

PERSONNEL AND ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE REPORT relative to low income self-identification for free spay/neuter program eligibility.

Recommendations for Council action:

1. APPROVE a change in the low income verification procedure to determine eligibility for the Free Spay/Neuter Certificate Program that allows self-identification of low income status using a signed affidavit.
2. DIRECT the Department of Animal Services (DAS) to work with the City Attorney to develop an appropriate affidavit that allows City of Los Angeles residents to declare their annual income to determine eligibility for the Free Spay/Neuter Certificate Program.

Fiscal Impact Statement: The DAS reports that there is no direct impact to the City's General Fund. The cost of the Free Spay/Neuter Certificate Program is covered by the Animal Sterilization Fund. It is anticipated that the proposed change in the low income verification procedure will result in an increased usage of the program by those residents who are unable to furnish the documentation currently required for participation. The DAS previously submitted a budget request for the Comprehensive Homeless Strategy (CHS) as described in the March 11, 2016 DAS report, attached to the Council file. In the budget request, \$500,00 was requested to service pets of the homeless population. This equates to approximately 4000 surgeries.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

Summary:

On April 6, 2016, your Committee considered a March 11, 2016 DAS report relative to low income self-identification for free spay/neuter program eligibility. According to the DAS, on March 8, 2016, the Board of Animal Services Commissioners unanimously approved a proposal to change the low income verification procedure to determine eligibility for the Free Spay/Neuter Certificate Program. The Free Spay/Neuter Certificate Program assists qualified residents of the City of Los Angeles with sterilization of their companion animals. Qualified residents are entitled to receive up to six (three dog and three cat) certificates that each cover the full cost of a sterilization surgery at a participating veterinary hospital. This program is instrumental in assisting low income residents on complying with the mandatory spay/neuter ordinance in the City of Los Angeles.

It is recommended that the Department allow residents to self-identify their low-income status by signing an affidavit declaring their annual income. In doing so residents who are not able to furnish the current documentation requirements will have an opportunity to take part in the free certificate program and have their animals altered in compliance with the law.

It should also be noted that this change is directly connected to an element of the CHS. The DAS is designated as the lead agency for two strategies one of which calls for programs to assist homeless individuals with pets. Within the strategy, the DAS proposes to expand the current spay/neuter services to the homeless pet owner population. Allowing self-identification for low income status will encourage homeless pet owners who do not have access to the current

acceptable forms of income verification to participate in the program by using an affidavit to declare annual income.

After further consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to recommend approval of the recommendations contained in the March 11, 2016 DAS report and detailed in the above recommendations. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

PERSONNEL AND ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE



<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
KORETZ:	YES
RYU:	YES
HARRIS - DAWSON:	YES
ARL	

4/6/16

**-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-**