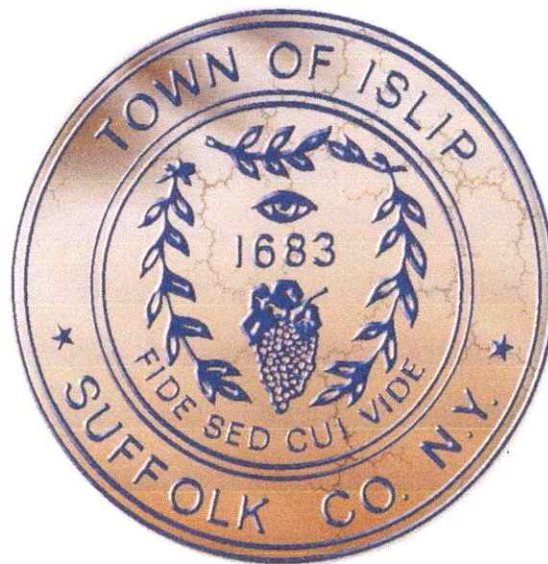


TOWN OF ISLIP
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL
TRAP/NEUTER/RETURN PROGRAM
FOR FERAL CATS

STATEMENT OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES



October 12, 2016

**TRAP/NEUTER/RETURN PROGRAM
FOR FERAL CATS
FINAL DRAFT
STATEMENT OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

1.0 **INTENT:** The Town of Islip herewith directs the Department of Environmental Control to implement and administer a Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) program for the control of the increase in the population of Feral Cats within the Town. TNR is a program wherein the free-roaming Feral Cats are humanely trapped, sterilized, medically treated, Ear Tipped, and returned to the outdoor locations where they were trapped. Kittens from Feral Cat colonies that are young enough to be socialized and friendly adult cats will be evaluated and placed for adoption at the Town's Animal Shelter and Adopt-a-Pet Center depending on available capacity. The Town will coordinate with established, not-for-profit Feral Cat rescue organizations, Feral Cat population control groups, and concerned individuals, who are familiar with the location of local Feral Cat colonies and their habits, to routinely and humanely trap Feral Cats and transport them to an approved, Town contracted Animal Hospital or Veterinarian for examination and sterilization. The TNR program will be funded by donations and/or grants. Any additional costs incurred will be the responsibility of the group(s) or individuals who will provide the necessary aftercare and return the Feral Cat to its colony. This program will end the reproductive cycle, which can produce litters up to three times per year resulting in the ever increasing Feral Cat population in the colonies within the Town. The TNR program can also assist in controlling the transmission of feline diseases and parasites.

2.0 **DEFINITIONS:** The following definitions are applicable to this Policy and Procedure statement:

Agriculture and Markets shall mean the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Animal Rescue Group shall mean an incorporated, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the humane treatment of animals; which also includes feral cat population control.

Department shall mean the Town Department of Environmental Control;

Ear-tipping shall mean a method to identify feral cats that have been spayed or neutered;

Feral Cat shall mean a free-roaming, generally not socialized and existing in a natural state Feral Cat, **not belonging to a Town resident**;

Shelter shall mean the Town of Islip Animal Shelter and Adopt-A-Pet Center;

TIA shall mean Trust-in-Agency account, wherein, Donations accepted by the Town for specific reasons; are placed to be used as intended.

Town shall mean the Town of Islip;

Voucher shall mean a promise to pay, at a specified rate, for professional Veterinary services for a spay/neuter procedure on a Feral Cat.

3.0 **BACKGROUND:** Feral Cats usually live together in groups in one area or territory, near food sources and shelter. These groups or colonies are located in all socio-economic areas of the Town. The female Feral Cats can produce approximately three litters per year with varying numbers of offspring. Because of their environment and little protection from predators and weather conditions, survival of the litters is variable. Without human assistance, Feral Cats are expected to have a high mortality rate, with an estimated fifty percent dying within their first year. Rescue groups and concerned groups and individuals are locally involved in the care of the Feral Cats through varying methods, such as, trap/neuter/return programs, providing food on a routine basis at specific locations at known colonies, and the placement of small shelters. There are also residents that are opposed to the maintenance of Feral Cat colonies because the cats will roam into populated areas in search of food, shelter, or feed on available wildlife.

The Town has no census data on an estimated number of Feral Cats within its borders. There are several established colonies known to the groups, individuals and Shelter personnel. New York State defines Feral Cats as free-roaming, and as such, cannot be controlled in the same manner as roaming dogs.

A Town sponsored TNR program would involve:

- Providing administrative and logistical oversight of the program;

- Managing the disbursements of the voucher program;
- Establishing and hosting an Advisory Committee with representatives of the participating groups for the purpose of coordination, communication and education;
- Seeking program funding through grants and donations;
- Promoting public education of the issue;
- Assisting individual residents with unwelcome Feral Cats;
- Providing to the Feral Cats: rabies vaccination, attention to medical needs, and Ear-Tipping.

A municipally sponsored TNR program, with the goal of controlling the reproduction of the Feral Cat population to reduce the impacts on neighborhoods and the environment has to operate in a transparent manner, with established methods, defined administrative and financial procedures, and routine reporting to the Town of Islip Department of Environmental Control (DEC).

5.0 **TOWN SHELTER:** The current policy of the Town Shelter, with respect to Feral Cats, is to respond to injured, sick and Dead-on-Arrival (DOA) animal calls. The Shelter does not respond to complaints about colonies, other than to provide information relative to available options.

6.0 **PROGRAM FUNDING: The program will be funded solely through donations, independent fundraising, and grants as specified below. No tax generated funds will be used for the program.**

a. **TIA ACCOUNT:** The Town receives donations from individuals/groups/businesses to support the Shelter. Some of these donated funds have conditions for their use. The Town places these funds in a Trust-in-Agency (TIA) account. If these funds are not designated for a specific use by the donator, they can be transferred to a Town administered TNR account. The Town will establish a Voucher System to reimburse participating Animal Hospitals and/or Veterinarians for all or part of the sterilization procedure on Feral Cats brought to them by program participating groups/individuals.

b. **PARTNERING FOR FUNDRAISING/GRANTS:** To replenish the TNR account, it is intended for the Program, with the assistance of the member groups and individuals; to participate in local fundraising events and seek donations. With an active,

established TNR program, that has the support of local interested groups, the Town can apply for grants for the continuation of the program. Interested groups can hold independent fundraising events to assist the TNR program.

c. **CONTINUATION OF THE TNR PROGRAM:** The continuation of the program is contingent upon the availability of funding through the Town's TNR account, grants, donations to the Shelter and fundraising events.

7.0 **TOWN TNR PROGRAM**

- a. **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION:** The T/N/R program will be administered by the Department of Environmental Control. The Department, through the Shelter, will administer the Voucher Program; interact with cooperating groups, loan traps for temporary use (via a Deposit Program), and communicate with participating Veterinarians and Animal Hospitals, maintain the budget and records of T/N/R procedures and process Voucher claims.
- b. **INTERESTED GROUPS:** The Town will coordinate with interested groups to assist in the program. These groups should be a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit (NFP) organizations with a history of being involved with animal welfare issues. The Town will seek experienced, established groups to, to function within the TNR Program, on the administration and operation of the TNR program. There will be periodic meetings with the Department and the group leaders to inform, grow, and maintain the TNR program. The groups will enact the program, doing the field work with the colonies, transport or arrange transport for a cat to a supporting veterinary, ensure its care; and return the cat to its Colony. Interested individuals may also participate in the Program.
- c. **RESIDENT SERVICES:** A resident contacting the Town or an interested group with a Feral Cat issue can be accommodated under the program if there is agreement by the Resident on the process. The Town will request a participating Group to establish contact with the Resident to explain the process. The Resident may borrow, with a deposit, a trap from the Town Shelter and receive a voucher for

the defined Veterinarian service. It shall be understood that the Feral Cat must be returned to the Colony upon recovery.

- d. **ANIMAL HOSPITALS/VETERINARIANS:** NYS Licensed Veterinarians who perform defined professional services for the treatment of feral cats will be eligible for payment under a Town Voucher System.

- e. **TOWN ROLE:** The Town, through the Department, will provide and maintain traps on a loan basis to the participating rescue groups. . The Department will administer and control the TIA accounts with routine reports. The Department will make routine, written reports on the TNR, which will be made available to the Town Board.

- f. **SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER PROGRAM:** The routine professional services to be provided will be spaying and neutering of feral cats secured by groups. Rabies Inoculation and ear-tipping will be included in the services.

- g. **PUBLIC EDUCATION:** The Town, with the input of the Advisory Group, will develop a Public Education Program focusing on understanding the Feral Cat issue, the TNR Program, and individuals' response to the Feral Cat concern. The Town may use the educational TV channel, printed and social media.

The Town may seek the services of a part-time Volunteer Project Coordinator to assist in the Administration and Operation of the Program.