

2026 ASPCA® Research Grants

Essential Requirements FAQs

ALL

For application submission inquiries/technical difficulties, please contact grants@aspc.org

All eligible, interested organizations are invited to [submit an application](#) for consideration with the following information:

- Basic Organization Details:
 - Federal Tax ID/Employer Identification Number (EIN)
 - Organization Contact and Primary Investigator information

- For nonprofit organizations, you will be asked:
 - If your IRS exemption is current
 - If you're in good standing with the Secretary of State in the state where you are incorporated.
 - This means that you meet all state-imposed requirements, which may include: filing reports/forms, paying required fees, appointing a registered agent, etc.
 - If you aren't sure, go to your state's Secretary of State's website (or do an online search for: your State, "secretary of state," "business search") and look up your organization.
 - If your board includes at least 4 Board members
 - If the majority of your board is independent
 - This means that fewer than half of your Board members can be paid employees and/or family members or close relatives
 - If your board chair and treasurer are not compensated by the organization
 - If your charitable registration is current/active in the state of the Grantee's primary location (for grants >=\$25,000)

- For Canadian organizations, you will be asked to list:
 - Any partnerships you have with US-based organizations
 - Other countries in which your organization has locations

Amount of grant funding requested: the total funding amount available for all six research areas is \$750,000.

The maximum individual grant amount for each research area is: \$50,000 for Access to Veterinary Care Research, \$35,000 for Applied Behavior Research, \$50,000 for Cruelty Research, \$75,000 for Farm Animal Welfare Research, \$35,000 for Psychological Trauma Research, and \$50,000 for Shelter Research. Requests may be made for any amount up to and including the maximum, and applications of any amount will be equally considered.

- *You will be asked to provide the following as attachments* (your document should include page numbers and be single-spaced in 11- or 12-point font):

- Brief description of the project leadership team/ key personnel (1 page): provide a list of team members and their credentials, and a brief explanation of why your team is well-positioned to carry out this work.
 - Biosketch, CV, or resume for all key research personnel (no page limit).
 - Project Title: title should specify the planned research activity, target population, and research goal
 - Project description and justification (3-5 pages, single spaced, 12-point font). Please include:
 - *Background/Significance*: explicitly address how the project meets the criteria of the grant program.
 - *Research question(s)*: clearly stated research question(s) or aims, including hypotheses and predictions to be tested.
 - *Methods*: description of the planned research methods, including the sample, sample size justification, research design, how ethical oversight will be obtained for human and/or animal research participation (including a plan to obtain owner consent for participation by owned animals), and planned statistical analyses.
 - *Impact*: description of how the results will be used to inform and advance animal welfare in the United States, along with a plan for disseminating the findings and measuring the impact of the research. Please include names of specific conferences, publications, or other outlets you will target in your dissemination efforts. Applicants should address dissemination and impact measurement beyond academic audiences: how will the findings get into the hands of those who can use them to improve animals' lives? How will you know whether they did? Preference will be given to dissemination and impact measurement plans that emphasize relevant applied audiences.
 - Project timeline (1 page): include anticipated start and end dates, major project milestones (e.g., data collection, analysis), and timeline for dissemination of project findings. Proposed project duration should typically be approximately 15 months (18 months for Applied Behavior and Psychological Trauma Grants), but shorter and longer timelines will be considered. The maximum duration is 24 months. Please ensure that project timelines are realistic based on project needs and capacity. While project rigor is of greater importance than timeframe, it is essential that applicants communicate with the ASPCA as soon as any potential impact to the project timeline is anticipated, even if prior to funding decisions.
 - Note: Requests for extensions cannot be guaranteed.
 - Budget (use [Budget Template](#)): total amount requested, along with a breakdown of income and expenses for the project if it were to receive the requested funding. If the total project cost is higher than the amount requested, explain how the project will be fully funded. For all projects, including those for which total project cost is higher than the amount requested AND those for which the amount requested covers the total project cost, include current status of other pending funding requests.
 - Note: Proposals that primarily support salaries should include justification of the necessity for grant support for salary costs to meet the research goals (e.g., basis for lack of institutional support such as adjunct status).
- How you learned about this grant opportunity
 - Whether you would like to opt-in to receive research related communications from the ASPCA

- If a grant is received, are there any known stipulations surrounding promotion? Who is the best contact regarding media-related stipulations?

Table of Contents

AVC	3
APPLIED BEHAVIOR	4
CRUELTY RESEARCH	5
FARM ANIMAL WELFARE	6
PSYCH TRAUMA	6
SHELTER RESEARCH	7

AVC

Accessible, affordable veterinary care is critical to the welfare of animals, and to keeping pets with their families and out of shelters. Basic veterinary care, such as vaccinations or common treatments, is often difficult to access or not affordable. Animals and their caregivers must be able to access affordable veterinary care, without judgement, with the goal of improving animal welfare and supporting pet-owning families and other caregivers. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ® (ASPCA®) aims to improve access to veterinary care (AVC) by leading systemic change to make veterinary care more accessible for dogs, cats, and equines.

The ASPCA is requesting proposals for our 2026 AVC Research Grants program. This program seeks to support research that advances knowledge in support of AVC and develops mechanisms for AVC implementation across the veterinary field. We invite organizations that meet the below criteria to apply for an AVC research grant.

The maximum award for any grantee is \$50,000.

Eligible Projects

The scope of this RFP is broad; the research can address AVC for cats, dogs or equines from any angle. Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to:

- **Medical** (e.g., what evidence is needed that a currently costly diagnostic/treatment protocol could be made less complex and expensive to offer for caregivers of dogs, cats, or equines? When is a more expensive medication less expensive in the long run because it requires fewer veterinary visits? What conditions more frequently lead to economic euthanasia?)
- **Legal** (e.g., how often do veterinarians receive license complaints or social media complaints for practicing [spectrum of care](#)?)
- **Impact** (e.g., how much does a spectrum of care approach increase the number of animals receiving veterinary care?)

- **Program delivery** (e.g., what are the most effective mechanisms for increasing access in rural areas? How big a barrier is lack of internet access for telemedicine? Does means testing work and is it worth it? Does price transparency or advertising flexible rates based on income increase access to care?)
- **Community Engagement** (e.g., What motivates caregivers to seek veterinary care for their animals? How do under resourced communities learn about the medical needs of animals in their care? What is the most effective mechanism to market accessible services to people who lack access to veterinary services for their pets? What mechanisms are most effective to address equitability, such as social and cultural barriers to care?)
- **Veterinary Engagement** (e.g., what are the barriers to veterinary professionals increasing access to care? What incentives encourage veterinary professionals to support and engage in access-to-care initiatives? How do veterinary professionals communicate with pet owners to incorporate their specific needs in treatment decisions?)

Ideally, the research will establish tools or guidelines that professionals and organizations can use to improve access to veterinary care.

Proposals that include a shelter-researcher partnership aspect are especially encouraged. Examples include, but are not limited to, inclusion of both shelter and academic staff on the study team, the creation of a shelter-facing deliverable, an implementation prospectus that includes a feasibility assessment and identified partner shelter.

For project-related inquiries, please contact ASPCAresearch@aspca.org

APPLIED BEHAVIOR

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals® (ASPCA®) is committed to preventing the euthanasia of adoptable dogs and cats, and aims to achieve this in part by supporting 1) the development and dissemination of evidence-based shelter behavior interventions and protocols and 2) methodological studies that are foundational to raising the rigor, interpretability, and impact of future applied shelter behavior research projects. The ASPCA recognizes that promoting the growth of high-quality research will enhance animal welfare by advancing the assessments and interventions used by key professional audiences and by improving the reliability of research findings in this area. To this end, the ASPCA invites grant applications for our 2026 ASPCA Applied Behavior Research program. This program seeks to support research that advances knowledge in preventing and responding to behavior problems in shelter populations.

The maximum award for any grantee is \$35,000.

Eligible Projects

The Applied Behavior Research program solicits research proposals that will inform shelter behavior protocols for dogs or cats. Projects may be retrospective, records-based assessments of interventions and outcomes, or prospective studies evaluating the efficacy of behavioral intervention(s). Of particular interest is research that addresses behavior concerns in shelter populations that are thought to place otherwise adoptable dogs and cats at an increased risk of euthanasia. Such concerns include, but are not limited to:

- Excessive arousal
- Kennel reactivity
- Behavioral deterioration

Please note that intervention-based studies require appropriate controls to allow for meaningful interpretation of study results. Uncontrolled studies will not be funded.

Furthermore, methodological studies that seek to determine how best to quantify behavior to answer questions related to the above topic areas are welcome (e.g., titration analyses of behavioral observations, validation of animal-based welfare metrics) Studies aimed at identifying risk factors that predict the development of behavior concerns in the shelter are also encouraged.

Proposals that include a shelter-researcher partnership aspect are especially encouraged. Examples include, but are not limited to, inclusion of both shelter and academic staff on the study team, the creation of a shelter-facing deliverable, an implementation prospectus that includes a feasibility assessment and identified partner shelter.

For project-related inquiries, please contact bst.research@aspca.org

CRUELTY RESEARCH

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals® (ASPCA®) aims to increase effectiveness in cruelty prevention and response by promoting the growth of high-quality research that will advance anti-cruelty policy and program initiatives, and strengthen animal cruelty awareness, prevention, and response among key audiences. To this end, the ASPCA invites grant applications for our 2026 ASPCA Cruelty Research Grant program.

The maximum award for any grantee is \$50,000.

Eligible Projects

Cruelty Research grant proposals can address cruelty toward equines, cats, or dogs from any angle relevant discipline (e.g., public policy, law, criminal justice, criminology, veterinary forensics, community engagement, prevention/intervention, human behavior change). Of particular interest is research that a) increases understanding of the perspectives of key stakeholder groups, or b) investigates the effectiveness of cruelty prevention/response efforts at the community or system level. Also of interest is research that heightens awareness of animal cruelty and builds knowledge that informs and engages key community stakeholders and allied professionals in preventing and responding to this animal welfare issue.

Key stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Animal welfare organizations
- Legislators
- Government agencies
- Veterinary professionals
- Applied animal behaviorists

- Other animal care professionals
- Law enforcement and prosecutors
- Social service professionals
- The public, including animal owners

Proposals that include a shelter-researcher partnership aspect are especially encouraged. Examples include, but are not limited to, inclusion of both shelter and academic staff on the study team, the creation of a shelter-facing deliverable, an implementation prospectus that includes a feasibility assessment and identified partner shelter, etc.

For project-related inquiries, please contact ASPCAresearch@aspca.org

FARM ANIMAL WELFARE

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals® (ASPCA®) believes that at every step of their lives – from birth to death – all animals must be treated with compassion. The ASPCA is dedicated to addressing farm animal suffering by promoting higher welfare farming practices and increasing public awareness about how to make more humane food choices. To that end, this year the ASPCA invites grant proposals supporting farmers' transitions from raising modern conventional broiler chicken breeds to alternative chicken breeds with higher welfare outcomes.

The maximum award for any grantee is \$75,000.

Eligible Projects

We seek research on how farmers' use of healthier, non-conventional broiler chicken breeds intersects with:

- Chickens' use of pasture
- Environmental outcomes
- Chicken product nutritional content

Research may be conducted by farms or other businesses in addition to academic or research institutions. However, field studies must include an academic partner or follow established [field trial protocols](#) for design and data collection. Projects may take the form of literature meta-analysis, survey research, economic research, field research, pilot/trial programs, program evaluation, or other forms of research deemed eligible by the ASPCA. Research that seeks to establish proof of concept that will be used to scale a research idea and pursue additional funding is eligible.

Final materials may include grey literature (reports), data sets, or peer-reviewed journal articles. Project proposals should include a plan to publicize or share final material with other stakeholders.

For project-related inquiries, please contact suzanne.mcmillan@aspca.org using the subject line RFP_Question

PSYCH TRAUMA

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals® (ASPCA®) aims to establish psychological trauma as a legally cognizable form of animal cruelty and to increase effectiveness in cruelty prevention and response in the absence of physical indicators that may be a result of injury, disease, or other causes. To this end, the ASPCA invites grant applications for our 2026 ASPCA Psychological Trauma Research program. This program seeks to support rigorous research aimed at developing or validating behavioral and biological markers of mental suffering due to cruelty and neglect. The ASPCA recognizes that promoting the growth of high-quality research will promote animal welfare by advancing the development and application of indicators used by key professional audiences.

The maximum award for any grantee is \$35,000.

Eligible Projects

The Psychological Trauma Research Grant program solicits research proposals that will inform the documentation of animal cruelty and neglect in the absence of physical trauma in dogs. Of particular interest is research that focuses on objective metrics. Such metrics include, but are not limited to:

- Biomarkers
- Quantifiable behavioral markers
- Composite markers

For project-related inquiries, please contact bst.research@aspca.org using the subject line Psych Trauma RFP Question

SHELTER RESEARCH

The ASPCA is committed to ending euthanasia of dogs, cats, and equines except when it is the most humane and responsible option. Along with our other initiatives to end animal cruelty and expand access to veterinary care, the ASPCA seeks innovative and effective ways to improve shelter capacity to effectively care for, rehabilitate, and place animals as well as keep animals out of the shelter when it is safe and appropriate to do so. To this end, we invite proposals on topics related to the well-being and care of equines, dogs, and cats in a shelter environment, as well as programs that strengthen prevention-oriented approaches that reduce suffering and keep animals and people together. Of particular interest are proposals that contribute to practical, evidence-based approaches of optimizing shelter capacity and operations in a shelter setting.

The maximum award for any individual grantee is \$50,000.

Eligible Projects

The scope of this category is broad, including topics reflected in the [Association of Shelter Veterinarians' Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters \(2022\)](#).

Topics include but are not limited to:

- shelter management and operations
- population management
- increasing adoptions

- medical health of shelter-housed animals
- role of the shelter in public health
- shelter-based surgery and other medical procedures
- use of technology and other tools to increase efficiency in a shelter setting

Note: proposals related to shelter behavior research should be submitted to the Applied Behavior Research category, proposals related to animal cruelty should be submitted to either Psychological Trauma Research or Cruelty Research, and proposals related to increasing access to veterinary care should be submitted to Access to Veterinary Care Research grants as appropriate (see descriptions).

Proposals that include a shelter-researcher partnership aspect are especially encouraged. Examples include, but are not limited to, inclusion of both shelter and academic staff on the study team, the creation of a shelter-facing deliverable, an implementation prospectus that includes a feasibility assessment and identified partner shelter, etc.

For project-related inquiries, please contact sheltermedicine@aspca.org. If the project has an equine sheltering focus, please contact equinewelfare@aspca.org.