



# Targeted TNR in Havre de Grace, MD

Project #  
18-330

County: Harford

Number of Cats Spayed:	180	Number of Dogs Spayed:	n/a
Number of Cats Neutered:	161	Number of Dogs Neutered:	n/a

Amount Received: \$12,500	Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): \$0
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### Project Synopsis:

We conducted targeted TNR of cats and kittens in the 21078 zip code, Havre de Grace, with a goal of completing 400 cats during the project period using low-cost providers.



### Project Description:

Best Friends in Harford County is an all-volunteer no-profit organization founded in October 2015, with a primary mission of Trap-Neuter-Return of community cats. Project 18-330 was started in August 2017 and completed in December 2018. Our proposal for targeted TNR established a spay/neuter goal of 400 community cats, or 1/3 of the estimated population of roaming cats in the 21078 area. The target area was chosen because the city has relative strong physical boundaries, including two major highways and the Susquehanna River, as well as a long-standing issue with ever-expanding feral cats colonies. Our intention is to fix approximately 400 community cats each of the next two years, completing entire colonies, in order to stabilize the roaming cat population in Havre de Grace.

### Summary of Approach:

With our partner Stray Streets TNR, based in Havre de Grace, we conducted the project by contacting known colony caretakers, identifying new colonies in the targeted area and recruiting caretakers if none were found, and actively pursuing TNR using a number of volunteer trappers, transporters, and veterinary providers approved under the grant, with later scope additions to broaden our provider base. Cats and kittens were trapped any day of the week, but clinic dates were limited and had to be coordinated in advance.

Through face-to-face engagement, social and public media, and information tables at local events held multiple times a month from May 2018 to completion, we promoted this project. In January 2018, the project leader gave a presentation to the Havre de Grace council and met twice with the mayor after that televised presentation. The mayor's office began promoting this project in their newsletters during the summer, and we advertised on local radio in the summer and fall in order to increase outreach.



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**Accomplishments:**

We completed spay/neuter of 341 cats using project funds. Our goal was to fix 400 cats, or 1/3 of the estimated population in the target area, based on the initial plan to use one local veterinary provider, as the grant instructions stated was preferred, and one more distant but lower-cost provider of services. We had anticipated taking 200 cats to each location one day a week. Later approved scope changes increased our provider base, with a range of \$25 to \$50 for s/n per cat, regardless of gender. In no case did we apply more than the higher \$50 cost to any individual surgery, regardless of whether said surgery cost more at the first available provider; BFHC paid the difference. We did not reach the target number not because we charged any additional medical costs (we did not; BFHC covered those) but because the ratio of \$25 to \$50 s/n was not even (200-200). To achieve that projected balance would have required holding ferals in traps for up to one week while awaiting available clinic space. We therefore took target-area cats to the next available clinic, with the intent, as implied in instructions, of minimizing stress on the animals.

In addition to the number of spay/neuter surgeries done with grant funds, we were able to fix an added 15 with free clinic spaces, a county mini-grant, owner/caretaker/adopter payments, and other low-cost providers who were not listed in the proposal or changes of scope. Beyond the numbers achieved, we established communication with HdG government officials, resulting in a good partnership and written endorsement by the mayor to help with future TNR grants. We also met or talked frequently with the county Animal Control office and were therefore allowed to intervene in a few situations in which residents wanted help but were leery of government action. The local shelter routinely referred and continues to refer clients with community cat issues to our organization. Another outcome of this project was to increase awareness throughout the county of the benefits of TNR; word-of-mouth referral is now a regular contributor to our client list from all parts of the county.

**Lessons Learned:**

We learned quickly that this type of project, being new to Harford County, requires continual advertising and education. To increase contact with potential clients, we used new (to us) methods of reaching the public, to include presenting at a televised city council meeting in HdG, formally meeting with government officials and property managers, and placing public service announcements on local radio. We also learned, after the fact, that we should have estimated a higher per-cat cost, perhaps using the higher \$50 figure for ALL surgeries rather than averaging the overall cost for 200 cats at each pricing level, in order to ensure that we would meet the target s/n goal stated in our proposal.

**Attachments:**

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