



## West Virginia Spay Neuter Assistance Program - Frequently Asked Questions

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**Q. What’s new for FY 2023?**

A. The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) is proud to offer the West Virginia Spay Neuter Assistance Program (WVSNP) once again in FY 2023. Although several updates have been made to this FAQ document for this fiscal year, there are a few new matters to bring specifically to your attention:

1. Please note that **the application deadline for FY23 is January 17, 2023, at 11:59pm.** Although this deadline had been a few weeks later in previous years, we hope to be able to award money earlier by moving to an earlier deadline.
2. There is now a ranking preference for applicants operating high-volume, low-cost clinics. This preference confers a bonus in the applicant ranking system of five points and was instituted at the recommendation of the West Virginia Spay Neuter Advisory Committee.
3. Grantees are now permitted to claim credit in their matching funds for van rental expenses used to transport animals to veterinarians. Applicants should list the projected amount that will be spent for qualifying van rentals on the application at 2.5.b.
4. On the application, required information is now marked with yellow fill. Optional information is marked with pale orange fill. Once sufficient information is entered, the yellow fields will turn green to indicate that all required information has been provided. The “STOP” sign has been removed, so applicants will need to confirm for themselves that no yellow fields remain.
5. Applicants are now given options regarding voluntary publicity. (See application section 1.2.) WVDA may choose to publicize the WVSNP and its grantees to direct the public to spay and neuter funding opportunities. However, we recognize that not all grantees may desire that public exposure. Applicants are given the option to be included in WVDA’s voluntary publications. Please note, however, that WVDA may release applicant information in a variety of other contexts, including the following:
  - a. The WVSNP rule requires WVDA to maintain and make available to the public a current list of grantees and their contact information.
  - b. WVDA is a governmental agency and its records are subject to public disclosure through the West Virginia Freedom of Information Act.
  - c. WVDA may release any information received from applicants for any other lawful purpose. Applicants should not submit to WVDA any private or confidential information.

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**Q. Who is eligible to apply for the grant program?**

A. Private entities and government entities are both eligible. Individual pet owners are *not* eligible for direct grant funding.

A private entity must maintain 501(c)(3) status, be incorporated in and in good standing with the state of West Virginia, have its principal place of business in West Virginia, and meet one or more of the following criteria: (1) provides or facilitates spay neuter services by a veterinarian to the general public; (2) rescues stray, abandoned or feral animals and provides or facilitates adoptions services for the animals to the general public; or (3) advocates and furthers effective means for the propagation of humane principles to prevent animal cruelty, abuse, neglect and overpopulation. Registration with the West Virginia Secretary of State must be as a corporation. Sole proprietorships and voluntary associations are ineligible for the program.

A governmental entity must be either a county or municipal shelter or an animal control agency.

Entities that facilitate spay and neuter services via vouchers or other methods are eligible; it is not a requirement that the applicant actually perform the spay/neuter services.

**Q. How do I download the application?**

A. Download the application package and save it to your computer using the “save as” command. The package is a zipped (compressed) file and contains a blank Excel application file, a PDF version of these FAQs, and an Owner/Caretaker Certification (for Low-Income Restricted Programs only). To unzip the file on Windows, right-click the zipped file and select “Extract All.” To unzip the file on a Mac, simply double-click the zipped file.

**Q. How do I submit an application?**

A. The application is a normal Excel file and can be opened, closed, saved, and attached to an e-mail message. (If the file opens in Protected View, you may have to click “Enable Editing.”) You will notice that each tab is locked and you will be able to enter data only in the appropriate cells. Cells set up for data entry are colored yellow. Enter all your data and e-mail the file, along with all supporting documentation, to spayneuter@wvda.us. Do not print the application and handwrite your answers or use a typewriter. Applications must be submitted digitally, as .xls or .xlsx files.

**Q. Can I use Google Sheets to complete the application?**

A. Google Sheets does not support some features employed by the WVSNP application. For best results, it is recommended that applicants use Microsoft Excel. For example, applicants using Google Sheets may be unable to fill in EIN and West Virginia Business Registration Account Number. If this affects you, place the missing information in the body of the e-mail when submitting your application. Other issues may exist. If possible, use Microsoft Excel to complete your application. However, applications completed using Google Sheets will not be rejected.

**Q. When is the application due?**

A. For FY 23, the deadline is January 17, 2023, at 11:59pm.

**Q. Why don't I have a full year to use grant funds?**

A. It is important that WVDA have time to prepare next year's grant cycle. Therefore, all FY 23 invoices and final reports will have to be submitted no later than November 15, 2023. You should take this timeline into account when planning your project. Please note that it will not be possible to extend the grant deadline due to the short window before the next application period.

**Q. What if, despite my best efforts, my application is missing a required element?**

A. WVDA may, but is not required to, contact you with an opportunity to correct your application. Therefore, in the weeks after the application deadline, it is recommended that you monitor the e-mail address you list on your application.

**Q. My organization no longer maintains a business license with the West Virginia Secretary of State's office. Are we eligible?**

A. No. The legislative rule requires that all grantees be incorporated in, and in good standing with, the state of West Virginia. We must be able to confirm that your organization meets this requirement.

**Q. How do I find my Business Registration Account Number?**

A. If you do not know this number, please contact the West Virginia State Tax Department. They can help you find your number in their registry or aid you in registering for one. Please call 304-558-3333 or 800-982-8297 for tax information and assistance, or visit the Tax Department online at <https://tax.wv.gov/Business/BusinessRegistration/Pages/BusinessRegistration.aspx>.

**Q. Why can't I request more than \$25,000.00 in WVDA funding?**

A. Due to the overwhelming response from groups all over the state, WVDA prefers to fund as many groups as possible. If one group requests a large amount of funding, that reduces the pool of money available to other groups. Therefore, funding is capped at \$25,000.00 per group for this fiscal year.

**Q. What are "matching funds" and how are they calculated?**

A. WVDA encourages groups to put up their own funds to "match" in some proportion the funding WVDA provides. Although not required for participation, matching funds increase the total impact of the program. Therefore, groups able to provide matching funds at a higher percentage score more favorably under the ranking criteria.

The percentage of matching funds used to rank applicants is simply the percentage of the *total project funds* the applicant would provide. If the total project would cost \$10,000.00 and the applicant would provide \$5,000.00, that is equal to a 50% match.

Grantees are permitted to apply some transportation costs to its matching funds when requesting reimbursement. See below.

**Q. How will my application be ranked?**

A. Applicants are awarded points based on a number of ranking criteria, which are defined on Tab 3 of the application. Although the maximum ranking score for FY 23 is 102, WVDA does not expect applicants to score the maximum number of points. Rather, WVDA understands that factors outside the control of applicants, as well as varying capacities of applicants, affects the ranking.

**Q. How do my projected counties served affect my application ranking score?**

A. Ranking points are awarded to applicants based on the geographic areas that they expect to serve with their project. Specifically, ranking points are awarded based on two statistics for the counties applicants list on their application: (1) Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) status; and (2) median household income. The ARC is an economic development partnership agency of the federal government and 13 state governments focusing on the Appalachian Region. Each year, the ARC applies an index-based system to classify counties according to their respective levels of economic distress. WVDA considers this system a good proxy for estimating need for spay neuter assistance. In addition, ranking points are awarded based on the median household income of the counties served according to [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). Both of these statistics can be found on the “CountyLookup” tab of the application and are updated every year so that the most recent available statistics are used.

**Q. What are my chances of receiving a grant?**

A. To date, all applicants who qualify for a grant, and have submitted all required materials, have received a grant in some amount. However, due to demand, many requests are reduced in amount. A higher ranking score may help the applicant receive more of its request.

**Q. Do I still need to submit a project budget?**

A. The project budget is now contained on Tab 2. It is not necessary to submit a separate attachment unless you wish to clarify your use of funds as stated on Tab 2. Tab 2 will control in the event of a conflict between Tab 2 and any other information submitted.

**Q. Why are you collecting information about adoptions?**

A. Applicants are asked to provide information about the adoption fees they charge, if any. This information will not affect points or ranking, but is used to check for compliance with the WVSNP Legislative Rule. Grantees may not charge a fee incident to adoption to cover spay or neuter services paid for under WVSNP. If such a fee is charged, the spay or neuter services are not eligible for reimbursement.

**Q. How will grantees be reimbursed for payments made toward the grant?**

A. If you are selected as a recipient of grant funds, you will be reimbursed after properly submitting an invoice for eligible expenditures. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted on the schedule laid out in your Grant Agreement, which provides for approximately bimonthly submissions. WVDA will reimburse at a rate consistent with the percentage of grant funds WVDA has agreed to provide. For example, if the awarded grant was \$5,000.00 and the matching funds provided by the applicant was \$5,000.00, WVDA will reimburse at a 50% rate. ( $\$5,000.00 \div (\$5,000.00 + \$5,000.00) = 50\%$ ).

**Q. What information will have to be submitted in order to request reimbursement?**

A. To obtain reimbursement, a grantee must use the Invoice Template form provided by WVDA. Currently, the form will require you to provide your name, address, award number, contact person, and the “WVDA Share” from your Grant Agreement. You will need to provide detailed information about each procedure for which you are requesting reimbursement. This includes the service date, whether the animal altered was a dog, a cat, or a community/feral cat, whether the procedure was a spay or a neuter, the amount you paid for the procedure, the county of residence of the owner, or, for stray and feral animals, county of capture, and the veterinarian or vet agency that performed the procedure. Supporting documentation, such as copies of receipts documenting expended funds, must also be submitted. When submitting invoices to WVDA for reimbursement, grantees must use their correct name as it appears on the Grant Agreement. Failure to do so will require revisions, likely delaying reimbursement.

**Q. What expenses are eligible for reimbursement?**

A. WVDA will reimburse grantees for properly invoiced direct costs of spay and neuter procedures and reasonably related expenses, including but not limited to anesthesia, pain medication, increased expenses due to cryptorchidism and pregnancy, and rabies vaccinations incident to spay and neuter procedures. No reimbursement will be provided for unrelated veterinary care, administrative costs, overhead, advertising, or facilities or equipment. Some transportation costs may be applied toward the grantee’s matching funds.

**Q. How can I apply transportation expenses to the matching funds provided by my organization?**

A. Reasonably necessary mileage the grantee traveled transporting animals to and from a veterinarian may be applied to the grantee’s matching funds. Rather than calculating actual expenses the grantee incurred, WVDA will credit grantees the WVDA rate for each mile that the grantee substantiates as a valid, reasonably necessary transportation expense. WVDA’s invoice form will perform this calculation automatically once you enter the mileage data.

Note that, at the time the FY 2023 application was released to the public, the IRS had not yet announced the 2023 mileage rate. WVDA will adjust its reimbursement rate to match the IRS rate once it is announced. Therefore, calculation of travel reimbursement on the application must be viewed as an estimate only.

**Q. How long will it take to receive my reimbursement check?**

A. Once you submit your invoice, WVDA follows its normal grant reimbursement procedures to approve payment. Due to the State’s fiduciary responsibilities to the taxpayers, the review process is robust. Multiple internal WVDA staff will review each request to ensure that the request complies with state law and your grant agreement. After WVDA approves the invoice for payment, the West Virginia State Auditor’s Office must approve the payment. From the time WVDA receives a correct invoice, it takes approximately 22 business days to issue a check, although at certain times of year it can take considerably longer. Normal USPS delivery times apply. If you wish to expedite the receipt of your check, the State Auditor’s Office offers the opportunity to sign up for direct deposit by submitting a form. To download the form, go to the State Auditor’s “Electronic Payments” page, at <https://www.wvsao.gov/ElectronicPayments/Default>, and click on the Company eVendor Agreement (Setup). WVDA does not collect this form; rather, it should be submitted directly to the State Auditor’s Office.

**Q. Is the WV Spay Neuter Program limited to low-income pet owners and caretakers?**

A. No. Grantees may choose to run programs designed for low-income pet owners and caretakers, but eligible grant programs under the legislative rule are not limited to such low-income programs.

**Q. What are the requirements of Low-Income Restricted Programs?**

A. Grantees who receive ranking points for running Low-Income Restricted Programs (LIRPs) are responsible for complying with the LIRP guidelines. Non-LIRP grantees need not comply. The LIRP guidelines are as follows:

1. Eligible owners and caretakers must currently be receiving assistance from at least one of the following state and federal public assistance programs: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); Medicaid; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); The West Virginia Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP); Social Security Disability; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP); or Low Income Veterans Assistance under 38 U.S.C. § 2044.
2. If an eligible owner or caretaker requests free spay or neuter services from a grantee running a LIRP, and the grantee has remaining grant funding sufficient to provide such the requested services, the grantee must grant the owner or caretaker’s request.
3. A grantee may, by written policy, limit eligible owners or caretakers to a maximum number of animals per owner which can be spayed or neutered under the LIRP.
4. Grantees may run a combination of LIRP and non-LIRP programs, but requests from eligible owners or caretakers must take precedence over non-LIRP expenditures.
5. Grantees must collect a completed Owner/Caretaker Certification from each eligible owner or caretaker who receives spay or neuter services under the grantee’s LIRP. The Owner/Caretaker Certification is available on WVDA’s website at <https://agriculture.wv.gov/owner-caretaker-certification/>.

6. On the Owner/Caretaker Certification, an eligible owner or caretaker must certify that he or she is currently receiving assistance from at least one of the public assistance programs named above at #1. The eligible owner must also certify that he or she is the owner or caretaker of the animal to be spayed or neutered.
7. Upon invoicing WVDA, the grantee must submit an Owner/Caretaker Certification for each free spay or neuter service performed under the grantee's LIRP.
8. The grantee may not request documentation or evidence to prove that the eligible owner is receiving assistance from a public assistance program, but shall rely on the eligible owner's sworn statement on the Owner/Caretaker Certification.
9. The grantee may not charge any fees of the eligible owner in exchange for the spay or neuter services.
10. The grantee may not solicit the eligible owner for a donation.

**Q. Are spay/neuter expenses for stray and feral cats and cat colonies eligible for reimbursement?**

A. Yes. Grantees may choose to submit for reimbursement of expenses incurred for spaying and neutering stray and feral cats, so long as the grantee adheres to all other requirements.

**Q. May grantees utilize out-of-state veterinarians?**

A. No. WVDA may not provide reimbursement for spay/neuter procedures performed by veterinarians who are not licensed and doing business in the State of West Virginia.

**Q. What if my question is not answered by these FAQs?**

A. Please feel free to e-mail [spayneuter@wvda.us](mailto:spayneuter@wvda.us) or call Andrew Yost at 304-389-9750 or Connie Shoemaker at 304-538-2397.