

Cats League & Assistance of the Western Slope

2214 Sanford Drive, #A4; Grand Junction, CO 81505

970-241-5793 clawsqj@outlook.com

www.clawsqj.org Facebook: Clawsqj



C.L.A.W.S.

March 31, 2017

Animal Assistance Foundation (AAF) Board

405 Urban Street, #340

Lakewood, CO 80228

RE: CLAWS' Grant Request

Dear AAF Board Members:

We were recently notified of the denial of our grant funding requests from both the Animal Assistance Foundation and the Pet Overpopulation Fund. We were certainly disappointed in the outcome, but understand there are criteria that help determine which organizations receive funding. We have been advised that there are several concerns about CLAWS, and wanted to share some additional information regarding our shelter death rate and length of stay, along with clarifying our position regarding transfers.

Death Rate

The mission of our organization is to help homeless cats in our community – regardless of age, disability, medical status, or other issues that may make a cat less desirable for adoption (i.e., behavioral concern, color, etc.). We therefore take in cats in high-risk categories – the very young, the very old, and those with identified medical issues or disabilities. From a numbers perspective, that means that our deaths per total population is higher than shelters that do not accept animals in those high-risk categories.

In 2015, we had 130 adult cats at the beginning of the year and total live adult intake of 384, for a total of 514 adult cats that were cared for during that year. 61 adult cats died, for a death rate of 11.87%. Of the 61 deaths, 21 of those cats were over 12 years old and – of those – 6 were over 15 years old. Removing 21 high-risk adult cats from the total cared for and from the number of deaths that year results in a total of 493 adult cats cared for and 40 deaths – for a death rate of 8.11%.

Applying the same approach to the juvenile population in 2015, we had 68 juveniles at the beginning of the year and total live juvenile intake of 504 – for a total of 572 juvenile cats that were cared for during the year. There were 28 juvenile deaths. Of the 28 deaths, 14 were under 8 weeks of age and – of those – 9 were 4 weeks or younger. Removing 14 high-risk juveniles from the total cared for and from the number of deaths that year results in a total of 558 juveniles cared for and 14 deaths – for a death rate of 2.5%.

Combining the total adults and juveniles cared for - without those in age-based high-risk categories - results in a total of 1051 adults and juveniles cared for in 2015. Combining the total adult cat deaths and juvenile deaths, and removing those in age-based high-risk categories, results in a total of 54 deaths in 2015. The total death rate for 2015 without animals in age-based high-risk categories is 5.14%. These totals still include adults and juveniles in other high-risk categories – for example, we took in several cats in 2015 who had been hit by cars. Although appropriate medical care was provided, some of those cats died as a result of their injuries. They are included within our live intake and within the total deaths reported, even though their odds of survival were significantly lower than cats that are typically accepted into a shelter.

Length of Stay

Our willingness to take in cats and kittens that may not be desirable from an adoption standpoint, and our guaranteed adoption commitment, are the two primary contributors to the average length of stay in our shelter. We have cats that have been with us for over six years and will likely never be adopted. They deserve to be cared for and we will make sure they have everything they need for as long as they are with us.

Transfers

As a guaranteed adoption facility, we are committed to finding homes for all the cats in our care – even if that home is the shelter due to conditions or traits that make a cat less desirable for adoption. Once a cat or kitten enters our shelter, they are protected by that commitment – which makes it very difficult to transfer them to an organization without a guaranteed adoption philosophy.

Additionally, due to our financial situation, we rely heavily on adoption fees to cover expenses outside of spay/neuter (i.e., vaccinations and FIV/FeLV testing) since spay/neuter is typically covered by the grant funding we have received in the past. We will only adopt out cats or kittens that have been spayed or neutered, FIV/FeLV tested, vaccinated (age appropriate), and microchipped. We are simply unable to forego adoption fees that offset those other costs in order to transfer cats or kittens to other animal organizations.

We have met with a potential transfer partner within the past couple of months, and will have additional dialogue with them to ensure that our concerns – and theirs – can be met so that transfers can occur. We will continue to explore other transfer partners as well.

Going Forward

In 2015, we spayed/neutered 628 homeless cats in our community; last year, our spay/neuter total was 568. Outside of a few small grants for feral spay/neuter, the combined grant funds from the Animal Assistance Foundation and the Pet Overpopulation Fund paid for those services and allowed us to positively impact overpopulation in our community – we thank you again for your support of our organization through previous grant funding.

Unfortunately, there are no other animal organizations in our area that are able or willing to provide those services this year, and we are financially unable to do so - we are not able to

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replace that amount of lost funding as our remaining donation-based income is required to maintain the daily operation of the shelter.

We know this additional information will likely not change the decision you have made relative to our grant request, but we thank you for your time in reading this letter. We will apply for grant funding again next year, and hope that our organization will be looked upon more favorably in light of some of the challenges and commitments that make our organization unique within our community. We would do just about anything to save a cat or kitten in need – and will continue to do as much as we can for as long as we can.

Sincerely,

CLAWS