

GRANT INFORMATION 2026 GRANT CYCLE

Background

Dog and cat overpopulation is a tragic problem that affects all areas of Georgia. Each year, thousands of healthy, friendly dogs and cats are euthanized because of pet overpopulation. In 2003, the Georgia General Assembly created the Dog and Cat Reproductive Sterilization Support Program to help with this problem through the spaying and neutering of dogs and cats. Currently, funds are raised by the sale of 3 dog and cat license plates, the yearly tax check off and direct donations. In 2014, the Dog and Cat Sterilization Grant program was created. Since the program's inception, thousands of procedures have been performed by Georgia veterinarians coordinating with grant recipients.

Purpose

The purpose of the Dog and Cat Sterilization Grant Program is to provide financial assistance with sterilization procedures. The Department hopes that grant funds will ease the burden of sterilization procedures and increase the number of dogs and cats sterilized in Georgia. It is further noted that the intent of the grant is to reduce the number of animals that are reproducing to reduce overpopulation pressures (not to subsidize the cost of adopting from shelters).

Program Overview

Grant applications will be assessed by a grant review committee and funding will be awarded based on the highest priority grant proposals after considering factors such as: targeting of important animal populations; ability to increase surgery numbers; cost-benefit ratio and record of grant applicant and sustainability. It is a priority to have a substantial portion of the funds, at least, covering surgeries for animals not otherwise legally obligated to be altered. As a result, programs altering a greater portion of owned animals and those allowing shelters to permanently increase the percent of animals altered prior to leaving the shelter for adoptive homes may be prioritized for grant funding. The applicant's willingness and ability to assist with promotion of the grant program may also be considered.

All eligible organizations must reside in Georgia to be eligible for the Dog and Cat Sterilization Grant Program. Once a grant has been awarded, the recipient must complete a final progress report showing all sterilization procedures performed. For the 2026 grant cycle, the final progress report will include the requirement to provide a record of each sterilization procedure that is performed using grant funds. Grant funds may only be used for sterilization surgery and may not be used for capital or administrative expenses or for procedures not directly related to sterilization surgery, such as, promotions, vaccinations, testing, licensing, food, medicine, and/or other medical procedures.

Non-Profit Animal Rescues and Veterinary Medical Foundations

Nonprofit Animal Rescue Organizations must be licensed by the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Nonprofit organizations including Veterinary Medical Foundations applying for funds are required to have been in existence for at least 12 months and have 501(c)(3) status at the time of filing the grant application. Nonprofits must provide a copy of the nonprofit status form 501(c)(3) issued by the Internal Revenue Service. **(Do not send a copy of a tax return or a copy of incorporation by the Georgia Secretary of State to fulfill this requirement).** Nonprofit rescues must also provide proof of incorporation by the Georgia Secretary of State.

County and Municipal Shelters

Municipal animal shelters must be licensed by the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Effective July 1, 1999, every county and city within that county is required to adopt a Service Delivery Strategy. This strategy is an implementation plan among cities and counties to provide local government services and resolve land use conflicts within the county. These strategies are submitted to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for approval and the DCA is in charge of monitoring compliance. Because of this law, no state-administered financial assistance can be awarded to a local municipality that is not in compliance. To determine whether your municipality is in compliance, visit DCA's website at: <https://dca.georgia.gov/community-assistance/coordinated-planning/intergovernmental-coordination/service-delivery>. All local municipality applicants verifying eligibility must submit a compliance certification.

Application and Submission

The application for the Dog and Cat Sterilization Grant is an online process. It is only available during the applicable 30-day application period. It can be accessed at <https://www.agr.georgia.gov/dcsp-applicants-and-grantees>. All applicants must provide a letter of collaboration from a Georgia licensed veterinarian that will be performing the sterilization procedures. The grant recipient is required to utilize the collaborating veterinarian(s) of record. Veterinarians may only be substituted with prior notice and approval from the Dog and Cat Sterilization Program Manager. The application period for the 2026 grant is May 15, 2026 – June 15, 2026

Notification of Awards

Applicants will be notified of grant decisions no later than 90 days following the close of the grant application period. To further promote the program, grant funds may be awarded in person at a destination and date to be chosen by Dog and Cat Sterilization Program Manager. In this event, a representative of the organization receiving the grant award will be required to attend the presentation.

Availability of Funds

Grant funds will be awarded based on availability of funds. The grant is usually offered on a 14–16-month cycle. Grant funds may only be used for spay and/or neuter procedures on dogs or cats. Grant requests must not exceed applicant's ability to perform services within the 12-month period. Any funds unused in 12 months must be returned to the program by mail to:

Georgia Dog and Cat Sterilization Program
19 M.L.K. Jr., Dr., SW. Room 112
Atlanta, Ga. 30334

If the recipient has a change in ownership or corporate structure during the grant cycle, the DCSP Grant Administrator must be notified prior to the change and can be reached at dcsp@agr.georgia.gov.

Veterinary Collaboration Agreement

The Veterinary Collaboration Agreement is an agreement between the DCSP grant recipient and a Georgia licensed veterinarian to perform sterilization procedures at a set cost for the spending of awarded grant funds. If there will be multiple veterinarians performing sterilization procedures during the grant cycle, then this should be specified by filling out a Veterinary Collaboration Agreement for each veterinarian in advance. Should an additional veterinarian be utilized during the grant cycle, the DCSP Grant Administrator must be notified and approve a new Veterinary Collaboration Agreement. If a veterinarian is listed on the final progress report that does not have an approved collaboration agreement, the applicant will be disqualified from the next grant cycle. The DCSP Grant Administrator can be reached at dcsp@agr.georgia.gov.

Final Progress Reports

The final progress report is a record of the number of sterilization procedures performed and a breakdown of the cost for each procedure. Every recipient of the award must email the final progress report with an itemized procedure record to dcsp@agr.georgia.gov by the deadline determined by the DCSP Grant Administrator. The deadline date is determined and published after funds have been dispersed to grantees. Final progress reports are to be submitted by the deadline. If the final progress report submission is late or excludes the itemized record, the applicant will be disqualified from the next round of grants. The final progress report can be found on the website at <https://www.agr.georgia.gov/dcsp-applicants-and-grantees>.

State Audit

Any recipient of a grant made by a state agency shall be subject to audit by the state auditor for the purpose of confirming compliance with state law and the performance of the terms of the grant pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 28-5-125