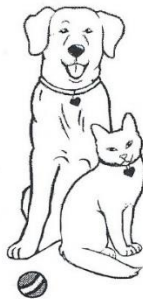


STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



ANIMAL POPULATION CONTROL PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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A. ANIMAL POPULATION CONTROL PROGRAM (APCP)

1. OVERVIEW:

The goals of the Animal Population Control Program (APCP) are to reduce the overpopulation of dogs and cats in Connecticut and to increase the level of immunization against infectious animal diseases. To accomplish these goals, the APCP provides sterilization and vaccination benefits for dogs and cats to (1) Connecticut residents for dogs and cats adopted from municipal pounds; (2) to low-income residents for dogs and cats that they own; and (3) to non-profit organizations engaged in activities aimed at reducing the population of feral cats. Connecticut is one of only a few states to provide a companion pet sterilization program administered by a state agency for municipal pound animals, feral cats and low-income owned pets.

Pet overpopulation is a significant burden on the limited resources of municipalities. Assistance, provided by the APCP in reducing the overpopulation of dogs and cats and increasing the level of immunizations of the state's pet population against infectious diseases, has a positive effect on local public health and safety. Easing the overpopulation of dogs and cats in Connecticut communities coupled with higher immunization levels decreases the risk of transmission of rabies and other infectious diseases not only from animal to animal but also from animals to people. Additionally, the reduction in animal overpopulation allows municipalities to shift their resources to focus efforts more on enforcement of animal control laws and on educational outreach regarding responsible pet ownership.

2. STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

This report has been produced in accordance with the provisions of Connecticut General Statute (C.G.S.) Sec.(§) 22-380k, *Report re operation of program*, which states: "Not later than one year following the inception of the animal population control program, established pursuant to C.G.S. Sec. 22-380e to 22-380m inclusive and annually thereafter, the commissioner shall submit a report to the joint standing committee of the general assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the environment setting forth a complete operating and financial statement regarding the operation of said program. The commissioner shall include an evaluation of the effectiveness of said program and any recommendations for statutory or regulatory changes deemed appropriate."

The APCP was authorized by Public Act #92-187 in July 1992 and implemented on May 22, 1995, to provide vaccination/sterilization benefits for any unsterilized dog or cat adopted from a municipal impound facility. The program was suspended from 1996 to 1997 and again in 2000 due to insufficient funding. The program resumed operation in 2001 after the structure for payments to participating veterinary practices was changed

by implementing a voucher system that set fixed payment amounts dependent on species and the type of sterilization procedure.¹ In addition to APCP income generated by the original \$6.00 licensure surcharge on unspayed and unneutered dogs², APCP income was augmented with the implementation of a \$2.00 licensure surcharge on spayed and neutered dogs in 2002³.

Since the start of the APCP, several changes have expanded the types of benefits provided in addition to the sterilization and vaccination of pets adopted from municipal pounds. Included in the additional benefits are: (1) Funding to assist non-profit organizations with the sterilization and vaccination of feral cats⁴; (2) Funding to assist qualified low-income individuals with the sterilization and vaccination of their own animals⁵; and (3) Reimbursements to persons completing municipal animal control officer training.⁶

In 2012, provisions were added to allow animal control officers to transport unsterilized pets to veterinarians for eligible owners and to exempt pets diagnosed with pyometra from the \$45 adoption fee.⁷

In 2013, provisions increased the maximum percentage of account funds used for sterilization and vaccination of dogs and cats owned by low-income persons from 10 percent to 20 percent.⁸

In 2014, provisions allow the account to be used for providing reimbursement to any municipality for costs of providing temporary care to any animal if such temporary care exceeded 30 days and costs exceeded amount of bond posted.⁹

In 2015, provisions replaced the definition of former “Medicaid” with the new definition of “HUSKY A, C or D.”¹⁰

In 2021, provisions increased the allocation from ten percent to twenty percent of the funds deposited in the animal population control account to be used for the sterilization and vaccination of feral cats.¹¹

B. OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

1 Public Act #01-87; C.G.S. §22-380i

2 Public Act #92-187; C.G.S. §22-380/

3 Public Act #02-61; C.G.S. §22-338(a)

4 Public Acts #96-243, #01-87 and #07-105 / C.G.S. §22-380g(b)

5 Public Acts #07-105 and #13-99 / C.G.S. §22-380g(c)

6 Public Act #12-108 / C.G.S. §22-380g(e)

7 Public Act #12-108 / C.G.S. §22-380f(a)

8 Public Act #13-99 / C.G.S. §22-380g

9 Public Act #14-205/ C.G.S. §22-380g

10 Public Act #15-69 / C.G.S. §22-380e

11 Public Act #21-90 / C.G.S. 22-380g

Vouchers are issued at the municipal pound for unsterilized dogs/cats to Connecticut residents who must pay a \$50 fee (\$45 voucher/\$5 municipality). The voucher is good for sixty (60) days from the adoption date and provides a one-time sterilization subsidy of \$80 for a male cat, \$120 for a female cat, \$180 for a male dog and \$200 for a female dog. In addition, two coincident pre-surgical vaccinations are provided with the sterilization. Pets that are too young or sick to undergo a sterilization procedure are granted a medical extension from a participating veterinarian. The APCP also provides vouchers to Connecticut low-income residents to subsidize sterilization and vaccination costs for owned pets and to non-profit organizations for the sterilization and vaccination of feral cats.

1. INCOME:

The APCP has its own dedicated account and receives no money from the state's general fund. Revenue is received from the following: annual surcharge on Connecticut dog licenses (\$2.00 sterilized/\$6.00 unsterilized), the \$45 mandatory voucher fee, proceeds from the sale of the "Caring for Pets" commemorative license plate and donations. Dog license surcharge fees are collected by the municipalities and given to the Department of Agriculture annually. Voucher fees collected by the municipalities are given to the Department of Agriculture on a quarterly basis and revenue from pet plate sales are deposited weekly by the Department of Motor Vehicles into the program's account.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, \$432,796.00 was received from dog license surcharge revenue, \$127,616.49 from the municipal pound pets program adoption fee and \$17,730.00 from the Department of Motor Vehicle sales of the "Caring for Pets" commemorative license plate for a total program income of \$578,142.49. The APCP received \$0.00 in donations in FY 2023.

2. EXPENSES:

Total expenses for FY 2023 were \$759,066.44. Participating veterinary practices (220) received \$482,940.00 for their services in supplying sterilization and vaccination benefits for 5,099 pets. The average benefit paid for dogs was \$220.00 and cats were \$130.00. Administrative expenses totaled \$276,126.44, of which, \$225,283.23 were used to cover personnel costs. Refunds for pets that were previously sterilized totaled \$0.00 (0 refunds).

3. PARTICIPATING VETERINARIAN PRACTICES:

For FY 2023, 220 practices were certified to participate encompassing over 600 individual veterinarians. The Commissioner of Agriculture, pursuant to C.G.S. Sec. 22-380h, certifies Connecticut Veterinary Practices wishing to perform vaccination/sterilization benefits for the state. Practices wishing to participate need to complete the program application form APCP-02, the SP-26 NB Agency Vendor Form and the federal Request for Taxpayer ID Number form W-9. Once certified, practices will receive the standard voucher amount as previously outlined in this report. Veterinarians may also charge adopters for post-surgical complications and a fee differential, which is the amount between the voucher and the hospital's normal spay/neuter fee.

4. ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER REIMBURSEMENT COSTS:

Pursuant to Sec. 22-380g (e) (3) which states in part “reimbursement of persons completing a training-program pursuant to subsections (c) and (d) of section 22-328 for the costs of such program”.

For FY 2023, there was no compensation paid out to Connecticut Municipal Animal Control Officers for training reimbursement costs.

5. “CARING FOR PETS” COMMEMORATIVE LICENSE PLATE:

The “Caring for Pets” commemorative license plate is available through the Department of Motor Vehicles in three different categories. An off-the-shelf plate with random numbers/letters combination is sold for \$50 (APCP receives \$35). Next is a transfer of a current marker plate for \$70 (APCP receives \$55). The third choice is a new vanity plate for \$139 (APCP receives \$55). Along with the regular renewal fees, there is an additional \$15 fee for each renewal, \$10 of which is deposited into the program’s dedicated account. “Caring for Pets” plates are available for passenger, combination, commercial and camp trailer type registrations.

Plate applications are located at all DMV outlets, veterinary practices, municipal pounds, town halls, pet and grooming shops, boarding kennels, auto dealerships or by calling the APCP at 860713-2507. Plates can be ordered over the phone by calling the DMV at 800-842-8222. Plates can be ordered online as well by going to the DMV website at www.ct.gov/dmv. The website allows the public to view the dog/cat design and provides citizens the ability to type in available acronyms for those seeking vanity plate combinations.



(SAMPLE OF “CARING FOR PETS” PLATE)

C. STATISTICAL SUMMARY

1. VACCINATIONS AND STERILIZATIONS:

The APCP, in FY 2023, supplied vouchers for 5,099 animals (1,808 dogs – 35%, 3,291 cats – 65%). Municipal impound facilities gave out 2,314 vouchers. Low Income Connecticut residents received 1,305 vouchers for owned pets. Non-profit feral cat organizations were awarded 1,480 vouchers. Sterilization benefits were provided for 3,348 pets for a 65% overall compliance rate. There were 0 animals found to be previously sterilized.

2. APCP FIVE YEAR SUMMARY (FY18-FY23):

The yearly totals include dogs and cats adopted from municipal pounds, cats sterilized through the APCP's Feral Cat Grant program awarded to non-profit organizations and dogs and cats owned by Connecticut residents who qualified to participate in the APCP's Low Income program.

APCP FIVE YEAR SUMMARY - VACCINATIONS/STERILIZATIONS

FY 2018 - FY 2023

Fiscal Year	Total # of Dogs	Total # of Dogs Sterilized	% Rate of Sterilization	Total # of Cats	Total # of Cats Sterilized	% Rate of Sterilization	Total # of Animals Previously Sterilized	Total # of Animals	Total # of Animals Sterilized	% Rate of Sterilization
2019	2,358	1,537	65%	3,216	2400	75%	6	5,574	3,937	71%
2020	2,094	1,315	63%	3,184	2369	74%	16	5,278	3,684	70%
2021	1,366	754	55%	2,674	1791	67%	6	4,040	2,545	63%
2022	1,303	782	60%	2,504	1705	68%	7	3,807	2,487	65%
2023	1,808	1,036	57%	3,139	2308	74%	11	4,947	3,344	68%

3. LOW-INCOME PROGRAM:

For FY 2023, \$214,578.00 was set aside for the low-income program. The APCP issued 1,305 vouchers with 582 used for a 45% overall sterilization compliance rate. Male dogs totaled 245 and female dogs totaled 276. Male cats totaled 344 and female cats totaled 440. Vouchers were issued for 784 cats of which 349 were sterilized (45%) and for 521 dogs of which 233 were sterilized (45%). The average benefit provided per cat was \$130 and \$220 for dogs, during FY 2023.

LOW-INCOME STERILIZATIONS

FY 2021 - FY 2023

Fiscal Year	Vouchers Issued	Vouchers Used	Dogs	Dogs Sterilized	Cats	Cats Sterilized	% Rate of Utilization
2020	1,377	644	505	251	872	393	47%

2021	808	416	296	151	512	265	51%
2023	1,305	582	521	231	784	351	45%

**LOW INCOME VOUCHERS ISSUED/UTILIZED BY COUNTY
FY 2023**

COUNTY	# OF VOUCHERS ISSUED	# OF VOUCHERS UTILIZED	% OF VOUCHERS UTILIZED
FAIRFIELD	177	105	59%
HARTFORD	274	83	30%
LITCHFIELD	93	43	46%
MIDDLESEX	39	12	31%
NEW HAVEN	417	204	49%
NEW LONDON	147	52	35%
TOLLAND	43	22	51%
WINDHAM	115	61	53%
TOTAL	1,305	582	45%

**STATISTICAL DATA
1997-2023**

FISCAL YEAR	IMPOUNDED	ADOPTED	EUTHANIZED	REDEEMED
1997-98	27,412	8,784	4,823	12,850
1998-99	26,412	8,751	4,410	12,253
1999-00	26,295	9,112	4,111	12,009
2000-01	24,338	9,035	3,228	11,082
2001-02	22,626	8,349	2,864	10,545
2002-03	21,023	7,780	2,698	9,757
2003-04	21,343	8,351	2,668	9,518
2004-05	19,210	7,568	2,264	8,630
2005-06	20,678	8,058	2,153	9,685
2006-07	20,076	7,451	2,342	9,541
2007-08	20,160	7,563	2,332	9,391
2008-09	19,791	7,432	2,549	9,023
2009-10	19,299	7,266	2,525	8,741
2010-11	20,118	7,659	2,743	8,892

2011-12	19,994	7,775	2,745	8,626
2012-13	18,585	7,411	2,341	8,282
2013-14	18,284	7,640	2,009	7,819
2014-15	16,434	6,719	1,601	7,567
2015-16	16,431	7,103	1,336	7,171
2016-17	15,583	6,792	1,131	6,792
2017-18	13,240	5,165	971	6,356
2018-19	12,325	4,653	774	6,404
2019-20	11,388	4,666	681	5,434
2020-21	9,750	3,885	615	4,646
2021-22	11,866	4,225	651	5,316
2022-23	12,378	4,879	731	4,984

The above statistical data shows the trends experienced by municipal pounds in the numbers of impounded, adopted, euthanized and owner redeemed dogs and cats from 1997 to 2023. The data demonstrates, in part, the positive impact that the APCP has had in an overall reduction of the state's surplus pet population.

4. FERAL CAT GRANT PROGRAM

In 2007, Public Act 07-1055 authorized the APCP to set aside up to 10% of APCP income for Connecticut non-profit organizations to provide sterilization and vaccination benefits for feral cats. In 2021, Public Act 21-90 increased the set aside for the feral cat program from 10% to 20%, this change went into effect October 31, 2021.

In FY 2023, the APCP issued 1,480 vouchers to 36 non-profit organizations. A total of 1,317 cats were sterilized, 11 cats were found to be previously sterilized, and 152 vouchers were not used for an 89% compliance rate. Seven counties in the state were represented, including 79 towns and cities. Feral cat totals per county were as follows: Fairfield 304, Hartford 273, Litchfield 96, Middlesex 1, New Haven 501, New London 73, Tolland 14 and Windham 66. Of the 1,317 vouchers utilized, 51% were used for female cats and 49% were used for male cats.

FERAL CAT GRANT PROGRAM BY COUNTY FY 2023

COUNTY	# OF VOUCHERS UTILIZED	% OF TOTAL VOUCHERS UTILIZED BY COUNTY
FAIRFIELD	304	23%

HARTFORD	273	21%
LITCHFIELD	96	7%
MIDDLESEX	1	<1%
NEW HAVEN	501	38%
NEW LONDON	73	5%
TOLLAND	14	1%
WINDHAM	66	5%
TOTALS	1,328	100%

6. CONNECTICUT HUMANE SOCIETY REPORT:

In 2003, legislative revisions to C.G.S. Sec. 22-380f (a) (b) (c) and (d) provide for the Connecticut Humane Society (CHS) to assist with pet overpopulation efforts at local municipal facilities by acquiring dogs and cats from those facilities without the requirement of paying a voucher fee. Once a pet is removed from a municipal impound facility, CHS is required to provide vaccination, sterilization (if unaltered) and adoption services through one of its three statewide facilities (Newington, Waterford & Westport). CHS is also required to submit a biannual report to the APCP, accounting for the disposition of each pet removed. If the Society fails to comply with any provision of this section, the Commissioner of Agriculture may terminate the organization's fee exemption status.

CONNECTICUT HUMANE SOCIETY IN 2023

	CATS	DOGS	TOTAL	%
ADOPTED	103	48	151	59%
DIED	1	1	2	1%
EUTHANIZED	1	4	5	2%
FOSTER CARE	0	0	0	0%
IN CARE	5	5	10	4%
RESCUED	0	4	4	2%
RETURNED TO ACO	32	20	52	20%
RETURNED TO OWNER	0	0	0	0%
TRANSFERRED OUT	11	1	12	5%
UNKNOWN	17	5	22	9%
TOTALS	170	88	258	100%

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

During the Animal Population Control Program's (APCP) more than twenty years of operation, the program has provided benefits to more than 250,000 companion pets.

It is recommended that policy makers consider increasing the current APCP dog license

surcharges. Increasing these surcharges will generate more revenue for the program to fund increases in payments for sterilizations and vaccinations and possibly other medical services at the time of adoption. This will positively impact participating veterinarians and potential adopters by increasing the likelihood of participation in the program.

It is also recommended that there is a wholistic look at the marketing efforts of the APCP program towards to public. More awareness and engagement will increase utilization and assist in reaching the ultimate goals of the program.

Policymakers should also look at creating an online structure for APCP participants to apply for applications, retrieve program information, and access follow-ups, all via an online system. There hasn't been a significant upgrade for user engagement in years, it is time to explore ways to modernize how we run this program.