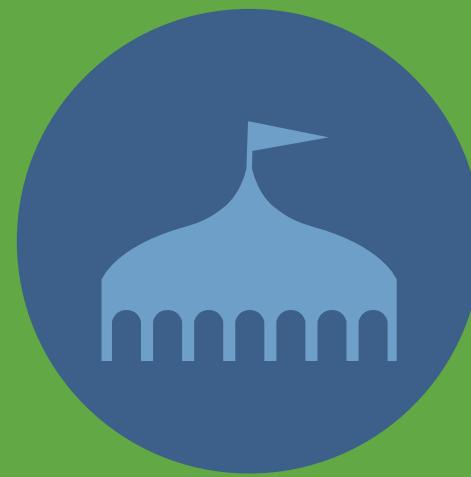




 THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

[Pets for Life]

 PETSMART
Charities



IX Community Outreach Events

"Learn everything you can, anytime you can, from anyone you can—there will always come a time when you will be grateful you did."—Sarah Caldwell

Community Outreach Events

The most important and primary decision you'll need to make about your community outreach event is when and where to have it. The key to attracting your target audience in high numbers is holding the event during a time and at a location that is most convenient for those living in the heart of your targeted community.



Cathy Wells

Holding a community outreach event is one of the best ways to get started in your target neighborhood, and one of the most successful ways to begin increasing people's familiarity with spay/neuter. It not only creates excitement about your program, but it's a great way for your team to meet many people in a short amount of time. You might have heard of or held "vaccine clinics" however, this toolkit's proven approach to planning and implementing community outreach is different. It's more personal and comprehensive than what you have used or witnessed in the past.

Community Outreach Events

Why hold a community outreach event? Here are two compelling reasons: 1. The event gives you a chance to pass out flyers, and while doing so, the opportunity to talk to people about a positive, free service. This is very helpful in building trust and relationships (as discussed in Chapters 7 and 8). 2. During the event and while promoting it, you will easily meet hundreds of people and pets, most of them unaltered.



> Greeting a dog attending a community outreach event in Chicago, IL

When canvassing for the event, don't feel compelled to engage people on the topic of spay/neuter or ask them to make a decision on anything regarding their pets' care. Simply let them know about an event in their neighborhood and where they can get something free for their pets. You'll meet many people simply by walking around the community and inviting them. At the event, you'll have a captive audience while people stand in line for the free services. Some people in line may recognize volunteers from canvassing efforts prior to the event. A spay/neuter conversation or asking for owner and pet information will likely be easier than if you just met. Whether talking to a stranger or someone while canvassing, make your interactions friendly and accommodating so that it's easier to gather information from everyone.



Selecting a Time and Venue for the Event



➤ Event attendees lined up early at a neighborhood rec center to receive free vaccinations

In Chapter 4, you learned how to do a community assessment. After completing your assessment and identifying the area where you want to start your outreach program, you now have the tools to market and plan for a community outreach event.

The most important and primary decisions to make about your community outreach event are when and where to have it. The key to attracting your target audience in high numbers is holding the event when and where it is most convenient for those living in the heart of your targeted community.

The location should be well known and easily accessible by foot, car, and public transportation. If you can secure this type of location, your chances of success are far greater. A church parking lot, a city park, a community center, or a local business partner's facility make for good venues. Ideally, your site should have wide-open space for tables and enough room for a long line of people and pets. Depending on the rules and restrictions that govern your area, you might need

to obtain a city or county permit and/or notify local law enforcement for traffic control. Be sure to abide by all local laws. This will ensure the event will run smoothly and it will demonstrate to other agencies the program is thorough and acts responsibly.

The best day to have your event is on a Saturday, if possible. Weekdays are generally not good for the majority of people and Sundays are traditionally filled with other obligations, such as church or family events. The ideal time of day is the morning to early afternoon. The optimal length of time for an event is four to five hours. Overall, the event requires a six to seven hour commitment by the majority of your volunteers, including set-up and break-down. These events are hard work with few breaks, so avoid extending the event beyond this time frame for the best results.



Event Staffing and Determining Services to Offer



➤ Dog getting nails trimmed by a volunteer

As you identify and secure a venue, determine which free services to offer as the headliner of the event and which community partners will be needed to help carry them out. The most popular service is a free rabies vaccination (and, if required in your area, free licensing). Other attractive options are free parvo/distemper shots and microchips. (If rabies or parvo/distemper shots are doable, then microchips are not recommended. In the outreach event setting, microchips can be very stressful for the pet and upsetting for the owner to see administered.) Select the main service by identifying which people or groups are willing and able to participate, reaching out to other local groups, and asking your local veterinary community for support. If you have enough volunteers, you can add more value by offering secondary items and services such as, free dog/cat food, nail trimming, ear cleaning, and collars/leashes. However, the primary services are what should be advertised and what will attract a good turnout.

Always keep in mind one of your goals is to reach owners with unaltered pets. By offering a free service, you'll attract a larger crowd. If you promote your event effectively, a strong majority of the attendees will belong to your target audience. Normally, expect at least 80% of pets in attendance to be unaltered if promoting using primarily hand-to-hand distribution of flyers and word of mouth in your area of focus.

Providing services at a reduced rate instead of completely free will attract some people; but there's a notable difference in attendance between a \$5 rabies vaccination and a free vaccination. Furthermore, offering a free service provides your team with a much easier "sell" when canvassing and handing out flyers. Offering something free of charge is also a great way to start a relationship with someone from an under-served community. It shows you understand how few resources are available to them. Remember, as discussed in Chapter 8, just because someone can't afford a \$5 vaccination doesn't mean they don't love or want to provide the best care for their pet.

In working to reach pet owners in under-served communities, provide free services rather than nominally priced services whenever possible. Remember, when reaching your target, the attendees at the event will be from neighborhoods that have a significant number of households living 50% below the poverty level. Charging any fee among this audience will dramatically reduce the number of target pet owners you'll attract.

As previously mentioned, your target audience is “systemically poor,” not “conditionally poor.” Those who are “conditionally poor,” in many instances, have found themselves impoverished because of a specific “condition” which led to a loss of income, such as being laid off.

The “systemically poor,” on the other hand, have never known anything other than the bleakest forms of poverty, physical survival being a persistent concern above all else. In short, the “systemically poor” are not looking for a “deal”. It is simply a “have and have not” existence for them. They will choose food for themselves and their pets over rabies shots or other services.

To help offset the costs of your event, try to get vaccinations, food, veterinary expertise, and other products or services donated. If this is not possible for your first community event, purchase vaccinations and any other items you can afford to offer. Use the data collected at the event to help tell your success stories to potential donors and friends of your organization. As you build your coalition of donors and volunteers, it is likely all or at least a large part of what you give away at future events will come from donations.

For an event that serves between 300–500 pets, you’ll need to gather a team of 40–60 people to work the event. The following chart shows the recommended number of reliable staff and volunteers instrumental in making the event a success.

Task/Responsibility	300 Animals	500 Animals
• Veterinarians	[3]	[4]
• Vet technicians	[6]	[8]
• Registration/paperwork	[4]	[6]
• Data collection	[4]	[6]
• Line/crowd management	[10]	[12]
• Spay/neuter voucher issuers	[3]	[5]
• Spay/neuter appointment table	[2]	[4]
• Food/give-away table	[2]	[2]
• Floaters/runners/misc.	[5]	[7]
• Program information table	[2]	[2]
• Photographer	[1]	[1]

[#] Number of Recommended Volunteers/Staff



➤ Long line stopping by the registration table at an event held in a local park

To identify the best volunteers for your event and assign volunteers to the most appropriate roles, host a volunteer orientation specific to the outreach event. At the orientation, discuss the goals for the event; the intended audience and the barriers they face in providing general wellness care and spay/neuter for their pets; the tone of event; how to make the event positive and safe; and more. At the orientation, run through a mock event, explaining and assigning people to each role based on their skills and interests.

Attached are descriptions of event volunteer roles. This will help identify the right volunteer for each task.

[Event Volunteer Assignments](#)

[Outreach Event Rabies Certificate](#)

[Outreach Event Line Management](#)

[Outreach Event Pet History Certificate](#)

Use the attached checklist while planning your community outreach event. It covers almost everything you'll need to consider for a successful event, including supplies, services, volunteers, etc. There may be some variables specific to your community, but the checklist is a great guide to use during your preparations. Additionally, the timeline will help plan your event and decide when various tasks should be completed.

[Event Checklist](#)

[Event Timeline](#)



Setup and Flow



➤ *Reviewing pet and owner information at a community outreach event in Philadelphia*

Once you've selected a venue and the free service you'll offer, take time to consider the layout of your event. Crowd flow matters, and if the set-up is well-designed, the event will run smoothly.

Make sure volunteers are in place for ongoing line management throughout the event. People will likely stand in line for hours before and during the event, so having friendly volunteers on hand to direct them and talk with them will help with both logistics and mood. Attached is a diagram of a suggested event flow that has worked well at all of our events.

Event Flow Diagram

The Basics of Efficient Crowd Flow

Establish a clear starting place for the line in advance. Consider where you'll set up the first stop, most likely, the information collection table. Make sure the line has ample space to grow outward from where the services will be offered, but doesn't block driveways, streets, etc. Ideally, the line should be contained to sidewalks, parking lots, grassy areas in a park, or any other open space. Be sure to provide water bowls along the line for pets to stay hydrated while waiting. Designate a few volunteers to be "floaters" who are available for miscellaneous jobs that might surface, including filling water bowls and scooping up accidents in line if an owner needs help.

Resist the urge to have more than one line (for example, one line for dogs and one line for cats). Multiple lines will cause problems. You will not have as much control over two lines, and people get upset if you have a person with a cat move to the head of the line immediately while someone with a dog has been waiting for two hours. If you manage the line properly, one line is the safest and fairest for all attendees.

One of the keys to a safe event is to keep the entrances and exits separate. When people and pets who have received their services must pass right by the people still standing in line, you run the risk of negative interactions. Instead, ensure that the path people and pets take to exit is not near the beginning of the line.

Arrive at your venue at least 1½ hours before the event—allow more time if there are not enough set-up volunteers. If you arrive and find that attendees are already there, ask them to form a line starting in the predetermined location. Be sure to ask who arrived at the venue first as that person should be placed at the front of the line.

If you have a single “early bird” attendee, feel free to ask that person to have new people line up behind him or her. By establishing a clear starting place at the beginning of the day, you’ll avoid confusion, hard feelings, and help prevent chaos. Make sure you have multiple volunteers assigned to staging and line management.

Line Management

Line management is of utmost importance to avoid people-to-people and pet-to-pet conflicts. Your goal is for everyone to have a positive experience, so it is critical to maintain order. With a large number of people and pets in one line, and with volunteers who have varying degrees of pet management skills and training, it can be a challenge to prevent over-stimulation, which could lead to chaos, or worse, injury. To avoid incidents, vigilance and tight line management is crucial. Volunteers who are calm, flexible, and good with people and dogs should be assigned to line management.

General instructions for line management are:

- Avoid face-offs: Face-to-face approaches and greetings are what people normally do in social interactions, but they can lead to conflict among animals. Make sure the line has dogs lined up head-to-tail and not face-to-face.



➤ *Signing people up for free dog training classes at a community outreach event in Atlanta.*

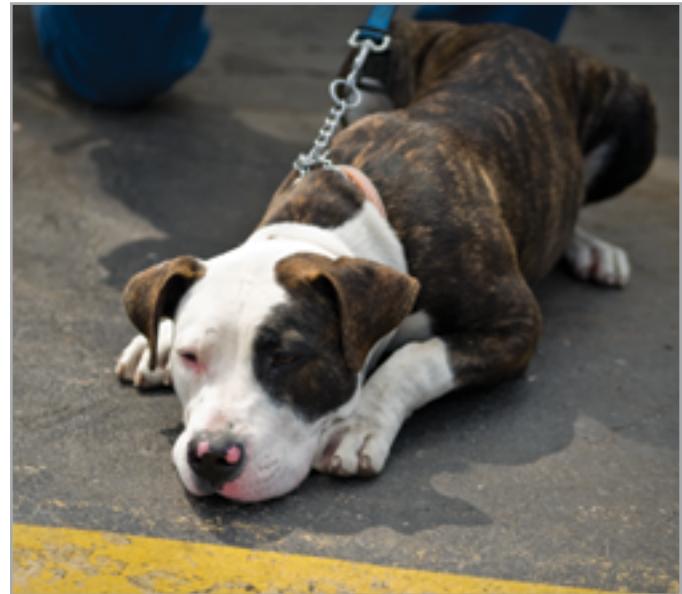
- Create a buffer zone between dogs by walking along the line and helping to maintain reasonable space between them.
- If larger dogs become overexcited or aggressive toward smaller dogs being held, ask people to put their dogs on the ground and make more space between those dogs (the same applies with cats).
- When necessary, pull aside a dog who is being extremely vocal or overly reactive to avoid a chain reaction of dogs responding and getting increasingly over-stimulated. Some dogs will need to stay to the side and not re-enter the line. In these cases, plan for the veterinarian to administer vaccinations to dogs in a location outside the line (more details on this on p.120) When removing a dog from the line, do so quickly, without talking, hesitating, or attempting to calm the dog down in the line. If a dog needs to be calmed down, do so at a reasonable distance from the other pets in line. Some dogs may be able to re-enter the line once they settle down.

- Some attendees at your events might enjoy seeing their dogs get worked up or react to other dogs and people in a negative manner. These are pet owners who will need a little more attention. Assign someone to have a relaxed, non-accusatory conversation with attendees like this. If you have a volunteer with dog training experience, assign that person to line management and this role specifically. Don't tell the dog owner that what they're doing is wrong, because you want to avoid any possible escalation or altercation. Instead, attempt to encourage alternative behavior. These situations are rare, but it's good to be prepared for everything.

Rarely will an attendee be completely out of control and unwilling to leave the line or move to the side to allow his or her pet to calm down. If it does happen, warn the person that he must cease any negative behavior that is causing problems for other attendees and pets and that if he doesn't, he will need to leave. Try to maintain civility so that there's a possibility for further discussion with the dog owner after the event, to help prevent or improve the behavior. Above all, when managing the line, trust your gut and keep things moving along.

Attempting to give someone his or her first dog-training lesson while in line is not ideal. However, if you have partners or volunteers who are experienced dog trainers, they can offer some basic suggestions and advice to people in line who seem to have trouble with control and positive interaction with their dogs. They might focus on:

- Leash control
- Eye contact and focus
- Proper collars and leashes
- Exercise and socialization explanation
- Keep calm and settling commands



➤ *Patiently waiting in line at a community outreach event*

At these events, the volunteers assigned to line management should focus on that task alone. Additional volunteers should work through the line of attendees to discuss spay/neuter, with a goal of talking to each person. This can usually be accomplished with five or six people (for 300–500 pet owners, or one person for every 50–75) assigned to line management, but it's always better to have more. There can't be too many people assigned to line management. Make sure to have one person in charge of all the line management volunteers and ensure that they all communicate throughout the event.

As stated earlier, some people can't stand in line with their pets due to excitement or aggression. If you have at least two veterinarians working the event, identify one as a "runner" who divides their time between helping with those arriving at the veterinary station and going out into the crowd and vaccinating pets who are either standing off to the side due to disruptive behavior or waiting in an owner's vehicle due to social issues. Get to these pets as quickly as possible so they can leave, avoiding stress for the animal, the owner, and other attendees in line. You should assign one vet tech and one volunteer to shadow this veterinarian and make sure that when the veterinarian gives the vaccination, the information form is collected from the owner and the owner receives the rabies certificate (if applicable). On hot days, the line and crowd management teams should watch for animals waiting in cars to treat them as soon as possible.

For the reactive dog area, choose an open space separate from the line and service area, but not too far away. If possible, use numbered cones in the reactive area. Having numbered cones not only helps volunteers tell people exactly where to go with their dogs, but also helps the runner veterinarian know who to serve first and helps maintain space between the reactive dogs. Reserve this area only for dogs who are highly reactive so it doesn't grow too large or turn into a second line. The best way to manage the reactive dog area is to have one or two volunteers assigned to identify reactive dogs and direct them to the area.



➤ Reactive dog area at a community outreach event in Milwaukee

The most likely time for an accident to happen is at the very beginning of the event when volunteers are just arriving or at the end when volunteers are tired. Make sure someone monitors the line as soon as people and pets start arriving, even during set up. Make sure that line management volunteers stay attentive and focused until the very last person and pet have been served and have left. Although the reactive dog area should reduce potential altercations between dogs, use the attached guide to prepare for handling these situations if they do occur. Make sure people are assigned to manage these scenarios.

Dog Safety Document

Data Collection and Veterinary Area

While people are waiting, volunteers assigned to data collection should walk along the line and pass out owner/pet history certificates. Attendees should hold onto their forms until they reach the data collection (or information) table. Keep in mind, the people attending the event might not be literate or might not speak English as a first language, so volunteers should be ready to help fill out the forms or explain the questions. Make sure to provide clipboards and pens, collecting them when one person is done and passing them on to people further back in the line. Ensure that people complete a separate form for each pet, and look out for people who need help holding their pet while they fill out the paperwork. Have volunteers review each certificate for completion, both in the line and at the data collection table.

[Pet History Certificate](#)

[Pet History Certificate Spanish](#)

The first stop for attendees is the data collection table. Leave a space between the start of the line and the table so that only the people and pets whose information is being handled are there. Station a volunteer at the table and instruct him or her to bring people from the line to the table only when a volunteer is available and ready to take their information. You'll likely need a few volunteers to staff this table. They must check for completion on the forms before the client moves on and help clients complete the forms if needed.

If you're providing a service other than rabies vaccinations, collect the pet history certificate forms at the table and direct the client to the veterinarian's table as explained below. If providing rabies vaccination and/or licensing, the volunteers at an adjacent table should take the information forms and transfer the information to the rabies certificate/license paperwork. The data collection table and the rabies/certificate table can be the same.

Be careful—this is where the line can bottleneck because rabies certificates are often in booklets, and clients can't complete this paperwork while they wait in line. To minimize delays, complete as much of the required information on the rabies certificates prior to the event, such as the date, vaccination serial number, expiration date, veterinarian's signature, etc. Then only the owner and pet information will have to be completed on site. After transferring the information from the data form to the rabies certificate, place the information form in a pile/box/container to keep for your database. Give the rabies certificate to the owner before she or he moves to the veterinarian's table.



➤ Event attendee filling out a pet information form while in line

Make sure to leave a safe zone between the information/rabies certificate table and the veterinarian's table so that only the animal the veterinarian is currently servicing is at that table. Having multiple animals and people crowded around the veterinarian creates stress for the pet and makes the veterinarian's job more difficult. To keep the safe zone intact, you should have two volunteers who serve as "bouncers." When the veterinarian is finished with one animal, the "bouncer" tells the next person in line at the information table to proceed to the veterinarian's table, ensuring that no one advances until given permission. The more volunteers you have

filling out paperwork and the more veterinarians you have administering vaccines, the quicker the line moves. Each veterinarian works differently, so talk to your veterinarian about their preference for administering the services.

Some prefer for the dog to remain on the ground for the shot, while others prefer to have the dog lifted onto a table. To keep the line moving and guarantee that any concerns or issues with the pets are addressed, give the veterinarians notebooks to write down which pets need a follow-up after the event (e.g. pets with medical issues that cannot be addressed at the event or pets who need dewormer, flea/tick medication, etc.)

Consider having an enclosed area for treating cats. If your event is held outside, set up a pop-up tent behind the veterinary table to create an “indoor” space so that if a cat gets loose it can’t run away.

Set up the spay/neuter appointment table after the veterinarian’s station. Once the vaccination services are complete, the client immediately makes their spay/neuter appointment, continues to any other services being offered (e.g. nail trims, food, etc.) and finally moves on to the exit without clogging up the service area.

Before clients even get to the spay/neuter appointment table, they should have discussed spay/neuter with a volunteer. Designated volunteers should work the line to discuss spay/neuter with every single person. See Chapter 7 to determine which volunteers should have this assignment. This is the perfect time to discuss the surgery and distribute spay/neuter vouchers to a captive audience. Attached is a sample voucher for use at your event. Refer to Chapter 8 for talking points, tips for approaching people about spay/neuter specifically, and ways to present the voucher itself.



Spay/Neuter Voucher

IN LOS ANGELES,
58,000
PETS ARE PUT
DOWN EVERY YEAR.

THIS VOUCHER IS VALID FOR \$90 OFF
YOUR NEXT SPAY/NEUTER APPOINTMENT.

Name

Firstname Lastname

Telephone

555-123-4567

Address

123 Main Street Anywhere

Appointment Date/Time

Tues. Oct. 15 2013, 9 a.m.



mromero@humanesociety.org • 888-837-3193 Surgery Location: 5550 N. Figueroa Street, LA 90042



Capturing the Event

It's a good idea to visually document the event. Photos or video of the setup, flow, and attendees make for great reference and can be used in press recaps, donor presentations, newsletters, or promotions for future events. If you plan to use the images for promotional purposes, you should post a highly visible sign at the event to alert attendees that pictures taken at the event might be used for future promotional purposes. If your organization plans to use photos for promoting services for a fee, you'll need to obtain a formal photo release of any person recognizable in the photos.

Use free photo sharing websites such as Flickr or Photobucket to host images that people can download. This is another nice free give-away/souvenir of the day, and it can be a good way to stay connected with the community. Keep in mind, people love their pets and love to have pictures of them.

➤ [Flickr](#)

➤ [Photobucket](#)

➤ [Sample Outreach Event Images](#)

If you have the capability, place the photos you have taken on your website using a special URL [example: yourname.org/Clinic]. On the same page as the photos, add a spay/neuter message or general wellness message for those who visit. This is a good way to re-introduce the spay/neuter message to visitors browsing and downloading images from the event.



➤ *Capturing a family photo while waiting*

If your team decides to capture images for attendees to download, include the web address for the photos on business-card-sized paper or post the address somewhere visible.

Whatever you decide to do with the images, be sure to capture as many pets and people as possible. Make arrangements to get the pictures uploaded as soon as possible following the event. To ensure that you get the images you want, provide the event photographer with a list ahead of time. Try to capture the following situations and image types:

- Banners or signage in use
- Close-ups of pets (cats in carriers and dogs on leashes or enjoying offered activities)
- Collaborative partners working together, identified (when possible) by organization-specific t-shirts or jackets
- Crowd and pet diversity (if applicable)
- Crowd shots that show the large number of people in attendance
- Group shots of collaborative partners and volunteers
- Pet owners interacting with their pets (petting, kissing, comforting)
- Pets getting groomed or getting their nails clipped (if applicable)
- Overall setup and flow
- Veterinarians administering shots
- Volunteers distributing pet food or treats (especially if the food is donated—capture close-up shots of brands on the packaging to share with donors)
- Volunteers talking with pet owners and handing out flyers with pet wellness information



Event Promotion



➤ *Signing pets up for spay/neuter at a heavily attended outreach event resulting from a strong promotional effort*

[Event Flyer](#)

[Event Flyer Spanish](#)

As discussed in Chapter 5, your community outreach event will be most successful when advertising in a way that reaches your specific target audience. You have chosen the focus area of the community, and you'll need to get onto the street and reach people on a personal level to market the event. The most successful advertising mechanism for reaching your target audience is canvassing, engaging people face-to-face, and peppering the neighborhood with flyers. Attached for reference is a sample outreach flyer. Having a free event to promote allows for easy and open conversations with everyone you meet, and you have the opportunity to engage with a large number of people. Walk up and down neighborhood streets

and talk to people who are walking or sitting outside. Visit busy bus stations and pass out the flyers as people walk by. Find a busy corner store or strip mall and distribute flyers to customers. The options are nearly endless.

When canvassing, always let business owners or managers know who you are, and ask permission before posting or distributing information on their property. Think about canvassing for community outreach events as promotion for the event and a chance to connect with the community to start building relationships.

As you canvass, tell people about the event offering free rabies shots for dogs and cats and to please bring their pets if they're interested. Most people are happy to take the flyer, and you can judge their willingness to engage in further conversation by asking whether

they have a pet, whether they think they can attend, etc. If someone quickly declines or doesn't take the flyer because they don't have a pet, ask them to please share the information with someone they know who has a dog or cat. Just about everyone knows someone with a pet and is willing to pass the information along. Make sure to say "thank you" and "have a good day" at the end of the conversation, or "hope to see you Saturday" if they take a flyer. Keep interactions positive and end on a good note.

In addition to handing out flyers in person, post them around the neighborhood and leave them for people to pick up. Some of the best places to advertise are corner stores (with permission only; hang them on the door or community board and leave a stack by the register), laundromats, check cashing stores, busy food take-out locations, and generally anywhere the flyer will receive good visibility within the area of focus.

Start this "boots on the ground" type of promotion a few weeks before the event, making people aware and excited about the free services. However, some of your most effective efforts will occur the week before the event. Considering your focus area, you'll find that many people are struggling financially and usually don't have long-term plans on their calendar. For this reason, the week leading up to the event is when most clients will decide whether they can attend. Keep this in mind, use the majority of your volunteer hours to flyer and canvass during that final week, starting with the weekend before and including the day before the event. Saturate the target area—you'll see a great response to those interactions.

More traditional advertising like press releases, radio announcements, and TV interviews are great for bringing attention to your work and organization, but is not what you should use to generate event attendance. Traditional advertising always results in bringing out people who are not from your area of focus and a larger number of altered pets. Consider

who you want to reach and what type of media they consume, recognizing that it might not be the same as for you or your staff. It will also be different from the media venues you use to reach donors/supporters. Posting your event on online calendars, social sites, and trade forums may also help you reach some potential clients. But again, be aware of who you are attracting using various marketing strategies. The goal is not to necessarily get the largest crowd possible to your event but to get the largest portion of your target audience as possible—there is a big difference. However, getting media out to cover the event itself, on the day of the event, is important so you can share the message of this program and the need for this type of work.

In addition to how you promote, what you promote is also key. Always include the word "free" in headlines and event descriptions on all promotional materials or flyers. Be careful what you promote as free, however. Obviously, explain the main attraction—rabies shots, basic shots, microchips—is free, but don't reveal free spay/neuter vouchers will be available. You'll find if advertisements state that free spay/neuter vouchers will be available, you lose the option to use discretion at the event itself in selecting the people who really need vouchers. Although the goal is to help everyone as much as possible with spay/neuter, by advertising it as part of the event, you could attract rescue groups and others who do not understand that the primary mission for the outreach event is to reach under-served pet owners, increase their familiarity with the topic of spay/neuter, and build relationships. Additional marketing strategies in Chapter 13.



Follow Up

The final piece of your community outreach event strategy is the follow-up. It's difficult to overstate the absolute necessity of following up with people who attend the event. You put a lot of work and effort into planning the event, encouraging attendance, and making it enjoyable and positive. So make sure you use what the event provided you: the contact information of hundreds of people.

This is a great opportunity to further serve many people and their pets. Within two days of the event, every person who signed up for spay/neuter should be contacted, regardless of when their appointment is scheduled.



Spay and Neuter Follow-up Script

In follow-up calls, be positive and friendly, thank them for attending the event, remind them of their appointment(s), and ask if they have any questions. If their appointment(s) are weeks away, call once a week (as explained in Chapter 8) just to check in and keep the appointment fresh on their minds. Let them know that if any doubts or questions come up, they should feel confident asking you any questions. Call the day before the scheduled appointment to give instructions for the next day (as given to you by the spay/neuter provider), discuss transportation plans, check in one last time to make the pet owner feel comfortable, and answer any new questions.

The spay/neuter provider will likely call the client the day before the surgery to provide instructions, but never let the phone call from another agency replace a phone call from your organization. The day after the surgery, call the client again to make sure their pet is doing well and to see if they have any questions. This thorough follow-up will not only build trust with your clients, it will increase your voucher redemption rates.

You'll want to keep the line of communication open in case the owners have any doubts. If at any point in the follow-up process you are unable to make phone contact, make or arrange with someone else to make an in-person visit. Make contact one way or another to ensure that the spay/neuter appointments are completed.

After contacting everyone who signed up for spay/neuter, contact every person who attended the event. You'll continue to build relationships and will likely schedule more spay/neuter appointments. Often, just one more conversation will convince people to alter their pets. Many people need time after the community outreach event to consider spay/neuter and feel comfortable making the decision, so a follow-up call is all that is needed to get that "yes."



Sample Budget



► Line at an event providing vaccinations for over 250 pets in Maywood, IL

The sample budget below assumes that your event is 4-5 hours in duration and has an approximate attendance of 250 pets and their owners. (The cost of the spay/neuter surgeries resulting from event day is not included in this budget, as the cost for spay/neuter varies and may change depending on your arrangements with participating veterinarians.) You'll often have items such as vaccinations donated, or veterinarians and veterinarian technicians will volunteer their time. And you can almost always find a free venue.

These costs are estimates based on previously held events. Final costs will vary by scope, location, and need, but an outreach event with a plausible turnout (up to 500 pets) should not cost more than \$5,000.

- Vaccinations: \$1,000
- Medical Supplies: \$250
- Vet/Vet techs: \$500
- Permits/Rent for Space: \$500
- Printing/Advertising: \$500
- Misc. Supplies: \$500

If your jurisdiction has a licensing requirement (meaning a license must be purchased for each animal at the time of rabies vaccination) you might incur additional costs to cover the fee for each vaccination given. In these situations, talk with the enforcement agency about reducing the fee for animals vaccinated at your event or possibly even waiving the fee for animals vaccinated that day. The majority of pets that receive vaccinations at your event will not have been vaccinated or licensed previously, so it is in the best interest of the government agency to encourage new registrations. If the cost is too high and you're unable to negotiate reduced or waived fees, you might have to provide another service (such as parvo/distemper vaccinations or microchips) instead.

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