

2021

Annual Report

Tuscaloosa
Spay Neuter
Incentive Program
(TSNIP)

www.TSNIP.org
(205) 349-8111
P.O. Box 21287
Tuscaloosa, AL 35402





2021 TSNIP Annual Report

From the President of the Board

I am so encouraged by the progress we made in 2021, especially with the continued challenges due to COVID-19 concerns. We are so fortunate to have all the volunteers and veterinarians who generously contributed their time and efforts to make our mission achievable. And of course, none of this could come together without the dedicated work of our program coordinator, Britni Hood. She makes all the moving parts fit together so well, and that is no easy feat.

All of these achievements would not be possible without the financial support from individuals and government sources. Funding TSNIP is essential for providing services to the citizens of Tuscaloosa County, City of Tuscaloosa, and City of Northport. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank you for your continued support.

Thank you all!

Beth Bobo



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About TSNIP

The Tuscaloosa Spay Neuter Incentive Program (TSNIP) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to reducing the population of unwanted animals in Tuscaloosa.

Fewer unwanted animals improves public health, reduces costs of animal control, sheltering, and euthanasia, and reduces suffering and disease in Tuscaloosa's animal population. We have been focused on using trap-neuter-return (TNR) to reduce the population of feral cats and also on educating students and community members about the importance of spay and neuter for all pets since TSNIP was founded in 2013.

TSNIP was started when concerned citizens approached the City of Tuscaloosa to ask for a solution to the rising euthanasia rates at Metro Animal Shelter. The rising euthanasia rates were a concern for the cities of Tuscaloosa and Northport, and Tuscaloosa County, as well. Increasing animal intake and euthanasia at Metro Animal Shelter is costly for our community. There are many animal lovers in our community, as we can see from the strong rescue groups and hard-working volunteers here. However, feral cats don't qualify for most rescue groups. And bringing feral cats into a shelter doesn't help - these cats don't do well in captivity and are not socialized well enough to be adoptable.

TSNIP works to fill a gap between rescues and animal control. With TNR, TSNIP can effectively reduce feral cat reproduction. This solves both problems - the feral cats don't stay in the shelter, stressed, upset, and waiting to be euthanized. Instead, they are fixed and returned to their home area, where they will block the cycle of reproduction. This means fewer cats and kittens flooding Metro Animal Shelter, Humane Society of West Alabama, and Callie's Place for adoption. The cats that do come in have a better chance of adoption and good outcomes. TSNIP also works to educate our community, about pet overpopulation and the importance of spay and neuter for all pets.

Our Mission

The Tuscaloosa Spay & Neuter Incentive Program (TSNIP) serves with the mission to reduce the unwanted pet population in the cities of Tuscaloosa and Northport and Tuscaloosa County through community education and feral cat population management.

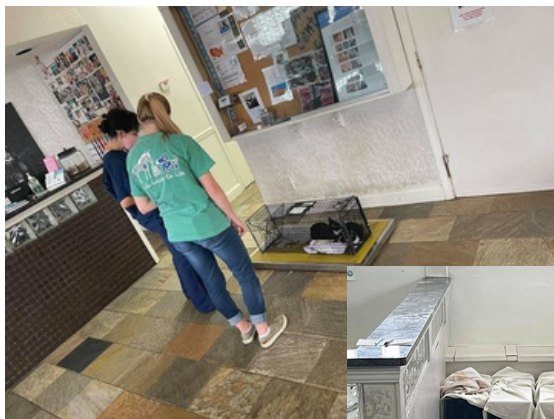


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What is Trap-Neuter-Return?

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is the process of trapping feral cats, having them spayed or neutered (“fixed”), and returning them to their original location. In our program, the cats also receive a rabies vaccine and have their left ear cropped flat to show that they are fixed.

Fixed cats go back to their original location - this is important. Fixed cats become good neighbors. They still catch rats and snakes, but they are no longer fighting and howling at night, and are less likely to spray to mark their territory. Even better, they guard the resources there, so new cats don’t move in, reproduce, and create a new “cat problem”.



*Spay Day: August 29, 2021
Animal Medical Center
Two vets and ten vet techs donated
their Sunday to perform spay/neuter
surgeries on 22 feral cats.*





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How does TNR make a difference?

TSNIP started trapping in the spring of 2014, when Tuscaloosa clearly had a stray and feral cat problem. The Tuscaloosa Metro Animal Shelter (“Metro”) euthanized over 1,800 cats and kittens that year, in addition to the many they adopted out.

It’s easy to see where these cats came from: Using data from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) pet ownership survey, U.S. Census data, and PetSmart’s Pets for Life survey on spay-neuter rates, we can calculate how many pet cats live here, and how many can reproduce. Because there are so many roaming, unfixed pet cats, removing feral cats doesn’t stop cat reproduction on the streets.

We find that the City of Tuscaloosa has approximately 16,000 pet cats. About 5,000 of these are NOT spayed or neutered and can produce kittens. Tuscaloosa County as a whole has approximately 33,000 pet cats. Over 8,000 of these are NOT spayed or neutered and can produce kittens. An average female cat has 4-6 kittens per litter and can easily have 2-3 litters every year. Most households will struggle to find homes for that many kittens; some will end up on the streets.

TSNIP’s TNR program works to stop feral cat reproduction and gets adoptable cats back to adoption channels and off the street. TSNIP has worked to stabilize Tuscaloosa’s feral cat population since 2014. In 2021, after 7 years of TNR, Metro euthanized 40 cats and 81 kittens, rather than the 956 cats and 902 kittens that were euthanized in 2014 (reductions of 96% and 91%, respectively).

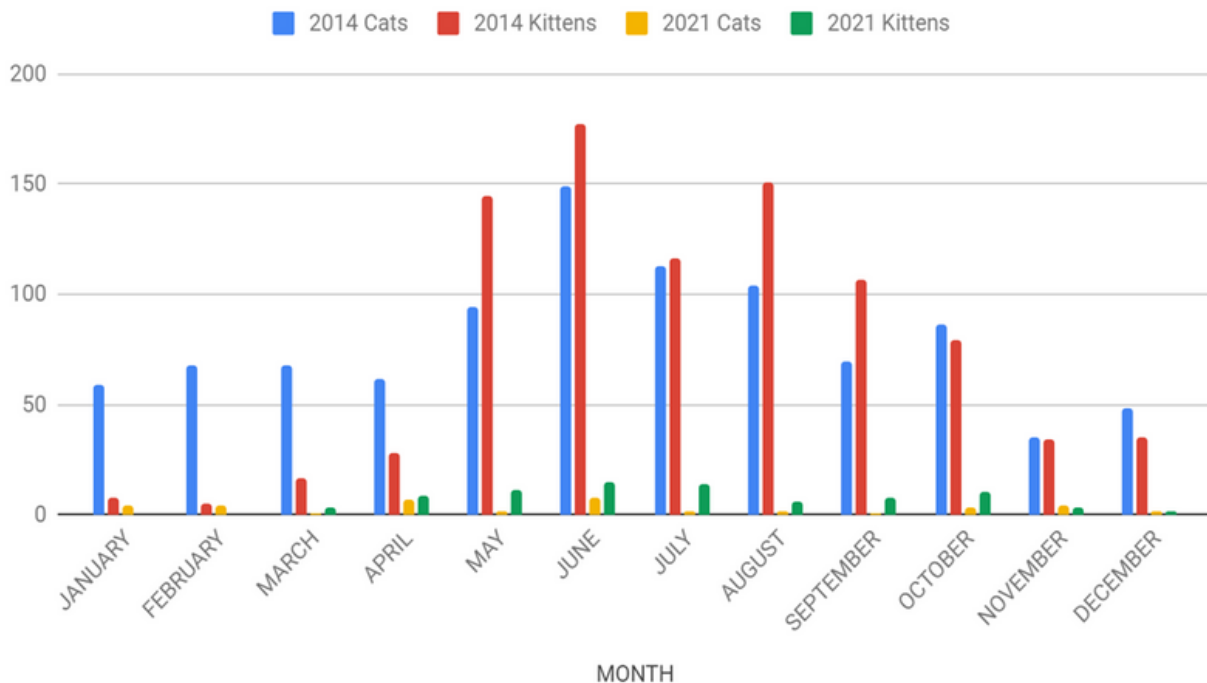
A tipped left ear is an indication that a feral cat has been spayed or neutered.





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2014 Cats, 2014 Kittens, 2021 Cats and 2021 Kittens



2014 to 2021 comparison:
Tuscaloosa Metro Animal Shelter euthanasia rates

Feral cat intake has also dropped dramatically from 698 in 2015 to 256 in 2021. Metro has added many great foster and adoption programs that have helped to reduce euthanasia, but this shows that feral cat populations are truly reduced as well.

Moreover, TNR works best when the feral cats are returned to their original location. This stops the cycle of new cats moving in, having kittens, and needing to be removed. So when feral cats are brought to Metro, TSNIP takes them to be fixed, and returns them to their location. This does two things: It stops feral cat reproduction in our community, to slow the growth of feral cat populations. It also opens space at Metro, so the shelter can focus on adoptable cats. Keeping cages open gives Metro time to find adopters so that cats don't have to be euthanized for lack of space.

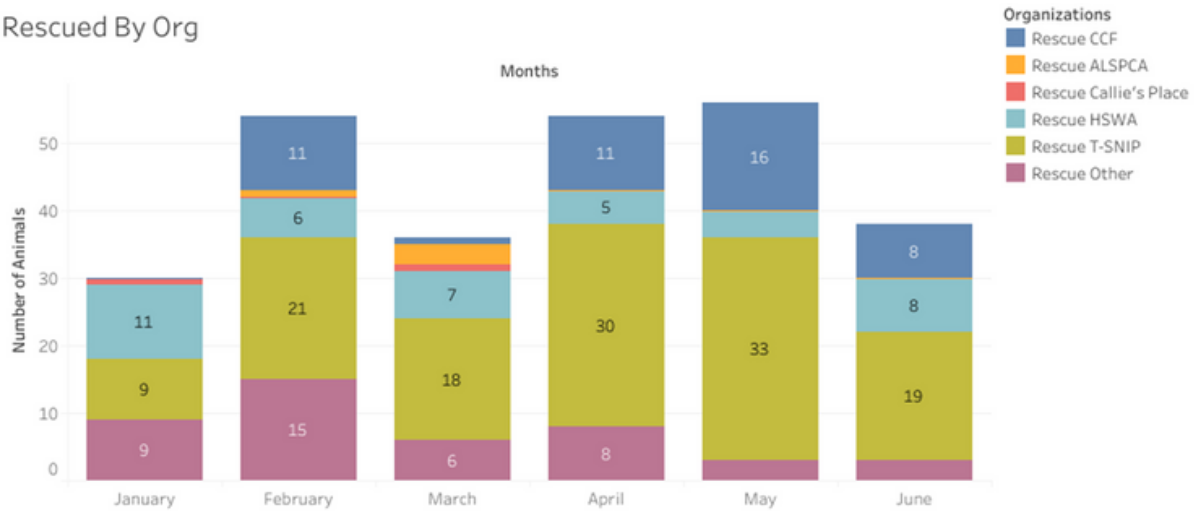


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This 2018 graph from the Metro Animal Shelter shows that TSNIP (shown in green) took 10-30 cats from the shelter each month:

A comparison of rescue groups. Currently T-SNIP has pulled the most animals from the shelter as part of its Trap-Neuter-Release program in Tuscaloosa City and Northport.

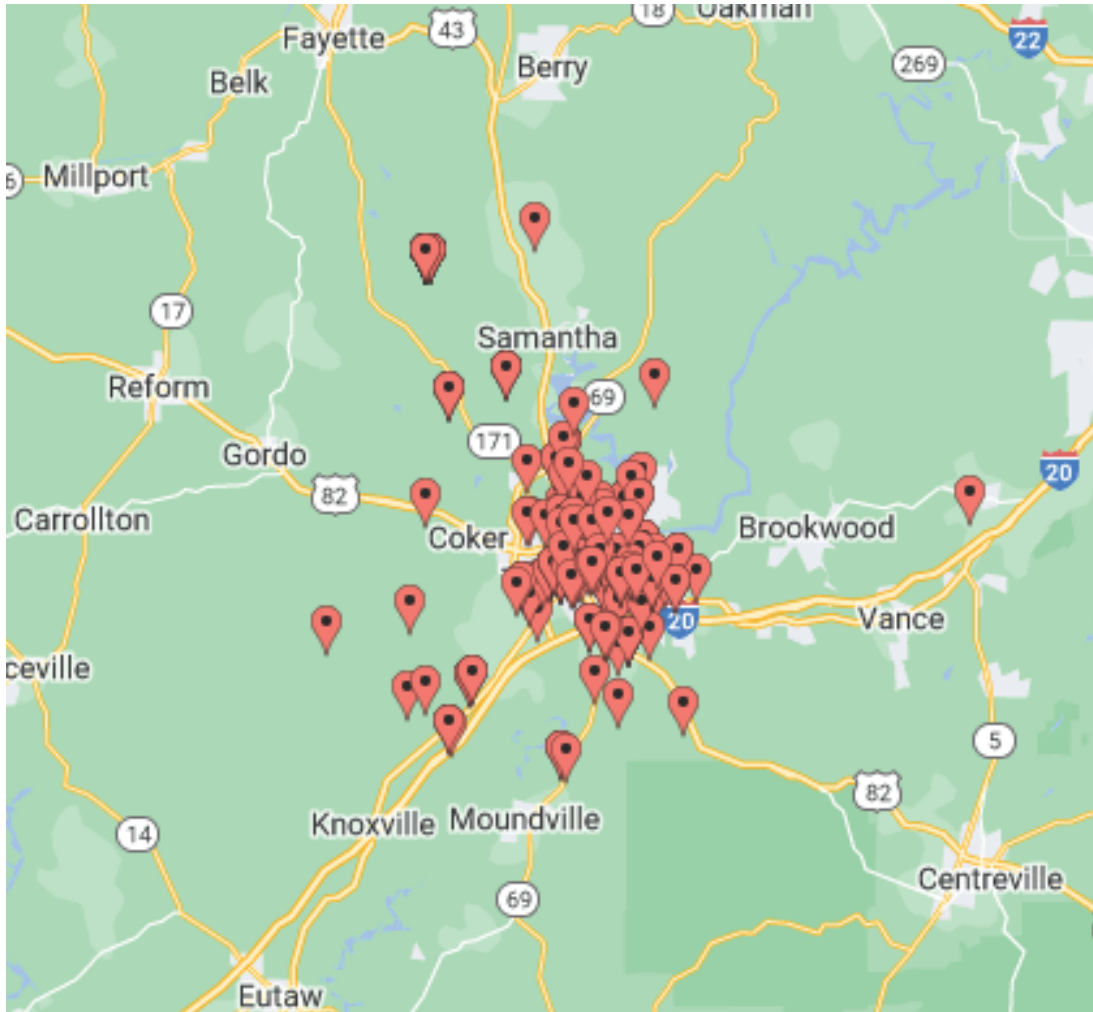
Rescued By Org





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Each red pin on the map below indicates a location where a feral cat was trapped and entered into the TSNIP program through Metro Animal Shelter in 2021.





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TSNIP as a community resource

It is estimated there are 5,000 to 8,000 unfixed pet cats in the Tuscaloosa Metro region. Statistics show that most of these breeding pet cats are owned by households with incomes under the federal poverty line. These families do not have the resources to fix their cats, or to house the kittens. Some of these kittens end up on the streets, developing into unsocialized cats and subsequently producing kittens that also become feral cats.

TSNIP collaborates with Metro Animal Shelter and our local rescue groups to manage feral cat problems. Our hotline gets calls about pet cats and dogs as well as feral cats. We refer people to the impressive spay-neuter programs run by Metro Animal Shelter, Alabama Spay Neuter in Irondale, and Cans for Kritters in Brookwood to get help with fixing their pets. We connect people with rescues like the Humane Society of West Alabama, Canine Compassion Fund, and No Greater Love when they need help with placing animals. We are fortunate in Tuscaloosa to have a strong network of rescue groups and a creative shelter as partners.

TSNIP fixed 696 cats in 2021. This work could not happen without the hard work of concerned citizens who volunteer their time to monitor and trap feral cats; the generous support of local veterinary clinics, who perform surgical procedures at a discounted rate; the collaboration of Tuscaloosa Metro Animal Shelter, and the hard-working officers responsible for Animal Control throughout Tuscaloosa and Northport; and especially funding from the City of Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, and the City of Northport. This funding is key to providing a county-wide TNR program and education for our community. With a consistent presence, we have been steadily reducing Tuscaloosa's feral cat populations and euthanasia rates and plan to continue this work.

TSNIP also often acts as a liaison between communities and local Animal Control officers. TSNIP staff and board members meet with animal control departments to provide training and updated information about TNR efforts and situations in which colonies need to be rehomed due to dangerous situations.

In addition, TSNIP often acts as a referral center for local citizens seeking spay/neuter resources for their own pets.



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Feral colony support

TSNIP provides support to feral cat colonies by serving as a resource for citizens who help to care for these cats. TSNIP provides access to several types of cat traps for volunteers working to spay and neuter cats in these colonies, and provides weekly spay/neuter appointment availability, as well as organizing transportation resources for these efforts.

TSNIP occasionally provides food and feeding coverage for individuals caring for colonies, and always works to educate the community about the best ways to provide care safely, how to trap cats for TNR, how to identify and interact with cats and kittens that are not feral and might be successfully re-homed.





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Creating alternative living options for feral cats

2021 saw the development of a new effort to rehome feral cats that could not stay in their original location due to redevelopment. With the McFarland Mall scheduled for demolition, an effort was made to relocate the cats living in the colony at that location. Thanks to the efforts of the TSNIP Program Coordinator, a legion of volunteer networking, and social media efforts, several farmers and residents in more rural areas throughout the community stepped forward to accept these feral cats. Thus began the cats' new careers as barn cats.

Rehoming a feral cat is not for the faint of heart... Trapping can not begin until new homes are confirmed, and then it can take weeks to trap these smart and savvy cats. Once at their new location, it can take weeks for them to adjust to the new environment and any other cats already in residence. But this effort has proven that happy endings are possible and make all the hard work worthwhile.



*A new life and career...
(Top to bottom) Iris, Brother,
Sister, and BB in their new
jobs as farm cats. All were
relocated from areas where
they were in danger of harm
due to demolition or other
environmental threats.*



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Future efforts

TSNIP will continue our education program to encourage citizens to value spaying and neutering all pets.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed a lot of the Education Committee's plans throughout 2021. Dr. Jeff Parker's University of Alabama class developed a curriculum to discuss spay/neuter and plight of unwanted animals, but they were not able to host any outreach events in 2021. Programs are planned for 2022, and will be implemented as health guidelines and school regulations allow.

In 2021, we worked to develop a golf tournament fundraiser, Tee Off for TSNIP. The tournament date was set for March 24, 2022. We hope to continue this as an annual fundraiser, and hope to use these funds to support increased spay and neuter services and increase our TNR numbers.

Looking further forward, TSNIP is exploring ways to provide accessible spay and neuter services to pets and their families in under-served communities in Tuscaloosa County. As long as there are free-roaming, unfixed pets, there will be unplanned puppies and kittens. Private citizens are rarely prepared or equipped to spay and neuter entire litters of unexpected animals.

TSNIP is also creating a greater social media presence on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. These efforts provide education and information to the community at large, and also provides opportunities to suggest local resources to community members reaching out on these platforms seeking help with cats and kittens in their area.

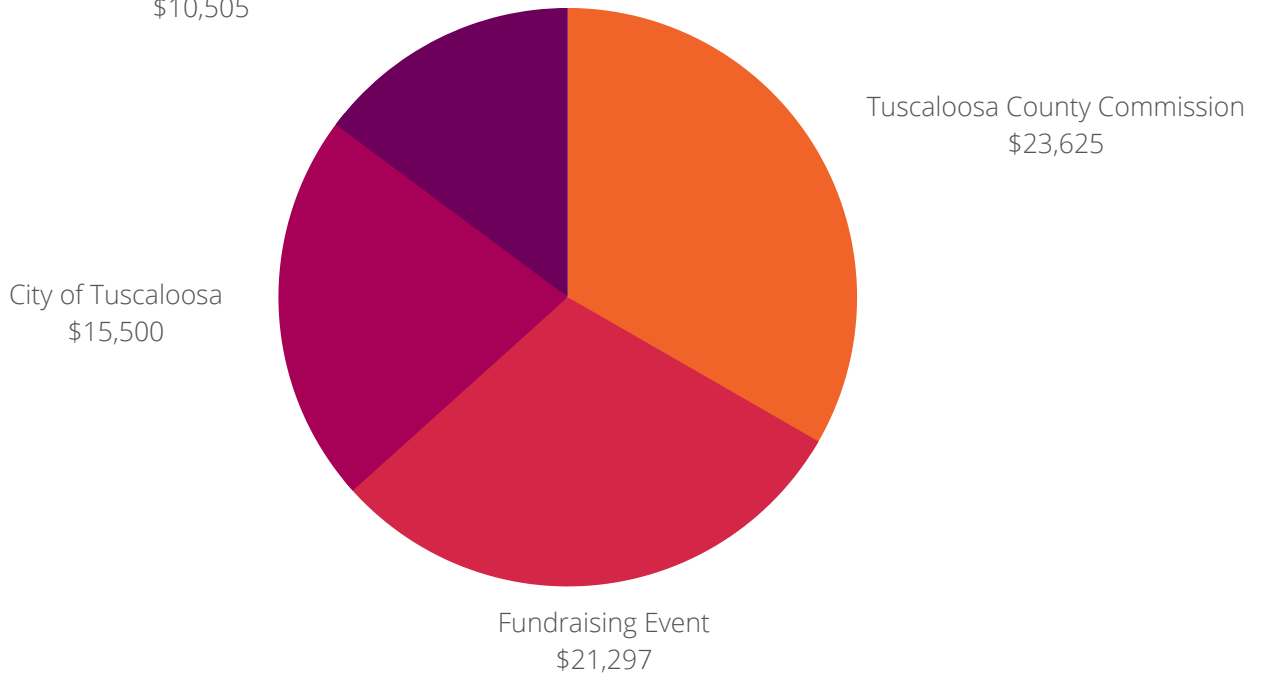


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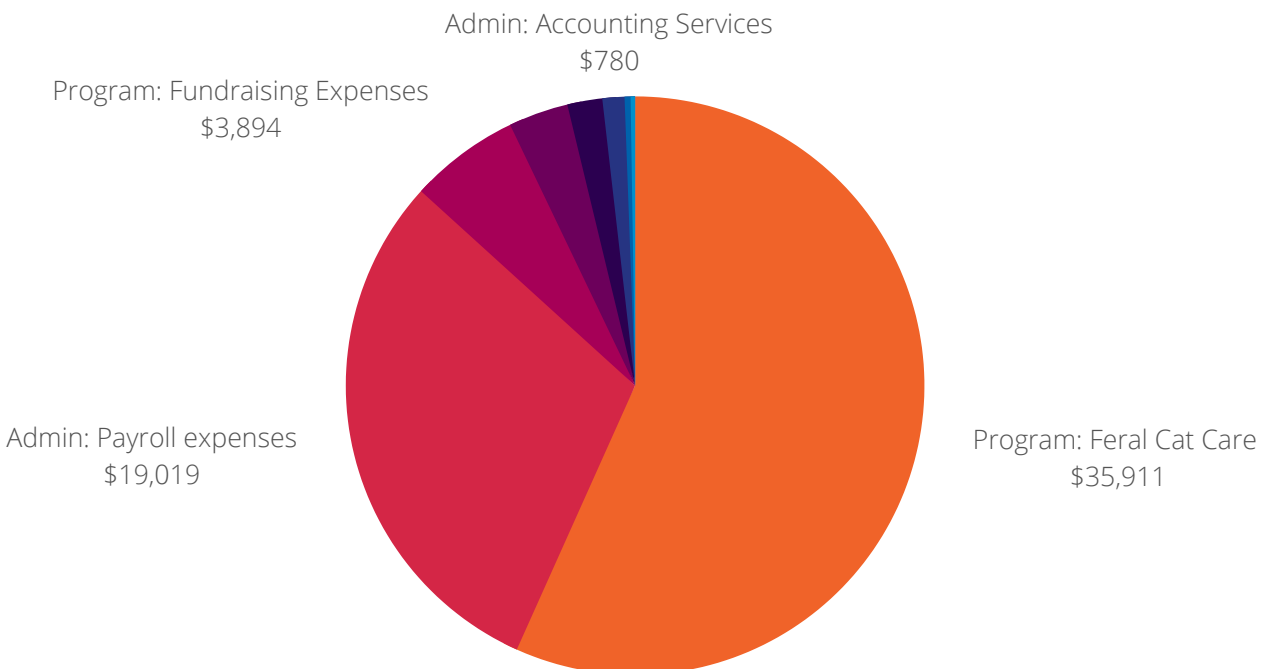
Financial report

Funding & Contributions

Individual & Business Contributions
\$10,505



Expenses*



*Due to COVID-19 safety precautions, no education expenses were incurred in 2021.



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How to support TSNIP

DONATE

With support from generous donors, grants, and fundraising activities, TSNIP funds spay/neuter surgeries and cat care for the cats trapped by TSNIP and volunteers. In addition, TSNIP is able to assist with need-based funding for surgeries, transportation, and community outreach to neighborhoods with the highest unwanted pet populations, including feral cat colonies in the hearts of our cities and towns.

To donate online via PayPal, please click the button below:



To donate via check or money order, please mail your donation to:

TSNIP
P.O. Box 21287
Tuscaloosa, AL 35402

VOLUNTEER

TSNIP relies on volunteers to trap cats for TNR and relocation, as well as feeding colonies of feral cats throughout Tuscaloosa and Northport. We are also seeking individuals who might be interested in serving on the TSNIP Board of Directors.

If you're interested in learning more about volunteering with TSNIP, please visit <http://www.tsnip.org/volunteer.html> for more information.

SUPPORT THE TSNIP ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Tee Off for TSNIP is an annual golf tournament fundraiser benefitting TSNIP. For information about sponsoring the tournament or registering a team, visit <http://www.tsnip.org/teeofffortsnip2023.html>!



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Many thanks to our 2021 Veterinary Partners



Alabama Spay Neuter
(205) 956-0012
www.alspay.org



Alberta Veterinary Clinic
(205) 556-2666
www.albertavet.com



Animal Medical Center
(205) 758-7295
www.amcpets.vet



Averette Veterinary Hospital, P.C.
(205) 752-7444



Bryant Drive Animal Hospital
(205) 758-5520
www.bryantdriveanimalhospital.com



Indian Hills Animal Clinic
(205) 345-1231
www.indianhillsac.com



May Veterinary Clinics
(205) 339-3200
www.mayvetnorth.com



McAdory Veterinary Clinic
(205) 424-7387
www.mcadoryvet.com



Ramey Veterinary Hospital
(205) 556-2626
www.rameyveterinaryhospital.com



Tidmore Veterinary Hospital
(205) 339-5555
www.tidmorevet.com



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Committees

Animal Wellness
Lucy Roberts, DVM

Education
Jeffrey G. Parker, Chair

Finance
Charity Golden, Chair

Events
Heather MacLeod, Chair

If you are interested in learning about joining TSNIP's volunteer Board of Directors, please contact Beth Bobo.