



# PRAIRIE PAWS ANIMAL SHELTER INC.



**6,188 ANIMALS  
SERVED IN 2025!**

## FROM THE CEO

Looking back on 2025 I am incredibly proud of everything that our teams have accomplished for homeless pets. This was the first year that we had all three shelter locations running simultaneously and in-sync with each other. Our leaders found their groove and we all saw what a regional animal welfare organization can really do.

Somehow our volunteers and fosters dug even deeper, gave even more of themselves, and our pets flourished.

As we turn the corner into 2026, I am excited to see the boundaries that we push, the standards we exceed, and the lives we change together. Thank you for being alongside us as we do this meaningful work.

*-Vanessa Cowie*

**THANK YOU!**



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# THE OTTAWA LOCATION

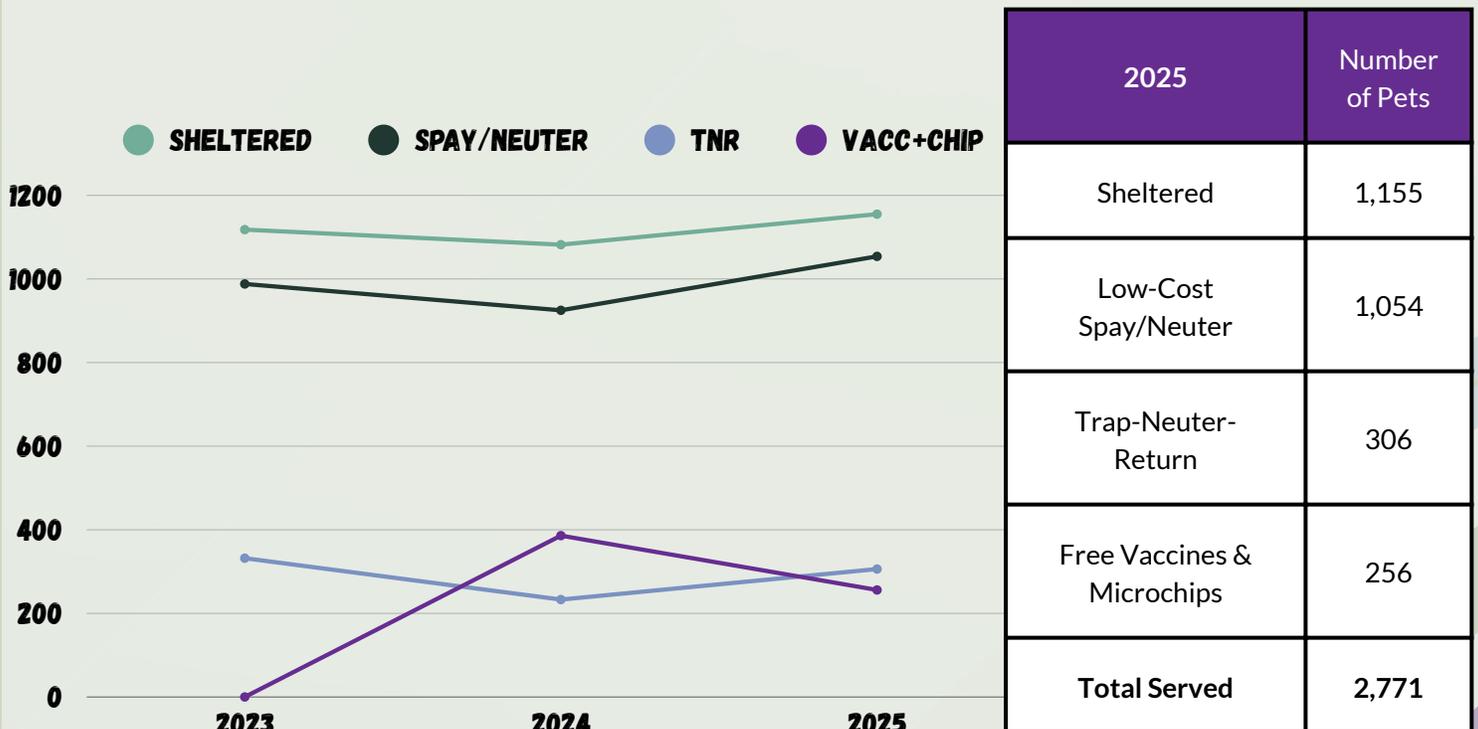
SERVICE AREA: FRANKLIN COUNTY KS

POPULATION SERVED: 26,000

2025 resulted in the highest number of sheltered pets for the Ottawa location going back more than 7 years.



Historically, the number of pets entering the Ottawa location as strays and relinquishments has been climbing annually. In 2022 low-cost spay/neuter was launched with a goal to reduce the number of pets that will require sheltering. 2025 was the first year that we began to see the impact of this program.



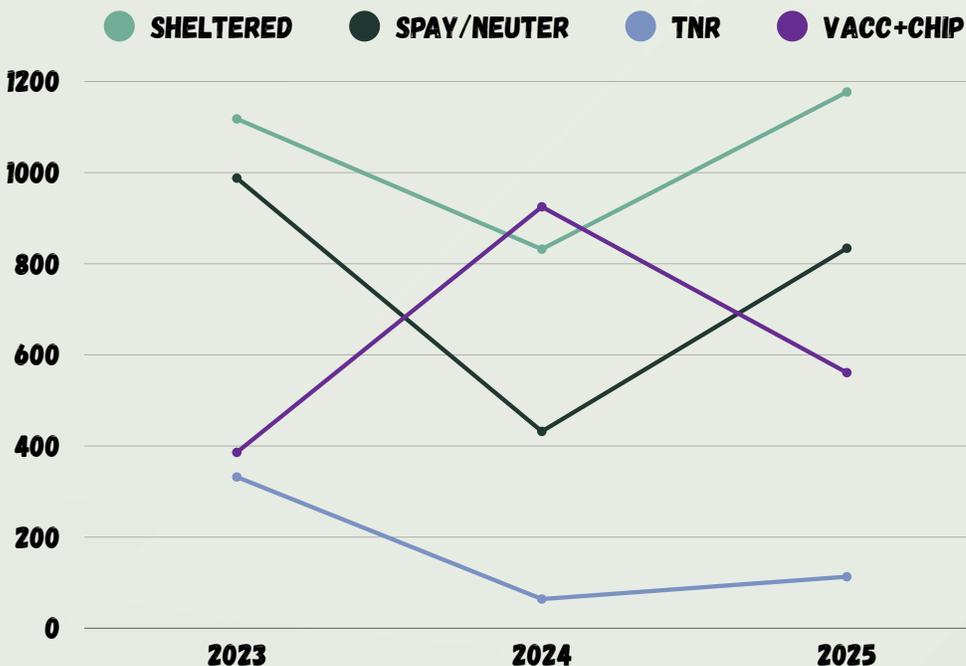
2025	Number of Pets
Sheltered	1,155
Low-Cost Spay/Neuter	1,054
Trap-Neuter-Return	306
Free Vaccines & Microchips	256
<b>Total Served</b>	<b>2,771</b>

# THE MANHATTAN LOCATION

SERVICE AREA: POTAWATOMIE COUNTY & RILEY COUNTY KS  
 POPULATION SERVED: 92,000



The Manhattan team were focused on increasing the number of pets served in each program. All programs saw an increase with the exception of the free vaccine and microchip clinics. This is because free vaccines and microchips are also administered at the time of low-cost spay/neuter which served 402 more animals in 2025, compared to 2024. It is preferable that un-vaccinated pets who are also unaltered are served through the low-cost spay/neuter program instead of the free vaccine program.



2025	Number of Pets
Sheltered	1,177
Low-Cost Spay/Neuter	834
Trap-Neuter-Return	113
Free Vaccines & Microchips	561
<b>Total Served</b>	<b>2,685</b>

# THE EMPORIA LOCATION

SERVICE AREA: THE CITY OF EMPORIA KS

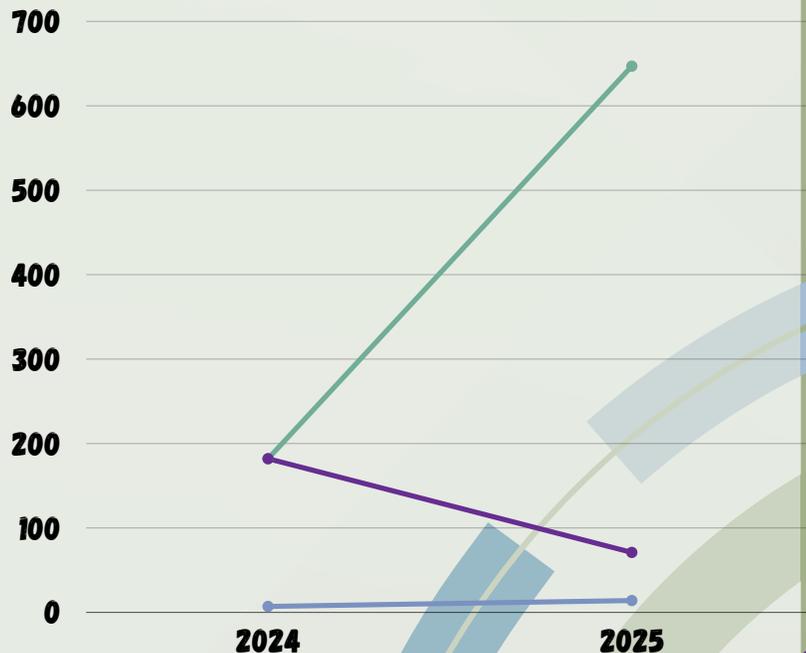
POPULATION SERVED: 24,000



The Emporia location has significantly increased its capacity to serve the communities stray and unwanted pets. In 2024 36 pets a month were sheltered, and in 2025 that number increased to over 53 per month!

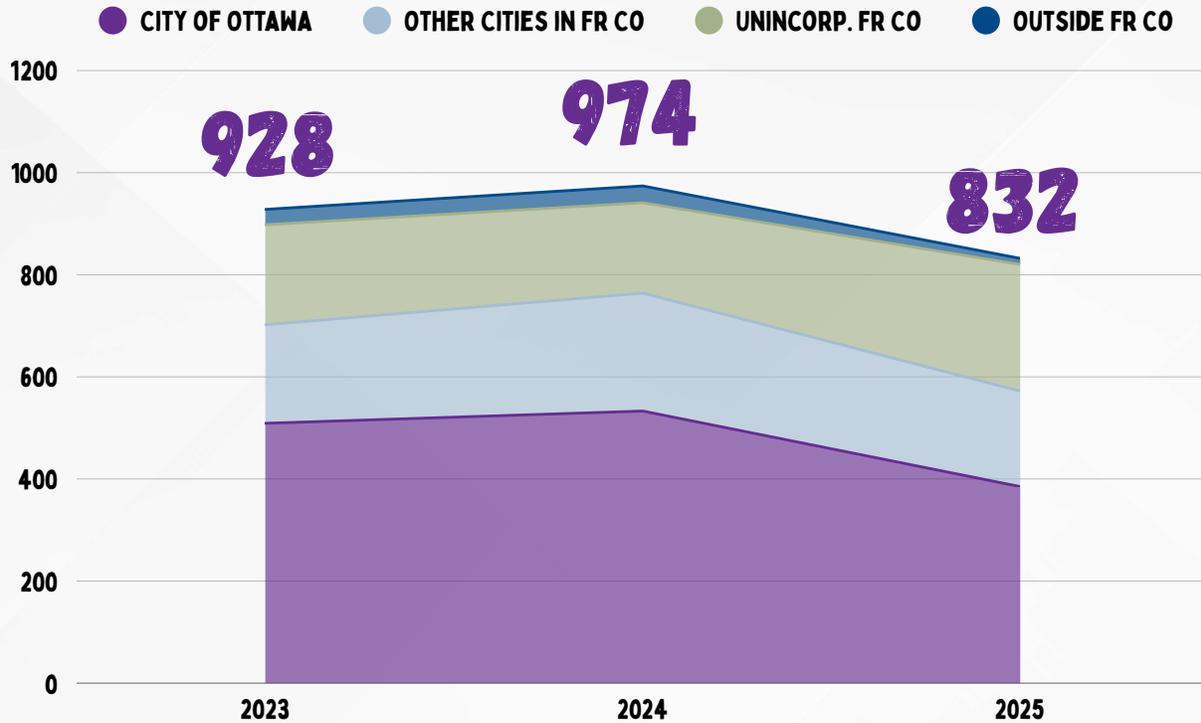
- SHELTERED
- TNR
- FREE VACC + CHIP

2025	Number of Pets
Sheltered	647
Trap-Neuter-Return	14
Free Vaccines & Microchips	71
<b>Total Served</b>	<b>732</b>



# ANIMALS SHELTERED AT OTTAWA BY ORIGINATING JURISDICTION

Excludes returned adoptions, TNR cats and transferred pets.



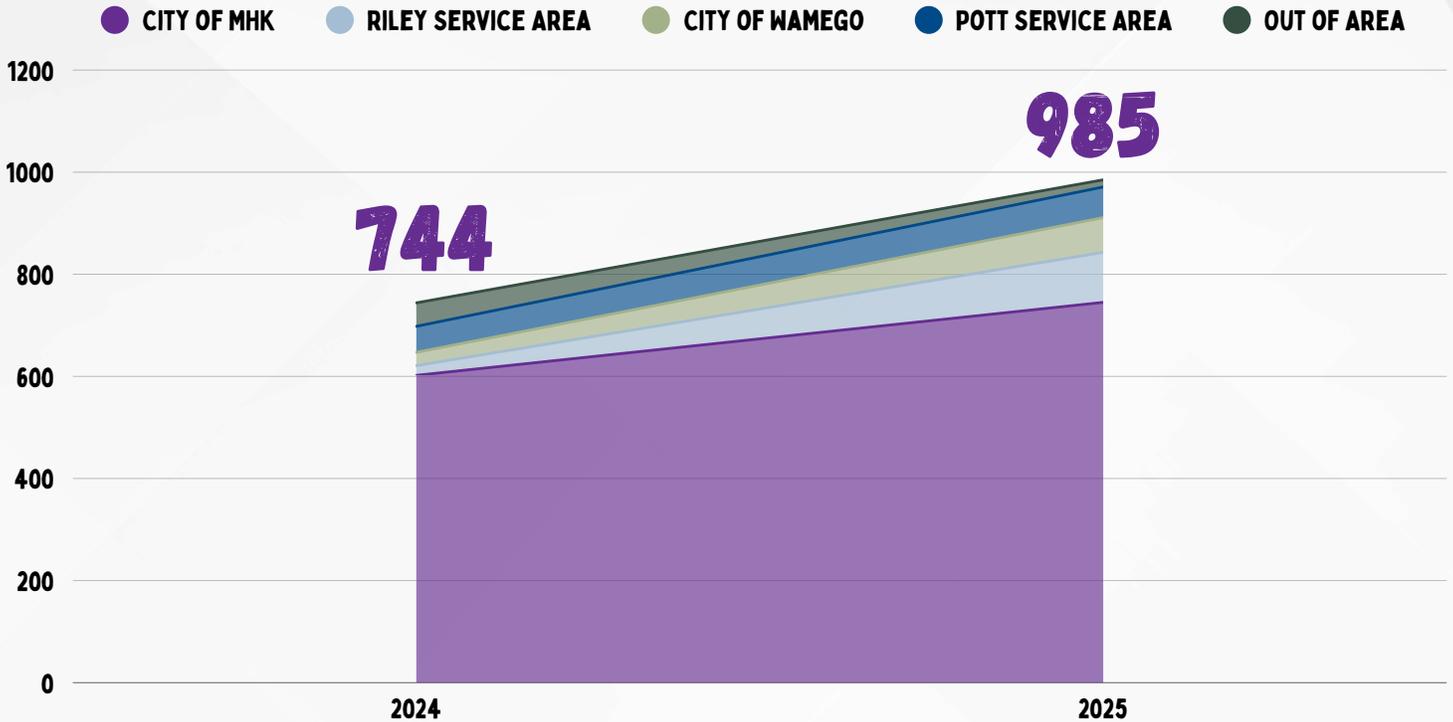
	City of Ottawa	Other Cities in Fr Co	Unincorp. Fr Co	Outside Fr Co	Total
2023	509	193	196	30	928
2024	533	231	177	33	974
2025	385	187	248	12	832



The programs being delivered at the Ottawa location in 2025 had a significant impact on reducing the number of stray and unwanted pets in the community. Prairie Paws, with the support of donors and government partners, has made tremendous investments in data-driven, holistic animal welfare strategies that address the root-cause of homeless pets. Unfortunately when the number of unwanted pets increases in the unincorporated areas, it can indicate that dumping is increasing. The causes behind dumping are complex and nuanced, but we do know that a lack of services in neighboring communities results in animals being dumped in Franklin County

# ANIMALS SHELTERED AT MANHATTAN BY ORIGINATING JURISDICTION

Excludes returned adoptions, TNR cats and transferred pets.



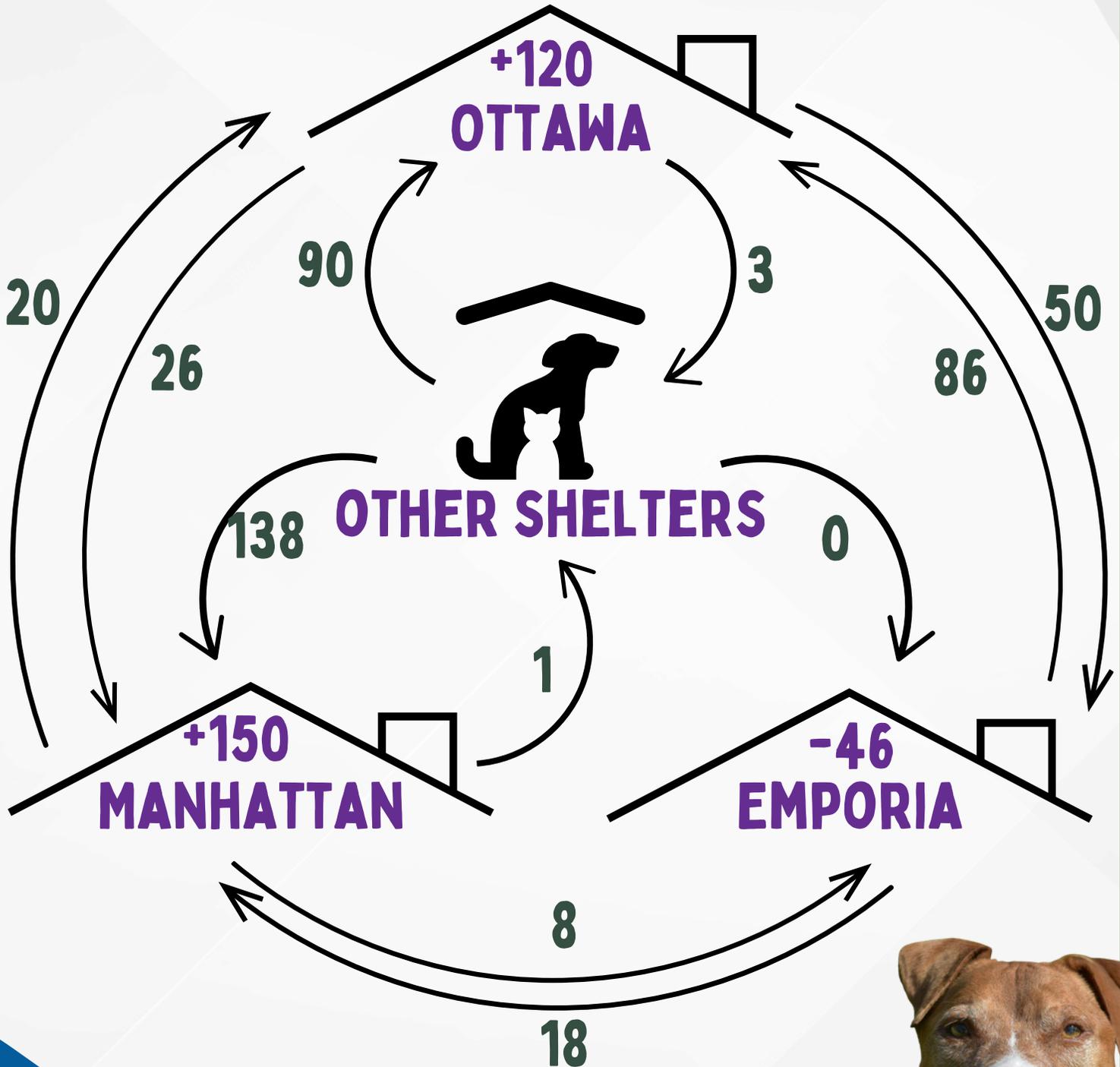
	City of MHK	Riley Service Area	City of Wamego	Pott. Service Area	Out of Area	Total
2024	602	19	26	51	46	744
2025	745	98	68	60	14	985



The Manhattan location has had a strong focus on increasing the capacity of animals that can be served at the facility, so that the service area can be increased to serve a larger population of citizens. The team has succeeded in shortening the length of stay of sheltered pets so that a higher volume of pets can be sheltered.

# TRANSFER PROGRAM

ANIMALS ARE OFTEN TRANSFERRED BETWEEN PRAIRIE PAWS LOCATIONS TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF THE LIMITED RESOURCES AT EACH LOCATION (KENNEL SPACE, SURGICAL CAPACITY, STAFF, ADOPTERS, ETC). WHENEVER POSSIBLE ANIMALS ARE TRANSFERRED INTO A PRAIRIE PAWS LOCATION FROM SHELTERS CHALLENGED WITH HIGH RATES OF EUTHANASIA TO PROVIDE NEEDED INDUSTRY SUPPORT.



Charger was admitted to the Ottawa location and spent 153 days waiting for his new family to find him. Staff decided that a change of scenery may do him good and he was transferred to the Emporia location. He found his new home two weeks later!



# RECLAIM RATE

**RECLAIM RATE IS THE PERCENTAGE OF STRAY PETS THAT WERE RECLAIMED. WHILE A HIGH RECLAIM RATE IS THE GOAL, THE MAJORITY OF STRAY PETS ARE NOT RECLAIMED, AND HERE ARE SOME OF THE REASONS WHY:**

Variable	Why does this decrease reclaim rate?
High rates of identification (tags, microchips etc)	Physical identification allow for animals to be reunited in the field, this means they don't experience an intake at all. Reunification in the field is always the goal for all stray pets regardless of its impact on reclaim rate.
Low access to relinquishment services	When pet owners are unable to voluntarily relinquish their animals to a shelter, or the wait is excessive, they often have no choice but to abandon the pet in a community with a high-performing shelter. This results in animals being admitted as strays and serving the <b>stray hold</b> with no chance of being reclaimed
Financial hardship	Financial hardships lower a pet owner's perceived ability to afford reclaim fees. Prairie Paws will always work to reunite pets and in some cases the adoption fee may be a more affordable option for the pet owner, and includes more veterinary services. When a reclaim is converted to an adoption the reclaim rate lowers.

Location	Dog Reclaim Rate	Cat Reclaim Rate
Ottawa	49.8%	10.3%
Manhattan	44.1%	12.2%
Emporia	59%	14.7%

Custom tag-engraving machines are located in the lobby of the Ottawa and Manhattan locations to increase physical identification on pets. Additionally all adopted pets are microchipped at no charge to the adopter.

The reclaim rate is helpful in estimating the number of pets that will be processed for adoption after the **stray hold** has concluded. The very low reclaim rate on stray cats is why Prairie Paws has adjusted the cat intake policy to serve free-roaming healthy cats through the TNR program, or the relinquishment program.

## STRAY HOLD

Mandated by the State of Kansas, all shelters must hold a stray pet for a minimum of 3 business days (not including weekends, public holidays or days the shelter is closed). This is to give the owner an opportunity to reclaim their pet prior to it being placed up for adoption.



# ANIMAL ADOPTIONS

**THE NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF ADOPTIONS IS THE MOST CRITICAL FACTOR IN DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF ANIMALS THAT CAN BE SERVED BY OUR LOCATIONS.**

Location	2024			2025		
	Dogs	Cats	Total	Dogs	Cats	Total
Ottawa	395	520	915	400	417	817
Manhattan	323	472	795	386	584	970
Emporia	50	50	100	196	144	340

## ADOPTION RETURN RATE

**PRAIRIE PAWS ACCEPTS ADOPTED PETS BACK INTO CARE FOR THE LIFE OF THE PET. ADOPTION RETURN RATE IS THE PERCENTAGE OF ADOPTED PETS THAT ARE RETURNED TO THE SHELTER AT SOME POINT AFTER ADOPTION. A LOW ADOPTION RETURN RATE IS IDEAL, BUT POLICIES THAT ARE TOO FOCUSED ON REDUCING RETURNS CAN BE DISCRIMINATORY AND INCREASE THE LENGTH OF STAY OR LOWER THE OVERALL VOLUME OF ADOPTIONS.**

### Efforts Being Made to Reduce Returns

- A volunteer dog trainer provides free, post-adoption training support to all Prairie Paws' adopters.
- All adopters have access to a free veterinary exam at a list of local veterinary clinics.
- All pets are provided daily socialization and enrichment so that they are happy and healthy in their future homes.
- All pets are spayed/neutered, vaccinated and microchipped prior to adoption.
- Residents of the Manhattan area can access discounted/free dog training through the Sorensen Scholarship.
- All adopters can access free resources through an adoption app called Petzel.

Location	2024 Return Rate			2025 Return Rate		
	Dogs	Cats	All Species	Dogs	Cats	All Species
Ottawa	19.7%	7.5%	12.8%	18.8%	7.5%	13.0%
Manhattan	16.7%	7.0%	10.9%	18.4%	8.0%	12.2%
Emporia	12.0%	2.0%	7.0%	9.7%	10.4%	10.0%

# LOW-COST SPAY/NEUTER

**OPEN TO RESIDENTS OF ANY COMMUNITY, LOW-COST SPAY/NEUTER IS BUNDLED WITH LIFESAVING VACCINES AND A MICROCHIP AT NO EXTRA COST. EXPANDING THIS PROGRAM TO SERVE A LARGER POPULATION OF PET OWNERS IS A PRIORITY. IN 2026 A MOBILE SPAY NEUTER TRAILER WILL BE LAUNCHED TO BRING THIS PROGRAM TO EMPORIA AND OTHER UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES.**



Unlike the shelter pets and TNR cats, veterinary students don't hold the required license and are not experienced enough to perform surgery on privately-owned pets. These surgeries are performed by paid, on-staff veterinarians and travelling surgeons that are specially trained in high volume spay/neuter.



Location	Number of Spay/Neuter Surgeries		
	2023	2024	2025
Ottawa	988	925	1,054
Manhattan	0	432	834
<b>Total</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>1,357</b>	<b>1,888</b>

**Surgery Fees:**  
 Cats = \$85  
 Dogs = \$135  
 Includes free vaccines and microchip

# TNR PROGRAM (TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN)

**THERE IS NOW AMPLE RESEARCH TO SUPPORT THE EFFECTIVENESS IN THESE PROGRAMS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF FREE-ROAMING CATS IN SUBURBAN AND URBAN AREAS WHEN COMPARED TO REHOMING. TNR INVOLVES THE TRAPPING, STERILIZATION, VACCINATION AND RELEASE OF HEALTHY COMMUNITY CATS. INITIALLY DEVELOPED FOR FERAL OR UNADOPTABLE CATS, TNR HAS NOW BEEN PROVEN TO BE SUCCESSFUL FOR FRIENDLY, STRAY CATS THAT WOULD OTHERWISE OUTNUMBER POTENTIAL ADOPTIVE HOMES.**

	2024		2025	
Location	Number of TNR Cats	Estimated Number of Prevented Kittens	Number of TNR Cats	Estimated Number of Prevented Kittens
Ottawa	233	699	306	918
Manhattan	64	192	113	339
Emporia	7	21	14	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>912</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>1,299</b>

All surgeries of shelter pets and TNR cats are performed by K-State Veterinary Students (pictured below) at no cost to our shelters. These surgeries provide valuable experience to the students who would otherwise graduate with limited exposure to the complexities and pressures of these common surgical procedures.



# VACCINE/MICROCHIP CLINICS

**OPEN TO RESIDENTS OF ANY COMMUNITY, PET OWNERS LINE UP BY THE HUNDREDS TO RECEIVE FREE VACCINES AND MICROCHIPS FOR THE PETS THEY LOVE. BY VACCINATING PERSONAL PETS AGAINST LIFE-THREATENING DISEASES THE HEALTH OF COMMUNITY PETS AND THE SHELTERS THEY MAY ENTER WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED.**

	Pets that received free vaccines and microchips	
Location	2024	2025
Ottawa	386	256
Manhattan	925	561
Emporia	182	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,493</b>	<b>888</b>



K-State students and faculty provide these services in partnership with Prairie Paws. The students learn important technical skills required for vaccinations, but most importantly they gain valuable experience interfacing with under-served pet owners. Most pets have never seen a veterinarian prior to attending one of these clinics. While it looks like the number of pets that received these services decreased, every pet that participates in low-cost spay/neuter is also vaccinated and microchipped for free.



# VOLUNTEERS & FOSTERS

	Number of Hours Volunteered	
	2024	2025
Ottawa	6,266	7,587
Manhattan	1662	2,965
Emporia	226	656
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,154</b>	<b>11,208</b>

## VOLUNTEERS DONATE TIME TO HELP WITH:

- Dog-walking
- Laundry and dishes
- Cat cleaning/socialization
- Assisting with events
- Hosting community groups
- Transporting pets
- Photography
- Bathing Dogs
- Assisting with adoptions
- Training
- Animal Enrichment
- Onboard new volunteers
- Sorting donations
- Recycling cans
- Receiving donations
- Making repairs
- Shoveling snow
- Mowing
- Shooting videos
- Promoting adoptable pets
- Admin & Data Entry
- Visiting Assisted-Living
- Trapping cats
- Weed-eating

Foster homes are essential for providing the appropriate care for shelter pets that can't be cared for at the shelter. Tiny newborn kittens and puppies, nursing mothers and animals recovering from medical procedures are just some of the pets that spend time in foster homes. Foster parents provide all of the care, socialization and supervision and Prairie Paws provides all of the food, supplies and veterinary care. Without foster homes, our most vulnerable shelter pets would not survive.



Location	2024			2025		
	Number of Foster Families	Number of Animals Fostered	Total Days pets spent in foster	Number of Foster Families	Number of Animals Fostered	Total Days pets spent in foster
Ottawa	45	363	7,458	26	277	5,067
Manhattan	22	104	1,937	58	155	2,521
Emporia	3	3	16	22	51	568

# HOW DO WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

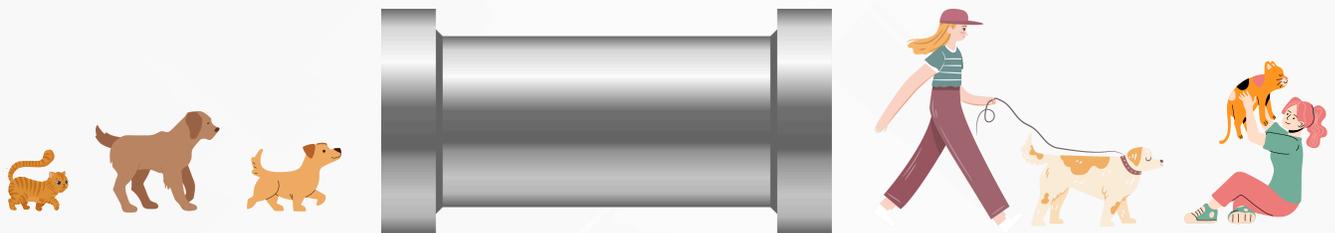
**SERVING AS MANY ANIMALS AS POSSIBLE IS IMPORTANT WHEN ACHIEVING OUR MISSION, BUT HOW DO WE KNOW IF INCREASED VOLUME IS LOWERING OUR STANDARD OF CARE, OR HAVING A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE ANIMALS?**

## LENGTH OF STAY

The Length of Stay (LOS) is the average number of days an animal spends at the shelter between intake and outcome. A low LOS allows for more animals to be housed while utilizing fewer resources. Most relinquished pets require veterinary procedures such as spay/neuter before they can be adopted out. Scheduling those relinquishments appropriately reduces the number of days those animals will consume a kennel. Alternately if spay/neuter capacity is low, animals that don't require spay/neuter can be admitted on those days. Another scenario is the pet is too young for spay/neuter (less than 2 months) and those can be scheduled at a later date to serve other animals first.

Location	LOS in days	
	2024	2025
Ottawa	26	23
Manhattan	14.5	13
Emporia	20	18

**IF YOU THINK OF AN ANIMAL SHELTER AS A PIPE, ANIMALS ENTER ONE END AND LEAVE FROM THE OTHER. THE LENGTH OF THE PIPE IS LENGTH OF STAY, AND ANIMALS THAT ARE IN THE PIPE ARE CONSUMING RESOURCES. A SHORT PIPE CAN SAVE MORE ANIMALS THAN A LONG PIPE!**



## LIVE RELEASE RATE

A shelter's Live Release Rate (LRR) is the percentage of animals that experience a live outcome. A LRR of 90% is the defining metric used by most organizations to establish that a shelter is No-Kill. When calculating LRR only animals that are sheltered are counted (animals who participate in low-cost spay/neuter or vaccine clinics are not faced with euthanasia and would artificially increase this value). Animals that are ordered to be euthanized by a judge or are elected to be euthanized by the owner are also excluded from this calculation. Some efforts to increase the LRR can cause LOS to dramatically increase, which would lower a shelter's capacity to care for a high volume of pets. The challenge is to manage these metrics holistically, and in balance with each other.

Location	LRR	
	2024	2025
Ottawa	93.5%	94.0%
Manhattan	96.7%	95.4%
Emporia	95.3%	96.7

# FUNDRAISING

## BOW MEOW/MANHATTAN GALA



Our main events of the year, our Galas include exciting live and silent auctions, along with a catered dinner and live music.

## GOLF TOURNAMENT



Our Golf Tourney is always so much fun. Our golf teams provide a huge amount of support while enjoying some time outdoors!

## BARKTOBERFEST



Our Barktoberfest is our annual CrossFit competition, allowing athletes to compete for the gold while supporting our shelter.

## WE RELY ON YOUR SUPPORT!

Prairie Paws is primarily funded through donor support. The impact your gifts make on our organization cannot be overstated.

Whether you give through events, direct mail, in memory of a loved one, or recurring donations, you are the driving force behind Prairie Paws' mission.



## SCAVENGER HUNT

## DISC FOR DOGS DISC-GOLF TOURNEY



## SUBARU LOVES PETS



## POOCH PLAYOFFS



## PICKLEBALL



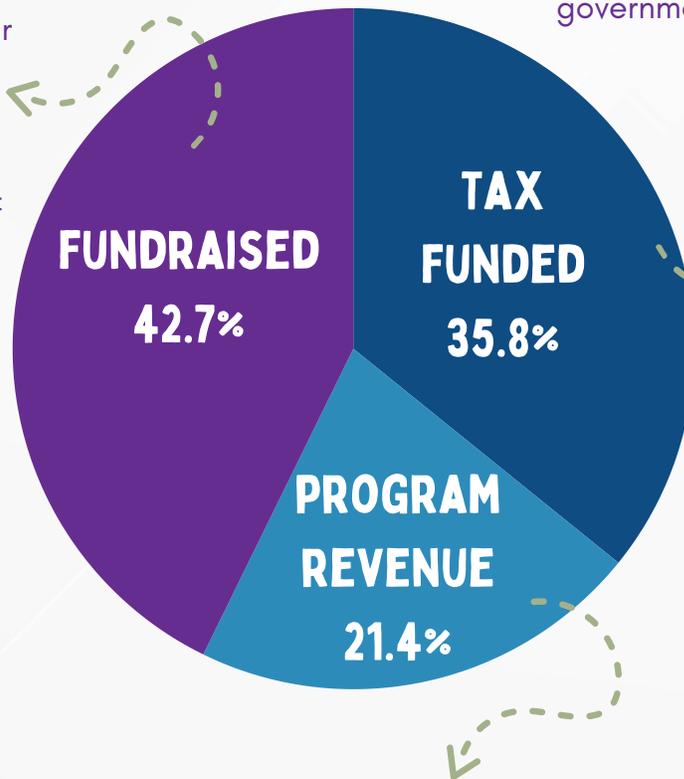
## GRAVEL GRIND

# EXPENSES

Location	Ottawa	Manhattan	Emporia	Total
Payroll	\$461,276.40	\$358,770.53	\$205,011.73	\$1,025,058.67
Operating	\$384,190.05	\$276,624.68	\$107,690.14	\$745,217.50
Total	\$845,466.45	\$635,395.21	\$312,701.87	\$1,793,563.53

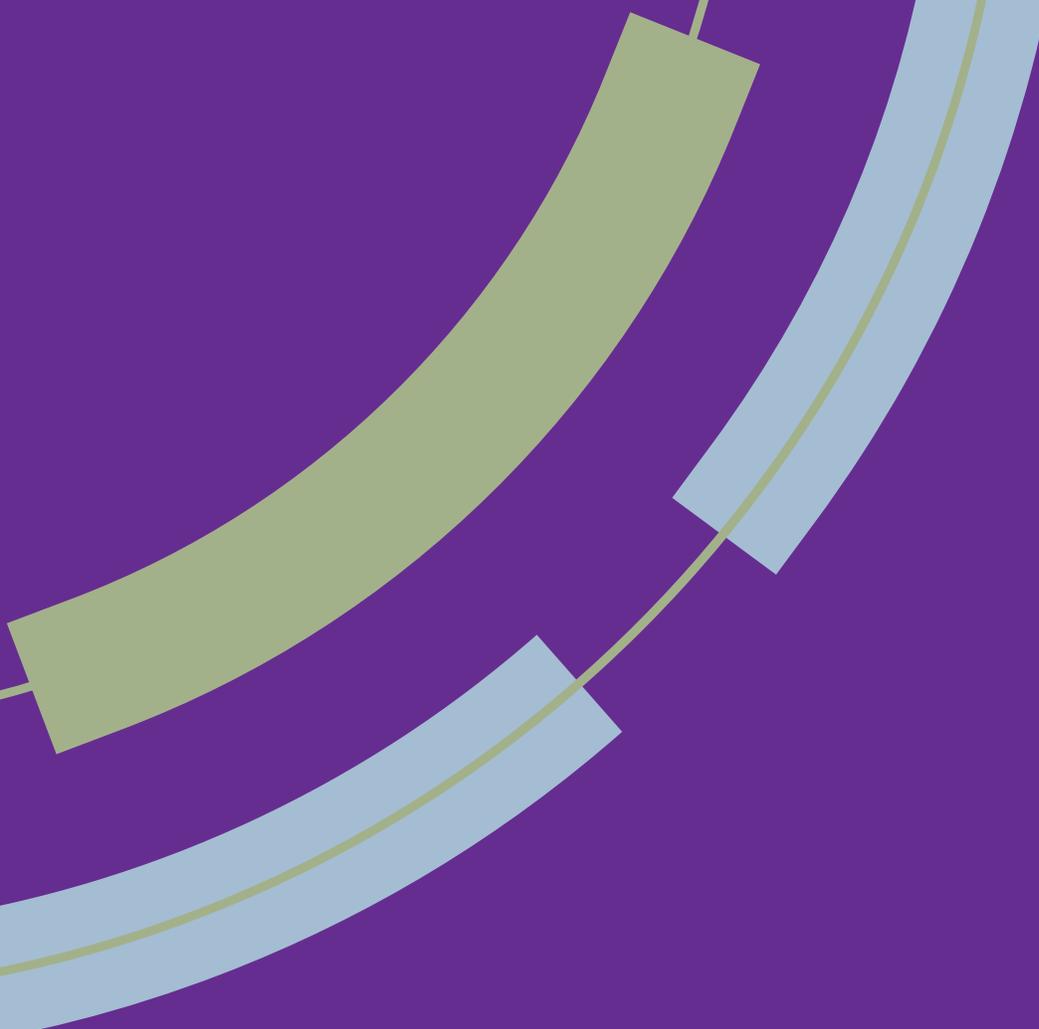
# REVENUE

If you have ever attended an event, responded to one of our mailers, clicked on our donation links, or donated in someone's memory you are one of the 3,500 donors that support Prairie Paws every year.



142,000 Kansas tax-payers support Prairie Paws through their local government who contract with our animal shelters.

Program Revenue combines the revenue collected at the time of adoption, reclaim, retail, registration and spay/neuter fees.



## OTTAWA

3173 Hwy K68  
Ottawa, KS, 66067  
(785)242-2967  
info@prairiepaws.org



## MANHATTAN

605 Levee Dr  
Manhattan, KS, 66502  
(785)587-2783  
mhk@prairiepaws.org



## EMPORIA

1216 Hatcher St  
Emporia, KS, 66801  
(620)340-6345  
emporia@prairiepaws.org



[www.prairiepaws.org](http://www.prairiepaws.org)