



SCRAPS: Pet Licensing Program



Compiled by ASPCA® and PetSmart Charities® and distributed to the field, September 2007. Visit the ASPCA® National Outreach website for animal welfare professionals: www.ASPCApro.org.

Spokane County Regional Animal Care and Protection Services (SCRAPS)

A comprehensive licensing campaign that raises funds for spay/neuter assistance



SCRAPS created a pet license campaign that immediately increased the numbers of licensed animals and raised on-going funds for spay/neuter assistance. They based their program on the successful license campaign in Calgary, Alberta that combines several factors: adding a surcharge to every license sold, raising the fine on an unlicensed pet and producing a multi-media campaign with targeted messages about the importance of licensing.

Stats

- The media exposure resulted in significant increases in new and renewed pet licenses sold over the previous year as well as increased revenues.
- The \$3 surcharge produced about \$100,000 for spay/neuter assistance program

How Cool is That?

At ASPCA® National Outreach we're especially impressed by:

- Their research into a licensing model that already works
- The effective use of the media to get their message out
- A sustainable form of revenue for spay/neuter assistance
- Tracking of data from the outset of their program

Adopt or Adapt

Even without a full media campaign, you can promote your own licensing program in a cost efficient way. As SCRAPS has done, include your license application or flyer in your local property bills or utility bills. Their materials are included in the tools section for you to view and adapt to your community and agency.

SCRAPS: The Whole Story

Spokane County Regional Animal Care and Protection Services (SCRAPS) handles animal control and licensing for Spokane County, WA excluding the city of Spokane.

They created a pet license campaign that raised on-going funds for spay/neuter assistance. They based their program on the successful license campaign in Calgary, Alberta that combines several factors: adding a surcharge to every license sold, raising the fine on an unlicensed pet and producing a multi-media campaign with



Launched in 2003, this program raised \$100,000 for spay/neuter assistance in its first year.

[Who They Are and What They Do](#)

[Ingredients and Prep Work](#)

[Step by Step](#)

[Results](#)

[Some Words of Wisdom](#)

Who They Are and What They Do

SCRAPS, Spokane, WA
Nancy Hill, Director

SCRAPS services the entire county of Spokane, covering 1,700 square miles. In developing a comprehensive licensing program, they sought to fund a spay/neuter assistance program with increased fees and numbers of licenses sold.

This program serves two purposes: to reduce euthanasia of adoptable pets by raising return-to-owner rate for lost animals and to fund spay/neuter assistance to reduce unwanted births. As these numbers start to shift the balance, SCRAPS sees the additional benefit that they may increase revenues for animal control services, while decreasing the need for them.

To increase the percentage of pets licensed and provide income for spay/neuter services SCRAPS created a multi-prong approach:

- They added a \$3 surcharge to dog and cat licenses.
- They raised the fine for an unlicensed pet from \$75 to \$200.
- They conducted a multi-media campaign with targeted messages about the need to license pets.
- They tracked results closely to measure effectiveness of the campaign.

Ingredients and Prep Work

Prerequisites

- A pet licensing requirement – Spokane County has long required dogs be licensed, began requiring cat licensing in 1991
- A fine for non-compliance high enough to motivate compliance
- Minimum barriers to licensing, i.e. rabies vaccination is required in Spokane County, but not required to get a license for the pet
- Database for licensing information and for monthly reports to track the numbers
- Licensing amnesty – no penalty for previous non-compliance if you comply now
- Source of funding for production of media materials and purchase of advertising time and space

People

- Accounting and data entry staff to handle incoming funds, keep database on licensed pets, and issue license paperwork and tags. Volunteers can help stuff envelopes.
- Volunteers or paid professional to create media materials (television commercials, print ads, flyers, etc.) and negotiate favorable placement and prices with local media outlets

Up-front Costs and Startup Funding

SCRAPS spent:

- \$10,000 on market research to determine what messages would motivate their citizens to license their pets
- \$45,000 on design, production and purchase of space for TV, radio and newspaper ads. They note that: prices can vary a lot depending on how much design and production work that is donated, and on the size of the media market - prices for commercial time are higher in larger markets.
- SCRAPS estimates a budget of \$25,000 for the second year purchase of advertising time - no new material to be produced.

Time Line

- The total time to start date of campaign: Eight months
- Market Research: Two months
- Design and Produce advertising materials for TV, radio and print: six months
- Run ads: Continuing throughout the year

Step by Step

1. Develop the appropriate messages to motivate licensing through market research.

- SCRAPS research found that the two key messages were:
 - Licensing will help return your lost pet to you.
 - Licensing pays for adoption and protection services that can help reduce or eliminate euthanasia of adoptable animals.
- SCRAPS research also found the decision makers about licensing were typically women age 18 - 50

2. Write and produce television, radio and print ads with these two messages:

- SCRAPS bid out the promotional campaign production initially, continues to work with that producer because he does the work at cost to help animals.
- SCRAPS did 2 30-second TV spots, one on each message.
- SCRAPS did 2 30-second radio spots, which were basically the audio from the TV spots.
- There was one print ad, which was the license application that people could cut out and send in.

3. Make access to license applications easy by placing in grocery stores, fast food restaurants, and have available on your website.

4. Buy placement for ads on cable TV, network affiliate broadcast stations, radio, and newspaper.

- Use professional media buyer to place ads and to negotiate with media outlets to maximize discounts and match time.
- Support the message through materials and promotion of licensing on your website.

5. Send licensing promotions in every mailing available through your county or city government.

- SCRAPS put inserts in property tax bills, water and power bills and utilities bills promoting licensing. The inserts look like a utility bill itself, which motivates compliance.

6. Send renewal notices promptly, and follow-up with reminders if the renewal notice doesn't get a response in 30 days.

Results

The Numbers

- Revenue from pet licenses increased by 12%, or about \$40,000, from 2003 to 2004 when the program went into effect.
- Number of new licenses issued increased by an average of 22% per month from 2003 to 2004.
- Number of renewed licenses issued increased by an average of 7% per month from 2003 to 2004.
- Months of greatest increase corresponded to months when the media campaign was most active.
- Rate increase and increased license sales yielded about \$100,000 for spay/neuter assistance program.

Critical Factors

Near-saturation of the local media with their message assured that it made a big impact on the public. For example, one week's schedule could include 1000 30-second commercials on cable stations, 80 30-second commercials on radio, 100 10-second website mentions on radio, and a 3 column x 6" application ad in the newspaper.

Thinking Outside the Box

- To qualify for spay/neuter subsidy vouchers, the pet has to be licensed.
- They included advertising on their license program in: property tax bills, water and power bills and the utility bills.

How They Feel About What They Did

The campaign made people realize SCRAPS was working to help animals, and put them on the map a little more.

Their Next Steps

- Find a continuing source of funds for annual media campaigns. They have contracted with a development director and are using direct mail, jars at events, and an annual Dog Walk to raise funds.
- Set up license application on the website so it can be submitted electronically and paid for by credit card.

Some Words of Wisdom

- Increase in license sales is spurred by ad campaign, but drops off when the campaign ends. Thus a continual schedule of ads is preferred over a once or twice a year blitz.
- Aim for as much saturation of the media market as possible during ad flights.
- Cable television ad time is generally much less expensive than network television.
- An annual fund source is necessary to keep the program going, since the program will not continue to produce results once ads end.

Tell Us What You Think

With the information we've provided, can you start a program like this one in your organization? [Click here](#) to send an e-mail to ASPCA® National Outreach with your feedback.

SCRAPS: Thumbnail Sketch

Spokane County Regional Animal Care and Protection Services
 2521 N Flora Road
 Spokane WA 99216

www.spokanecounty.org/animal



Spokane County Regional Animal Care and Protection Services (SCRAPS) provides animal control and licensing services for Spokane County WA excluding the city of Spokane.

SCRAPS mission is to protect public safety and ensure animal welfare through compassionate, responsive, professional enforcement of laws and public policy.

The agency serves a population of 220,000 people in an area of about 1700 square miles in northeast Washington. The agency handles almost 7,000 dogs and cats a year.

Staff

- 1 Director
- 1 Development coordinator
- 1 part-time behaviorist
- 14 shelter staff and animal control officers

Operating Budget

\$1,000,884

License Fees and Rate Structure

	Dogs	Cats
Neutered/Spayed	\$33	\$33
Unneutered/Unspayed	\$48	\$48

A discount of \$20 for dogs and \$10 for cats may be taken if the pet is under six months of age, or a new pet acquired in the past 30 days.

Business Type

Government agency