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## **A Home for Cook County's Animals FY2020 Call for Projects**

### **Introduction**

Cook County Animal and Rabies Control was established in 1954, when the Illinois Animal Control Act was enacted by the state legislature during a statewide rabies epidemic. The Department's mission is to prevent the transmission of rabies from animal to man through vaccination, registration, education, legislation and surveillance. The Department also works to decrease pet over-population by promoting spay/neuter programs and to facilitate quarantines of animals in bite incidents to prevent the transmission of rabies, and to promote animal welfare and participate in disaster preparedness and response.

The Department also interacts with animals, both domestic and wild, in its operations. The Department is often called upon to impound strays found in the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, unincorporated Cook County, as part of evictions performed by Cook County Sheriff's police and animals deemed dangerous and found at large and impounded after a request for assistance from a municipality.

### **Housing Cook County's Animals**

Although the Department does not operate a shelter, the Department contracts with private shelters to house animals impounded by the Department. The Department does not have enough demand in its day-to-day operations for shelter services, hence its contracts with private shelters.

Despite those partnerships, there is still a large demand for shelter services within Cook County. Current total shelter capacity of all Cook County shelters is not sufficient to house all the animals that need shelter.<sup>1</sup> In warm weather, there is a sharp increase in the number of animals apprehended throughout Cook County as they either escape their homes or are allowed to roam. Historically, shelters often are filled to over-capacity, forcing them to increase their calls for adoptions and offer financial incentives to clear room for the influx of animals. The overcrowding is even more pronounced because many shelters are "no-kill," requiring even more space for animals that cannot

be euthanized. In shelters that euthanize animals, overcrowding often forces those shelters to create space through euthanization.

The Department is issuing a call for proposals from governmental and/or nonprofit shelters for grant financing to expand their capacity to house animals. Proposals shall be for capital costs but must increase the number of animals that the shelter can house. Applicants must agree to shelter animals impounded by the Department and provide a limited amount of space to accommodate rabies observations if their application is accepted for funding.

## **Eligibility and Application Process**

The following sections describe which entities are eligible to apply, application deadlines, and project readiness criteria that must be met in order to qualify to apply. If your project qualifies under these basic criteria and the application is received by the deadline, then your project will be evaluated.

## **Standards**

Applicants shall meet or exceed the licensing and construction requirements as set forth by the Department. Those licensing standards include, but are not limited to, possessing an Illinois Department of Agriculture license for sheltering animals and an Illinois Department of Natural Resources Nuisance Wildlife Control Permit. Furthermore, successful applicants must agree to allow for 24 hour/7 days a week access by Cook County Animal and Rabies Control wardens and/or Cook County Sheriff's police to bring animals to these shelters. Furthermore, the shelter must maintain veterinary availability to examine companion animals daily under rabies observation and for the examination and direction of treatment for animals impounded for Cook County.

Construction proposals must adhere to standards required by the State of Illinois Department of Agriculture and the Department. Proposals must include having or planning separate housing areas to segregate healthy from infirmed animals and cleaning plans to reduce the potential of infectious disease.

The Department reserves the right to improve construction plans, methods, materials and/ or any other aspect of a proposal in order to ensure the highest standards of animal care. The Department will work with the agency submitting the proposal on how to meet and fund those standards.

## Deadlines and How to Apply

The call for projects opens on November 1, 2019 and ends at 5:00 p.m. on February 28, 2019. Application materials are posted on the Department's website: <http://cookcountyiil.gov/AnimalShelterGrant>. Applications will only be accepted electronically and must be submitted by the deadline or they will be rejected. Applicants should use the Shelter Grant application form and email the completed fillable PDF Application, not a scanned copy.

## Eligible Applicants and Projects

Eligible sponsors include local governments and nonprofit animal care agencies that operate shelters. For projects that involve multiple jurisdictions or entities, the application should identify a lead applicant and provide letters of support from partner entities. Lead applicants are limited to a single project application. Staff salaries are not an eligible expense under this program. Applicants are limited to one application each.

## Project Submission Instructions

Project submission forms can be found on the Department's website: <http://cookcountyiil.gov/AnimalShelterGrant>. Project applicants must fill out the form as completely as possible and submit the fillable PDF form electronically to Brian Miller at [brian.miller@cookcountyiil.gov](mailto:brian.miller@cookcountyiil.gov). The application form was designed to provide descriptive information that evaluators will need to understand the scope of the project and its benefits. The form will be the primary tool Cook County staff will use to evaluate and rank projects. Supporting documentation, like existing plans, should be referenced in the project description. Other documentation like cost estimates, board resolutions, etc. should be emailed with the application. Documents should be emailed with the application submission with cover pages that accurately identify the applicant's name, the project name and the project location. Applicants should email application and all supporting documents to Brian Miller, [brian.miller@cookcountyiil.gov](mailto:brian.miller@cookcountyiil.gov). If applicants need assistance completing the application or have questions about how to develop estimates, they should contact Brian Miller at [brian.miller@cookcountyiil.gov](mailto:brian.miller@cookcountyiil.gov) or (312) 603-2820. County staff will be available to answer questions about the application, how to submit a competitive application and other general questions. The County will prioritize providing assistance to disadvantaged communities/applicants but cannot guarantee staff availability to help in every instance where it is requested.

## Timeline

A Home for Cook County's Animals Grants process will be conducted according to the following timeline. It is imperative that project applicants adhere to the application deadline and are responsive to County requests for information.

- November 1, 2019 - A Home for Cook County's Animals opens and resources distributed throughout the County
- January 8, 2020 - Informational Meeting – 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. – Location: Chicago Loop
- February 5, 2020 - Informational Meeting – 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. – Location – Chicago Loop
- February 28, 2020 - Applications Due – by 5:00 p.m.
- March 2020 – May 2020 - project evaluation team will review applications
- June 2020 - projects will be approved by the Cook County Board of Commissioners and awardees will be notified of award

Please RSVP for the Informational Meetings by emailing [brian.miller@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:brian.miller@cookcountyil.gov). Once your reservation is confirmed, you will receive the location of the informational meeting.

## Project Selection Criteria and Process

Cook County staff will evaluate applications using a three-step process.

### 1. General Measures of Application Quality

The first level of review is meant to determine the quality and completeness of applications as prepared by the applicants. During this portion of the evaluation, projects will not be scored, but will be reviewed at a high level to identify projects with quality applications that are worth evaluating. Projects passing this stage, will be subject to a scored evaluation.

To do well in the initial screening, applicants should ensure the quality and clarity of their responses. All mandatory fields in the application must be completed and any fields that pertain directly to the type of project for which the applicant is requesting funds should also be filled in. Applicants should clearly describe the need for the project in their application, demonstrate how the proposed project addresses that need and spell out its benefits. Applications should include specific information that may be difficult for reviewers to discern on their own. Images are often a good way to describe a project, including its limits and potential benefits. Applicants are strongly encouraged to include plans, photos and other graphics that help to illustrate needs and benefits. Cost estimates are required. County staff can help develop a cost estimate if an applicant needs such assistance, contingent upon staff

availability and the applicant's level of need. The schedule should reflect a reasonable timeline for completion of a project with high-level milestones and start and end dates. These dates can be flexible, but proposed projects will be assessed for the likelihood that they will begin and end as forecasted.

Reviewers will consider past experiences and fiscal factors (where available) in assessing an applicant's capacity to lead and complete a project. Reviewers will also take note of barriers to implementation that might suspend activity on a project or prevent it from being completed by noting obstacles such as known environmental concerns, lack of consensus among community residents, businesses or elected officials, and/or engineering feasibility concerns.

## 2. Qualitative Assessment Project

Reviewers will also conduct a qualitative review of applications that assesses project readiness, the applicant's capacity to complete the project and the benefits to be derived from the project as described in the project summary. Once reviews have been completed, the Department will make project selections and build a proposed program constrained by the available funding. Cook County will consider factors such as geographic equity, cost, number of animals to be housed and/or project feasibility in putting together final program awards. Successful applicants will be informed of their project's award and, if accepted, they will be invited to a mandatory meeting where they will receive information needed to initiate their project. Cook County reserves the right to modify accepted proposals to ensure that the highest quality care and facilities of sheltered animals is maintained.

## 3. Project Milestones

Once selected, project applicants will be expected to develop a detailed project schedule with estimated milestone dates. County staff will ask that awardees provide brief status updates every quarter and more detailed updates as they are needed throughout the development of the project. County staff will schedule routine site visits during the course of construction.

### **Application Checklist**

- Signed Mayor's or Chief Executive's cover letter
- Statement of need
- Completed project application form
- Project milestone schedule
- Project Budget
- Detailed Cost Estimates
- Most recent financial audit or proof of financial standing
- Resolutions and Certifications of Resolutions

Optional Items:

- Sections or summaries of formally adopted or approved plans, studies, or reports that reinforce the need for the applicant’s project
- Attach any related images

Applicants should double-check their applications and make sure that all applicable fields have been filled in completely and accurately. If the evaluation team finds data missing or requires more information to make a determination, a department representative will contact the applicant and make a request for the information. Applicants will have 7 days to comply with the request.

Questions or requests for assistance should be directed to: Brian Miller, 118 N. Clark Room, Chicago, IL 60602 (312) 603-2820, [brian.miller@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:brian.miller@cookcountyil.gov)

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<sup>i</sup> For example, see Cherney, Elyssa. “As Chicago’s largest no-kill animal shelter fills up, PAWS pleads for adoptions.” Chicago Tribune. July 26, 2018. Accessible at: <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-met-paws-shelter-capacity-20180725-story.html>.

Vivanco-Prengaman, Lenor. “City dog shelter hits capacity of 300, has to consider euthanizing animals.” Chicago Tribune. January 11, 2018. Accessible at: <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-met-chicago-dog-shelter-at-capacity-20180111-story.html>.