

Department New Request Form Fiscal Year 2022

Program	Central Services
Department	Non-Department
Request Category	Capital Outlay
Request Rating	Urgent

Title of New Request:

Rank: 6

Missoula City-County Animal Control Shelter Expansion - Capital Building Project

Department Goal Provide adequate and safe facilities for the public, staff and animals at the shelter.

1. How will request assist in achieving Department Goal and benefit the customer?

The Missoula City-County Animal Control Program is making a joint request of the City of Missoula and Missoula County to each contribute ARPA funds for a portion of an expansion to the Animal Control Shelter. The current animal control shelter does not have adequate space for staff, the public or the animals we are entrusted to care for. The plan is to add a wing to the existing shelter, on land we already own, to provide necessary workspace for employees, additional dog and cat shelter space, improved safety features for the animals, better flow for the public and a larger surgery room for the low cost and free vaccination and spay and neuter clinics. Further, this request addresses a number of concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including improved facilities to handle and house animals exposed to COVID-19 and other diseases, to provide the ability for staff and the public to physically distance, and to accommodate additional strays, surrendered pets, and animals from animal cruelty cases. See attached sheet for more information. The Department intends on using donations and an intercap loan, but cannot fund the entire shelter expansion with those sources alone.

2. What specifically is needed to achieve this goal?

We need funding to expand the shelter, so it will 1) provide adequate workspace for staff, 2) provide adequate break and meetings areas, 3) reconfigure the public entrance to provide better flow and service to the public, 4) provide space for more animals, 5) enhance safety features, 6) increase the ability to perform low cost vaccination and spay/neuter clinics. Specifically, we are asking the City to provide \$600,000, the County to provide \$400,000. We hope to raise \$300,000 - 400,000 through donations and will use an intercap loan for the rest. The estimated cost is between \$1.6 and \$1.9 million.

3. Cost Impact of New Program:

Account #	Item	Qty	Unit Cost	Requested One-Time	Requested Ongoing	FY 2022 Unfunded	FY 2022 Funded	Proposed FY 2022 Ongoing
Ongoing Expenses								
					-	-	-	
					-	-	-	
					-	-	-	
					-	-	-	
					-	-	-	
					-	-	-	
					-	-	-	
One-time Expenses								
1000.390.440600.700	Shelter Expansion	1	600000	600,000		-	600,000	
						-	-	
						-	-	
						-	-	
						-	-	
Expense Sub-Total				600,000	-	-	600,000	-

Revenue Offset:

Account #	Revenue Description		Proposed Onetime Revenue	Proposed Ongoing Revenue
1000.000.334999.00	N	ARPA funds	600,000	
Revenue Sub-Total			600,000	-

4. What sort of data will be used to report results and outcomes of request?

We will be successful if we are able to build the shelter. We will be able to show that we have adequate workspace for staff, better flow and service for the public, fewer times when we are at shelter capacity, and fewer incidences of communicable disease at the shelter.

Requested/Proposed Funding Source

	One-time	Ongoing
Tax or Assessment	-	-
Non-tax	600,000	-
Fund Balance	-	-
Total	600,000	-

COVID-19 pandemic effects on Missoula Animal Control

Jeff Darrah, Missoula City-County Animal Control Supervisor

June 7, 2021

COVID-19 has impacted the daily operations of Missoula Animal Control over the last 14 months and revealed some problems with our facility in general. I will explain some of the issues and concerns that arose during this difficult time.

- Animal Control was part of the Missoula City-County Health Department COVID-19 Response Team. Animal Control assisted with animals that belonged to owners who contracted COVID-19 and needed to be hospitalized. Animal Control had incidents occur where the dogs had to be picked up by Animal Control and brought back to our shelter. The concern with handling these animals had to do with fomites and the potential risk of contracting COVID-19 by our staff. The animals were bathed at Animal Control, but an adequate isolation area and bathing area does not exist in our current shelter.
- A dozen employees work in very close quarters, not allowing for the ability to social distance. The current workspace is cramped, and workstations are shared. This puts employees at a greater risk, as well as the public. COVID-19 impacted our staff: 5 out of 12 employees (42%) contracted COVID-19. We had 8 out 12 employees (67%) were quarantined due to close contact. The impact caused for the overtime budget to be depleted by the non-infected staff. The need for physical distancing was temporarily mitigated by renting a trailer for three staff, but that is not a long-term solution.
- Animal Control continued to operate, but because of very tight quarters in the front lobby area, the public was only allowed in by appointment or they were served curbside. This was again a problem of lack of adequate space to physically distance in the facility.
- Missoula Animal Control experienced COVID-19-related issues that were also observed as a national trend in the sheltering world. We had a high demand for adoptable pets as people who were home were looking for companionship; these are referred to as “pandemic pets”. Because of shutdowns, people had more time to care for pets. Now, as we return to normalcy and people return to the workplace, we are quite concerned that there will be a glut of surrendered pets, and the space at the shelter is already at a premium.
- Missoula Animal Control investigates animal cruelty cases and during this pandemic we have witnessed a marked increase in animal cruelty investigations and increase in severity of these cases. This is consistent with the national trends on animal abuse and

domestic violence increases during this time. These investigations can fill our shelter to the brim with animals that are confiscated and must be held for a long period of time. The three largest cases during this time involved dogs being housed at our shelter for months. One case at the onset of the pandemic involved nearly 40 dogs, which were housed for nearly 2 months. Two other cruelty cases involved seizing 12 and 11 animals. The holding capacity of our shelter is 30 dogs. Also, the severity of the animal cruelty cases during this pandemic have seemed to be on the rise, including mutilated and starved animals. When these high numbers take up our shelter, it makes it difficult to house the stray animals that come into the shelter.

- The increase of persons without a home during this period also seems to have risen. Animal Control often deals with the pets of un-homed persons, especially if the person is hospitalized or incarcerated. Animal Control often has several animals in the “Safekeep Status.” These are non-adoptable dogs that are held for at least 4 days free of charge and sometimes much longer.
- 01/01/20-5/25/21
Surrendered Animals-----290
Adoption returns-----45
Seized Animal Cruelty-----87
Safe-keep-----112
Stray-----1268
- When there are cramped quarters at Missoula Animal Control is when we see outbreaks of other animal diseases such as “Parvo”. We have experienced “Parvo” on two occasions during this pandemic, where 10 dogs have died and many others got sick, but were saved with care. Also, when our cat room is full, upper respiratory infections hit our cats very hard; this happened twice during this pandemic.

In closing, the Missoula Animal Shelter runs at capacity much of the time. A natural disaster, pandemic or multiple animal cruelty cases stretch our ability to safely house the animals in our care. The crowded workspace causes distraction, much easier disease spread, and it also limits the public’s ability to use and enjoy our facility.