



Request for Proposal
**Civic and Community Service Organizations
City Animal Pound and Sheltering Services**

From:
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Harrisonburg, VA

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Executive Summary

The Shenandoah Valley Spay/Neuter Clinic (SVSNC) is pleased to submit a proposal to operate high quality animal care and control services for the City of Harrisonburg in accordance with, and to the extent permitted by, applicable state law, regulations and local ordinances. The proposal outlines a comprehensive public/private partnership to improve the quality and length of life for animals coming under SVSNC's purview. The enclosed proposal provides a detailed explanation of the services and unique features offered by SVSNC. SVSNC's knowledge and expertise in providing quality care to animals is unparalleled. Based on our extensive experience and ongoing commitment to quality and performance, we are confident we can provide life saving shelter services.

- **Facility** After budget approval, the SVSNC will create an animal care and control facility (hereinafter referred to as the "Shelter" to distinguish it from the current "Clinic") at 900 North Liberty Street where the contracted services will be provided starting January 1, 2011. The SVSNC will provide the shelter building and related equipment and vehicles.
- **Veterinary Care** The Clinic and its on-site veterinarians, licensed veterinary technicians and staff will provide all medical needs for animals impounded, including spay/neuter before release.
- **Public Health and Safety**
 - **Rabies** The Shelter will follow all appropriate protocols for rabies cases.
 - **Disaster Preparedness** The Shelter will work with the City to update the Emergency Operations Plan.
 - **Complaint Response** The Shelter will forward animal related complaints received from the citizens of Harrisonburg to Animal Control as appropriate and in accordance with state and local laws.
 - **Impoundment of Strays** The Shelter will accept strays for impoundment from the City Animal Control Officer(s), City Police Officers and the public. Care and holding periods will meet or exceed state and local standards set by law.
- **Best Practices** The Shelter will establish a comprehensive program of Best Practices to increase the Live Outcome Rate¹ of animals.
- **Accountability** The Shelter will maintain full transparency regarding operations and services and provide quarterly reports to the City and the public.

¹ The Live Outcome Rate is the percentage of animals that leave the shelter alive, whether to adoptive homes, reclaimed by owner, or transferred to another approved rescue organization.



The SVSNC Mission

The SVSNC is committed to ending the preventable euthanasia of cats and dogs in the Shenandoah Valley. An integral part of achieving this mission has been underway since 2005; over 52,000 animals have been spayed or neutered at the Clinic. In addition, over 41,000 rabies vaccines have been given to eligible animals without proof of current vaccination, thus helping to ensure public health and safety.

The other critical component of saving lives will be achieved through the proposed Shelter. Animals will be rescued from abuse and neglect, given physical and emotional care and treatment, and given the best possible chance for adoption. Rebound intake of Shelter offspring will be eliminated by sterilizing all animals prior to release.

Key Elements

Facility

The SVSNC will create an animal care and control facility (the “Shelter”) at 900 North Liberty Street where the contracted services will be provided. SVSNC will provide the shelter building and related equipment and vehicles. (Not to include Animal Control Officers’ vehicles or equipment used in the field).

The SVSNC currently has a clinical services facility that will serve as the shelter’s medical clinic, including surgical suites and recovery. Current administrative offices will serve both Clinic and Shelter functions.

In addition, SVSNC will provide a progressive facility designed to protect the animals in care, prevent disease, and reduce related stress while ensuring the best atmosphere for adoptions and other life saving activities. The new animal care facility will provide the public with an efficient and user-friendly space.

This 5,500 square foot facility (see attached plans) will house an adoption center, grooming area, evaluation room, and animal holding space in compliance with state laws and regulations. Isolation will occur at several points during the animal care process. Advanced cleaning and medical protocols will be utilized to contain contagious diseases. Overcrowding will be reduced, as animals will be quickly transferred to rescue groups, foster homes, and adoptive families. The adoption facility will be modeled after the Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA and the Richmond SPCA, both no-kill animal shelters. The facility will provide space where prospective adopters can interact with their potential new family members.



Veterinary Care

Medical care will be provided and overseen by on-staff licensed veterinarians and licensed veterinary technicians, following written shelter medicine protocols and the clinical judgment of the veterinarians. All medical services will be provided by the Clinic.

All animals will be evaluated on intake and immediately given any emergency medical care, including pain-relief. A staff veterinarian will be on call for emergencies at all times. Unless medically contraindicated, all animals will be vaccinated on intake.

The Clinic will provide medical care for all its animals in foster care, and spay/neuter surgery unless medically contraindicated before release.

SVSNC will exceed federal and state guidelines. Before being euthanized, all animals will be pre-sedated and will not be witnesses to other animals' deaths. The bodies will be transported in a respectful and sanitary manner to the Charlottesville SPCA for cremation.

Public Health and Safety

- **Rabies** The Shelter will detain, care for, maintain quarantined, evaluate, and send for testing, if necessary, any animal having rabies, or which is suspected of having rabies, or which has bitten a person or persons, in accordance with state and local laws.
- **Disaster Preparedness** The Shelter will work with the City to update the Emergency Operations Plan.

Best Practices - A Lifesaving Model

The SVSNC will create a comprehensive approach to animal care and control services for the City of Harrisonburg. The plan will include the following main components:

Commitment

The Shelter will have an open admission policy. No Harrisonburg animal that would otherwise be in danger or abandoned will be turned away. SVSNC will strive for a rapid increase in lives saved.

- **Behavior Evaluation and Training** A certified animal behaviorist on staff will establish protocols to evaluate, train, correct behavior, and enrich the lives of shelter animals, making them more likely to find a successful permanent home.



- **Training Classes** Basic canine training will be provided on a continuous basis, and a list of local trainers and behaviorists will be maintained for referral.
- **Rescue Partnerships** The Shelter will collaborate with a large number of rescue organizations to increase foster and adoption capabilities. The Clinic currently has good relationships with over twenty animal welfare organizations, facilitating further collaboration once the Shelter is in place.
- **Foster Program** A large-scale volunteer foster program is key to immediately increasing shelter capacity and saving more lives. A foster program on scale with other communities (1 animal for every 60 residents) will be developed. Animals difficult to care for in a shelter setting such as unweaned animals with their mothers, animals with broken bones, emaciated animals needing nutritional support before sterilization surgery, and frightened animals needing emotional rehabilitation are well served by a foster program. The Shelter will draw on the expertise of the Charlottesville SPCA to develop and manage the foster program and will collaborate with Cat's Cradle, the largest foster network in the Valley.
- **Pet Retention Program** Pet retention programs are designed to safely decrease Shelter intake, in collaboration with the public. These programs solve medical, environmental, and/or behavioral problems and keep animals with their caring and responsible caregivers. Such programs can decrease animal intake by up to 25%.
 - **Admissions Counseling** Pet surrender can often be avoided if proper counseling is offered. Personnel will be trained to do telephone initial consultations on animal behavior. Over the phone admissions counseling can address destructive behaviors, house-training, animals that don't get along with each other, etc. Such counseling requires training personnel in active listening and collaborative problem solving.
 - **Re-homing service** Moving, divorce, and infirmity are some of the many reasons people have to relinquish their pet. Helping people find a new home for their pet can keep the animal out of the shelter. Re-homing service includes spay/neuter assistance if needed, digital photography and listing on major adoption websites, assistance and advice with creation and placement of flyers, as well as advice on how to screen for a good home.
 - **Animal-Friendly Rental Housing** The Shelter will maintain a comprehensive list of animal-friendly housing, as well as work with property owners on how to set policies to create a win-win situation for their business and the animals' well-being.



- **Affordable temporary housing** In cases of a fire in the home or temporary homelessness, short-term housing for animals will be made available at a low cost. The animal will also be provided with low-cost or free spay/neuter and vaccines if necessary.
- **Return-to-Owner** The Shelter will put in place up-to-date practices to increase return-to-owner rates. Shelter management software will offer a searchable database, including pictures for better identification of lost and found pets. All animals will be microchipped before release. When owned animals are returned, owners will be offered incentives for spay/neuter and microchipping, if not already done.
- **TNR (Trap/Neuter/Return) Program** A substantial percentage of cats entering shelters are the offspring of "community cats".² They may be stray or feral cats. A comprehensive program to spay/neuter and vaccinate community cats will be offered, including working closely with Cat's Cradle, a group that has been doing TNR in our area for over ten years.³
- **Comprehensive Adoption Program**
 - **Hours** People relinquishing pets often do so during the day, but adopters are more likely to be available after working hours and on weekends. The SVSNC Shelter expects to be open six days a week to volunteers from 8 am - 6:30 pm and open to the public from 11am - 6:30 pm.
 - **Off Site Adoptions** For cats especially, having a "retail" setting is a very effective way to increase adoptions. We will work closely with rescue groups to increase total community adoptions, including at area retail stores and the Cat's Cradle Adoption Center.
 - **Marketing** SVSNC Shelter will undertake proven marketing programs including special pricing, events, and enhanced advertising to increase the number of people adopting pets from the shelter. Adoption events such as "Freedom Event" on the 4th of July- (free supplies with every adoption), a "Two is Company" party for kittens with 2 for 1 pricing during kitten season, or a "Midnight Special" with reduced prices for black cats and dogs are just a few of many ideas similar to ones used successfully by other shelters.

² Journal of American Veterinary Medical Association, 2009;234:1023-1030, Chu K, Anderson WM, Rieser MY. Population Characteristics and Neuter Status of Cats Living in Households in the United States.

³ A full discussion of Trap/Neuter/Return is beyond the scope of this proposal. Please refer to www.alleycat.org for world-renowned information on the topic. Alternatively, we will be happy to provide any materials desired, including brochures, research articles, and DVD's on feral cats and their relationship to Animal Control.



Accountability

SVSNC will continue to operate with the greatest possible transparency in all aspects of its business. SVSNC will utilize a shelter management software program as a medical records database, for intake and disposition of animals, and to provide shelter statistics and reports. SVSNC will provide a quarterly report to the City Manager's office, to include:

- Quarterly intake of owned and stray animals
- Dispositions – adoptions, transfers, returned to owner
- Medical Services – number of animals spayed/neutered
- Euthanasia Summary

In addition, SVSNC will provide, in a timely manner, other comprehensive reports as requested by the City Manager's Office to ensure transparency and accountability.

- **Dog Licensing** SVSNC will enforce and sell, on behalf of the City, the use of dog licenses pursuant to the instructions of the City Manager's office. SVSNC will promote dog licensing through its programs and services. SVSNC will not release any adopted or redeemed dog(s) to owners without the issuance of a proper dog license. Fees collected and kept by the SVSNC will be administered and amended in compliance with applicable laws.

Management

- **Staffing** SVSNC will provide staff to fulfill the terms of the contract and provide employee orientation and training. SVSNC will comply with all federal, state, and local laws governing equal employment opportunity, wage and hour requirements, worker's compensation, worker's safety and all other legal requirements governing employee relations and working conditions.

SVSNC will expand and update procedure and training manuals delineating protocols for daily operations, animal adoptions and public education programs. Management and performance plans will be implemented to ensure accountability for each staff member.

- **Transition Team** SVSNC management staff is ready to begin the implementation and transition immediately upon award of this contract. A transition team consisting of the following individuals will manage the process: Cate Mansfield, Executive Director; Sarah Warner, Operations Manager; Julie Bullock, Veterinarian in Charge.



- **Quality Assurance Program**

The SVSNC quality assurance model will include:

- **Plan:** Establish objectives and processes required to deliver the desired results
- **Do:** Implement the process developed
- **Check:** Monitor and evaluate the implemented process by testing the results against the predetermined objectives
- **Act:** Apply actions necessary for improvement if the results require changes

The SVSNC will update current policy and procedure manuals to incorporate specific items required for animal care and control. The majority of current policies and procedures as documented will apply to the animal care and control contract. Monitoring of those procedures is performed daily.

The quality assurance program will include management performance goals. Quality assurance meetings will review project issues, deliverables, and input from City residents.

Organizational Background and Experience

Opened in 2005, the SVSNC is committed to ending companion animal overpopulation by providing low cost, high quality spay and neuter services. We use the highest standards to ensure the safety and comfort of each animal during his or her stay at the Clinic. We also offer low cost vaccinations at the time of surgery. The Clinic is open to everyone regardless of income or place of residence.

The Clinic follows the Humane Alliance model – nationally recognized for the quality and self-sufficiency of its clinics.⁴ SVSNC provides services to twenty rescue groups and shelters, as well as members of the public. In 2009, the SVSNC spayed and neutered 14,339 cats and dogs. Over 52,000 surgeries have been performed since inception.

SVSNC is currently staffed by 9 full-time and 10 part-time veterinarians, licensed veterinary technicians, veterinary assistants, administrators, a canine behaviorist, and animal care technicians with many years of experience in the animal care field.

⁴ www.humanealliance.org



Cate Mansfield, Executive Director, has a Master's Degree from Tufts University in Public Policy and Animals. She has successfully led the Clinic in a new, innovative, and very challenging field.

Ms. Mansfield has spoken on how to operate a successful high-volume spay/neuter clinic at the state level (Virginia Federation of Humane Societies) and the national level (Best Friends Animal Sanctuary on-line seminar on Super-Clinics).

Adriana Voors, DVM, staff veterinarian, is a nationally recognized expert in Shelter Medicine and spay/neuter, especially in anesthesia protocols. She has co-authored The Association of Shelter Veterinarians veterinary medical care guidelines for spay-neuter programs, published in the Journal of American Veterinary Medicine.⁵

The SVSNC Clinic received the Ayreshire Award⁶ from the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies in 2007.

Conclusion

The Shenandoah Valley Spay/Neuter Clinic (SVSNC) has the vision, determination, and the expertise to offer our community high quality, collaborative, innovative animal care and control services. This is an opportunity for the City of Harrisonburg to stride forward in animal welfare at no extra cost to the taxpayer.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a proposal and we look forward to working with you.

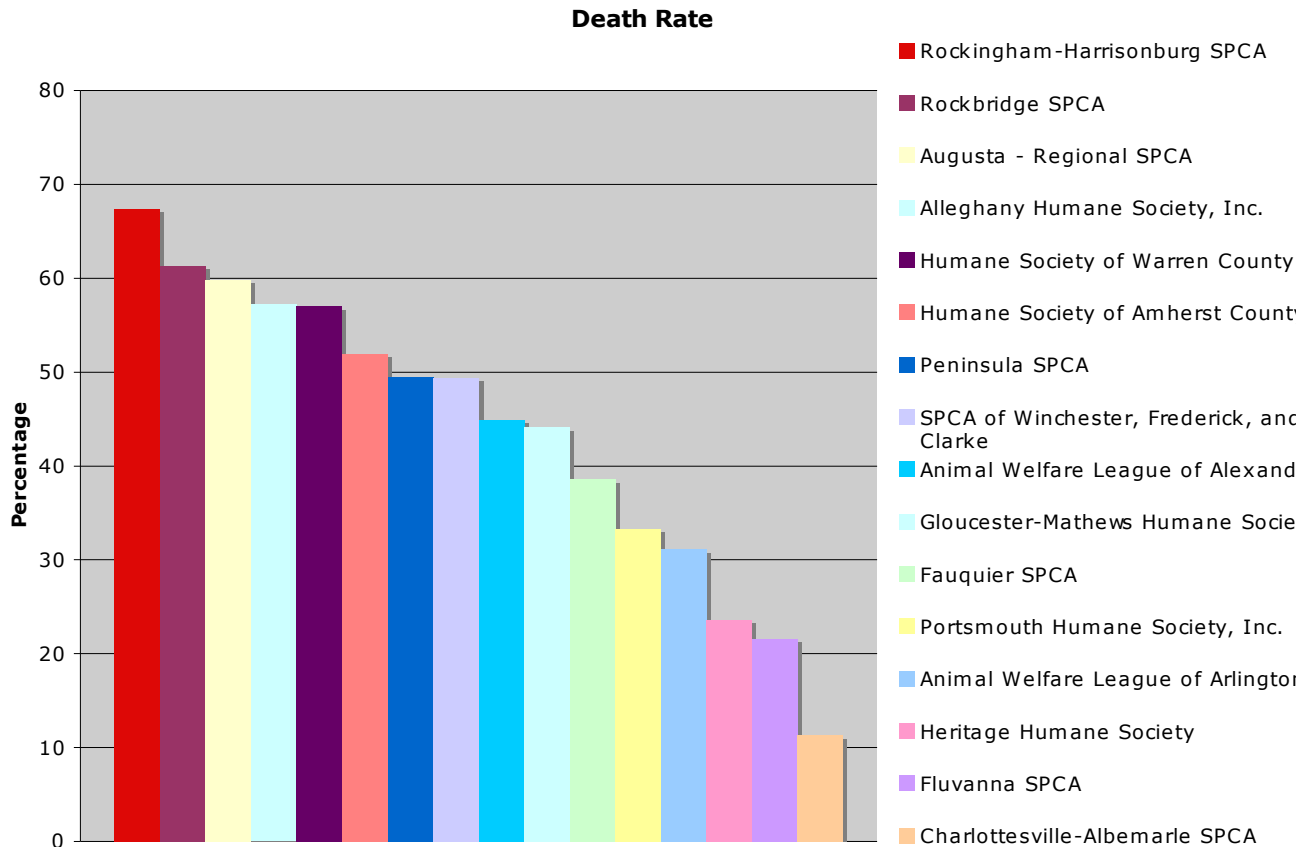
⁵ Journal of American Veterinary Medical Association, 2008;233:74-86, Association of Shelter Veterinarians' Spay-Neuter Task Force. The Association of Shelter Veterinarians Veterinary Medical Care Guidelines for Spay-Neuter Programs.

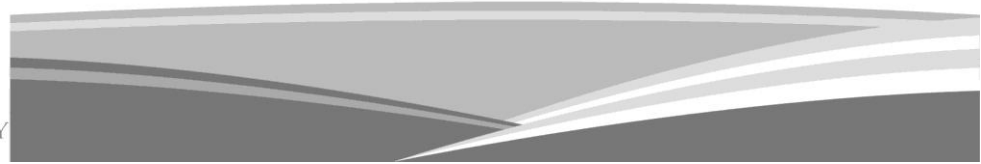
⁶ <http://vfhs.org/programs-and-services/awards.html#ayrshire>



Graphs

The following graph compares the R-H SPCA's death rate with 15 fifteen other government contracted non-profit shelters in Virginia.





The following graph compares the R-H SPCA's adoption rate with 15 fifteen other government contracted non-profit shelters in Virginia.

