NCDA&CS, Veterinary Division, Animal Welfare Section

Animal Shelter Support Fund Legislative Report

Calendar Year 2023

Animal Shelter Support Fund Legislative Report, Calendar Year - 2023

Purpose of Report

Pursuant to N.C. General Statute § 19A-69, this is the legislative report for the N.C. Animal Shelter Support Fund.

> **§ 19A-69. Report.**
>
> The Department shall report annually to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations and the Fiscal Research Division no later than March 1. The report shall contain information regarding all revenues and expenditures of the Animal Shelter Support Fund.

Background

The N.C. Animal Shelter Support Fund was established in 2015 for the purpose of reimbursing local governments for expenses related to their operation of a registered animal shelter due to the denial, suspension or revocation of the shelter's registration, or due to unforeseen catastrophic disaster at an animal shelter. The Animal Shelter Support Fund was established as a special fund in the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services ("NCDA&CS") consisting of appropriations by the General Assembly or contributions and grants from public or private sources. Any appropriated and unencumbered funds remaining at the end of each fiscal year in excess of two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000) shall revert to the General Fund.

Revisions to the Animal Support Fund Legislation

Session Laws 2021 revised the statutes relative to the Animal Shelter Support Fund. The fund now provides grants to local governments for expenses related to their operation of a registered animal shelter. The grants may provide aid for expenses for the following: denial, suspension, or revocation of the shelter's registration, compliance with applicable requirements of the NC Animal Welfare Act and its associated rules, or an unforeseen catastrophic disaster at an animal shelter.

Current Status of the Animal Support Fund Administrative Rules

The 10-year, statute-mandated review of administrative rules (02 NCAC 52J) for the NC Animal Welfare Act was initiated in 2021. The revised rules for the NC Animal Welfare Act were adopted in September - October 2022. All counties and municipalities that operate an animal shelter were provided copies of the revised rules and the revisions were discussed with the shelter staff during subsequent Facility Compliance Inspections.

Due to Session Laws 2021 revisions to the Animal Shelter Support Fund statutes, new administrative rules were required to administer the fund. The rule making process for the Animal Shelter Support Fund associated rules was initiated January 2023. The revised rules were amended and became effective December 1, 2023.

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Fund Balance

The fund balance for the Animal Shelter Support Fund as of December 31, 2023 was $250,000.00. Grants from the Animal Shelter Support Fund were awarded to 9 counties on February 26, 2024 (see the 2024 Update section below) totaling $203,760.00. Therefore, the remaining balance of unawarded monies from this fund is $46,240.00 as of February 29, 2024.

2024 Update

In January 2024, the Animal Welfare Section of the NCDA&CS notified all NC county administrations and municipal shelters that grants were available from the Animal Shelter Support Fund. Information was disseminated on the statutes, rules, and application process for these grants. A news release was published by NCDA&CS in January 2024 that also contained this information. In February 2024, the Animal Welfare Section sent out a reminder encouraging counties and animal shelters to apply for these grants.

The Animal Welfare Section received applications from 9 counties for grants for the Animal Shelter Support Fund by February 23, 2024. Grants were awarded for the full amount requested in the application to all 9 counties on February 26, 2024. The total amount awarded from the Animal Shelter Support Fund for these 9 grants was $203,760.00.

An application from a 10th county was received on February 27, 2024. This application is in the review process.

Summary

In September 2015, the Animal Shelter Support Fund was created by the N.C. General Assembly. The monies were to be used to reimburse local governments for expenses incurred for the operation of an animal shelter due to a catastrophic disaster or the denial, suspension or revocation of the animal shelter's registration. The statute creating this fund also required that rules be issued by the Animal Welfare Section of the NCDA&CS.

In Session Laws 2021, the fund was changed from a reimbursement fund to a grant fund. The fund now issues grants for expenses incurred by local governments to comply with the NC Animal Welfare Act and its associated rules as well as for expenses related to catastrophic disasters.

The NC Animal Welfare Act administrative rule (02 NCAC 52J) revisions were adopted in September/October of 2022. The revised rules to administer the Animal Shelter Support Fund became effective in December 2023.

As of February 29, 2024, 9 grants have been awarded from the Animal Shelter Support Fund totaling $203,760.00.