

Fort Bend County Animal Services

R-1909-07882 - Animal Welfare Organization

Amount Requested: \$300,000.00

Status

Draft

Organization Information

Organization: Fort Bend County Animal Services

Primary Contact: Barbara Vass

Primary Signatory:

IMPORTANT: THIS IS A TWO-PART APPLICATION

This application requires that your organization has completed a 2018 **Annual Partnership Report**. This report must be submitted by **September 26, 2019** for your grant application to be considered. Information about completing the Annual Partnership Report can be found on the Organization's tab on the main dashboard of this site. You will find the Organization section on the left-hand menu.

Completing your Annual Partnership Report each year makes your organization eligible for all partner benefits including adoption event awards, fast-track disaster relief, and other perks!

Information Verification

Please navigate to the "Organization Info" section of the Fluxx Grants Portal and verify that the following are correct. Please read the descriptions of organization types here:

<https://www.petcofoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/AWO-Grant-Application-Instructions-7.31.19.pdf>

Please Select Your Organization Type: Nonprofit or municipal agency that is responsible for animal control sheltering (legally or contractually obligated or to accept stray dogs or cats)

Is your Executive Officer correctly listed? NO

Executive Officer Name: KP George
Executive Officer title: County Judge
Executive Officer email: countyjudge@fortbendcountytx.gov

Is your Mailing address correctly listed? : YES

Has your organization submitted the 2018 Annual Partnership Report? YES

Request Details

The Petco Foundation uses the information provided in your application and Annual Partnership Report to evaluate your organization's effectiveness and efficiency against your peers. Please provide a suggested grant amount in the box below. Keep in mind that your grant award, based on our evaluation of your organization, may differ from your suggested amount.

NOTE: Requests may be submitted for any purpose that is expected to result in an increase in your lifesaving results, or other significant positive lifesaving impact for the animals of your community. Investments of \$100,000 or more are considered Lifesaving Impact Awards. Your organization must shelter a minimum of 2,500 animals in order to qualify for an award of this size. These types of grants are very limited and require an additional attachment detailing your lifesaving impact plan. You should not submit a lifesaving impact award request unless your organization has a detailed plan to increase the lifesaving rate in your community. Your plan should provide the history of your organization's efforts to save animals, the current state of animal welfare in your community, the purpose for our investment, and how this investment will increase your future lifesaving efforts, including your specific goals and strategies. Upload your plan in the "attachment" section of this application.

\$-300,000.00

Please describe how this investment will help your organization achieve its lifesaving goals and objectives.

Use of Investment:

We are asking for this investment for four items: an Adoption Trailer/Transport Vehicle/Disaster Recovery Vehicle, Garage door installation, insulation, and air conditioning of our kennels, a pilot program for enhancements to our Community Cat Program, and a pilot program to keep data for a heartworm treatment protocol for shelter dogs.

Each of these requests will increase our lifesaving ability in unique ways. Having a multi-purpose vehicle will allow us to have many more pop-up adoption events throughout our community, it will also serve as a transport vehicle, developing transport partnerships is very important to our organization, now that we will have a new vet on staff who can spay/neuter/microchip, hw test or combo test and provide health certificates will allow us to be a more attractive supply shelter if we can also provide transport. Also, as we saw with Hurricane Harvey and some recent hoarding cases, having a fully equipped unit for dispatch in emergent situations would be an asset to the shelter as well as our community and those around us that need our help.

One of our most important investments would be to provide for our pets so that they are free of discomfort in weather that is too hot or too cold. Currently, our facility is indoor/outdoor kennels and while the indoor kennels do have heat in the winter, there is no air conditioning for our dogs, especially those who have to be in the outside kennels, which is all the time given how long we hold dogs and how many we receive. We have been trying to work with our County to provide these garage doors, insulation and air conditioning to no avail and we feel very strongly that keeping our dogs comfortable in all weather conditions will be beneficial to them in body and mind.

We are very proud of our Community Cat Program, however we want to try to fund a pilot program which would allow our County government to see the need for a part-time staff vet dedicated to our CCP. In order to have our ordinance amended in 2018, we assured the Commissioners Court that we would not seek County funds for a CCP, however, given the success we have had, and the demand from the public, we feel that if we can prove the cost-effectiveness of having an on staff vet for our CCP, we will receive funding for it in our 2020-2021 budget.

Finally, we hold dogs for an extended period of time, many of them come to us with heart worms and we would like to be able to put a heart worm treatment protocol in place through a pilot program so that in future, the County can fund this program as well. It was only in late 2014 that we were given the funding to provide basic vaccines on intake and now we want to be able to move forward with being able to provide as much basic care for our pets, especially our heart worm positive dogs as possible and we feel that with the correct data over time, we can present a good case to our Commissioners Court next budget cycle to have those funds added to our medical budget.

Please provide other important information that may be relevant or important to our consideration of your request. Attachments may be added in the Attachments and Certifications section.

Additional Information:

We have made great strides in our lifesaving efforts over the last 4 years and we have so many projects and plans that we would like to accomplish, and we keep pushing forward with the resources we have. While this request seems very large, we are trying to reach out for other grant opportunities to accomplish additional goals. Recently we received two Maddie's Fund Innovation Grants so for one we are working on supplying microchip scanners and door hangers for each animal control vehicle so that we can start a Return to Field program without ever having pets come into the shelter. We are partnering with a 501c3 to also provide microchip scanners and protocols to local fire stations to try to return pets to their homes from the firehouses. The second grant will allow us to have 3 free microchip clinics for our community. We hope to piggy back on those clinics with a low cost vaccine service for those pets as well, that is a work in progress.

We are trying also to work with our Commissioners Court to move towards reduced cost microchips as licensing for our community pets.

Currently, we have a contract in place with a mobile spay/neuter unit to provide free spay/neuter services to qualified members of our community on a monthly basis and one thing that we would like to expand on should we be able to find the resources, is to also offer these services to those who do not meet the income requirements but cannot afford to have their pets attended to at the local animal clinics.

Transfer Partnerships

Provide the names of the top 3 organizations that you transferred animals to in the last calendar year (name of organization, city & state) and the approximate number of animals .

Austin Pets Alive, Austin Texas - 80 cats/kittens

Animal Rescue Kingdom, Richmond, Texas - 75 animals

Saving Our Companion Animals - Fort Bend County, Rosenberg, Texas - 30 animals

Did your organization transfer in animals from shelters other than your local shelter in the last calendar year? : NO

Partnership & Recognition

Recognition:

Your recognition of the Petco Foundation to your supporters and within your community encourages Petco customers to feel confident in making a donation to the Petco Foundation at the register when they shop. This fundraising in small amounts (averaging around \$2 per transaction) helps support the Foundation's grants program in a way that does not diminish your own fundraising efforts. It's incredible that simply by collecting these small contributions we are able to provide more than \$30 million in investment support each year!

Are you willing to work with the Petco Foundation, Petco, and any other corporate partner or organization designated by the Petco Foundation to recognize and promote this award?

Agree to recognize grant: Yes

If granted, please describe how you will recognize this award from the Petco Foundation:

Describe recognition:

Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), press release to greater Houston area TV and radio stations, internal publications for Fort Bend County, Commissioner's Court presentation at Court, Facebook video with our Director, Judge and Commissioner.

Describe your relationship with the Petco Foundation and/or Petco stores if applicable.

Relationship:

We have been the proud recipient of a Petco Lifesaving Investment which was instrumental in our CCP being developed and implemented. While we do not have a current relationship for adoption events, we do work with local Petco stores for donations.

Documents & attachments

Submission of your request requires the following documents be uploaded in this section. Click the headings below for uploading instructions. Please read the documents required information carefully as failure to upload required documents will result in your application being denied.

▼ Other required documents uploading instructions

To upload:

- Click the plus sign
- Click "add files"
- Select the correct files from your computer
- Use the drop-down menu to add the correct label to each file
- Click "start upload"

Other required documents:

- **IRS Form 990** - All organizations are required to submit their most recent Form 990, excluding schedules. If your organization does not file a Form 990, please attach audited financial statements, if available, or otherwise un-audited financial statements.

Optional documents:

If you are a qualified organization and applying for a **Lifesaving Impact Award**, please upload required document here. If not, other documents commonly associated with requests may include capital campaign materials, sponsorship information, photos or other items. Please limit other documents to those critical to your request.

DOCUMENTS

Certification

- I certify that the leader of the organization (CEO/Executive Director/President or similar title) has reviewed this application and the accompanying Annual Partnership Report that is a part of this application.
- I certify that I am an officer or authorized representative of the organization submitting this application and that all information on this grant application is true and correct in all material respects.
- I agree that any funds granted will be utilized specifically to accomplish lifesaving objectives.
- I agree on behalf of the organization that as a partner of the Petco Foundation any public messaging that includes information about the Petco Foundation shall promote a positive message about helping animals and saving lives.
- I agree on behalf of the organization that its representatives shall not disparage or speak negatively or take any action intended, or which would reasonably be expected, to harm the Petco Foundation or its reputation or which would reasonably be expected to lead to unwanted or unfavorable publicity to the Petco Foundation.
- I certify and agree that any and all information submitted is not considered confidential, will become the property of the Petco Foundation, and that the Petco Foundation may use such information as it deems appropriate in its sole discretion.
- *If you cannot agree to these conditions, you may not submit this grant application.*

Select "yes" to agree:

Are you submitting this application on behalf of a governmental or municipal agency, department or division?

Select "yes" or "no"

IMPORTANT: After you save your form for the last time it is not submitted until you click the "Submit" button at the bottom of this page. If you have not clicked the "Submit" button, your form is not submitted!

Fort Bend County Animal Services – Lifesaving Impact Plan

Grant Amount Requested: \$300,000

About us:

Fort Bend County Animal Services (FBCAS) is an open admission municipal facility in Rosenberg, Texas, west of Houston. On average, we take in approximately 4,000 homeless pets from our community, which consists of the unincorporated area of Fort Bend County. Our seven animal control officers cover 875 square miles. We have a population of approximately 800,000 people, and our county has been one of the fastest-growing counties in the United States year-on-year for the last decade. While there are four other shelters in Fort Bend County, individual cities manage them and they are their own separate facilities and jurisdictions.

History:

Up until late 2014, FBCAS mostly operated under the “catch and kill” animal sheltering model. At the end of September 2014, the shelter’s save rate hovered around 30%.

However, in the fourth quarter of 2014, the County made changes to the management team and brought on board new people whose goal was to create a lifesaving-focused facility. The shelter started using Chameleon software and pushing a more aggressive adoption event schedule and social media presence. In November of 2014, Commissioners Court, the County’s governing body, agreed to allow FBCAS to vaccinate pets upon intake. This was a clear step in the right direction towards changing the culture of the County officials regarding the animals in our care.

In 2015, FBCAS began to contract more effectively with outside veterinarians to ensure that adopted pets were spayed/neutered and microchipped before they left the shelter. Without the presence of a staff veterinarian, FBCAS had to contract out all Rabies vaccines, emergency medical needs and surgeries. While we completed as many spay/neuter procedures prior to adoption as possible, we relied on adoption fees to pay the contract vets, which often made the sterilization process arduous. By the end of 2015, the save rate had more than doubled to 65%. It was also the first year that staff received funding to attend animal welfare conferences including APA, HSUS and Best Friends. We also participated in our first Clear the Shelters event that year.

In 2016, we presented a plan to Commissioners Court to hire a veterinarian and veterinary technician. After seeing the cost-benefit of having a medical team on staff, the Commissioners Court increased our budget to hire these two new positions for the 2017-2018 budget year. From this point on, we became a larger presence in the community; visiting schools, HOAs and community meetings, and receiving local media features. We also organized multiple

successful transports to Wisconsin and Colorado with a local non-profit, and became Network Partners with Best Friends Animal Society. Our 2016 save rate increased again to 72%.

By 2017, a majority of our pets were ready to be adopted the same day, and we performed Rabies vaccines and minor medical procedures in-house. We continued to increase our adoption events and community presence. In June, Best Friends Animal Society performed an assessment of our shelter and we implemented the recommendations in 2018. In July, the shelter staff and volunteers spent a wonderful week with the Dogs Playing for Life team. This program taught our team how to assess our shelter animals' behavior, train them, and enrich their lives at the same time.

On August 25, 2017, Hurricane Harvey made landfall in Texas. This storm devastated the region, and two years later, Fort Bend County is still recovering. Despite this enormous setback, FBCAS managed to maintain an upward trajectory and the save rate reached 79% in 2017. This improvement would not have been possible without the generosity of non-profits. After the storm hit, Austin Pets Alive! and San Antonio Pets Alive! cleared our shelter of over 180 animals so that we would have room for the pets displaced by the storm. In December 2017, the Petco Foundation awarded us a grant to kick-start the biggest lifesaving program that we have initiated to date: the Community Cat Trap Neuter Return Program (Community Cat Program).

Our single biggest lifesaving achievement occurred on June 5, 2018. On that day, Commissioners Court amended the County leash law to exclude community/feral cats so that FBCAS could implement the pilot Community Cat Program in the cities of Needville and Richmond. This amendment was the result of two years of lobbying Commissioners Court to change this ordinance. Until that day, FBCAS had to euthanize all feral or fractious cats upon intake, and we knew there was a better way.

We were so fortunate that we gained the support of Commissioners Court and that we had the guidance of national animal welfare organizations like Alley Cat Allies and Best Friends Animal Society as we sought to educate our community on the Community Cat Program's benefits. FBCAS had always felt that implementing a Community Cat Program would be a huge step in saving lives in Fort Bend County, and we were not wrong.

None of this success would have been possible without the Petco Foundation's support in the form of a \$75,000 grant, and an additional \$5,000 Innovation Grant from Maddie's Fund. Our Community Cat Program is 100% funded through grants and donations.

As of December 31, 2018, 549 community/feral cats have been spayed/neutered, received a Rabies vaccination and had their ear tipped. If someone asked when this program became successful, we would answer that we were successful the first time we returned a cat.

The fall of 2018 also brought us our new 501(c)(3) partner, [Fort Bend PAWS](#). Based on the Best Friends Animal Society recommendations, three community members formed Fort Bend PAWS

to serve as FBCAS' fundraising entity. During their first year of operation, Fort Bend PAWS raised more than \$40,000 for FBCAS and supported countless community events.

Thanks largely to the Community Cat Program, in August of 2018 FBCAS reached an overall save rate of 91%. Since then, we have maintained a 90% or greater overall save rate, and the 2018 average save rate was 85%.

While 2018 was an incredible year for FBCAS, 2019 has been even better. In January 2019, we welcomed a full-time Community Involvement Assistant, who works on expanding our social media presence and community relationships, including improving and expanding our volunteer program. In May 2019, our new intake facility and medical building opened. This expansion allowed the veterinarian and veterinary technician to have a more comprehensive suite.

This year, we are planning to implement an intake diversion/PASS program for our pets and community members. Many people surrender their pets because they feel they have no other option; but an intake diversion program can offer a solution that lets people keep their pets.

Another top goal is to reinvent our foster program and incorporate the aid of community members, who can act as adoption ambassadors for our pets. Creating a vibrant foster program is a full-time commitment that we would love to invite the community to help with.

Two staff members will be attending Maddie's Fund Apprenticeships for Fostering Programs to kick start this initiative.

Dogs with behavioral issues would also benefit from stronger volunteer-oriented programs. Sometimes, the dogs that come to us need so much more than we can give them. We hope to find a partner organization that can help us expand our Dogs Playing for Life program and address the most challenging behaviors.

On August 31, 2019, our save rate was 93%. This date marked the thirteenth consecutive month that FBCAS has maintained a monthly save rate greater than 90%. We want 2019 to be even better than 2018, and we are continuously seeking new solutions and funding for our shelter and our pets.

Lifesaving Impact Plan - \$300,000 request

Adoption Trailer/Transport Vehicle/Disaster Recovery Vehicle

FBCAS has a passenger van that we use for transporting our pets to adoption events, implementing transport programs, and emergency transport during weather events and other crises. Since it is the only enclosed vehicle at FBCAS, it also serves many other purposes. However, it can only accommodate about eight animals at a time, and our operations outgrew this capacity many years ago.

An 8x24 trailer with towing capabilities could fundamentally change how FBCAS operates. We could use it to conduct pop-up adoption events and program awareness events, large transports, and disaster operations. This vehicle would increase visibility in the community, attract more foot traffic to our brick and mortar facilities. Additionally, if we had this trailer we could enter into MOUs with other area shelters when they need to use it. This would be an incredible asset to our budding partnership efforts and ensure full utilization of the vehicle.

For events, we would use this trailer to transport pets to large-scale community adoption events like the Best Friends Super Adoption weekend and the upcoming Mega Adoption Event at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, which is a collaborative effort between FBCAS, Montgomery County Animal Services, Harris County, and City of Houston BARC.

One of our biggest challenges has been sustaining a monthly pet transport to facilities outside of Texas. We would like to work with other no-kill shelters around the country to transport our pets. In the past, out-of-state transports proved financially unsustainable. With a vehicle, driver, and a staff veterinarian who can fully assess the pets' wellbeing and provide health certificates, we could use this lifesaving method regularly. It would also be an attractive option for other shelters that may not have the resources to provide anything except adopters.

Finally, this vehicle could aid disaster response and recovery. In a crisis like Hurricane Harvey, we could mobilize on behalf of shelters, regionally and nationally, who must make room for displaced pets. FBCAS would also mobilize the trailer for non-weather emergencies, such as extreme hoarding cases. Sadly, this is not a rare scenario in some areas and in [March 2019](#), FBCAS helped rescue 76 dogs from a single property.

Garage Door Installation/Insulation/Air Conditioning Kennels

Finding a way to enclose the shelter's outside kennels to support heating in the winter and air conditioning in the summer is one of our greatest goals.

When the County built the original FBCAS facility in 1987, the kennels were designed as in/out with a guillotine door between them. Under the catch-and-kill model, dogs were not at the shelter long enough to need to house them on both sides. However, we now house dogs for extended periods and we utilize both sides of the kennel virtually every day of the year. For the inside kennels, we have industrial fans, Portacools, and heating. However, there is little

protection from the elements for the outside-facing kennels, though they are shaded. We try to protect them with tarps, insulated doghouses, and blankets, but these measures are insufficient for the extreme Texas weather.

While we have impressed upon County officials the need for this enclosure, the money is not in the budget right now. The substantial and ongoing costs of repairing County facilities, roads, and infrastructure after the severe flooding events in 2015, 2016, and 2017 and the cost of investing in infrastructure to mitigate future events has constrained the County. In August 2019, Commissioners Court had to table a planned Facilities bond that would have included the cost of the enclosure. Instead, the Court had to call for a bond election to cover the local match required to access federal funding for flood control projects.

In the future, we hope that the Commissioners Court and the public will be amenable to a bond proposal that includes a Pet Resource Center. However, enclosing the outdoor kennels is a crucial part of our lifesaving plan that cannot wait.

Community Cat Program Enhancement Pilot Program

The single most important lifesaving program that FBCAS operates is the Community Cat Program. Since its implementation in June 2018, we have saved over 1,400 cats. Our goal is to save 3,000 cats in three years. At this time, our program is 100% funded through grants and donations, since Commissioners Court approved the aforementioned ordinance change on the condition that the Program not utilize County dollars. We have been able to keep the program alive thus far, but it has become difficult to keep up with the demand as news of the program's success spreads throughout the community.

We would like to pilot an in-shelter program to demonstrate to Commissioners Court the efficacy of moving this program onto the County budget beginning in October 2020. We would record the marginal cost of surgeries during the course of the in-house program to compare to the current cost of contracting with outside clinics. The existing arrangement costs on average \$75 per surgery. This figure does not include the costs of staff time, vehicle wear and tear, and gas spent transporting the cats to and from the clinics.

FBCAS has a room now that is suitable for medical staff to perform the surgeries. Based on the program's projected utilization over the next year, if we can hire a relief vet for an average of eight days per month, outfit the new room, and purchasing additional medical supplies, we believe we can successfully make our case to Commissioners Court for the next budget cycle.

Heartworm Treatment Pilot Program

Even though we have veterinary staff that provides basic medical care, treating heartworm-positive dogs remains difficult. We are onboarding a full-time veterinarian, and in October 2019 FBCAS will begin the hiring process for a second veterinary technician. We would like to

implement a heartworm treatment protocol suitable for a facility that is accepting nearly 2000 dogs a year.

Due to a lack of funds, FBCAS tests for heartworm but does not provide treatment. Eventually, we would love to treat the entire population on a monthly basis. For this pilot, we would give dogs that test negative upon intake a preventative treatment, and begin treatment for dogs that test positive upon intake.

This pilot is new territory for FBCAS and we plan to track and record the resulting data to support our budgetary request to Commissioner's Court for heartworm treatment as a routine part of our dogs' intake procedure.

This fund will also allow us to present a more positive snapshot to potential foster parents, so that they do not feel liable for the cost of heartworm treatment and thus deterred. If FBCAS can provide the medication, residents will be more likely to foster our dogs with heartworms, which will increase the adoption rate and save more of these dogs' lives.