue to expand social media audience.
 - Print and distribute promotional flyers to local veterinary hospitals, shelters, pet stores, and businesses with community bulletin boards over the course of the year..
 - Post informational graphics, articles, and testimonials related to microchipping on social media accounts.
 - Use social media as a platform to spread awareness of HSFN's microchipping services.
 - Perform microchipping procedures by appointment.

4. Description of Available Facilities

HSFN is operated out of its own shelter and does not rely on foster families to care for its animals. The following page contains a detailed floor plan of the building, with each room labeled according to its usage. As depicted in the image, this facility has VET STUFF where the microchipping procedures will be performed by our veterinary technicians. Clients may wait in the LOBBY PLACE(?) while the procedure is completed.

As social media websites can be accessed from any location with an Internet connection, the Social Media Copywriter will not require an office workspace on the HSFN premises. Rather, she will operate largely out of her own home, and make visits to the shelter as-needed to speak with the Director of Development and Marketing about upcoming events that require social media advertisements and to take photographs and videos of pets residing in the shelter or newly picked up strays that are being held for the required 7 days before becoming property of HSFN.



Fig 6. The front entrance of HSFN. Source: NashuaGardenClub.com

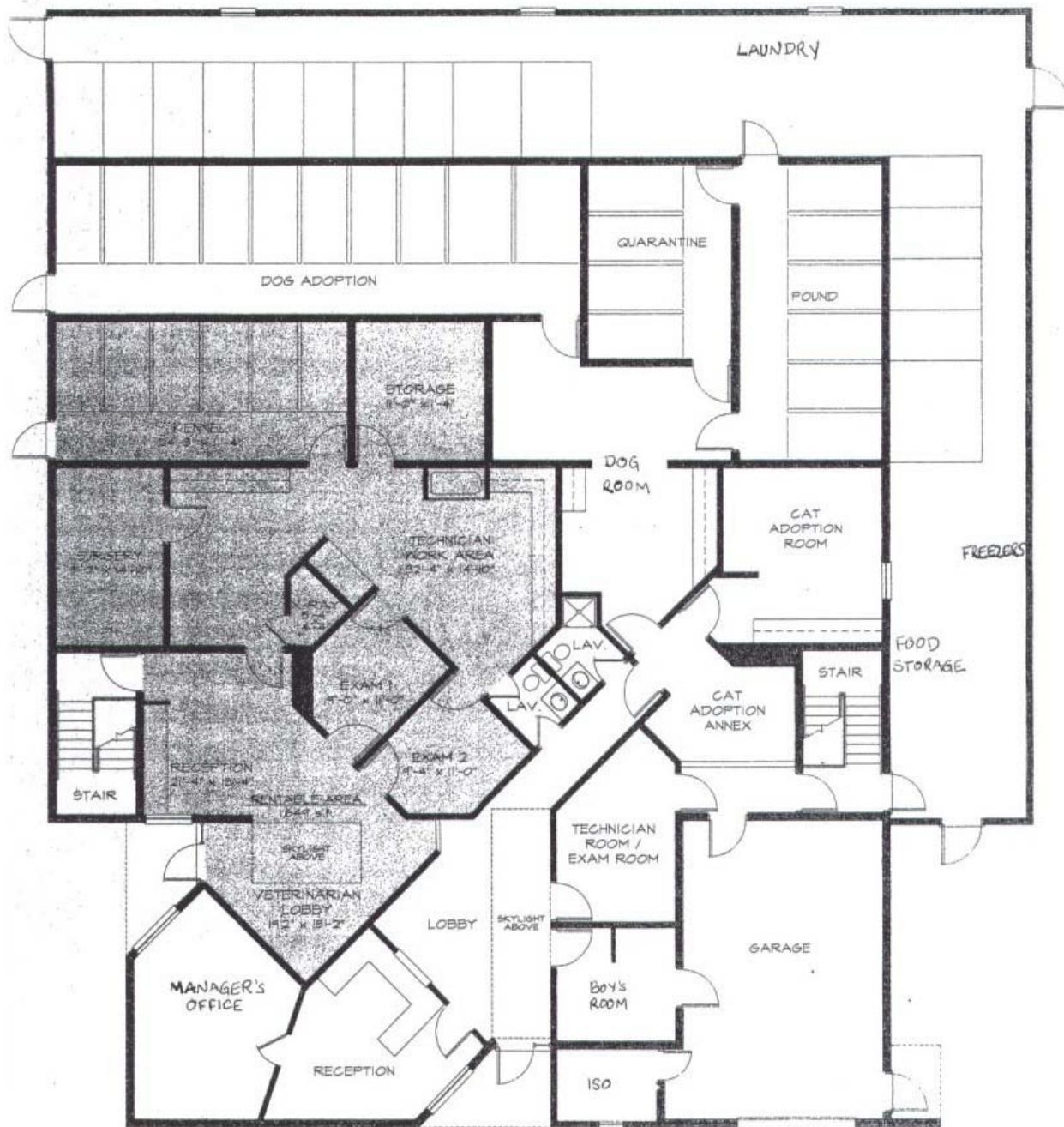


Fig 7. The floor plan of the Humane Society for Greater Nashua shelter. Source: HSFN.org

5. Personnel

In order to complete the proposed program, the Humane Society for Greater Nashua will continue to employ its current staff in addition to filling new positions that will be created by the organization using the grant funding, if awarded.

5.1 Current Staff

The following section details the full-time staff currently employed by HSFN that will be directly involved in the program. These positions are all funded by HSFN's current source of income, and as such will not have salaries provided by the proposed grant. Additional staff members not directly relevant to the program and their positions are listed in Appendix A.

Executive Director — Dan A. Saunders, CAE

Mr. Saunders ensures that the entire organization is running smoothly and that all staff members are consistently performing their jobs to the best of their ability. He regularly evaluates job performance and the effectiveness of the organization's procedures, as well as assists in the development of fundraising activities. As Executive Director, he will oversee the program and evaluate its impact on the organization and community.

Director of Administration — Jody Collins

Ms. Collins is responsible for developing business plans alongside the Executive Director, as well as directing the Human Resources aspects of the organization. As the member of our staff responsible for budget development and implementation, she will manage the grant funds if awarded to HSFN.

Development and Marketing Director — Erica Reese; **Assistant Director** — Delia Santos

Our Development and Marketing staff are responsible for all fundraising events and for any activities or advertisements promoting the organization. During the course of the project they will work together with the Social Media Copywriter to publicize our microchipping services.

Director of Veterinary Services — Elena Bell, DVM

Dr. Bell diagnoses illnesses, prescribe treatments and medications, and performs all of the surgeries at HSFN. As part of this program she will administer microchips at all scheduled appointments.

Veterinary Technicians — Hazel Matthews, Lora Rodriguez, Brittany Mullins

We currently have three on-staff vet techs who assist in all of the spay/neuter, microchipping, and vaccination procedures for our animals. Throughout the year during which the program takes place they will be available by appointment to assist the Director of Veterinary Services in performing our low-cost microchipping services.

Receptionist — Kristi Gardener

Our receptionist and is responsible for answering the HSFN phone and responding to client questions and concerns. As part of the program she will take calls about scheduling microchipping appointments and inform clients of appointment availability.

5.2 New Positions

As part of the expanded microchipping program, HSFN would need to fill two new positions within the organization in order to fulfill the objectives of the program. The salaries for these two positions will be funded by the proposed grant.

Social Media Copywriter

The Social Media Copywriter will bolster the organization's online presence and attract more followers, subscriptions, and likes to our various social media accounts through engaging content, as well as create informative posts on microchipping that present the information in a positive and appealing light. Rather than hire outside the organization, this position will be filled by the Principal Investigator, Rachael Smith. She will work closely with the Director and

Assistant Director of Development and Marketing to create advertisements designed for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Graphic Designer

The program also includes print advertisements and informational flyers. The designs for these posters will be commissioned for approximately ten hours of work from the Principal Investigator, the funding for which is also included in the project budget.

6. Budget

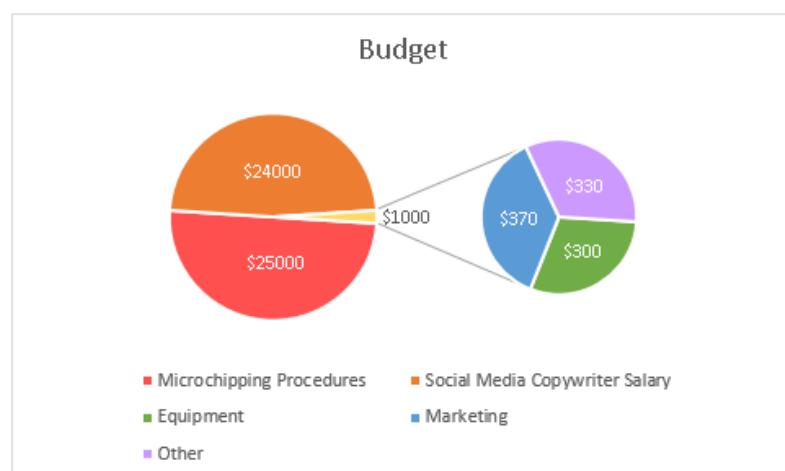
The budget for the project is as follows:

Category	Explanation	Amount
Microchipping Procedures	\$25/procedure @ 1000 procedures	25000.00
Social Media Copywriter Salary		24000.00
Equipment	HomeAgain Universal Microchip Scanner	300.00
Marketing	Graphic design commission: \$15/hour @ 10 hours	150.00
	Printing costs: \$0.06/page @ 1,200 pages	120.00
	Flyering costs	100.00
Other	Unforseen expenses	330.00
Total		50000.00

Most of the budget will go towards paying for the low cost microchipping services. In order to offer them at a reduced rate than what the microchip and procedure costs (\$45) we will need \$25 for each procedure. This will bring the cost of each surgery down to only twenty dollars. Over the course of a year we estimate that we will have around one-thousand appointments to perform this procedure, requiring a total of \$25,000.

The next largest portion of the budget would be the Social Media Copywriter's salary. A competitive salary for this position is \$24,000 for the year of the project. We will also commission a graphic designer to create advertisement flyers. A standard rate is \$15 an hour, and we estimate that the designing will take about 10 hours for a total of \$150.

We would also like to purchase universal microchip scanner to ensure that all types of microchips can be read. HomeAgain Universal Microchip Scanner costs \$300.



For the marketing portion of the project, we will be posting flyers in local veterinary hospitals, shelters, pet stores, and other locations. At \$0.10 per color printed page, printing costs for 1,200 flyers will be \$120. In order to pay for a flyering service that will put up the posters in public places throughout the city of Nashua, we will set aside \$100, a standard fee.

We will also set aside \$330 to account for unforeseen expenses and/or emergency funds. The total budget for the product comes out to be \$50,000.

7. Summary

Like the BISSEL Pet Foundation, pet homelessness is an issue that the Human Society for Greater Nashua is greatly concerned with and saddened by. Microchipping is of the ways of addressing this problem that we would like to make a larger focus of our shelter operations. If we can bring information about microchipping procedures to a large audience and provide those procedures for pet owners who could not otherwise afford it, we hope that many more pets will be kept out of shelters and returned safely to their families.

7.1 Projected Impact

HSFN will personally oversee the microchipping of 1,000 currently-owned pets. This is in addition to the projected 2,000 pets we estimate will come through our shelter within the year of the project's duration, which will be microchipped as per our typical standards and funded by our current source of income. Approximately 3,000 animals will be impacted by HSFN alone, but as part of the project's we also hope that many more owners will make the decision to have their pets microchipped as well. It would be difficult to estimate those numbers, although at the time of writing we had 11,350 likes on Facebook and 526 Twitter followers, numbers that we will try to grow by hiring a Social Media Copywriter.

If we are able to achieve our goals, we will have successfully impacted the pet owners of the greater Nashua area and their animals, as well as all of our current and future shelter pets. We hope that in the years following this program, we will notice an increase in the number of pets we are able to return to their families as a result of the work we put into this project.

7.2 Distinction from Similar Proposals

From looking on the BISSEL Pet Foundation's website and viewing past projects the BPF has funded, HSFN noted that your organization has previously funded numerous microchipping programs. While each of these were admirable in their goals, we at HSFN believe that our proposal provides a unique distinction that we did not notice in those others. By physically

microchipping pets as well as educating the public on why they should microchip their pets, we are addressing both sides of the overall problem in order to more effectively make a change. We want to directly involve the community in our push towards fewer homeless pets.

7.3 Conclusion

With 1 out of every 3 pets becoming lost at some point during their lifetime and 90% of lost pets never returning home, this is not a problem than can go unaddressed. HSFN is committed to helping all abandoned, abused, neglected, and unwanted animals, and the discussing the topic of microchipping and providing low-cost microchipping services are just two ways through which we can do this. Even a small effort can have a noticeable impact, and we are sure that with our dedication and planning, our efforts will display positive results within our community of shelters and pet owners.

On behalf of all the staff and volunteers at the Human Society for Greater Nashua, thank you for considering our proposal. We look forward to hearing back about the grant's approval status in the coming months.

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