

CITY OF RIO DELL | HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CALIFORNIA



The Spay and Neuter Voucher Program

How a city of 3,400 built a self-sustaining spay and neuter program

July 2020



Why we built it

Unaltered animal populations drive shelter intake, animal control calls, and costs that fall hardest on small cities. Rio Dell built a simple answer: pay a trusted local clinic directly, one animal at a time.

Approved August 20, 2024

Resolution 1623-2024 established the program and named animal license fees as its funding source.

Delivered by a local provider

Humboldt Humane, dba Critters Without Litters, invoices the City per animal served.

Backed by philanthropy

McLean Foundation grants #399 (\$2,000) and #400 (\$1,500), awarded October 23, 2024.

HOW A VOUCHER WORKS

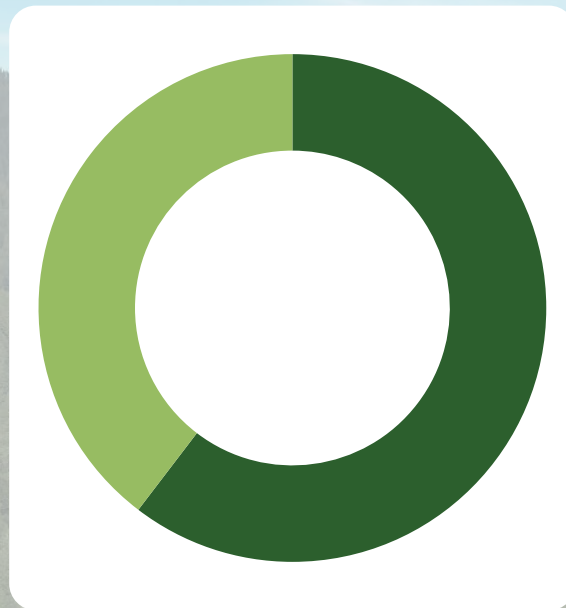
- 1 Resident brings a dog or cat to the clinic
- 2 Clinic performs the spay or neuter
- 3 Clinic invoices the City per animal
- 4 City pays the clinic directly, funded by dedicated fees, grants, and donations

Results through June 2026

53

animals served

Every animal served through a voucher redeemed at the local clinic, valued from \$75 to \$350 by animal type and size.



32 dogs



21 cats

About \$120

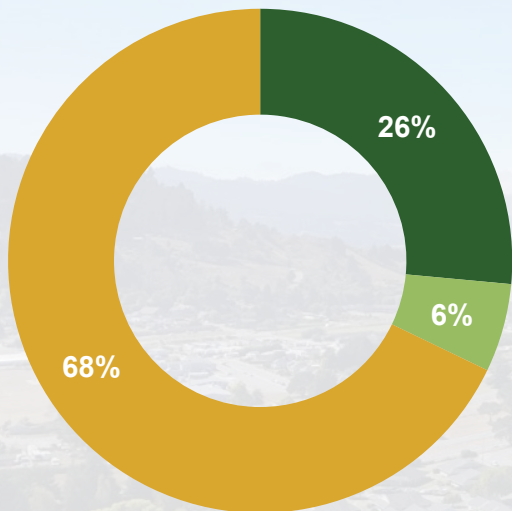
average cost per animal served

22 months

of continuous operation since launch

How it is funded

The voucher program is fully funded by dedicated animal fees, philanthropy, and community donations. \$13,221 secured to date.



● McLean Foundation grants **\$3,500**

Grants #399 and #400, reimbursed in full on September 9, 2025

● Community donations **\$750**

Three local donors supporting the fund

● Dedicated animal fees **\$8,971**

Two years of license fee collections, dedicated to the program
June 30, 2026



The leverage story

Outside funding and dedicated fee revenue by fiscal year



\$13,221 secured

in grants, donations, and dedicated fee revenue across the program's two years

Philanthropy carried the start

The \$3,500 McLean reimbursement arrived September 2025, just as the fund ran lowest

Fees replaced the grants

Both McLean awards closed October 2025; dedicated license fees now carry the program

The funding stream exists

Animal license and control fee revenue vs the \$2,500 annual projection



\$8,971 collected

in animal license and control fees across the program's two fiscal years

Double the projection

FY 2025-26 collections hit 200% of the \$2,500 annual forecast in Resolution 1623-2024

Transfer complete

The full \$8,971.05 dedicated to the program effective June 30, 2026



THE ASK

Stable state funding for rural spay and neuter

California's \$50-million California for All Animals initiative put more than half of its disbursed funding toward spay and neuter, and its grant funds are now fully awarded. Rio Dell shows what comes next.

The model works

53 animals served at about \$120 each, verified to provider billings.

The economics are honest

Dedicated local fees fully fund the current program. What they cannot fund is growth: more animals, feral cat work, regional demand.

The partnership is ready

A proven local provider, a dedicated fund, and a live funding stream. State support scales a working model.