Comparison of Models for Spay/Neuter Programs

The following table defines several common spay/neuter models that you can implement in your community. ASPCA® Community Outreach has profiled a number of organizations that are successfully implementing these models. These are listed in the Examples row for each program model.

In our profiles, you'll find detailed information about the programs, including timeline, startup costs, staffing, step-by-step instructions, and lots of great advice from the people who make these programs succeed. Visit ASPCApro.org, and select Spay/Neuter from the main menu to read the profiles and find other great resources for spay/neuter initiatives.

Voucher Program
Qualifying individuals receive vouchers for free or reduced-rate surgeries performed by participating veterinarians.

Benefits:	• Clients have more freedom to schedule appointments and find locations near their homes • Groups build relationships with local vets • No start-up costs • Opportunity to educate local vets about animal welfare issues
Challenges:	• Follow-up is necessary to be certain that vouchers are distributed and are used • Concern that "unqualified" people will use vouchers • Fewer animals can be fixed each day • Typically more expensive than high-volume spay/neuter programs
Critical Factors:	• Participation of local veterinarians • Client compliance • Strong organizational structure
Key Questions:	• What are the qualifications to receive a voucher? • Will a co-pay be required? If so, how can you keep it affordable ($20 or less)? • How will you distribute vouchers?
Examples:	• Help Fix ME • New Hampshire STOP • AdvoCAT

Fixed Clinic	
A fixed space that offers surgeries during regular office hours by appointment, often with a focus on ferals and pediatric spay/neuter.	
Benefits:	• Individuals and animal groups in the community are more familiar with you • Consistency in staff, schedule, and physical location • Ability to concentrate on high-volume, high-quality surgeries • Self contained
Challenges:	• Local veterinarians may view you as competition • Start-up costs are high • Longer startup lead time other programs
Critical Factors:	• Flow (good efficiency in running the day) • Staff trained in high volume techniques • Partnerships with other organizations to maintain volume of surgeries • Developing a good budget and following it • Tracking costs so you know what you are spending
Key Questions:	• Is your community's population large enough to sustain a fixed clinic? • If not, are you able to provide a transportation component to reach a greater geographic range?
Examples:	• Humane Alliance • Humane Ohio's stationary clinic • Pets ALIVE

Mobile Van	
A mobile vehicle is equipped to perform surgeries. The van typically travels to different areas to reach a larger population.	
Benefits:	• You can reach the population in a wider geographic area; especially useful in more rural areas • Self-contained surgery center • The van could be used for other transportation needs • Very visible for marketing and awareness of your service
Challenges:	• A van that is suitable for surgeries is expensive to buy and operate • You'll need to hire a driver • Space limitations of the van • More marketing required because you cannot as easily count on word-of-mouth or regular volunteers, particularly if your visits to each community are infrequent
Critical Factors:	• Get the word out! • Partner with groups in the towns you visit • Use marketing "specials" to generate volume
Key Questions:	• What will you do if the van breaks down? • How will you handle post-surgical complications that occur after you've left a community?
Example:	• ASPCA Mobile Spay/Neuter Clinics • PetFix Northeast Ohio • SNAP Houston

MASH or Other Monthly Clinic

An organization owns all necessary equipment to perform surgeries and sets the equipment up for each clinic. Clinics are generally held in borrowed space, such as gymnasiums, vet offices, warehouses, etc.

Benefits:	• Less expense – no rent! • You can go to areas with greatest need • Lower start-up cost and quicker start-up time than other programs • Ability to work with multiple groups and communities
Challenges:	• You'll need a space to store your equipment and strong volunteers to help set it up each week/month • Wear and tear on equipment from traveling • Wear and tear on staff and volunteers from traveling
Critical Factors:	• Try to use the same location(s) as much as possible. This makes it easier to set up, and you'll become more familiar to clients.
Key Questions:	• Can you get a vet to perform surgeries?
Examples:	• Humane Ohio's original MASH-style clinic • Montana Spay/Neuter Task Force • SOS

In-Clinic Clinics	
Using the veterinary staff, equipment, and facility of a private veterinary clinic or hospital to perform spay/neuter surgeries on weekends and other days when the practice is closed.	
Benefits:	• Not having to purchase equipment and maintain a facility keeps costs down
Challenges:	• Your program depends on the good will of the owners and veterinary staff of the facilities you use
Critical Factors:	• Convincing private-practice veterinarians that the animals sterilized in the clinics are not animals they would see in their regular practice • Having volunteers or staff who can organize and promote the clinics and handle non-veterinary tasks during the clinics
Key Questions:	• Does your community have the volume of low-income pet owners to regularly fill the clinics? • How will you promote your program to the pet owners who need it?
Example:	• Oklahoma Spay Network
Special Promotion Event	
A promotions that is generally held annually and relies heavily on creative marketing and volunteer efforts	
Benefits:	• High number of surgeries performed in one day • You can reach a target population who need spay/neuter
Challenges:	• You might have to turn people away because your schedule is full
Critical Factors:	• Creative marketing • Strong organizational program and upfront planning
Key Questions:	• How can you get more surgeries done during a promotion: partnering with other groups, vets, and so on?
Example:	• Beat the Heat • Super Cat Fix • ASPCA's Community Block Party • SAAC Spay Day

Partnership with a Vet School or Vet Tech Program A school partners with humane organizations to provide no-cost surgeries. The surgeries provide education for veterinary and veterinary technician students resulting in a win-win for all involved.	
Benefits:	• No cost for surgeries
Challenges:	• You work with the school's schedule • Some clients may have questions about students operating on their companion animal
Critical Factors:	• Make sure it is truly a win-win for your organization and the school • Flexibility
Key Questions:	• How do you ensure that the program will continue even if a new administrator takes over the school? • How will you manage any criticism about students operating on animals?
Example:	• Nebraska Humane Society • No More Homeless Pets in Utah
Fixing Animals from "Free to a Good Home" Ads Contacting individuals listing puppies/kittens as "free to a good home" in classified ads, offering spay/neuter assistance so that their pets do not have more litters, and finding to find homes for the litters.	
Benefits:	• Reaching a unique audience • Catching new litters early and fixing them before they have even one litter
Challenges:	• You might end up with more animals than you planned for
Critical Factors:	• A positive attitude when making calls • Being creative and respectful in offering assistance
Key Questions:	• How will you find homes for the litters? • Who will do the surgeries, and at what cost?
Example:	• Litter Patrol

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