

ANIMAL SAMARITANS SPAY/NEUTER PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

City Council Meeting
December 11, 2025



PALM DESERT



BACKGROUND

The Pet Reimbursement Program established in 2010. Expanded in 2014 and 2019 to include spay/neuter, vaccinations, microchipping, and adoption reimbursements.

Participation has remained low: 42 residents since 2020.

In contrast, 90 direct-use vouchers issued in 2025 were claimed within one week.

Animal Services Subcommittee met on October 30, 2025 and agreed to recommend moving to:100% cost coverage for vouchers. Annual funding not to exceed \$50,000





RESIDENT DEMAND

Since 2020, only 42 residents have utilized the Pet Reimbursement Program. An average of 10 residents per year despite ongoing availability.

This demonstrates low engagement and administrative inefficiency.

In 2025, the direct-use vouchers demonstrated strong demand. Residents overwhelmingly prefer simple, no-cost, direct access to services

WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED

- Low utilization despite program longevity and outreach
- Manual processing: Residents must submit receipts, proof of residency, and license documentation. Feedback from residents indicates the process is confusing, time-consuming, and discouraging
- Many residents have expressed that they prefer a direct discount or voucher system rather than reimbursement
- Delayed reimbursement timelines reduce participation
- Administrative workload outweighs the current community impact

PROPOSED PROGRAM

- Transition from reimbursement to voucher-based model
- Replaces reimbursement system.
- Provides 100% cost coverage for spay/neuter and microchipping.
- Up to four animals per household, consistent with Title 6.
- ***Residents automatically eligible — proof of residency required.***
- The program is streamlined, accessible, and cost-efficient

THE CITY OF PALM DESERT AND
ANIMAL SAMARITANS PRESENT:

FREE SPAY & NEUTER CLINIC

SEPTEMBER 17 - 18, 2025

Help reduce overpopulation and ease the burden
on local shelters. **Free microchipping also available!**

Apply for a free voucher at the Palm Desert Library
73300 Fred Waring Drive
Income requirements apply, see website for details

PalmDesert.gov/Pets

 **Animal
Samaritans**



WHAT IS COVERED

The voucher fully covers:

- Surgical labor
- Anesthesia
- Medications & supplies
- Pain management
- Take-home items (e-collars, pain meds)
- Microchipping

Average total cost per animal: \$220
(\$215 procedure + \$5 microchip)



HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

- Residents obtain a City-issued voucher.
- Voucher valid for 60 days
- Presented at Animal Samaritans at the time of service.
- Animal Samaritans performs the procedure.
- Provider invoices the City monthly.
- No out-of-pocket cost unless elective, non-covered services are requested

PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Removes financial barriers for residents
- Encourages responsible pet ownership
- Reduces shelter intake & improves animal welfare
- Enhances public safety through prevention of overpopulation
- Ensures efficient use of City funds
- Reduces administrative workload



FISCAL IMPACT

- Funding available in Account Nos. 1104230-4388400 (*Animal Regulation/Animal Resources & Programs*)
- \$50,000 per fiscal year budgeted
- Total not to exceed \$150,000 over three years of contract
- Subcommittee endorsed this funding level on October 30, 2025

RECOMMENDATION

Staff presents the following options for the City Council's consideration:

- **Option 1** — Maintain Current Program and continue the existing Pet Reimbursement Program as is.
- **Option 2** — Adopt the Resolution entitled: “Resolution of the City Council of the City of Palm Desert, California, rescinding the City’s Pet Reimbursement Policy and establishing a new Spay/Neuter Partnership Program with Animal Samaritans” and Allocation of \$50,000 from unencumbered Animal Services funds,

THANK YOU

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