

2022

Annual Report

Tuscaloosa
Spay Neuter
Incentive Program
(TSNIP)

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





2022 TSNIP Annual Report

From the President of the Board

TSNIP continued in 2022 to make strides in reducing and managing the communities of feral cats throughout the City of Tuscaloosa, City of Northport, and Tuscaloosa County.

Through our education and community outreach programs more citizens are aware of how Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) works and the benefits of stabilizing feral cat populations using this humane method. This work is accomplished by the generosity of volunteers who contribute their time trapping and monitoring colonies and the of local veterinary clinics who provide surgical procedures at a discount. This is all accomplished by the efforts of our Program Coordinator, Britni Hood.

I am very thankful for the funding support from individual citizens, the City of Tuscaloosa, City of Northport, and The Tuscaloosa County Commission, as well as businesses and individuals who sponsored our second successful Tee Off for TSNIP golf tournament fundraiser. I am hopeful that with this additional source of funding we will be able to move forward with a program that will improve access to spay/neuter services for pet animals to citizens in need.

I am very fortunate to work with my fellow Board members who are all hands-on participants in TSNIP projects. I appreciate the time they generously volunteer to TSNIP's mission.

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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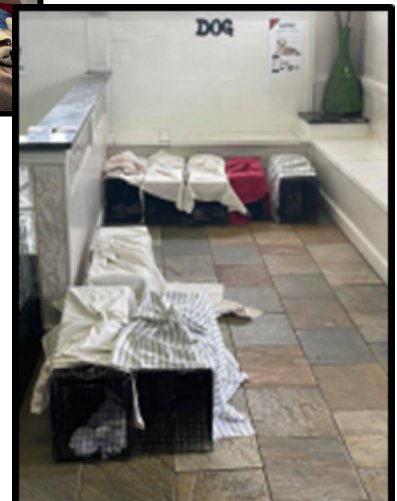
What is Trap-Neuter-Return?

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: November 13, 2022
Animal Medical Center
Four vets, two senior vet students,
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.

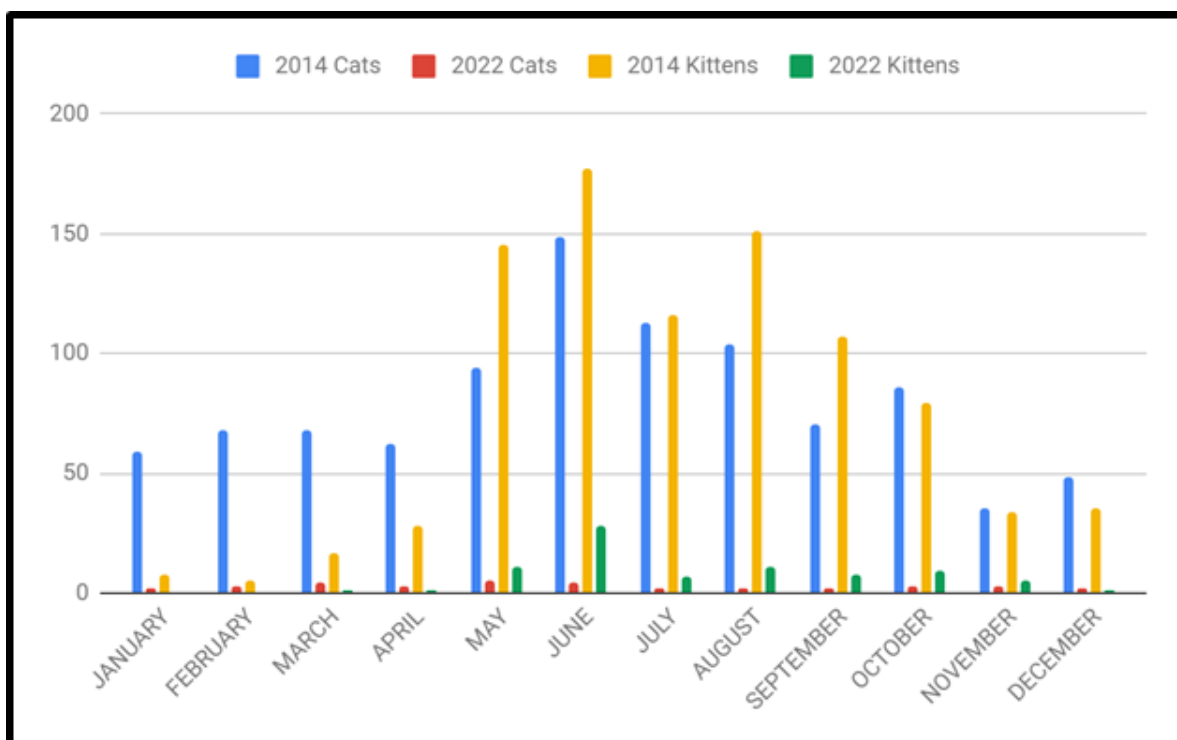
TSNIP’s TNR program works to stop feral cat reproduction and gets adoptable cats back to adoption channels and off the street. TSNIP has worked to stabilize Tuscaloosa’s feral cat population since 2014. In 2022, after 8 years of TNR, Metro euthanized 35 cats and 82 kittens, rather than the 956 cats and 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 to 2022 comparison:
Tuscaloosa Metro Animal Shelter euthanasia rates*

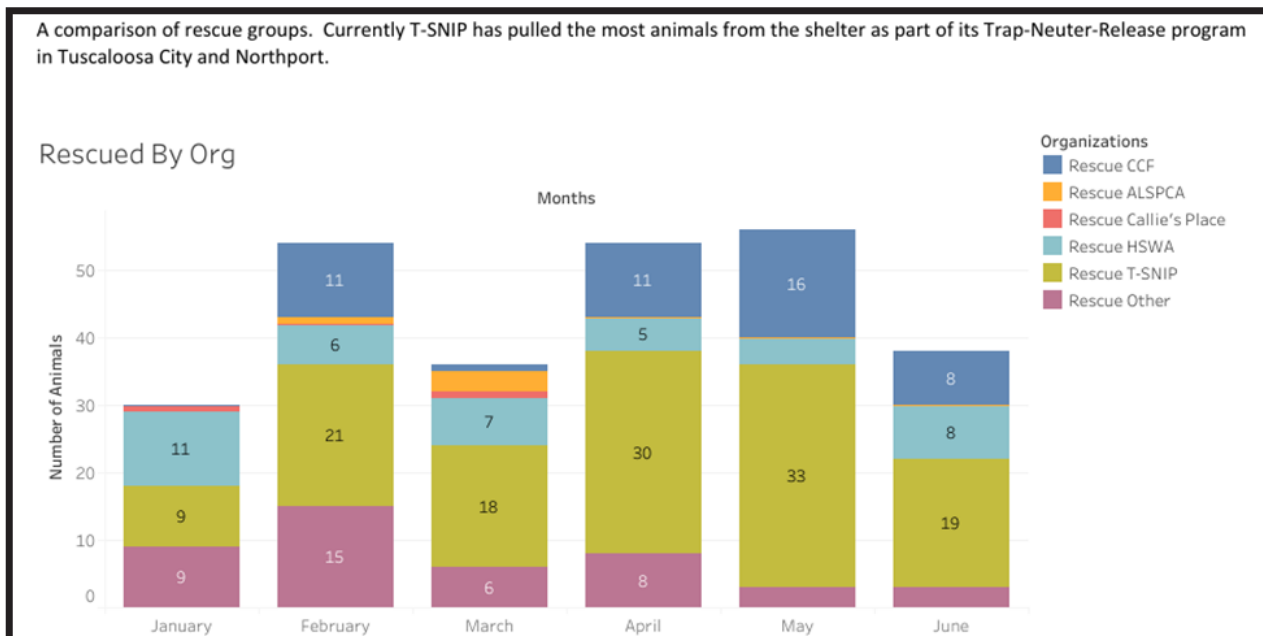
Feral cat intake has also dropped dramatically from 698 in 2015 to 246 in 2022 (a 65% reduction). Metro has added many great foster and adoption programs that have helped to reduce euthanasia, but this shows that feral cat populations are truly reduced as well.

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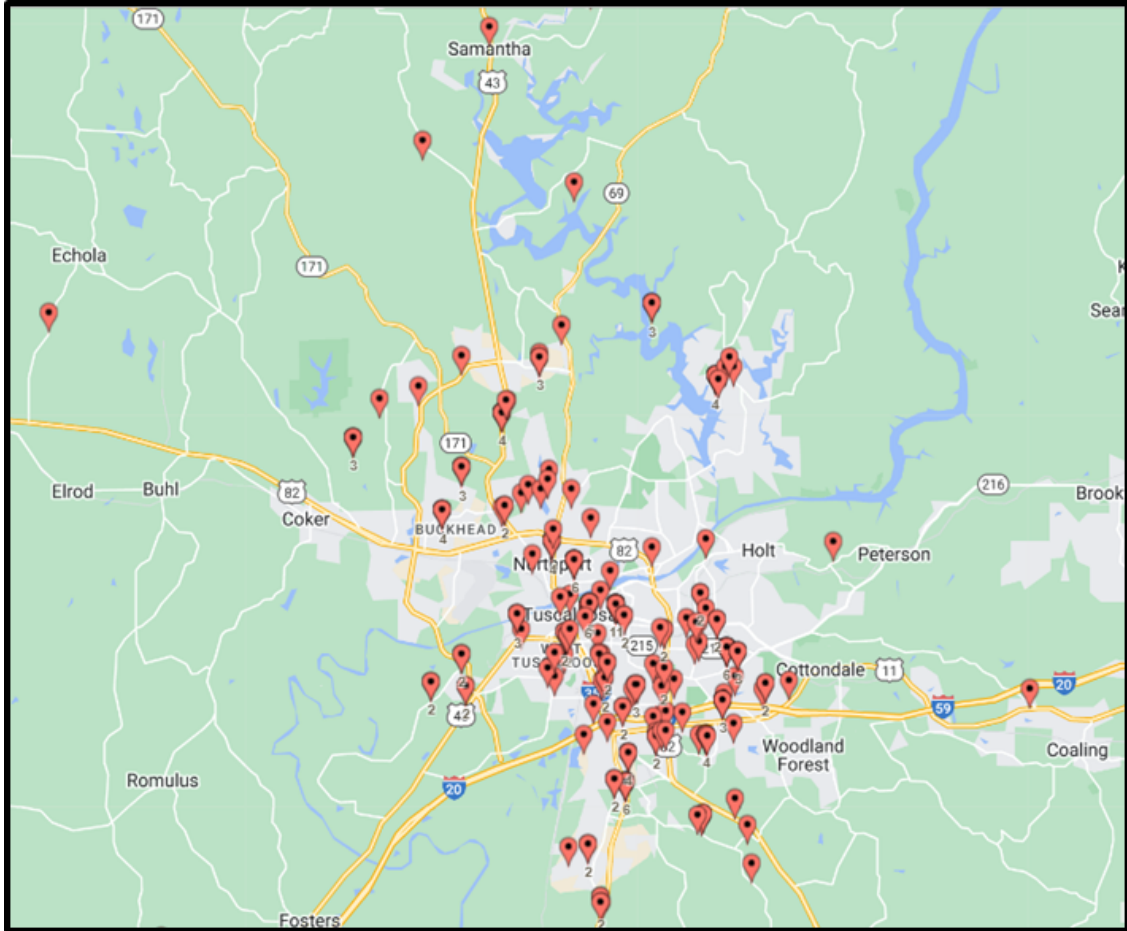
This 2018 graph from the Metro Animal Shelter shows that TSNIP (shown in green) took 10-30 cats from the shelter each month:





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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 2022.





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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 700 cats in 2022. 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 city- and 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.



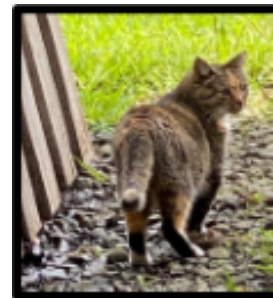


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Creating alternative living options for feral cats

2022 saw the continued efforts to rehome feral cats that could not stay in their original locations. Thanks to the efforts of the TSNIP Program Coordinator, a legion of volunteer networking, and social media efforts, several farmers, sanctuaries, 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 in 2021 from areas
where they were in danger
of harm due to demolition or
other environmental threats.*



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Community education & outreach

2022 outreach and community education featured several smaller public relations initiatives and one signature large event directed at educating children. As always, public outreach and youth community education is done in collaboration with Dr. Jeffrey G. Parker, a professor of child psychology at the University of Alabama, and the volunteer assistance of 20 college students enrolled in a specialized service learning course at the University.

Efforts this years were done in collaboration with 45 middle school students from the Tuscaloosa Middle Magnet School. These included an education booth featuring materials and presentation on the management of feral cat populations through TNR at a local supermarket and the creation of laptop stickers for distribution on campus. The signature event was a daylong event hosted at the Children's Hands on Museum called "TTown Underground". Middle school and college students developed a dozen interactive and arts & crafts exhibits scattered throughout CHOM. Throughout the day, community visitors learned about issues such as the reproductive escalation of reproductively intact cats, the life of and respect for feral animals, responsible pet ownership, and how TNR supports healthy community cat colonies.

4/23/2022

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CELEBRATING AND UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD OF TUSCALOOSA'S "UNDERGROUND CITY" OF CATS

Educational exhibits, art, and interactive activities on responsible pet ownership and the lives of stray and feral cats

CREATED BY CHILDREN FOR CHILDREN
and hosted by middle school students from Tuscaloosa Magnet Middle School

Tuscaloosa Children's Hands On Museum
All day 9:30am to 4:00pm

Support from Tuscaloosa Spay/Neuter Incentive Program and The University of Alabama



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First annual "Tee Off for TSNIP" fundraiser

March 2022 saw the first annual Tee Off for TSNIP golf tournament fundraiser, hosted at Ol' Colony Golf Complex. With over 30 local businesses from across Tuscaloosa County sponsoring the event and more than 60 golfers registering to play, TSNIP was able to raise over \$29,000. After event expenses, the net result was \$18,843.

TSNIP is very grateful to Tide Management for being the tournament's primary sponsor. Other sponsors included:

- Aspire Physical Recovery Center of West Alabama, LLC
- Catch 22
- Emergi-Care Clinic, P.C.
- Renasant Bank
- Tuscaloosa Internal Medicine, LLC
- Tuscom
- Two Men and a Truck
- Blue Moon Properties
- Druid City Vital Care
- New Perspectives Counseling & Consulting, LLC
- Tuscaloosa Title Company, Inc.
- Armstrong Law, LLC
- The Builders Group
- Druid City Properties
- Equity Title Company
- Hardin & Hughes
- J & P Construction Co., Inc.
- Keith and Company, LLC
- The Legacy Connection
- Mainstreet Builders
- Misc. Metals & Fabrication, LLC
- Neel-Schaffer
- Toulmin Kitchen & Bath
- Town & Country Ford
- Tuscaloosa Association of Realtors & West Alabama MLS
- Buffalo Rock
- Key to the World Travel/Theresa Perry
- SouthMark Design

Funds from the 2022 Tee Off for TSNIP supported Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) efforts within the City of Tuscaloosa, Northport, and throughout Tuscaloosa County. It is our hope that future fundraisers could also support spay/neuter programs for both pets with owners and stray "community cats".





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Other fundraising

TSNIP was honored to be a recipient of funds raised by the 2022 Sleepy Kraken Runyak event, held on June 11, 2022. The duathlon is coordinated by the Tuscaloosa Track Club, and includes a 2 mile road run, 2 mile paddle (kayak or paddleboard), and finishes with a 2-mile trail run. There is also a youth participation option for kids 8-14 years of age, which includes a 1 mile road run, 1 mile paddle (kayak or paddleboard) and finishes with a 1 mile road run. (For those that don't paddle, there is a 4 mile land-only option for runners and walkers of all fitness levels.)

TSNIP received a donation of \$500 from the event.

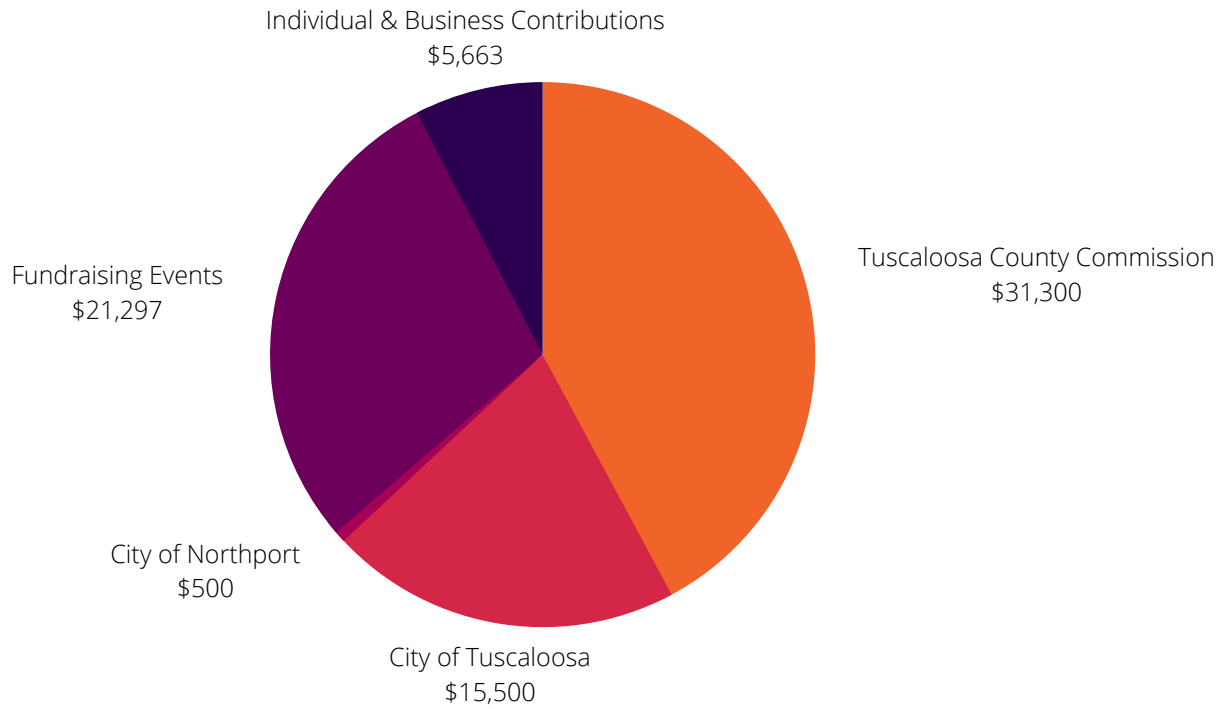




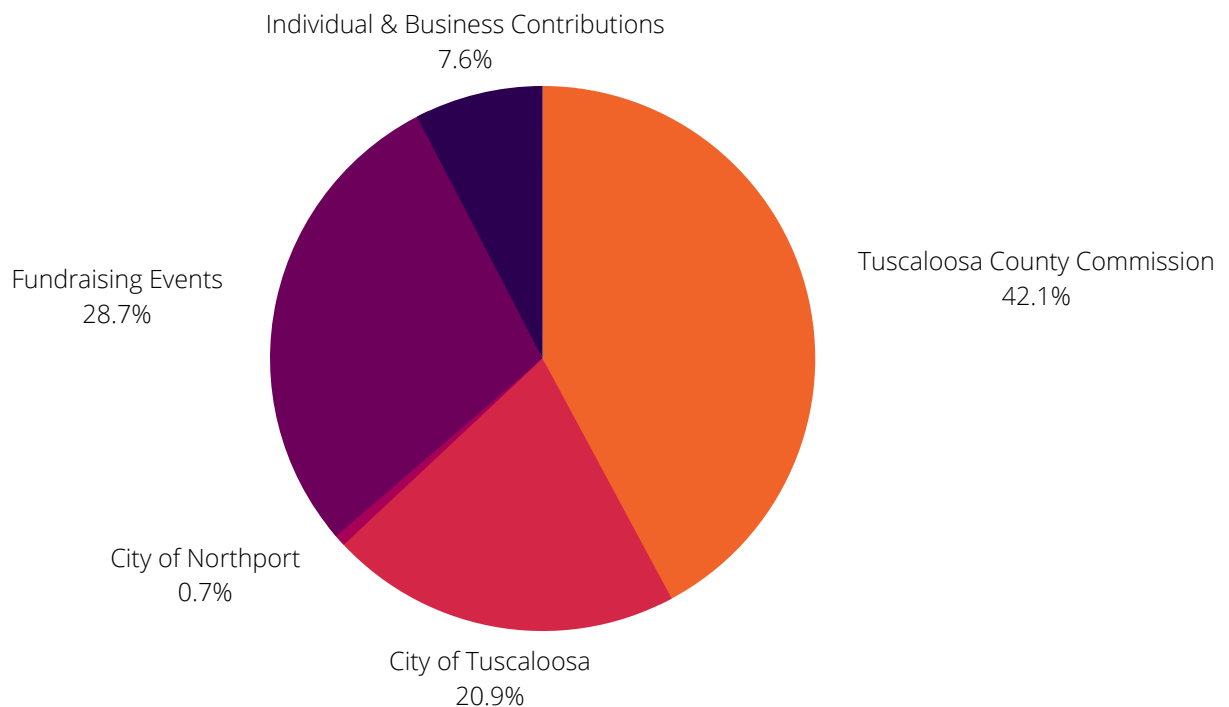
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Financial report

Funding & Contributions (\$).



Funding & Contributions (%).

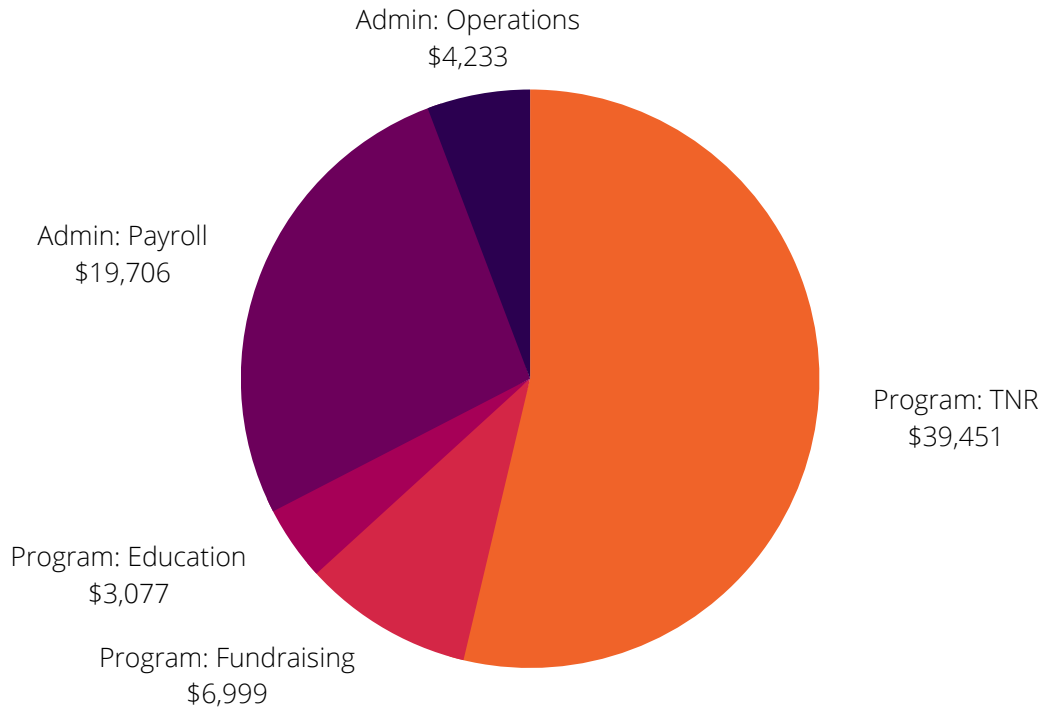




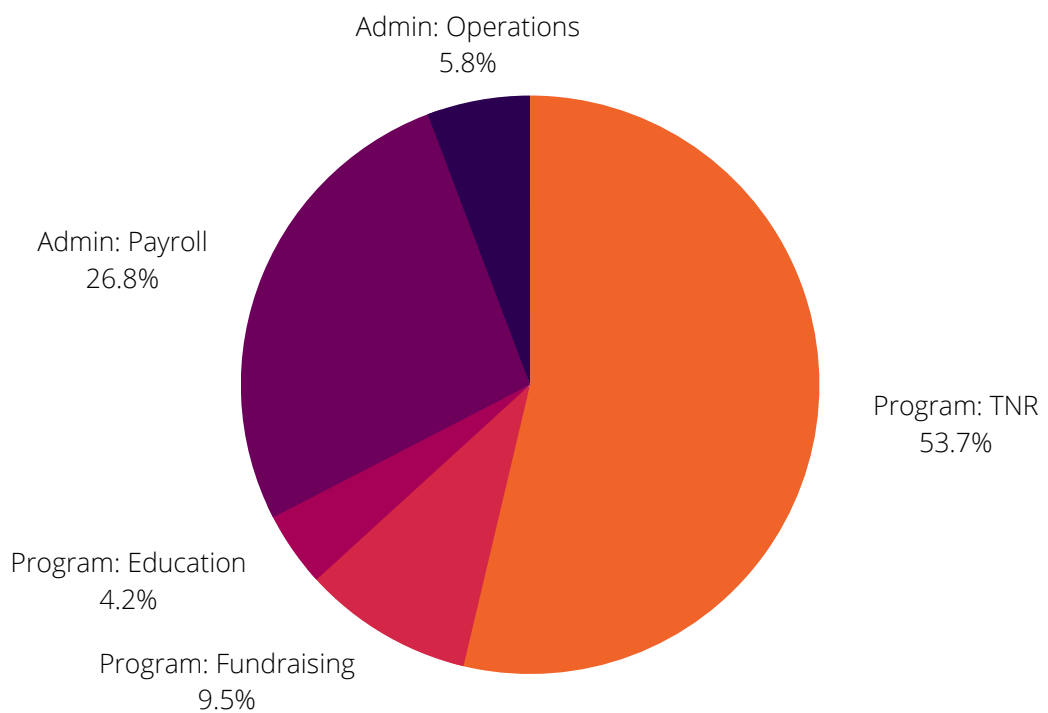
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Financial report

Expenses (\$).



Expenses (%).





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Future efforts

Improving Access to Spay & Neuter Services

Looking forward, TSNIP is exploring ways to provide increased access to spay and neuter services for 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, especially in communities already under-served in veterinary care.

Awareness & Social Media

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.

2024 Tee Off for TSNIP Fundraiser

The 2023 Tee Off for TSNIP fundraiser was held in March 2023 at Ol' Colony Golf Complex. The 2024 Tee Off for TSNIP golf tournament fundraiser will be held in March 2024 at North River Yacht Club.

Local Artisan Support

Muddy Paws Pottery has pledged 5% of profits to support TSNIP. (<https://muddypawspottery-al.com>)





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Future efforts

Community Education & Outreach

TNSIP's partnership with local schools, organized youth groups, and the University of Alabama will continue in 2023. Activities are expected to involve approximately 50 youth who will conduct a range of education activities in the community at large.

Plans include the development of a partnership with the Tuscaloosa Metro Animal Shelter to host a TNR-themed scavenger hunt to help educate the community on management of feral cat populations, expand TSNIP "brand awareness" in the community (using giveaway items such as stickers and buttons), and increase awareness about the value of TNR.

An additional partnership with the Humane Society of West Alabama will yield several sessions of "Cat Yoga". Several UA students from Dr. Parker's community service course have volunteered their time and certified yoga instructor skills for these classes so all registration fees will be shared between TSNIP and HSWA.

Students are also planning a campaign focused on asking area merchants to support TNR and TSNIP by placing provided "table tent" signs on checkout counters and dining tables. Efforts are also in the works to expand this to apartment communities that house large numbers of students, placing the table tents in public areas of the communities.

Students will also be creating a public service video showing life of a feral cat, which will include a series of presentations by children in large university classes to caution students to avoid the cycle of adopting then dumping pets in the community.

In addition, a book for young readers will be written and illustrated by area youth. The book aims to raise understanding and respect for the "underground city" of feral cats that inhabit our community and introduces the concepts of TNR and cat colony population management in age-appropriate ways.



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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 via Venmo, scan the QR code below or search "tsnipdonations" under Venmo Charities.



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>.



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Many thanks to our 2022 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

Finance
Charity Golden, Chair

Education
Jeffrey G. Parker, Chair

Events
Heather MacLeod, Chair

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