



Enhanced Licensing Compliance

5 Points

10 Points

IMPORTANT NOTE: This action will retire on **December 31, 2022**. For municipalities currently approved for this action, the points will remain in your application until the action expires.

Point value: 5-10 points

This action identifies methods by which a municipality may enhance its ability to meet its legal and ethical responsibilities for the care and management of animals in its community, generate funds, and reduce costs, which will help to sustain animal welfare programs without increasing the financial burden on taxpayers. The generation of increased funds will be through higher compliance with licensing, adoption fees, grants, and where necessary, fees for noncompliance with licensing requirements. Additionally, it will help the community to understand issues relating to the health and welfare of animals.

Why is it important?

Animals are an intimate part of any community. There are approximately 8.9 million people in New Jersey, living in 3.5 million households with 2.7 residents per household. (2013 US Gov. Census)

According to the NJ Department of Health, 56% or over 2 million households have at least 1 domestic animal. This impacts all aspects of a community's structure, including: rabies control, other diseases, impact of animals on the ecology, car accidents, neighborhood nuisance calls, animal population growth, animal cruelty, rescuing animals in fires, weather events, etc. Without this enhanced program, a municipality is severely limiting itself in addressing these issues. Increased compliance with licensing could generate thousands of dollars for each municipality, depending on its size, and millions statewide. These enhanced funding revenues can sustain animal welfare programs and protect the public from zoonotic disease (diseases transmitted from animals to humans, such as rabies). Many of these concepts have proven successful in Calgary Canada and can be easily adopted by New Jersey municipalities. In Calgary, the outcome of these measures was that the number of stray dogs and cats entering the shelters was reduced, because ACOs now were able to return more animals to their owners. This had a two-fold effect. With a reduction in animals filling up cages, the shelter could focus more on community outreach programs, quality re-homing of those animals that still were impounded, and achieve a major reduction in the euthanasia rate. In addition, ACOs could spend more time addressing nuisance and neglect cases, and become more community based in their approach. In Calgary, the result was that public opinion became positive towards Animal Control, and Animal Control Officers became viewed as true public servants.

Who should lead and be involved with this action?

Participation by dog and cat owners, local officials, animal related groups and businesses, and animal control officers is essential.

Animal control officers, board of health officers, and/or non-profit groups can team up with community groups to conduct an initial census of dogs and cats in the municipality, and at the same time, educate pet owners. Part time help, such as college students, or senior citizens, can be hired to assist with this.

Once a baseline census has been conducted, updating the records annually can be done by a designated municipal staff person (usually Animal Control or Health Department).

The green team can partner with community groups to solicit incentives such as discount coupons from local pet

supply stores, veterinarians, pet services providers or other businesses in your community which would be provided to pet owners when they license their pet(s). A letter, phone call or visit from a local official would also help to educate vendors about the advantages of offering discount coupons to individuals who license their pets.

Timeframe

Development of educational materials, and solicitation of vendors to offer discounts for pet owners would depend upon the number of vendors that need to be contacted, but could probably be accomplished within a 6-12 month timeframe.

The initial animal census should be conducted or updated from within 24 months of the certification submission deadline. The time required to conduct the census will vary, depending on the size of the municipality.

Project costs and resource needs

This action can be done with minimal initial cost. The designated person in the community, often the health officer, can customize the sample material in the guide, "[A Municipal Approach to a Self-Sustaining Community Animal Welfare and Enhanced License Compliance Program](#)" (also found under the Resources section of this action) to help educate the public. A [Press Release packet](#), which also can be customized by the municipality, is also included in the Resources section of this action. These Press Releases are designed to assist with municipal outreach and education about animals to the general public. By teaming up with community groups, solicitation of incentives such as discount coupons can easily be achieved and a letter, phone call or visit from a local official would also help educate vendors about the advantages of offering some discount coupons to individuals who license their pets. Copying costs are minimal.

The largest expense may be the hiring of additional part time help, such as college students, or senior citizens, to educate pet owners and conduct an animal census. However these costs are more than offset by the revenues generated. In fact, the use of volunteers or volunteer service organizations that are trained to help conduct the census and education/outreach program can enable municipalities to avoid even these minimal costs.

What to do, and how to do it ("How to")

Below we have listed the requirements for earning points for this action.

1. For 5 points, the municipality will implement an enhanced licensing compliance program from within 24 months of the certification deadline. Outreach and education about the program must be publicized to the relevant municipal departments and the community at large. Copies of your educational materials and outreach materials must be provided.
2. An animal census must have been conducted or updated within 24 months of the certification deadline.
3. You must provide data that shows that the number of licensed animals increased after your enhanced licensing campaign.
4. For an additional 5 points, the municipality must have passed an ordinance which specifies the fee structure for licensing dogs and cats with an exemption for feral cats managed through a municipally approved Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Manage Program. The ordinance may include no-cost colony licensing for feral cats, some other way of registering feral cats directly or with a nonprofit, or simply an exemption from individual licensing (see [TNVM document on Sustainable Jersey website](#) for more details on options and information on why requiring individual licensing of feral cats is counter-productive). The ordinance must be in effect at the time the municipality applies for certification. A signed, dated, copy of the ordinance must be provided, with accompanying documentation, such as a memo showing that it was distributed to the relevant municipal departments.

We have provided guidance and recommendations for implementing the action. You do not need to follow this guidance exactly as long as your final product meets the requirements.

The program has very simple steps that have been shown to be effective. The thrust of the program is primarily voluntary compliance through incentives. There is great value to a pet owner in having his/her animal licensed. This program tries to help educate pet owners in the community about the value of voluntary compliance for the safety of their animals. The first step is to decide on the best way to develop an enhanced licensing program in the municipality.

1. THINK ABOUT HOW TO INCENTIVIZE LICENSING:

- Pet owners need to see the value of compliance with registration and license requirements. Develop a

package of materials for distribution to the community on the advantages of having a pet licensed. (See Resources section for a Press Release kit and example flyers about lost pets). These materials may be distributed to schools, libraries, veterinary offices, and pet supply stores in your community. Some of the materials may be left at homes during the completion of the animal census. One of the educational pieces emphasizes safety of the owners' pets, talking about a license as a "free ride home" should for any reason their pet be lost.

- Another recommended technique is to solicit discount coupons, or simply a statement of the discount from local veterinary institutions, pet shops, and/or pet supply stores to be given to anyone in your community who has a current animal license. These incentives can be significantly higher than the actual cost of the license. The green team or other municipal volunteers will need to make a plan to solicit donations and discounts.
- It is important for the municipality to think about how they will educate residents about the value of licensing their pets and incentives such as reduced fees for neutering pets, or discount coupons from pet stores, before beginning the outreach and education component of the animal census.

2. CONDUCT THE CENSUS AND EDUCATE

- Identify the resources needed to complete the animal census. Can you use volunteers, or hire students or seniors to assist with the census?
- In order to evaluate the effectiveness of your enhanced licensing program, you will need to establish a baseline number of dogs and, where a licensing ordinance exists, cats in your community by pulling the number of licenses issued in your municipality as of the previous year. NJ does not require cat licensing, so if the municipality intends to license cats, you will need to pass an ordinance requiring that cats be licensed (for an additional 5 points in this action). If you implement an ordinance, be sure to put a regulatory review process in place.
- Once the municipality has made decisions about licensing and other ordinances, you are ready to conduct the census. This is an opportunity to educate the public about the laws and also to provide information about incentives for licensing.
- The responsibility for conducting a census lies with the municipality and each town can designate an official to conduct and organize it. Animal Control Officers and volunteers should be engaged in conducting the census on a regular basis. Towns that have shared services' agreements can include this requirement in those agreements.
- While you are conducting the census, distribute educational materials to pet owners about the value of licensing their pets, as well as information about coupons or incentives. In Edison, NJ, the municipality hired college students to assist in the census and used the additional revenue generated to offset their salaries.
- The municipality should consider what educational materials you will provide to residents and how you might provide information about where residents should begin their search for a lost pet, either as a handout or on the municipal website. Use flyers and local news media, including newspapers and cable TV public service announcements, to provide information about pet licensing and its importance. (Examples of press releases and informational flyers are found in the Resources section of this action).
- Document the initial numbers of licensed pets through the number of licenses issued during the previous year. You will use this baseline to compare the numbers of licensed pets before and after your enhanced licensing campaign, and evaluate its success.
- By collecting license fees and investing them back into your community, your municipality will be able to improve services to animal owners and to the community in general. In addition, an undue financial burden will not fall upon the general taxpayer.

3. ENFORCE, ASSESS AND HAVE A REGULATORY REVIEW

- When an animal is noted to be on the premises and there is no record of its registration, a compliance letter should be sent, explaining all of the advantages of voluntary compliance, but also noting the potential fines involved in noncompliance. License applications should also be left with the owner.
- Unfortunately, there will be occasions where you may have to take an individual to court to force compliance. Few municipalities actively enforce licensing requirements. Increasing enforcement for noncompliance is encouraged when attempts at education and voluntary compliance have failed.
- Those fees generated will further assist in your animal welfare program. After studying the impact of court fines and the cost of licensing, the City of Calgary, Canada, increased its fines for failure to license. The "tipping point" was the amount of the fines, i.e. the dollar number at which residents became unwilling to take the chance of noncompliance and the fees were raised to that amount.
- If you are going to require cat licensing, it is recommended that the municipality conduct a regulatory review.
 - Evaluate license fees, penalties for not licensing, and identify the programs you will fund with initial revenues generated from these ordinances.
 - Since the State of New Jersey doesn't allow more than a \$50 fine for enforcement, consider imposing

- civil penalties.
- The regulatory review should consider what civil penalties might be imposed.
- You might impose a “late fee” for not licensing animals. In Edison, a late fee of 20% of the cost of the license was used to encourage pet owners to license their pets.
- The violation schedule can be approved through the court system.
- Consider including an initial amnesty period for owners of unlicensed pets after the imposition of fines, late fees or non-compliance fees.

4. EVALUATE SUCCESS

- The most obvious indicator of success is monitoring the number of registrations.
- Other indicators would be the rate of Return-To-Owners, euthanasia numbers, lost and found reports and the number of animal related complaints.

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO FACILITATE LICENSING COMPLIANCE AND RAISE FUNDS

There are some additional actions that municipalities should consider to facilitate licensing compliance.

It is important to note that some of the concepts listed below are controversial, specifically pet limit laws, TNVM programs and colony licensing. The examples included below are based on successful models, but your municipality should carefully weigh the options you will pursue based on your own demographics.

Special Notes to Encourage Compliance

Repeal Any Pet Limit Law

One recommendation that would facilitate the success of this model would be to repeal any pet limit ordinance that exists. Pet limit ordinances have been determined to be unconstitutional in Minnesota and Pennsylvania. Beyond this, however, they discourage licensing and the generation of revenues, by making residents with multiple pets fearful of reporting their animals to the municipality. Some municipal officials want pet limit ordinances because they believe this will prevent hoarding cases. However, hoarders have a mental illness and often disregard all laws regarding animals, from licensing to sanitary code provisions, to abuse and neglect statutes. Pet limit laws do not prevent hoarders from keeping large numbers of animals in bad conditions, but they do discourage residents who responsibly care for multiple animals from reporting those animals to the municipality and paying licensing fees. They are therefore counterproductive.

The Calgary model does not recommend imposing a limit on the number of pets per household. Instead, it recommends looking at indicators that animals are suffering – such as the condition of the animal; the quality of the space occupied by the animal, etc.

Exempt Feral Cats Managed Through Municipally Approved TNVM (TNR) Programs from Individual Licensing: Options for Tracking Feral Cat Colonies

Individual licensing was devised for pet animals, not for feral cats that are cared for by volunteers or nonprofits, and is incompatible with managing feral cat populations. Calgary found, in the development of its successful model, that it was necessary to explicitly exempt feral cats from individual licensing in order for the community to accept cat licensing and for individuals feeding feral cats to come forward and cooperate with getting them neutered and vaccinated through a TNVM program.

Colony caregivers helping with TNVM programs often find it difficult to individually license each cat in a colony on an annual basis. There are alternative methods of tracking vaccinations of cats in colonies managed through TNVM, including colony registration through a colony license, which establishes requirements for the care of the animals and safety of the community, as well establishing record keeping requirements. In municipalities in NJ, colony licenses may require the micro chipping of feral cats which can serve both to identify them and determine their vaccination status.

Raise additional revenues

Another way to increase revenues through licensing is to include a **voluntary donation line on the license applications**. If your municipality will be spending licensing revenue on animal welfare programs intended to save homeless animals, you can advertise this fact and solicit donations on license applications. Maricopa County, Arizona, found that once they did this, most residents rounded up their license fees to the nearest \$10 increment, and the county started raising an additional \$10,000 every month.

Additional Potential Programs

Additional programs that could be considered in a comprehensive approach to addressing animal concerns and municipal costs are pet retention programs; coordinating with rescues to take animals after the 7 day hold period; establishing lost and found protocols that will coordinate with surrounding municipalities, shelters and rescue groups.

What to submit to earn points for this action

In order to earn points, your submission must meet the following standards:

1. For 5 points, the municipality will implement an enhanced licensing compliance program from within 24 months of the certification deadline. Outreach and education about the program must be publicized to the relevant municipal departments and the community at large. Copies of your educational materials and outreach materials must be provided.
2. An animal census must have been conducted or updated within 24 months of the certification deadline.
3. You must provide data that shows that the number of licensed animals increased after your enhanced licensing campaign.
4. For an additional 5 points, the municipality must have passed an ordinance which specifies the fee structure for licensing dogs and cats with an exemption for feral cats managed through a municipally approved Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Manage Program. The ordinance may include no-cost colony licensing for feral cats, some other way of registering feral cats directly or with a nonprofit, or simply an exemption from individual licensing (see [TNVM document on Sustainable Jersey website](#) for more details on options and information on why requiring individual licensing of feral cats is counter-productive). The ordinance must be in effect at the time the municipality applies for certification. A signed, dated, copy of the ordinance must be provided, with accompanying documentation, such as a memo showing that it was distributed to the relevant municipal departments.

Submit the following documentation to verify the action was completed to the above standards. (Log in to the password protected webpage where you submit your online application for certification to write in the text box and upload documents)

Provide a short narrative in the text box (300 words maximum) describing your efforts to implement an enhanced licensing compliance program.

Upload: Copies of flyers, handouts and news media clippings used in the program, as well as any educational materials that were developed as part of your educational/outreach campaign.

Upload: Statistics showing the increased numbers of registered dogs and cats where there is an existing ordinance. You may also wish to provide data regarding the rate of Return-To-Owners, euthanasia numbers, lost and found reports and the number of animal related complaints

Upload: Updated census figures.

For an additional 5 points, upload copies of the ordinance and documentation of its distribution.

IMPORTANT NOTES: Please excerpt relevant information from large documents. Please remember that your submissions will be viewable by the public as part of your certified report.

Spotlight: What NJ municipalities are doing

Edison, NJ: Edison's municipal website provides information about its Animal Shelter. On the website, Edison provides information about adoptable pets, rabies clinics, neutering pets, and volunteers, as well as links to cat and dog licensing forms.

Edison was the recipient of a grant to implement a Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate and Manage program for its feral/community cats. With the help of this funding, licensing information was disseminated door to door by census takers. Articles were placed in newspapers, interviews were held on 2 radio stations and the program was highlighted on NJ television. Additionally, their website has been updated to include links to HSUS, and the NJ Dept. of Fish and Game. A pet first aid class for the community was also sponsored.

The program increased revenue through licensing, which enabled Edison and three of the four communities where they are contracted to provide services to hire part time and hourly census staff. These workers were dedicated totally to census work during part of the day and then would work the other part of the day in the shelter, freeing up animal control officers to work on TNVM and other animal control activities, maximizing the flexibility of the staff.

This funding also enabled the towns to establish successful TNVM programs. TNVM activities were ongoing at 36 locations encompassing several hundred cats. Additionally, over 25 kittens and cats were removed from colonies and successfully adopted. As a result of the TNVM program, education of both animal control officers and the public, the number of animals euthanized fell significantly. Promotion and outreach about adoptable dogs and cats from their shelter, using volunteers and staff, and a vigorous pet retention program have also assisted in achieving this lower euthanasia rate. This decrease also saved conservatively \$15,000 to \$20,000 in funds that can be used to sustain animals in the community programs. A secondary effect of this was increased morale on the part of volunteers and staff at the shelter.

http://edisonnj.org/departments/animal_shelter/index.php

Resources

Calgary Model of Animal Services The City of Calgary Animal & Bylaw Services' animal programs are considered to be some of the most successful programs on the continent. This is based on statistics such as Calgary's 88% return-to-owner rate for dogs and a 55% return to owner rate for cats, which results in Calgary's low dog and cat euthanasia rates. These successes, along with a steady decrease in the number of aggressive dog incidents, have all been accomplished without specific breed banning or regulating the number of dogs and cats that citizens are allowed to own. Calgary's animal programs are also self funding with no tax supported dollars used to develop and provide the services.

[Calgary Animal Services](#)

FUR ALERT: Like Amber Alert for pets, FurAlert allows animal lovers to help each other! Use the free iPhone app to notify people nearby about your missing pet so they can help you quickly reunite.? Help others find their missing pets and be a hero!

New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services, Office of Animal Welfare

The Office of Animal Welfare is dedicated to promoting and protecting the health, safety, and welfare of companion animals in the state of New Jersey. Information is available on dog licensing, animal control, animal facility inspection, feral cats, animal cruelty, and more. <http://www.state.nj.us/health/animalwelfare/index.shtml>

International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and Career Development Institute

Programs to help municipalities manage feral cat populations safely and effectively include, "A Municipal Approach to a Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate & Manage Program: A Guide to Animals in the Community Feral Cat Program" which was developed with funding from IFAW and input from members of Sustainable Jersey's Animals in the Community Task Force. A companion document, a Resources Compendium, lists resources to help municipalities set up humane and effective municipal cat population control programs.

[A Municipal Approach to a Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate & Manage Program: A Guide to Animals in the Community Feral Cat Program](#)

[Resources Compendium: A Municipal Approach to Community Cats](#)

Community Wildlife Habitat Program

<https://www.nwf.org/CommunityWildlifeHabitat/>

Sustainable Jersey's Animals in the Community Task Force has created several documents which may be helpful in implementing this action.

[A Municipal Approach to a Self-Sustaining Community Animal Welfare & Enhanced License Compliance Program](#) is a document which suggests methods by which municipalities may enhance their ability to meet their legal and ethical responsibilities for the care and management of animals in the community without expending tax dollars. These suggestions will help municipalities generate funds and reduce costs, which will help sustain animal welfare programs without increasing the financial burden on taxpayers. (This document was developed by the Task Force with funding from IFAW.)

A Press Release kit which municipalities can adapt to help inform the community about animal related issues and services such as rabies clinics. Each press release is designed to be easily personalized in seconds to add the name of the municipality and that of the public official issuing it. It is recommended that you issue one press release a month to your local papers depending on the subject matter and time of year.

The subject matter includes:

1. Annual Rabies Clinic

2. Becoming a Seeing Eye Dog family
3. Benefits of Licensing Your Pet (Your Pet's License can be a "Free Ride Home")
4. Cold Weather Tips for the Care of Your Pets
5. Common Myths about Cats
6. Companion Cats Should be Indoor Cats
7. How Do I Choose a Family Pet?
8. How to Avoid Puppy Mills
9. Keeping Your Pets Safe in Your Home
10. Nutrition for Your Pet
11. Pet Safety in Hot Weather
12. Teaching Children to Interact with Animals
13. Training Your Dog to be a Good Citizen and Family Member
14. Winter Holiday Tips for Pet Owners
15. Why Should I Spay or Neuter My Pet?

[Municipal Press Release Kit](#)

St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center (St. Hubert's Giralda, Inc.) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the humane treatment of animals. Its services to the community include pet adoption and animal rescue, animal assisted therapy, humane education, dog training, and pet loss support. The Center operates animal shelters in Madison and North Branch, N.J. and a Dog Training and Behavior School in Madison, N.J. Many of our innovative programs for animals and people serve as models for other organizations across the country.

Documents about finding lost pets are available from St. Hubert's website:

<https://www.sthuberts.org/pethelpline>

[Hand out flyers for Missing Pet Recovery](#)

[Lost Pet Posters](#)

[Missing Pet Prevention](#)

[Missing Pet Recovery Tips](#)

[Missing Pet Recovery Tips – Cats](#)

[Missing Pet Recovery Tips – Dogs](#)

<http://www.sthuberts.org/about>

What to Do if You Lose Your Pet

[Tips for finding lost pets from the Animals in the Community Task Force](#)