



Board Report

File #: 24-351, **Version:** 1

Receive an updated response to **Board Referral No. 2024.1** seeking staff to explore the possibility of the County of Monterey developing a grant program to support local non-profits to provide for and expand upon the available pet/animal education to the community with direction from Hitchcock Road Animal Services.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors:

Receive an updated response to **Board Referral No. 2024.1** seeking staff to explore the possibility of the County of Monterey developing a grant program to support local non-profits to provide for and expand upon the available pet/animal education to the community with direction from Monterey County Animal Services.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

On February 6, 2024, Board Referral No. 2024.1 was assigned to the Health Department to determine the possibility of the County of Monterey developing a grant program to support local non-profits to provide for and expand upon the available pet/animal education to the community with direction from County of Monterey Animal Services (through Hitchcock Road Animal Services or HRAS).

The County of Monterey currently partners with local non-profits to spay and neuter dogs and cats. Education is a crucial component of spay and neuter programs as it helps promote responsible pet ownership, reduce overpopulation, and improve animal welfare. Education can help prevent unplanned litters and reduces the financial burden on pet owners and the shelter. Educating the public on how to responsibly abandon animals at shelters is essential for promoting animal welfare, reducing the burden on shelters, and ensuring that animals receive the care and attention they need. It can lead to more compassionate and responsible pet ownership practices while also benefiting the larger community.

At this time education is the responsibility of the County's Health Department through Hitchcock Road Animal Services (HRAS). There appears to exist an opportunity to work with trusted partners, in the form of local non-profits, to help educate our communities with a focus on reducing the abandonment of animals while increasing registrations and vaccinations of pets.

The Health Department is tasked to develop a grant program for local non-profits to provide and expand upon the available pet/animal education to the community with direction from HRAS.

Department staff met internally to review current pet/animal education provided to the community to determine what can be expanded on. Current efforts include:

- A revised website that is in both English and Spanish.
- Expanded social media educational efforts to include key pet/animal related topics to include lost/found, pet abandonment, spay/neuter.
- Increased presence in community by way of presentations and events.

- Requested additional staff to assist efforts and expand further.

HRAS reviewed current trusted partners and determined there were eight (8) locally that may provide community outreach in addition to their animal rescue efforts. These partners are actively part of the HRAS Rescue Partner program, and each has been vetted and determined to be a legitimate organization. As the referral identifies an opportunity to work with “trusted” partners in the form of local nonprofits, it was these groups that HRAS reached out to. Staff then prepared and emailed a survey that queried local partners’ efforts to provide community education and what additional resources were needed. Of those that do continue to provide community education, the additional resources that were identified as being needed included:

- Social media posts to share (from HRAS to the partner)
- Handouts and flyers on related content
- Additional volunteer support

The Health Department has requested \$30,000 to fund an initial grant program to develop a grant program to support local partners community outreach efforts. The areas in which the proposed grant would provide financial support are related to the areas identified in the survey: print and social media and recruitment of volunteers. Additional opportunities may be identified outside of that as it relates to the topics of responsible pet ownership, spay/neuter and pet retention/abandonment.

HRAS plans to promote this grant locally and ask interested partners to submit their requests within a specified time period in order to determine exact needs and amounts. Materials and/or funds would be distributed after submission period, upon approval. HRAS would like flexibility to alter the proposed strategy amounts after receiving applications in order to best meet the needs of the partners.

Staff has reached out to the Action Council for Monterey County for their support to manage this grant program under the current Health Department service agreement. In that agreement, the Action Council would receive the monies and distribute it to the local partners through an application process as determined. This arrangement is still pending as of 5/8/24.

Initially, HRAS intends to provide as much of the support as they can to the groups, (i.e. by providing the printed materials or social media content), however, if direct reimbursement is requested, then service agreements will be needed.

PROPOSED STRATEGY

Print: Printed materials related to spay/neuter, responsible pet ownership, pet retention and other pet ownership related topics by HRAS. Materials would not be for advertisement for any for profit businesses.

**INITIAL ANNUAL
FUNDING AMOUNT**
(Up to amount)
Total: \$30,000

\$8,000

Social Media: Creation and promotion of key social media messages

related to spay/neuter, responsible pet ownership, pet retention and other pet ownership related topics by HRAS. Content would not be for advertisement for any for profit businesses. \$5,000

Recruitment: Cost reimbursement for services related to helping nonprofits increase their volunteer recruitment efforts. This would be a reimbursement process and require an agreement in place with the organization. \$5,000

Additional advertisement/promotion opportunities

Other opportunities may be identified related to pet/animal education opportunities to include advertisements in partner jurisdictions, training for volunteers and additional promotion items. \$7,500

Staff Coordination Efforts or Administrative Costs for Action Council (15%) \$4,500

This work supports the County of Monterey Health Department 2018-2024 Strategic Plan Goal(s): 1) Empower the community to improve health through programs, policies, and activities; and 2) Enhance community health and safety by emphasizing prevention; and 3) Ensure access to culturally and linguistically appropriate, customer-friendly quality health services. It also supports one of the ten essential public health services, specifically: 4) Mobilize community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Health Department staff will continue to have discussions with representatives from local partner agencies who apply for this grant.

FINANCING:

There is no impact to the County General Fund with receipt of this report. This grant program is dependent upon the receipt of requested funding through the Board of Supervisors. Without that funding, this grant program will not be possible.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

Check the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives:

☐ Economic Development:

- Through collaboration, strengthen economic development to ensure a diversified and healthy economy.

☐ Administration:

- Promote an organization that practices efficient and effective resource management and is recognized for responsiveness, strong customer orientation, accountability and transparency.

☒ Health & Human Services:

- Improve health and quality of life through County supported policies, programs, and services;

promoting access to equitable opportunities for healthy choices and healthy environments in collaboration with communities.

☐ Infrastructure:

- Plan and develop a sustainable, physical infrastructure that improves the quality of life for County residents and supports economic development results.

☐ Public Safety:

- Create a safe environment for people to achieve their potential, leading businesses and communities to thrive and grow by reducing violent crimes as well as crimes in general.

Prepared by: Cindy Burnham, Animal Services Administrator, 796-8796

Approved by:

Date

Elsa Mendoza Jimenez, Director of Health Services, 755-4526

Attachments:

Board Report

Preliminary Response to Referral No. 2024.1

Referral No. 2024.1