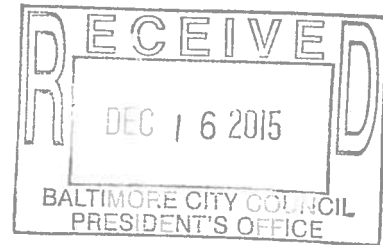




BALTIMORE ANIMAL RESCUE & CARE SHELTER, INC.

December 14, 2015

President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
409 City Hall
Baltimore, MD 21202



Dear Council President and City Council Members:

We are respectfully requesting support for 15-0605 for an increase to our annual grant of \$54,000, starting in fiscal year 2016, as a match to funds raised by BARCS to hire a third full time Veterinarian.

Prior to BARCS existence, there were no veterinarians that worked at the shelter. There was no need to have a veterinarian at that time since the euthanasia rate was 98%. However, as BARCS began to implement life-saving programs, it was necessary to hire a veterinarian to begin working on the health of the animals housed in the shelter. Therefore, through fundraising efforts, we were able to hire our first part time veterinarian. A few years later, with donor support, we were able to build a surgical suite and add a second part time veterinarian to do spay and neuter surgeries of our adoptable animals.

For six years we have been operating with only two part time veterinarians whose job is to do their best to manage the health of 250 animals housed at the shelter, evaluate 35 new animals arriving at the shelter daily, diagnose and treat sick and injured animals, handle emergency cases, document investigation cases, diagnose infectious disease cases, be available to provide care to over 500 animals in foster homes, and provide spay/neuter surgery and wellness checks for 4,500 adoptable animals. This is a job for at least eight full time veterinarians. As you can imagine, it is an impossible task, but with their dedication and drive, they've hung in there and have done the best they could.

Thankfully, with the support of our donors, in fiscal year 2014 we were able to make one of our veterinarians full time. She splits her time with two days helping to manage the health of the shelter animals and three days of providing spay/neuter surgery. This is an improvement compared to before, but clearly not enough for the needs of the shelter's animals.

Gratefully, with your support and advocacy, in fiscal year 2015 we were able to make the second veterinarian full time. This allowed us to extend her daily hours and provide an extra day of coverage of shelter medicine.

As a result, we now have one veterinarian six days a week working on shelter medicine and one veterinarian covering three days of surgery. We've also had to rely on the generosity of some community veterinarians to help cover additional days in surgery. However, this only offers sporadic care and is less reliable than having a paid veterinarian.

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We continue to see an increase in the number of animals that need medical care as well as spay/neuter surgery. We are respectfully asking for the City to provide half of the funding, \$54,000, to supplement the hiring of another full time veterinarian. BARCS will match that amount with our fundraising efforts. This will allow us to provide spay/neuter surgery for our adoptable animals six days a week and have better coverage seven days a week to care for the 12,000 animals we take in annually.

Our goal is to save lives and to reduce and eliminate suffering. In order to do so we must employ an adequate amount of staff that can identify and treat illness, injury, pain.

Below is a comparison of other local shelters and their number of veterinarians that provide health care to their shelter animals as well as spay/neuter surgery:

- Baltimore Humane Society takes in approximately 700 animals a year (compared to our 12,000) and they have 1 full time veterinarian.
- MDSPCA takes in approximately 4,000 animals a year and they have 4 full time vets and 2 contract veterinarians.
- Baltimore County Animal Control takes in approximately 4,000 animals a year and they have 2 full time vets and 12 part time veterinarians.
- BARCS takes in 12,000 animals a year and we now have 2 full time veterinarians.

As you can see, BARCS takes in the most animals (three times as many) and has the least number of veterinarians.

BARCS has grown to become a nationally recognized shelter with progressive programs. It is a shelter Baltimore can be proud of. Over the last three years we have met one of our benchmarks which is saving all healthy animals we take in annually. Our focus must now be on providing care to treatable conditions, enhancing preventative measures, increasing spaying and neutering, and overall providing better quality care to all the animals we receive. However, in order reach these appropriate standards of care and stabilize the retention of our employees, we must work toward providing suitable staffing throughout the shelter as well as be able to cover increases to general operating expenses.

We hope the City of Baltimore will match BARCS funding to enable us to hire another full time veterinarian to care for our cities homeless animals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Brause
Executive Director, BARCS