



STRAY ANIMAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, municipal officials, non-profit animal welfare organizations and the general public are grappling with the health and safety hazards of unwanted and uncontrolled animals. By partnering with Animal Control Officers (ACOs), the MVMA Charities Stray Animal Program seeks to provide financial assistance for the urgent and emergent care of non-owned animals or unclaimed strays. The ultimate goal of the Stray Animal Program is to help facilitate the rehabilitation of these animals and their adoption into suitable homes. The following guidelines are intended to aid ACOs in applying to the Stray Animal Program and requesting payment for urgent and emergent services provided to stray animals by local veterinarians. Please note that these guidelines may be changed at any time.

I. The Stray Animal Program

- Each town and city in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts may register to participate in the MVMA Charities Stray Animal Program. The town or city should designate a single Animal Control Officer (ACO) as the registered contact person for that community's submission(s).
- MVMA Charities Stray Animal Program will provide payment for up to 100% of veterinary bills generated for the urgent and emergent treatment of stray animals. There is a yearly limit in total payments to a single town or city. A chart listing each community and its yearly limit is included with these guidelines.
- Payment is made directly to the veterinarian providing treatment once a **Request for Funds Form** has been submitted by the authorized ACO.

II. Registering with the Stray Animal Program

- Registration is limited to one ACO per town or city. This ACO must be approved by the town or city.
- The registering ACO should fill out, sign and submit a **Stray Animal Program Application for Participation**, along with the accompanying documents (proof that the applicant is an ACO and authorization by the town or city for the applicant to represent the town or city).
- A single ACO may represent more than one town or city, however, a separate application must be submitted for EACH town or city the ACO will represent.
- The ACO submitting the application will be the **ONLY** person authorized to submit payment requests. To change the authorized ACO, a new application must

MVMA Charities

A 501(c)(3) Not-for-Profit Supporting Organization
of the Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association

163 Lakeside Avenue, Marlborough, MA 01752-4554
Phone: 508-460-9333 Fax: 508-460-9969
MVMACharities@massvet.org www.mvmacharities.org

be submitted (along with appropriate documentation). The new application will replace any previous application submitted for that town or city.

III. Submitting Requests for Payment

- To request funds, the authorized ACO must submit a **Request for Funds Form**, along with a copy of the service provider's bill, clearly indicating that the urgent or emergent treatment was for a non-owned animal or unclaimed stray animal, to MVMA Charities.
- Requests for funds may only be submitted by the authorized ACO.
- All fund requests are subject to approval by MVMA Charities.
- Payment will be made directly to the veterinarian or clinic providing care. While attempts will be made to forward payment in a timely manner, there may be a delay of up to 120 days from receipt of a Request for Funds Form before payment is sent.
- Payment will be made for up to 100% of the billed (effective 01/01/2012), unpaid total indicated on a receipt from the veterinarian providing treatment. Yearly payments on behalf of each town or city will not exceed limits listed above.
- Payment requests may be made for less than 100% of the outstanding bill; amount requested should be clearly indicated on the submission form.
- MVMA Charities does not prohibit obtaining funds from other sources for payment of charges not paid by the Stray Animal Program, however, if reimbursement is obtained from another source for any charges already paid by MVMA Charities, an amount equal to the overlapping funds obtained MUST be returned to MVMA Charities. The town or city to which the returned funds should be assigned should be clearly indicated.
- Fund requests should be submitted within 30 days of last date services were provided. For ongoing care, a new payment request for *additional* (not previously submitted) services for the same animal is permitted.
- Only services to stray (non-owned) animals are eligible for payment by MVMA Charities.

IV. Overpayment

- In the event of overpayment, MVMA Charities should be reimbursed for any funds dispersed in excess of the billed charges. Returned funds will be credited in calculation of the town's yearly disbursement limit.

Please direct any questions to the office of the MVMA Charities. You can reach us at the MVMA office at 508-460-9333 or by email at MVMACHarities@massvet.org. These

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Guidelines, and all MVMA Charities related forms, may also be viewed and downloaded online at www.mvmacharities.org.

- V. As of April 01, 2014, please submit requests for funds for the urgent and emergent care of ill and injured homeless animals only. Documentation by the participating veterinarian(s) of examination and diagnostic findings must be provided with your request for funds.

After April 01, 2014, please **DO NOT** submit requests for the following:

- Spay/Neuter*
- Vaccinations
- Routine blood, urine, fecal testing of asymptomatic animals
- Boarding
- Grooming* including flea and tick products
- Deworming medications and Heartworm preventative
- “Elective” **or non-urgent surgeries that would be considered primarily cosmetic (e.g. removing a lump that is not causing pain or expected long-term health issues but is cosmetically unappealing such as a sebaceous cyst)

*Exceptions to the above restrictions would be allowed for the following:

- 1. The animal is being anesthetized for another urgent or emergent procedure and it is safe and prudent to spay/neuter at the same time.
- 2. Spays/Neuters for pyometra, unwanted pregnancy, mammary gland or reproductive tract tumors.
- 3. Grooming of an animal requiring anesthesia due to severe matting and or pain.

** “Elective” surgeries for conditions that cause pain such as aural hematoma or cruciate injuries would be allowed for reimbursement.

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