Performance Evaluation and Community Needs of Spay Our Strays Organization

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Spring 2020

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The author is the President of the Board of Spay Our Strays, with which she has been associated since 2017. The analysis contained in this document is not an approved document of SOS and it reflects the opinions of the author alone. The analysis comes from SOS documents and from participant-observation by the author, and where the source is an SOS document, it is cited.
# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................................................................. 4  
Summary ............................................................................................................................................................. 5  
Introduction .......................................................................................................................................................... 7  
  Community cat overpopulation ........................................................................................................................... 7  
  Spay Our Strays .................................................................................................................................................. 8  
Theory .................................................................................................................................................................... 17  
Literature Review .................................................................................................................................................. 18  
  Elements of strategic planning ............................................................................................................................. 18  
  Overpopulation control measures ....................................................................................................................... 20  
  TNR program challenges ................................................................................................................................... 20  
  TNR program benefits ........................................................................................................................................ 21  
  Best practices based on the literature ................................................................................................................ 21  
Case Selection ....................................................................................................................................................... 26  
  Alley Cat Allies .................................................................................................................................................... 26  
  Neighborhood Cats ............................................................................................................................................. 28  
  Operation Catnip ................................................................................................................................................ 29  
  Alley Cat Advocates .......................................................................................................................................... 31  
  HOPE Spay Neuter Clinic .................................................................................................................................. 32
Variables ........................................................................................................ 32

Research Design ............................................................................................... 33

Findings and Analysis ....................................................................................... 34

  Research Question I ...................................................................................... 34

  Research Question II .................................................................................... 40

  Research Question III ................................................................................... 46

Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 48

  Recommendations ........................................................................................ 51

  Challenges ..................................................................................................... 58

  Recommended Next Steps ............................................................................ 58

Appendices ......................................................................................................... 61
Abstract

Free-roaming cat populations have been linked to public health concerns and negative impacts on animal shelter resources. Trap-neuter-return has gained popularity in the last few decades as a humane and effective approach to decrease the population of community cats and address these concerns. Spay Our Strays advocates for trap-neuter-return practices in Lexington, Kentucky, by providing services to the local community and surrounding counties. Strategic planning techniques and comparative analysis are used to develop recommended strategic actions the organization can use to improve their impact. Findings showed a need to invest in board development, diversify funding sources, focus on community-level targeting, and capitalize on collaboration opportunities.
Summary

The trap-neuter-return organization, Spay Our Strays, provides the Central Kentucky area with trap-neuter-return services, community education regarding trap-neuter-return practices and community cats, and supplemental food, shelter, medical care when necessary for maintaining healthy cat colonies, and other community programs formed to address concerns involving community cats including a foster care program for kittens found in the field. Recent changes to the board and external environment have led to a need for strategic planning techniques to be utilized for the benefit of the organization and its stakeholders.

A comparative analysis examines Spay Our Strays organizational structure compared to local and national organizations and widely accepted best practices. Focus is put on how they compare financially, how well Spay Our Strays serves caregivers from Fayette County compared to other counties, and how effective the organization is at serving its various stakeholders. For the comparative analysis the author reviewed program information from three national and two local organizations. Local organizations were selected based on their reputation and vicinity to Lexington, Kentucky, and include Alley Cat Advocates in Louisville and HOPE Spay Neuter Clinic in Versailles. National organizations were selected based on their contributions to the fields of trap-neuter-return and animal welfare and include Alley Cat Allies, Neighborhood Cats, and Operation Catnip. Data was gathered from N-990s, internal documents, emails, organization websites and other public material.

Based on the analysis it was determined that Spay Our Strays does not maintain a large enough budget or clinic capacity to adequately care for the number of cats and caregivers they are dedicated to assisting. Clinic data shows a trend of disproportionate utilization of clinic services by caregivers from out of county compared to those from in county. The imbalance is
indicative of the corresponding breakdown of service area, but not in line with the desire of all board members. The author created a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis and suggested strategic actions based on these findings and the information collected from other organizations and best practices. Improvements to funding, community collaborations, and disaster planning were among some of the suggestions.

Challenges to this analysis included a lack of stakeholder feedback and a rapidly changing list of factors to consider. Suggested next steps for the organization include conducting one-on-one stakeholder interviews and the creation and distribution of a stakeholder feedback survey. These tactics would provide the vital stakeholder information needed for continued strategic planning.
Introduction

Community cat overpopulation

Domesticated cats are popular pets worldwide with an estimated 85.8 million owned in the United States alone. Unowned community cats, otherwise known as feral or free roaming, are estimated to represent 36% to 46% of the total cat population based on several county-wide studies performed across the US. Sterilization rates vary widely between both groups with 85% of owned cats sterilized and only 2% of unowned community cats sterilized suggesting the large number of unaltered free roaming cats is the main contributor to cat overpopulation numbers.

Table 1—Projected annual contribution of owned versus feral cats to cat overpopulation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Owned cats</th>
<th>Feral cats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage female</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sterilization rate</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litters per year</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kittens per litter</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kittens per cat annually</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US cat population</td>
<td>73 million</td>
<td>50 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kittens born annually</td>
<td>33 million</td>
<td>147 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overpopulation refers to the surplus of companion animals available compared to the number of available owners. Overpopulation can have a significant impact on local animal welfare systems and the communities they serve. Crowded shelters with limited resources are forced to euthanize, and community complaints about noise, odor, wildlife predation, and invasion on property are the common result of community cat population left unchecked. These offenses can increase neighborhood conflicts and increase the cats’ chance of being subjected to animal cruelty. All of those concerns challenge many municipal shelters and animal control officers by requiring many of their limited resources. These impacts can be compounded due to social components of cat behavior. Community cats converge in colonies where members rely on shared resources for food and shelter and live in the same territory. The quantity of cats...
concentrated in a central area could inspire more complaints and thus require more community resources.

Feline overpopulation also leads to public health concerns over the spread of rabies and the feline diseases Feline Leukemia Virus and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus.\textsuperscript{11} Trap-vaccinate-release programs and oral baited immunization are tactics found by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to be effective at providing long-lasing herd immunity to skunk and raccoon populations even when individual animals consume a single dose. Even though ideal rabies control programs for cats and dogs consist of booster vaccines every 1-3 years, it is likely that a single dose during sterilization can help protect community cats against rabies.\textsuperscript{12}

Epidemiologic studies have found Feline Immunodeficiency Virus to be four times more prevalent in males versus females due to bite wounds incurred during territorial disputes.\textsuperscript{13} The same studies found Feline Leukemia Virus in males and females at approximately the same rate with the most common transmission path being between mother cats to her kittens. Both main causes of virus transmission can be eliminated or greatly reduced by sterilization.\textsuperscript{14}

\textit{Spay Our Strays}

The Lexington organization Spay Our Strays, Inc., was incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit for the following purpose, as stated in their Articles of Incorporation filed with the state of Kentucky in the Fall of 2012.\textsuperscript{15}

“To engage in all activities that promote and encourage charitable scientific and educational purposes; including, but not limited to, providing spay and neuter services to feral cats; education regarding humane treatment of feral cats; assistance to the caretakers of feral cat colonies; and the raising of funds to promote the overall purpose of the Corporation”
Per their GuideStar profile page, Spay Our Strays (SOS) explains as a humane solution for the overpopulation of community cats in Central Kentucky, Spay Our Strays should establish colony caretakers who will be expected to have the cats in their care spay neutered and vaccinated through their trap-neuter-return (TNR) program. Spay Our Strays provides supplemental/subsidized food, shelter, and medical care when necessary. Listed programs include a trap-neuter-vaccinate-return clinic with an estimated annual budget of $12,000 and a cat food provision program for low income colony caretakers with an annual budget of $2,000. These numbers do not account for the subsidized shelter and medical care they provide per their profile page or their foster care program not mentioned online.

An official mission statement was never introduced, and multiple unofficial versions are currently being used across platforms. The following version is available on their GuideStar profile page:

“Spay Our Strays’ missions are: to limit the number of unwanted cats in Central Kentucky by offering TNR (trap, spay/neuter/vaccinate, return) services to the community; to provide education about TNR to the community and specifically to caretakers of community (feral/stray) cat colonies in order to achieve a healthier cat population; to encourage and supplement, when necessary, maintenance of healthy colony cats.”

A more concise version, “The mission of Spay Our Strays is to improve the lives of community cats through the practice of trap-neuter-return (TNR), providing spay and neuter services at an affordable cost.”, is currently being used on organization brochures for public communication. Affordability means that it is economically viable for Spay Our Strays’ caregivers to financially
support their entire colony without hindering their personal or colony care. To accomplish this mission, Spay Our Strays offers reduced or comped TNR services on a needs basis.

Prior to incorporation the future founders of Spay Our Strays began running a feral cat program under the umbrella of an accredited local animal sanctuary starting in 2003 until 2009 when the sanctuary dissolved. During this time, they began community outreach and fundraising efforts, and helping caregivers care for sick free roaming cats in their community. The first TNR clinic was in 2006 when they partnered with a local veterinarian to run monthly clinics out of an individual’s home. In 2010, their operation moved to the Lexington Humane Society’s clinic space where it continues today, serving cats from over 30 Kentucky counties to date.

![Figure 2. Kentucky counties served by Spay Our Strays clinics from 2013 – 2019.](image)
Clinic surgeries are scheduled directly with Spay Our Strays by caregivers and other trap-neuter-return programs using their services. Scheduling is on a first come first serve basis with no prioritization given to particular counties or financial resources. Instead logistical details are used as a qualifier for service. Interested parties who can properly trap and transport but cannot afford the clinic fees are provided fully compensated or discounted surgery slots to ensure adequate sterilization and vaccination of their cat colonies. As stated previously, Spay Our Strays also provides many services for caregivers beyond sterilization and vaccination. These are activities that have grown from a perceived need in the community and are also provided on a first come first served basis.

Below is a logic model providing an outline of the resources, programs, stakeholders, and prioritized goals for Spay Our Strays. Many of the elements listed are standard for any trap-neuter-return program. However, as will be explained later, there are many models for a trap-neuter-return program to follow. Some focus solely on providing resources for surgery, while others encompass strong elements of advocacy and education. Spay Our Strays resources are divided between activities that provide services to various stakeholders and operational resources to the organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spay Our Strays Logic Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inputs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trapping supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise/Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonies fully TNRed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young kittens rehomed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease/avoid community conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spay Our Strays is completely volunteer run with eight, of a possible eleven, board members and thirty-three non-board member volunteers. The activities of the organizations require varying numbers of volunteers and other resources. The weekday clinics for example, require two check-in volunteers and one check-out volunteer for one to two hours twice a week along with various office supplies and printed material. Large fundraising events, such as the new Christmas gift wrapping event, can require twelve to fourteen volunteers for seven hours per day and donated and purchased gift wrapping supplies, printed material, and food and beverage. Other programs are supported by board members’ family members. The food delivery program distributes an estimated 1,800 pounds of food to thirty colonies in the Fayette County area every three to four weeks. Food is often picked up and distributed by the spouses of the organization’s Treasurer and Vice President.

The board has maintained several of the same members since its creation in 2012. Half of the current board members are founding members of the organization, and another two have been on the board for over five years. Of the eight board members five contribute directly to at least one organization activity outside of their board and officer responsibilities. The board meets officially on a biannual basis, but many board members attend the monthly members meetings on a regular basis as well. Seven of the board members are fifty-five or older with six being
retirees and two are seventy-five or older. Only two of the members live outside of Fayette County.

There are currently three open seats on the board. Existing board members nominate and vote on new board members. A new nomination policy is included in a currently proposed revision to the organization’s bylaws. If passed the new nomination process will include a call for interested members to be nominated and a short application process in the event there are more nominees than open seats. Due to life events and a recent influx of talented volunteers some board members have expressed a willingness and desire to step down from board and officer positions. These decisions are in part due to personal reasons and in part due to a desire to increase the engagement of volunteers identified with skills that could benefit the organization. Recent departures from the board have been due to a lack of time to dedicate to the organization, conflict between board members, and a different set of priorities for the organization than most other board members and volunteers.

Records of current volunteers including demographics and skills do not exist and much of the following information will be based on the author’s personal knowledge with assistance from other board members. Of the thirty-three non-board member volunteers twenty-eight are female and an estimated twenty-two are employed, four are college students, four are retired and one is not working. Nineteen are below the age of fifty-five and one is seventy-five or older. A public members meeting is held every second Tuesday of the month where many non-board members and board members come together to discuss current program changes and concerns, and upcoming fundraising plans and opportunities. Of the thirty-three volunteers nineteen actively contribute directly to at least one organization activity.
Spay Our Strays does not have an official list of caregivers served. Some individual volunteers maintain personal records of public requests they have fulfilled, and individual program data are available, but not equally maintained. As such, some data are incomplete and do not represent an equal number of years and some are collected in a way making individual caregiver information difficult to decipher. For example, the TNR clinic data includes an unknown number of caregivers represented by other trap-neuter-return organizations using these services. An effort was made by the author to remove any duplications across datasets to provide the best representation possible for a rough estimate of caregivers served per county. Below is a table of the top five counties per caregivers aided between 2012 and 2020. This data compilation is based on a combination of clinic data, individual volunteer records, food delivery program records, and foster program records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Number of Caregivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fayette</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bath</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessamine</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Top Five Counties of Caregivers

Some typos made deciphering duplicates difficult. In these cases, both entries were maintained. Clinic data was consolidated by the cat colony address provided at clinic check-in with the idea that at least one unique caregiver was being served at each location. Due to the lack of official data, and several caveats explained above these numbers should be viewed as rough estimates only. There is no national standard method for estimating the number of caregivers in a community. Past surveys of caregivers have indicated an estimated 9 to 25% of all households feed community cats.25 Taking all of this into account, it is clear that caregivers living in Fayette
County are the primary stakeholders served by Spay Our Strays. Since the organization does not intentionally prioritize Fayette County this distribution is likely due to the proximity of Spay Our Strays’ services and volunteers to these caregivers.

Trap-neuter-return programs were still a new concept nationally when Spay Our Strays started, with the first program not being introduced into a shelter setting until 2008. Growing acceptance of community cats and trap-neuter-return practices began impacting how Spay Our Strays operated. Internally, their clinic’s capacity went from 40-50 slots per month in their Saturday monthly clinics to more than double with the addition of 15 surgery slots per week to cover a rise in demand for emergency slots for pregnant and sick or injured cats. New programs grew out of community needs to address kittens found in the field, caregivers in need of food and veterinary assistance for their colonies, and poorly socialized cats needed to be relocated due to hazardous living conditions. These programs were formed gradually over time by individual board members addressing individual caregiver needs with organizational resources. The services grew as more caregivers in need were identified. These services have never been formally accepted by the board through an official vote but are known practices and utilized by most board members and volunteers from time to time. Internal strife and a sense of caution impede decisions related to requests for external resources and communicating with the public about these programs. As a result, these programs tend to lack designated funding and are not publicly recognized on Spay Our Strays material. These choices have created a lack of transparency with stakeholders and hindered requests for related resources.

Externally, more trap-neuter-return programs began operating in the same service area as Spay Our Strays. The Lexington Humane Society (LHS) began scheduling more community spay-neuter and TNR surgeries increasing the internal value placed on surgery slots and a need
for increased efficiency to keep up with the growing demand. Spay Our Strays needed to quickly expand their surgery options to accommodate emergency cases when surgery slots were fully booked or not available on the days necessary. These new accommodations were more costly by 33% to 37% for Spay Our Strays and their caregivers respectively. Clinic schedules are based on staff availability and are canceled from time to time to accommodate staff needs. The long-standing Spay Our Strays monthly Saturday clinic was put on hold beginning in December 2019 for this very reason with plans to start back in March or April 2020. This pause in service was not expected to have a significant impact on the Spay Our Strays community given the natural lull of successful trapping in winter months. In March 2020, the humane society decided to terminate the monthly Saturday clinic completely due to staffing concerns. The loss of a Saturday clinic has resulted in a reduction of SOS’s clinic capacity by 30% to 45% affecting out of county stakeholders almost exclusively. It is perceived by the organization that logistical and scheduling challenges will prevent these stakeholders from taking advantage of Spay Our Strays’ weekday clinics leaving many without spay neuter options for their community cats.

The changing demands and differing priorities among members have led to opportunities and challenges facing Spay Our Strays today and are the purpose of this project. Even though the issue addressed here is focused on a single organization, the methods applied can be helpful to other nonprofits and much of the analysis can benefit other TNR and similar animal welfare programs. The immediate results will solely affect Spay Our Strays and their unique stakeholders, but aspects of the logic model, general stakeholder categories, identification of strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats and other analysis components referred to in this study will easily translate to other organizations.
The clinic is the main program of Spay Our Strays and requires a large portion of the budget and other resources while also being a primary source of revenue. It is also the service most utilized by their out of county stakeholders. As a trap-neuter-return organization the main indicator for Spay Our Strays’ success is their ability to provide TNR services to enough caregivers in a short enough period of time to counteract and essentially stop population growth of cat colonies in their service area. To determine Spay Our Strays’ effectiveness I will be gathering and analyzing information regarding the following three questions.

1. **How well are Spay Our Strays clinics serving Fayette County compared to surrounding areas?**

2. **How does Spay Our Strays compare to other TNR programs?**

3. **How effective is SOS at serving its stakeholders?**

   For my analysis I will use available internal data to investigate where most Spay Our Strays’ clinic resources are going and how well the organization serves Fayette County compared to other counties. I will evaluate Spay Our Strays’ performance as a non-profit and as a trap-neuter-return organization serving Central Kentucky. An analysis of administrative data
including financial records and service metrics will be used to compare Spay Our Strays to other TNR organizations. Based on the results, I will provide recommendations to improve community stewardship.

**Literature Review**

*Elements of strategic planning*

Strategic planning is a useful tool for program development and setting goals for organizational growth. It answers three vital questions for an organization: who we are, who do we serve, and how do we excel. Existing models were originally designed with the private sector in mind, but the public and non-profit sector have begun to value strategic planning as a tool to increase public value and improve performance. When used effectively, organizations such as Spay Our Strays can identify how well they are doing, what needs exist in their community, and strategies to address them effectively.

There are several strategic planning models that organizations can use when developing a strategic plan. The best fit for an organization will depend on the organization’s size, culture, leadership makeup, environment, and expertise of its members. Five common models are basic, issue- or goal-based, alignment, scenario, and organic. Many organizations will choose to modify or combine model activities to design a better fit for their capabilities and needs.

Based on Kriemadis et al. (2007), I am focusing on a combination of activities included in the basic, issue- or goal-based, and alignment models. The basic model is simple enough for small organizations with limited strategic planning experience to implement successfully, however, it is not intended for established organizations like Spay Our Strays. This model will be used to ensure all basic planning activities have been covered by the organization. The issue- or goal-based model is a step-up from the basic model and most in-line with the current planning
activities of Spay Our Strays. This model’s activities will be the most utilized for this project. Lastly, activities based on the alignment model will be utilized to ensure there are strong alignments between Spay Our Strays’ mission and resources. These activities should help the organization address several issues affecting their internal efficiency, identify why current approaches may not be effective, and ensure they are operating efficiently. Below are suggested steps for each model. Not all steps will be used in this project.

Basic Strategic Planning Model

1. Develop a mission statement.
2. Select goals for the organization to reach to accomplish the mission.
3. Identify specific strategies to achieve each goal.
4. Identify specific activities to implement each strategy.
5. Monitor and update the strategic plan as needed.

Issue – of Goal – Based Model

1. Do an internal and external assessment to develop a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis.
2. Prepare a strategic analysis to identify and prioritize major goals and issues.
3. Design programs and strategies to address the identified goals and issues.
4. Design/update the organization’s vision, mission, and values.
5. Establish objectives, resource needs, roles, and responsibilities required for implementing the organization’s new vision, mission, and values.
6. Record the established goals, issues, vision, mission, objectives, etc. in the new strategic plan document and attach the SWOT analysis.
7. Develop a yearly operating plan document.
8. Develop and authorize a one-year budget.
9. Conduct the organization’s year-one operations.
10. Monitor, review, evaluate, and update the strategic plan document.

Alignment Model

1. Outline the organization’s mission, programs, resources, and support needs.
2. Identify what is working well and what needs to be adjusted.
3. Identify how these adjustments should be implemented.
4. Include the adjustments as strategies in the new strategic plan.
**Overpopulation control measures**

As previously stated, community cat overpopulation can negatively impact communities when left unchecked. Eradication, removal, and sterilization are three common approaches communities turn to when addressing these concerns. Eradication is common practice when addressing non-native predators. Recent examples where these measures have been used or promoted against community cats are Australia and the Western Governors’ Association. The effectiveness of these programs, however, require several factors not indicative to community cat environments. Some factors include a lack of species mobility from outside of target area, eradication numbers must be higher than the influx rate, and social and political support over alternative strategies. Removal programs are found to be ineffective, in large part, due to a phenomenon called the “vacuum effect.” This is when one colony is removed from a resource rich area, it is quickly replaced by new cats drawn to the resources left behind. The sterilization and vaccination of community cats are the only approach found to eliminate many of the adverse effects of overpopulation long-term. This solution is more favorable to the public than eradication programs, and public buy-in has been found to be a vital component for any program to be successful.

**TNR program challenges**

Before starting a trap-neuter-return program interested parties must be prepared for possible obstacles. Wildlife advocates are historically opposed to trap-neuter-return programs, claiming they perpetuate the detrimental impact community cats have on wildlife. It is important for TNR programs to work with local wildlife officials when these concerns arise from the community. Local ordinances and state laws can also hinder one’s ability to care for and trap-neuter-return community cats. These complications are usually the consequences of
unrelated or vaguely written laws. Common problems arise with those that set pet ownership limits, cat licensing laws, and feeding bans. These are examples of laws intended to apply to pets and wildlife, but with unclear language they are left up to interpretation. For example, laws dictate the number of animals a resident can own. However, in many municipalities “ownership” applies to any animal a person feeds on a regular basis. This interpretation can open caregivers up to fines associated with this and other ordinances with similar language.

*TNR program benefits*

Trap-neuter-return programs began as a humane alternative to eradication techniques being used to address concerns over the cat overpopulation issue. Positive impacts on the animal sheltering community were noticed in 2008 and contributed to their popularity. TNR programs are favored because they allow shelters the ability to return unadoptable cats back outside, lessening the burden on their organization. Long-term studies have been performed in recent years with positive findings. Last year, an analysis of the University of Central Florida’s 25 year old TNR program found a consistent reduction in population rates of 85 percent. Another 2019 study compared cull, sterilization, and relocation programs at high and low intensities and found high intensity sterilization very effective at reducing preventable kitten deaths and reducing population numbers overall. These findings point to a need for strategy and data collection when implementing a sterilization program to ensure high intensity impact and consistent results.

*Best practices based on the literature*

*Board development*

Organizations require board members with specific skills, a willingness to work, a commitment to the mission, influence, and diversity of thought. High performing boards focus
on fiduciary duties, give attention to the organization’s structure, are policy oriented, have a commitment to ‘Best Practices’, have individual members’ commitment, hold meetings that facilitate excellence, and competent staff to provide leadership.\textsuperscript{56} Board membership should reflect organization constituents and be large enough to ensure appropriate deliberation and diversity given the scope of the organization.\textsuperscript{57} Staggered term limits can help ensure broad participation and diversity while organized committees can be used to effectively carry out roles and responsibilities and facilitate the work of the board.\textsuperscript{58-59} A board should establish a selection process for new members that ensures an infusion of new ideas and community perspectives without disregarding the institutional memory provided by existing members.\textsuperscript{60}

\textit{TNR is a collaborative effort}\textsuperscript{61}

Collaboration between members of the local animal welfare community is essential when TNR is practiced at a communitywide scale. Collaboration between a TNR organization and the caregivers in their community is vital for success. TNR programs using a grassroots model put much of the responsibility on caregivers to trap, transport, and identify community cats in the area. Organizations must work with local humane societies and rescue groups to manage the fostering and intake of kittens and friendly adults and local veterinarians to provide surgeries and medical care. Coalitions and less formal groups of interested organizations and individuals can help with organizational strategy and education.

\textit{Gather baseline statistics and assess the community}\textsuperscript{62-63}

Data allows the organization to measure their progress, and knowing what resources are available and needs are to be met is important for any organization to be effective. It is important to know what laws in a community can create roadblocks for the organization and caregivers. Key metrics to gather include colony statistics and program statistics. Colony statistics identify
where the cats are coming from, what are their ages, how many are there, and who is feeding them. Program statistics include how many surgeries have been performed, the number of colonies identified, the number of colonies spayed and neutered, percentage of employee/volunteer turnover, the cost of spay and neutering the average cat, and a breakdown of where the budget is being spent.

Funding

Funding for trap-neuter-return programs typically comes from private donations, municipal funding, and grants. It is important to understand the eligibility guideline and expectations of each source. Municipal funding is possible when TNR is desired to address nuisance behaviors and resident complaints. Regulations associated with municipal funds can often require a bidding process. The records can also be subject to freedom of information requests which can include personal identifying information such as caregivers’ names and addresses. It is important to review state freedom of information laws prior to considering this funding source.

Expert versus Grassroots Models

Trap-neuter-return programs use one of two models when allocating resources and interacting with caregivers. When selecting a model, programs need to know the size of the community, the amount of resources available for a TNR effort, and the size of the community cat population to be addressed.

Under the expert model the programs’ employees and/or volunteers respond to public requests for assistance and perform all the hands-on work. This includes the trapping, transporting, and handling of the cats. Caretakers provide information about the presence of the cats, cooperate with the trappers, and provide long-term care of the colonies. This model is
considered appropriate whenever the cat population is relatively small, there is an adequate amount of funding and personnel available, and the community size manageable. This is also the preferred model when a TNR program is run by shelters with community contracts to provide animal control services.

Programs operating under the grassroots model rely on caretakers and concerned residents to perform most or all of the labor. The TNR programs offer support by providing training, equipment, spay/neuter referrals, and limited hands-on assistance. The grassroots model is preferred when the cat population is too large and the amount of resources is too low for experts to achieve the goals of trap-neuter-return.

_Targeting_

As previously stated, high impact and consistent results require strategy and data collection. Targeting practices allow for progress to be made when available resources seem too few for the scale of need. Targeting ensures resources are allocated efficiently to achieve maximum population reduction and are the recommended strategy component of this high impact equation.66

When an organization practices colony-level targeting they are trapping and sterilizing every cat in a single colony before moving their attention to another colony.67 This ensures a near to 100% sterilization rate which is vital for population reduction. The sterilization rate must be high but must also be reached as quickly as possible to outpace feline reproduction.68 To achieve this goal an organization must allocate their surgery slots accordingly and promote practicing “mass trapping” when communicating with colony caregivers.69 Mass trapping is the act of trapping an entire colony at once.70 For this to be achieved a TNR organization must be
able to supply enough traps and have a large enough clinic capacity to accommodate larger colonies.\textsuperscript{71}

Attempting to reduce population rates within a community through colony-level targeting has its limitations.\textsuperscript{72} Multiple colonies will be completely or close to completely sterilized but spread out across a larger area diluting the impact. When a sterile colony is near an unsterilized colony migration between colonies can occur. This is due to what is called the “vacuum effect” when animals move based on the capacity of resources in their vicinity.\textsuperscript{73} Community-level targeting allows the rate of population reduction to increase.\textsuperscript{74} Targeting colonies in proximity, by zip code or neighborhood, reduces the impact of migration between colonies.\textsuperscript{75}

Targeting has the greatest impact on reducing population when priority is given to the areas where most community cats live. Organizations can identify these “hot spots” by analyzing information from shelter intake data, community economic data, complaint calls and requests for assistance, and tribal knowledge. Location data, from these sources, can be categorized by area or mapped using mapping tools to identify and highlight possible patterns. PetSmart Charities recommends estimating community cat populations by dividing the community population by fifteen.\textsuperscript{76} This method is a modification of suggestions provided by existing research which suggests dividing the population by six, but PetSmart believes produces an overestimation based on funded project results. It should be acknowledged that this method produces an estimate that is on the low end of national popular estimates, and there are many variables that can affect population numbers such as a community’s population density and climate which are not accounted for using this method.\textsuperscript{77}
Case Selection

The following national organizations were selected for a comparative analysis because of their contributions to the field. They are the largest trap-neuter-return organizations in the nation and represent different models an organization can take to accomplish a TNR-centric mission. The Kentucky organizations were selected for their vicinity to Lexington and reputation in the state. Their organizational structures provide examples for grassroots trap-neuter-return programs working both within a single community and across county lines. Both examples touch on aspects specific to Spay Our Strays and provide unique challenge for the organization.

Alley Cat Allies

Based in Bethesda, MD, Alley Cat Allies started in 1990 with a 56-cat colony in a Washington, DC neighborhood. By 1993, they had developed protocols for trap-neuter-return and veterinary care for community cats, and in 1998 their founder was invited to speak about these protocols at the National Animal Control Association training conference. Alley Cat Allies is the self-proclaimed global engine of change for cats stating, “Our years of experience in grassroots organizing, hands-on activism, and education has empowered policymakers, veterinarians, nonprofit organizations, volunteer groups, activists, and caregivers with the tools and knowledge to practice, teach, and advocate for humane care for cats in every community.”

In 2000, Alley Cat Allies established a trap-neuter-return program on the Atlantic City Boardwalk. This project was in response to an order by the Atlantic City, New Jersey animal control to trap and kill the community cats living under and around the Boardwalk. To implement the program the organization created a Cat Action Team along with the Atlantic City Health Department, the Humane Society of Atlantic County, and local advocates. Their efforts resulted in more than half of the trapped cats being placed for adoption and stabilized colonies.
with no new births. Today the Atlantic City Boardwalk Cats Project is home to roughly 175 sterilized cats and Alley Cat Allies’ flagship project displaying the many benefits of a successful program.\textsuperscript{81}

Today Alley Cat Allies identifies themselves as an advocacy organization focused on low-cost spay and neuter policies and programs as well as trap-neuter-return and shelter-neuter-return.\textsuperscript{82} According to the organization’s mission statement, their resources are used “to transform and develop communities to protect and improve the lives of cats.” Their mission is achieved through three main goals: reform public policies, expand and promote cat care, and shift the public’s perception of cats.\textsuperscript{83}

In 2007, Alley Cat Allies formed a coalition with the Maryland SPCA, Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter, and the Maryland Feline Society called the Spay/Neuter Coalition for a Litter-less Baltimore.\textsuperscript{84} The coalition was started to address trap and kill practices used by Baltimore animal control and support caregivers being harassed for their efforts to provide food, water, and medical care to community cats. Through advocacy and education Alley Cat Allies and their partners were able to introduce new language for existing ordinances that would allow residents to care for managed colonies as long as all the cats were trap-neuter-returned.\textsuperscript{85} Following its successful passage, Alley Cat Allies led an effort to establish monthly seminars for caregivers to learn TNR best practices. Expert veterinarians were also brought in to educate local practitioners the techniques needed for high-volume, low-cost spay/neuter to make trap-neuter-return accessible and affordable in the Baltimore community.\textsuperscript{86}

Their board of directors consist of five members including the President and Founder Becky Robinson.\textsuperscript{87} Fifteen staff members work across four departments covering community programs and support, communications, development, humane law & policy. Descriptive job
titles include web manager, writer, photographer and special projects manager, donor relations, associate director of community engagement & events, field representative, director of content development, consulting attorney, and database & operations associate. Listed volunteer opportunities include event support, trap-neuter-return, cleaning colony sites, transporting cats to veterinary appointments, and fostering. Volunteering opportunities are available in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Bethesda, Maryland, Montgomery County Maryland, and location close to the volunteer’s residence. The number of volunteers, by location or cumulative, is not available.

**Neighborhood Cats**


eighteenth Cats is a trap-neuter-return organization started in a New York City neighborhood in 1999. Today they serve community cats and their caregivers in New York City, New Jersey and the island of Maui in Hawaii through trapping and educational services. Mass trapping, targeted TNR, and the drop trap are all trap-neuter-return staples created by Neighborhood Cats based on their years of experience. The organization has produced and continues to produce “how to” videos, author trap-neuter-return handbooks, write online courses and host an online colony database system call Cat Stats.

Neighborhood Cats has a six-member board of directors including a veterinarian, author, and director at large, executive director, and NYC TNR director positions. They also have a three-member executive staff consisting of a national program director, NYC program director, and Jersey City TNR director. They have trained over 7,000 New York City residence on humane trapping, and they host a TNR in NYC online networking group for their caregivers with a membership of 657 and a colony registration database for NYC covering the five boroughs and over 3,100 colonies. Volunteer opportunities and other information are not provided.
**Operation Catnip**

Operation Catnip is a clinic-only organization established in 1997 in Raleigh, NC with a second location opening in 1998 in Gainesville, FL. Modeled after Alley Cat Allies and the Feral Cat Coalition in San Diego, both Operation Catnip high-volume MASH-style TNR clinics are completely volunteer run utilizing veterinary students and community members to fill 75 positions every month. Operation Catnip of Gainesville has sterilized over 65,000 community cats since 1998 and has become a model for TNR clinics all over the world.97

In a study led by Dr. Julie Levy, founder of Operation Catnip, researchers investigated if targeted trap-neuter-return practices could effectively slow down cat intake rates into animal control in Gainesville, Florida.98 Approximately 54 percent of the estimated community cat population in the targeted area were sterilized through TNR during the two-year study. Dr. Leavy and her team found a 70 percent decrease in the intake at animal control versus a 13 percent decrease of cat intake in non-targeted areas. The study also found a 95 percent decrease in the euthanasia rate in the targeted area versus a 30 percent decline in the non-target areas.99

Unintended results of the study include adoptions of kittens and friendlier adults and a decrease of dog intake rates in the targeted area. Both results were attributed to the community outreach performed during the study which provided opportunities for conversations concerning the care of owned and unowned cats and dogs and available resources.100 One take away from the study was the way in which the research team communicated with the public. At the beginning of the study direct advertising was used to promote free spay/neuter surgeries through Operation Catnip. This approach was not found to be effective at bringing in the large number of cats they expected, so the team hired a neighborhood resident to knock on doors which was much more
effective. According to Dr. Levy, the resource needs for this project were intensive, and not realistic without an established target area.\textsuperscript{101}

Operation Catnip of Gainesville established two supplementary programs designed to prevent the unnecessary death of cats and kittens. Their Kitten Shelter Diversion program assists caregivers with rehoming kittens born in the field by providing a list of resources. The program requires a commitment from the caregiver to hold on to the kittens until a new home is identified and the kittens are sterilized and vaccinated preventing the need for foster volunteers.\textsuperscript{102} Their Working Cat Program is a collaboration between Operation Catnip of Gainesville and county animal services and rescue partners to identify non-traditional homes for poorly socialized cats.\textsuperscript{103} Both programs are structured to prevent euthanasia and address overpopulation contributors without diverting a large amount of Operation Catnip of Gainesville’s resources from their clinics. Operation Catnip in Raleigh does not support similar programs. Instead they provide a list of available spay and neuter, adoption, and TNR resources in the state and partner with veterinary clinics to provide spay-neuter vouchers increasing their impact beyond their clinic facility’s capacity.\textsuperscript{104-105}

Operation Catnip Gainesville’s board of directors has five members including three officer positions: the president, vice president, and treasurer. The vice president and two other members are in the veterinary field and the president is a treasury services specialist and vice president at a regional bank. Occupational information for the treasurer is not provided.\textsuperscript{106} Their administrative staff consists of an executive director, operations director, volunteer coordinator, and outreach coordinator.\textsuperscript{107} The clinic staff is a two-member team consisting of a medical director and technician.\textsuperscript{108} Specific volunteer applications for veterinary students and veterinary professionals are available for the completely volunteer run clinic. General volunteer
opportunities include working cat caretaker, trap depot volunteer, office volunteer, and trapping & transporting volunteer. The complete number of volunteers is unavailable, but 75 volunteers are needed to run one clinic.

**Alley Cat Advocates**

Started in 1999 to advance TNR in the Louisville area, Alley Cat Advocates applied a grassroots model by providing high-volume spay days for community cats trapped by their caregivers. Alley Cat Advocates has maintained a TNR focused mission by working closely with Louisville Metro Animal Services and The Kentucky Humane Society. The organization aimed to increase their impact in 2010 through a grant from PetSmart Charities. Alley Cat Advocates used the grant to target community cats living in one zip code selected by analyzing shelter intake data. Within eighteen months 800 community cats and shelter intake from that zip code began to drop at a rate faster than the rest of the shelter’s service area. City council also saw a noticeable drop in the number of complaint calls, involving stray and unowned cats, coming from the targeted zip code. Their success moved the city council to adopt city ordinances directing Metro Animal Services to develop a trap-neuter-return program and exempting caretakers from licensing and other requirements imposed on pet owners.

Alley Cat Advocates has nine paid staff, a fourteen-member support team of outside vets, and a ten-member board of directors. The staff consists of two veterinarians, two veterinarian assistants, a community cat trapper, a community cat outreach coordinator, operations director, assistant to the operations director, and an executive director. Their board of directors has four officer positions including a chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer. Three of the members, including the Secretary, are in the field of veterinary medicine. Current volunteer numbers are not available. Volunteer opportunities include responding to telephone messages, organizing
medical and office supplies, trapping and transporting cats, trap distribution, feeding at clinics, and information distribution in targeted zip codes. Volunteers with professional skills are invited to join one of Alley Cat Advocates administrative teams. These include the development team, education & community outreach team, personnel team, and the public relations & marketing team. These teams focus on various programs such as fundraising, volunteer recruitment, continuing education and educational resources, volunteer training and placement, and marketing.

**HOPE Spay Neuter Clinic**

HOPE Spay Neuter Clinic is based in Versailles, Kentucky, and serves the Central Kentucky area. This organization is not a TNR organization, but rather a spay neuter clinic that offers low-cost spay and neuter services for owned pets and unowned community cats. Since their opening in 2010, HOPE has provided 17,765 spay and neuter surgeries to animals from over 75 Kentucky counties. Community cats make up 500 of those surgeries per year through their monthly one day TNR clinics.

HOPE Spay Neuter Clinic has a seven-member volunteer board of directors with four officer positions and two program management positions. These are the president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, clinic manager, and TNR coordinator. The organization has two paid veterinary staff and twenty-five volunteers including a volunteer coordinator. Information regarding specific volunteer tasks and new volunteer opportunities is not available.

**Variables**

I collect administrative data from Spay Our Strays, the two Kentucky TNR organizations, and the three national organizations selected for this comparative analysis. Financial information is gathered from their N-990 forms and service metrics and program information is gathered.
from their websites, Charity Navigator profiles, and annual reports. Tabular data is merged into a single table for analysis. The administrative and organizational data I collect is used to compare these organizations to themselves and best practices. The findings from this comparison are used to identify strategic actions for Spay Our Strays.

**Research Design**

A comparative analysis will be done reviewing Spay Our Strays’ performance compared to other trap-neuter-return programs operating in Kentucky. Administrative data are gathered from a spay neuter clinic in Versailles, and one in Louisville. The administrative data are analyzed using summary statistics. Qualitative data are also collected from the respective organizations’ websites and social media accounts regarding available programs funding. A comparative analysis of Spay Our Strays service areas is also done to investigate the effectiveness of SOS serving Fayette County versus other Central Kentucky counties. The initial analysis looks solely at Spay Our Strays data. Based on these findings, a more in-depth analysis comparing SOS to other organizations, such as the Lexington Humane Society, serving Fayette County could be necessary.

Environmental scanning and comparative analysis are important tools for strategic planning. The research design laid out above utilizes both tools thus directly addressing the proposed problem statement and research questions. These methods along with the analysis used to interpret collected data provide adequate and relevant findings for a comprehensive SWOT analysis and strategic plan to be developed and proposed to the Spay Our Strays Board of Directors based on the evidence collected from this research.
Findings and Analysis

The one-on-one interviews and surveys originally planned for this project required IRB approval, but that approval was delayed by several re-submissions. See the timeline in Appendix A. Information and insight were instead pulled from documented best practices established for trap-neuter-return programs, and a comparative analysis was completed for Spay Our Strays, three nationally recognized organizations, and two Kentucky organizations.

1. How well are Spay Our Strays clinics serving Fayette County compared to surrounding areas?

Spay Our Strays data collection practices prior to 2017 has been found to produce incomplete data which understates the number of surgeries performed. The Lexington Humane Society provides a more complete data source which covers a longer period but does not differentiate between counties and cannot be used for this analysis.\(^{126}\) As seen below (Table 2) Spay Our Strays’ recorded internal numbers are typically under those attributed to Spay Our Strays by LHS. Data from 2017 is the one exception where Spay Our Strays internal data is over LHS data by 93 surgeries. The difference in the last three years is less than 100. For this reason, conclusions focusing on data from 2017 to the present are firmer than conclusions made using older data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>TNR surgery total</th>
<th>SOS contribution (according to LHS)</th>
<th>SOS internal numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Based on clinic data recorded by Spay Our Strays from 2013 – 2019, SOS has dedicated 49% of its clinic resources to out of county cats and 51% to Fayette County cats.

This information speaks to the previously discussed discord between board members, and the concern of some that the organization is not dedicating most of their clinic resources to caregivers from Fayette County. Clinic appointments are provided on a first come first serve basis. Most appointments are made by the caregiver calling the Spay Our Strays “cat phone” or reaching out to Spay Our Strays through Facebook or email. A small portion of appointments are made by Spay Our Strays’ volunteers who are coordinating an assisted trapping event. The breakdown of the clinic data could point to a lack of engagement from the organization with the local community. This assumption follows findings from the two-year study, performed by Dr.
Levy, studying the effectiveness of focusing Operation Catnip resources on a targeted area of the Gainesville community. The internal data on its own does not provide much insight regarding external factors that might also be influencing these numbers. These could include the availability of alternative service providers and logistical and financial barriers.

To better understand what would constitute an appropriate level of service for each group I used the “divide by fifteen” method recommended by PetSmart Charities. This method is the recommended standard for grant applications and a revision of the previously recommended “divide by six” method based on recommendations from academic researchers. The original “divide by six” method was developed by studies counting the number of community cats fed in a defined area and compared to human population estimates for the same area. However, when applied to new proposals the produced estimation proved to be difficult to fulfill during the execution of the project. PetSmart Charities estimated that the divide by six method was flawed because its origin did not consider multiple caregivers per community cat more than likely resulting in duplication in the original model. The “divide by fifteen” method produces estimates on the lower end of what is nationally accepted but is within the accepted range and has been found to be more accurate for the purposes of project proposals. Table 3 uses the estimated county populations from the Census Bureau to estimate community cat population estimates for each county represented in the Spay Our Strays clinic data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Population estimates</th>
<th>Community Cat Population estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fayette</td>
<td>323,152</td>
<td>21,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>92,987</td>
<td>6,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>57,004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessamine</td>
<td>54,115</td>
<td>3,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>50,991</td>
<td>3,399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitley</td>
<td>36,264</td>
<td>2,418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>36,263</td>
<td>2,418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floyd</td>
<td>35,589</td>
<td>2,373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyle</td>
<td>30,060</td>
<td>2,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>28,157</td>
<td>1,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>26,797</td>
<td>1,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodford</td>
<td>26,734</td>
<td>1,782</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bell</td>
<td>26,032</td>
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<td>Lincoln</td>
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<td>Rowan</td>
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<td>Anderson</td>
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<td>Johnson</td>
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<td>Harrison</td>
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<td>Garrard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
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<td>1,138</td>
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<td>Rockcastle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
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<td>Fleming</td>
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<td>940</td>
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<td>Morgan</td>
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<td>887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis</td>
<td>13,275</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the cumulative population of the 34 counties represented in SOS clinic data Spay Our Strays serves an estimated community cat population of 76,709 with 21,543 living in Fayette County. These numbers point to a proper distribution of clinic services to be 72% for out of county and 28% for Fayette County. This assumption is based on existing organizational material that states Spay Our Strays exists to serve community cats and caregivers in Central Kentucky and does not indicate a preference for Fayette County caregivers. If the board decides on a strategy that does favor Fayette County caregivers, they would be advised to update their documentation to better reflect these priorities.

Looking at year to year trends it appears that cats from Fayette County have become a smaller part of Spay Our Strays clinics dropping from 55% to 41% of cats between 2017 and 2019.
Available data is more comprehensive in recent years providing a clearer picture for comparison. In a comparison of weekday and monthly Saturday clinic use it is clear Saturday clinics were predominantly utilized by out of county caregivers rather than those from Fayette County. Based on this breakdown, it could be predicted that these caregivers could be displaced due to scheduling challenges associated with weekday service.
However, an analysis (Figure 6) of the weekday clinics operating during the months when the Saturday clinic was on hiatus shows a large influx of out of county cats compared to those from Fayette county.

![Graph showing community cat source counties for Dec 2019 to March 2020 (weekday only)](image)

Figure 6. Comparison of community cat source counties; weekday clinics.

This breakdown is in line with the pre-determined proper distribution rates based on population estimates. It also raises concern for the organization’s ability to continue to serve Fayette County caregivers at current levels. Time will tell if this is a new trend for Spay Our Strays, but the initial information does combat many preconceived notions concerning how out of county stakeholders can best be served. The extreme switch in clinic makeup, when comparing this period to the previous three years with consistent Saturday service, does raise concern for the organization’s ability to continue to serve Fayette County caregivers at current levels.

2. **How does Spay Our Strays compare to other TNR programs?**

It was difficult to find comparable organizations of similar size to Spay Our Strays due to the lack of financial information and public details available for organizations operating with less than $50,000 per year. These organizations are not required to complete full N-990s forms which
include financial information vital for this comparison. The programs selected for this analysis were chosen due to their vicinity to Spay Our Strays and relative age and mission goals. Most of the organizations were started in their local communities in the late 1990s and not long before Spay Our Strays started their TNR program in 2003. HOPE Spay Neuter Clinic is the one exception which began in 2010. All organizations provide an example of what is possible given the same amount of time, similar origin story, and mission. Below is a comparison of the selected organizations by several factors used to display how well they are comparable and shed light on possible success factors Spay Our Strays could benefit from implementing.

Service area

When comparing service areas by estimated human populations they may appear to be vastly different. However, when estimating community cat populations, the service areas become much more comparable. Operation Catnip serves the Jacksonville area with an estimated population of 903,889. When the “divide by fifteen” method is applied this number drops to 60,259. Alley Cat Advocates serves an estimated population of 766,757 in Jefferson County, Kentucky. Again, when the “divide by fifteen” method is applied this number drops to 51,117. Spay Our Strays serves an estimated 1,150,638 population based on the 34 counties represented in their clinic data. The estimated community cat population for the same counties is 76,709. By comparing service areas by the estimated population of community cats rather than humans the difference across these three areas goes from over 383,881 to a mere 25,592. This adjustment does not work for all the organizations included in this comparative analysis. Alley Cat Allies and HOPE Spay Neuter Clinic do not provide enough information to collect estimated populations from the Census Bureau for this analysis. Neighborhood Cats serves multiple
communities nationwide making their service area not comparable even when examining estimated outdoor cat populations rather than human populations.

**Leadership, staff, and volunteers**

Non-profits are not required to provide volunteer information per the IRS or any other revenue service because they are not paid, and no taxes are collected. Consequently, it is impossible to determine numbers or demographics without personal knowledge of the organizations. Below is a breakdown based on what information was made available on each organizations’ website. These numbers are not expected to be all encompassing for the reasons laid out above.

National organizations have smaller Boards of Directors with five or six members, but an average of 8 paid staff compared to 3.6 for Kentucky organizations. HOPE Spay Neuter Clinic is the most comparable to Spay Our Strays with similar sized boards and volunteer programs. However, Spay Our Strays offers many more services than HOPE with similar manpower. When examining annual surgery numbers this points to other limitations leading to a lower capacity rather than a need for more people to achieve a higher capacity. Alley Cat Advocates has the most board members of all of the six organizations and 4.5 times as many paid staff as the other Kentucky programs. This is interesting considering their service area is the smallest of all of the organizations. Their surgery numbers, however, are considerably higher than either of the other Kentucky organizations pointing to a program more effective at targeting cats in their service area.

Volunteers are utilized in different ways by all six of the organizations. There was no specific information available concerning Neighborhood Cats volunteers. Alley Cat Allies provides field opportunities for volunteers to work with community cats through trapping,
transportation, and care and outreach opportunities working organization information tables.

Operation Catnip recruits skilled and non-skilled volunteers to run their MASH clinics, manage their trap bank, provide office work, and care for community cats in their working cat program. Without knowing the number of volunteers in their program, Alley Cat Advocates appears to have the most robust volunteer program utilizing skilled and non-skilled volunteers, like Operation Catnip, and established all-volunteer administrative teams. The volunteer opportunities are very similar between Spay Our Strays and Alley Cat Advocates. Both organizations utilize volunteers to help with vital functions of the organization such as fundraising, volunteer training and recruitment, marketing, and responding to public requests.

Spay Our Strays does not currently use a committee or team model like Alley Cat Advocates. The board is considering committees, per their proposed bylaws, which is recommended practice for nonprofits and might be a benefit of Alley Cat Advocates. Given the limited information this is undetermined.

Financial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TNR Organizations</th>
<th>Overall Revenue</th>
<th>Contributions &amp; Grants (revenue)</th>
<th>Program Revenue</th>
<th>Overall Expenses</th>
<th>Salary Expenses</th>
<th>Other Expenses</th>
<th>Revenue Less Expenses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alley Cat Advocates</td>
<td>$498,289</td>
<td>$476,657</td>
<td>$4,999</td>
<td>$561,672</td>
<td>$134,630</td>
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<tr>
<td>HOPE Spay Neuter Clinic</td>
<td>$115,428</td>
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<td>Spay Our Strays</td>
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<td>Alley Cat Allies</td>
<td>$10,896,427</td>
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<td>Neighborhood Cats</td>
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<td>Operation Catnip</td>
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<td>$428,227</td>
<td>$199,575</td>
<td>$228,652</td>
<td>$295,886</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Financial Comparison of Spay Our Strays and other TNR national and local organizations.134,139

Spay Our Strays is based in Fayette County with an estimated population of 323,152 serves caregivers from 34 other Central Kentucky counties all together accounting for an estimated 26%
of the state’s population.\textsuperscript{140} According to LHS clinic data, an average of 814 cats were trap-neuter-returned annually in the last three years (between 2017 – 2019) through Spay Our Strays clinics. Their clinic fees, collected from caregivers, contributed $13,344 with contributions and grants contributing another $11,808, but they ended the 2018-2019 fiscal year with a deficit of $2,224. This is in part from the number of cats they provided uncompensated care and extra medical fees incurred during the clinics totaling $3,492, and another $3,479 was spent on veterinary services for community cats and Spay Our Strays fosters.\textsuperscript{141}

Alley Cat Advocates is a TNR organization serving an estimated population of 766,757 in the Louisville Metro area.\textsuperscript{142-143} Much of their revenue comes from contributions and grants with 91% coming from grants rather than their programs or fundraising.\textsuperscript{144} This allows them to provide many of their surgeries at no cost to caregivers and removing barriers to service.\textsuperscript{145} In 2019, they were able to TNR 4,088 community cats through their various clinic programs.\textsuperscript{146} This means Alley Cat Advocates trap-neuter-returned five times the number of cats of Spay Our Strays with twenty times the revenue. When comparing the revenue and expense per surgery, Alley Cat Advocates is bringing in $124.50 per cat and paying $140.40 for a $15.90 loss per cat TNR. In comparison, Spay Our Strays brings in $30.90 per cat TNR and spends $33.63, a much smaller loss of $2.73 per cat TNR.

HOPE Spay Neuter Clinic’s home county of Woodford has an estimated population of 26,533, but their services are also available to caregivers in Central Kentucky.\textsuperscript{147} Though it is unknown how many community cat caregivers versus pet owners have used their clinic their records show utilization from 75 counties or 62.5% of the counties in Kentucky and an estimated 1,974 surgeries per year.\textsuperscript{148} Taking a look at their estimated annual surgery numbers and financial information, HOPE Spay Neuter Clinic is providing 2.3 times the number of surgeries
than Spay Our Strays with 4.6 times the revenue. This means they are bringing in $64.90 and paying out $58.50 per surgery leaving a $6.40 profit per surgery. The slight profit per surgery may be attributed to the number of owned animals they sterilized which cost slightly more for the owner then services provided for unowned cats and their caregivers.

**Success Indicators**

Trap-neuter-return programs aim to address the overpopulation of outdoor cats. Long-term effects of an effective program would be a reduction in colony size to the point of elimination. More immediate and measurable indicators are the percent of cats sterilized, stable and decreasing populations, a reduction in preventable kitten death, reduced shelter intake and deaths of cats and kittens, and reduced nuisance complaints. Several of the selected organizations have published data recording their successes in some of these areas. Operation Catnip sterilized 54% of the community cat population during a two-year study targeting TNR practices in a selected area. The study resulted in a 70% decrease in cat intake and 95% decrease in cat euthanasia. Alley Cat Allies has maintained stable colony populations around the Atlantic City Boardwalk. Alley Cat Advocates saw a significant drop in intake rates from zip codes they targeted with TNR practices during grant funded projects. Neighborhood Cats registered more than 2,000 colonies by the end of 2013. They have recorded an average decline in population of 30% per colony since the start of participation in TNR. Spay Our Strays does not track any of this information themselves and does not have access to local animal control or humane society data.
3. How effective is SOS at serving its stakeholders?

Unfortunately, I was unable to gather specific stakeholder feedback as originally planned, owing to IRB approval delays. See Appendix A. Below is an outline of the six stakeholder groups, identified for this portion of the study, including a summary of their relationship with Spay Our Strays.

**Individual Caregivers**

This group includes community members who care for one or more community cats by providing them with food, shelter, and medical care. These stakeholders are the primary users of Spay Our Strays’ resources and the most impacted by the programs and policies they maintain.

**Rescue Partners – Service Users**

These are other animal-centric nonprofits that use Spay Our Strays’ resources to achieve their missions. This pertains almost solely to clinic services though equipment, transport and recovery assistance. Community connections and educational resources are also utilized by these stakeholders on occasion. Local animal control would also fall in this group on occasion.

**Partner Organizations – Service Providers**

The local humane society, contracted veterinary clinics, and local animal care and control make up this group of stakeholders. Spay Our Strays partners with each entity to provide TNR clinic services, wellness care for foster kittens, medical care for sick and injured community cats, and conflict resolution and community education where community cats are involved.

**Volunteers**
Volunteers are the most vital stakeholders for Spay Our Strays. (The author is one such volunteer.) The organization is completely volunteer based meaning their success and failure relies on the skills, ideas, and dedication of their volunteers.

Donors

Donors and community supporters are another vital stakeholder group. The organization does not regularly pursue grant funding from national organizations due to a lack of volunteers with the necessary experience and time. The TNR clinic is the only program that brings in regular income, but it is frequently underfunded due to extra medical expenses, common for community cats, and the number of service users who require financial assistance to cover medium to large colonies.

Community Members

This group consists of the neighbors of caregivers and concerned citizens that discover a community cat or cat colony in their community. Most are not aware of Spay Our Strays or TNR in general, and their attitudes towards community cats can vary. When connected with the organization, these community members can require assistance with found kittens, deterring community cats from their property, or information regarding community cats, TNR practices, and Spay Our Strays’ programs.

Decision Makers

This includes city, county, and state officials along with businesses owners, landlords, homeowner associations, and apartment managers. They can be the most difficult stakeholders to reach, and likely do not connect with the organization until community cats are a source of concern. Common requests include the removal of community cats from a
property or location, and often include threats of feeding bans, fines, and eradication strategies.

Conclusion

Delays in the IRB approval process prevented Spay Our Strays’ stakeholder feedback data from being obtained, but there is a set of questions planned for future use, see below. This analysis relies heavily on the information gathered from internal data, best practices established for trap-neuter-return organizations, and model organizations at the local and national level. Recommendations are based on the existing organizational goals and mission as presented in Spay Our Strays’ documentation. Based on some of the findings it may be necessary for these goals and the articulated mission to be altered to some degree.

When identifying strengths, I looked to information concerning the internal components of the organization. Based on the amount of funds attributed to donations and the engagement level of most of their volunteers and board members I would say Spay Our Strays is very well supported by their volunteers and community. The continued participation of many founding members provides a wealth of experience and institutional knowledge about the organization, their various stakeholders, and the community they operate within. It has also led to the long-standing relationship Spay Our Strays has with the Lexington Humane Society which is vital for clinic capacity, veterinary staff, clinic procedures, and clinic supplies. Several organizational factors such as: a small budget, dependency on clinic fees and donations for revenue, large service area with an estimated 76,709 community cats, and dependence on volunteers points to the need for a grassroots model over an expert model. This is the current model of Spay Our Strays.
Weaknesses are also identified through an examination of internal organizational factors. The budget is limited with no surplus funds to protect the organization against possible decreases in revenue or unexpected expenditures. Funds are not dedicated to programs adding the risk of budget deficits. The organization’s clinic capacity has been depleted with the termination of the Saturday clinic. Considering the number of cats estimated in the service area it is important for Spay Our Strays to maintain a higher capacity and more flexible options to accommodate more caregivers. The lack of data and internal documentation made some portions of this analysis difficult and would make measuring the effectiveness of any program or organization changes near impossible. More baseline measures should be determined and tracked as soon as possible, so the organization can target their resources appropriately. Data is also a necessary element for writing successful grant proposals as seen in the case study of Alley Cat Advocates. Having established policies is a best practice for nonprofits. As previously stated, many of the board members contribute to SOS programs beyond their board duties. As a small organization volunteers can be overcome by the demands of such active programs. As evident by the structure of the board of directors of the national organizations, a large board is not necessary to manage large service areas. Best practices for board development suggest members that are willing to work and engage in discussion. There is currently an uneven level of engagement among the Spay Our Strays’ board members. Several board members are very engaged in multiple SOS programs and up to date on day to day information. They tend to meet and participate in monthly volunteer meetings and know many of the active volunteers. Other board members do not engage on a day to day level and only participate at the biannual board meetings.

Three opportunities were identified by examining the organization’s external environment and applying lessons learned from the review of best practices and other organizations. Alley Cat
Advocates runs a significant amount of its various TNR related services on grants funds. Providing more compensated surgeries could increase accessibility and remove one barrier to increased clinic capacity. The number of engaged volunteers has increased over the last few years bringing new skills and ideas to the organization. The board has lost several members in recent years providing an opportunity for these volunteers to bring their talents to the board. If approved, the proposed staggered term limits would also allow the organization to invite volunteers to join the board through the nomination process. Lastly, several outside organizations have invited Spay Our Strays to collaborate on different projects that would benefit both organizations greatly. These opportunities have the potential to strengthen existing relationships, increase clinic capacity, increase volunteer base, and decrease expenditures. Neighborhood Cats and Alley Cat Allies depend on collaborations with other organizations to assist their stakeholders and achieve their missions. Alley Cat Advocates and Operation Catnip depend on their strong relationships with the Kentucky Humane Society and University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine respectively and their local animal control entities to provide surgery space and supplies, volunteers, and other resources to implement their various programs.

City ordinances, natural disasters, economic crisis, and competition were all identified as external threats to Spay Our Strays. Alley Cat Allies and Alley Cat Advocates provide many examples of how city ordinances can dictate what caregivers can and cannot do and the ability of a trap-neuter-return program to be used in an area affected by the overpopulation of community cats. Current economic and social conditions related to the pandemic have had adverse effects on Spay Our Strays and other TNR and spay neuter services. Alley Cat Allies are currently aiding organizations and caregivers in need. Similar assistance and added trapping and transportation
services are provided by Alley Cat Allies to help protect cat colonies in areas hit by natural disasters such as hurricanes.158

An increased number of TNR programs have begun to operate in the same service area as Spay Our Strays. Without shared data many organizations are contacted regarding the same cat colonies and will dedicate more resources than necessary to achieve a stable population. Volunteers and financial and in-kind donations can become scarce or over utilized by multiple organizations working in the same area. Collaborative efforts in the form of a coalition or working group could help alleviate these issues and create opportunities for everyone involved.

Recommendations

Spay Our Strays 2020 Strategic Plan

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

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<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
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<td>• Supportive volunteers and community</td>
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<td>• Experienced board members and partners</td>
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<td>• Strong relationship with the Lexington Humane Society</td>
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<td>• Appropriate model for population and number of cats in service area</td>
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<td>• Reliable source of veterinary staff and clinic supplies</td>
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<td>• Lack of adequate clinic capacity</td>
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<td>• Lack of surplus funds</td>
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<td>• Missing vital organizational documents – policies, volunteer training manual</td>
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<td>• Lack of data and organization documentation available for strategic analysis and budgeting</td>
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<td>• Programs without dedicated funds</td>
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<td>• TNR grants</td>
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<td>• Board membership is in transition</td>
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<td>• New collaboration opportunities</td>
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<td>• Competition for resources among similar nonprofits</td>
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<td>• Organizations working at cross purposes</td>
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<td>• City Ordinances</td>
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Goals

Based on TNR best practices and model organizations the following are strategic actions for Spay Our Strays to begin to focus on in the immediate and near future. The items will allow Spay Our Strays to take advantage of current opportunities and prepare for current and future threats to their stability. This will allow them to better serve their stakeholders and run their programs more efficiently without overburdening their available resources.

Strategic Actions

- **Implement a “mobile” clinic program using the MASH clinic model provided by Operation Catnip.**
  - This objective would allow Spay Our Strays to increase their clinic capacity while improving service to out of county stakeholders. Dedicated clinics like these would allow caregivers and rescue organizations in other counties to TNR more cats and take advantage of mass trapping and targeting practices. This approach could also provide a compromise for opposing board opinions. As in the Operation Catnip model this could potentially be completely volunteer run, including the veterinary staff and much or all of the equipment and space could be donated.

- **Capitalize on new collaboration opportunities**
  - Several opportunities have developed in recent months for Spay Our Strays to collaborate with other organizations. If the organization were to follow through with these opportunities, they would have the potential to serve more cats, reallocate funds, increase exposure, and gain volunteers.
The Lexington Humane Society\textsuperscript{159–160} – Discussion with the administrative staff and their community cat specialist have included ideas to enhance their current partnership with Spay Our Strays. Mentioned enhancements include data sharing and mapping of TNR efforts, shared responsibility of trapping volunteer training, and increased access to the humane society’s community cat check-in procedures which would increase Spay Our Stray’s clinic capacity and schedule availability.

Girl Scouts of Kentucky’s Wilderness Road\textsuperscript{161-162} – In late 2019, a local girls scout troop organized a winter cat shelter build for Spay Our Strays. Since then Spay Our Strays was put in contact with leadership at the Girl Scouts of Kentucky’s Wilderness Road with an opportunity to collaborate. This partnership could elevate Spay Our Strays’ exposure to new potential volunteers and create new fundraising and community outreach opportunities.

Itty Bitty Kitten Rescue\textsuperscript{163} – The Spay Our Strays former foster coordinator started their own nonprofit to focus on young kittens through fostering and adoption. This decision has provided an opportunity for both organizations to work together to provide care to kittens found in the field during trapping.

Paws 4 The Cause\textsuperscript{164} – A Lexington animal rescue known for their work with dogs from rural counties and abuse cases, is remodeling their facility to include a new spay neuter suite. Representatives from Paws 4 the Cause have reached out to Spay Our Strays to advise on the final steps of the
clinic with the idea they will utilize the space for their clinics. This collaboration would allow Spay Our Strays to increase their clinic capacity and potentially provide a more flexible schedule for their stakeholders.

- **Start a Kentucky TNR coalition or working group**
  - This objective would increase the organization’s collaboration with similar organizations providing opportunities to pool resources for shared efforts, divide up responsibility, and increase the odds of obtaining grant funding. It would also alleviate competition between organizations operating in the same area. Spay Our Strays already works with local organizations when they schedule clinic slots for their own TNR efforts. This agreement does not include shared access to information such as annual TNR data or any resources beyond what is necessary for each trapping event.

- **Increase board diversity and skills**
  - Board development is an important aspect of all nonprofits. Best practices suggest boards seek members who have a willingness to work, a commitment to the mission, and provide diverse opinions that are representative of the nonprofits’ constituents. Best practices suggest nonprofits utilize staggered term limits, committees, and develop a selection process for new members to help facilitate these traits in members. The Spay Our Strays board has maintained the same members and officers for several years with many of the current board members holding their positions since the initial creation of the organization. The organization’s volunteer base has grown recently drawing members of different ages, backgrounds, and skill sets from the original board. Board membership has
been in a period of flux with four of the eleven members resigning between 2018 and 2020, and several current board members communicating a desire or willingness to step down. This provides an opportunity for interested volunteers and organization supporters to be voted in by existing board members to strengthen and expand the board’s skill set beyond the existing board member experience. Approving the proposed bylaws which include staggered term limits and committee obligations would also help to achieve this goal.166

- **Identify and apply for grant funding**
  - The analysis of financial records and overall background information of Alley Cat Advocates conveyed a large benefit to applying for grant funding to improve program effectiveness. This sentiment was also conveyed in TNR best practices. Alley Cat Advocates is an example of a successful grassroots TNR organization working primarily off grants. These funding sources have allowed Alley Cat Advocates to increase their impact locally by offering free and mostly free services. Grant funding would allow Spay Our Strays to provide uncompensated services to more caregivers without relying on their donors to cover the cost. This would allow Spay Our Strays to increase their reach and impact in their service areas.

- **Implement a community-level targeting model**
  - Spay Our Strays follows the guidelines for colony-level targeting by scheduling surgery slots based on the number of cats in a caregiver’s care and their capacity to transport and recover cats following surgery. During initial consultations a Spay Our Strays volunteer will encourage the caregiver to apply mass trapping
techniques to their colony by explaining its role in successful trap-neuter-return practices. However, this solely grassroots mobilization approach can result in slow progress due to resource constraints and unmotivated or physically unable caregivers. Pairing grassroots mobilization with community-level targeting can help accelerate progress as conveyed in best practices developed by Neighborhood cats and displayed by Alley Cat Advocates and various research studies. Following the community-level model is the best approach for creating a significant impact in a community.

- **Improve data tracking and use**
  - An organization can not properly assess their effectiveness of achieving their mission without data collection and analysis. Likewise, trap-neuter-return program strategies such as targeting cannot be done effectively without proper data collection and analysis. This is evident by guidance developed by Neighborhood Cats regarding targeting, and the success of Alley Cat Advocates resulting in updated and new city ordinances. Improved data collection for all Spay Our Strays programs would allow for better budgeting and fundraising practices. Recording service requests year-round would provide continuous stakeholder feedback and provide more information to point to where resources are being spent and any changing needs as they evolve.

- **Enhance web with resources for out-of-county users**
  - HOPE Spay Neuter Clinic, Operation Catnip, Neighborhood Cats, and Alley Cat Allies provide models with a strong online presence with resources for stakeholders and other community cat programs as an important strategy to
impact communities and achieve organizational goals with relatively minimal resources. Spay Our Strays can follow their models and assist their out of county stakeholders without investing a lot of organizational resources is to provide more information regarding community cats and resources for starting TNR programs in their area. Ideally this effort would be done in cohesion with the development of a Kentucky TNR coalition resulting in a stronger coalition that avoid competition.

- **Disaster planning**
  - Nonprofit best practices suggest organizations develop disaster plans in an effort to prepare for possible future crisis. Natural disasters involve rescue efforts for other animals as well as humans. The current COVID-19 pandemic has impacted Spay Our Strays and other animal welfare organizations in different ways. HOPE Spay Neuter Clinic, like many other clinics and TNR programs, have shut down their services until further notice. Spay Our Strays has been able to maintain a normal clinic schedule, but with several alterations to their clinic procedures, such as curb-side drop off and retrieval. Though it is too early to tell, Spay Our Strays is expected to see a decrease in donations which will directly impact the organization’s ability to fulfill their mission. National and local events like this one are expected to occur from time to time and it would be advisable for Spay Our Strays to practice disaster planning to be better prepared.
Challenges

Much of the internal data was incomplete and insufficiently informative in its current form. Clinic data had not been consistently collected or maintained until 2017 and was not used in any analytical sense until late 2019. Meeting minutes have not been consistently maintained beyond individuals’ records. Recent turnover of board members has made access to certain organizational records difficult to obtain. The original proposal to obtain stakeholder feedback through one-on-one interviews and surveys required approval from the Institutional Review Board. Unfortunately, approval was not obtained in time to successfully implement either phase. See Appendix A. This left the data limited to a review of national best practices, model organizations, and limited financial information. Therefore, the findings and proposed activities are not based strictly on Spay Our Strays’ performance as originally intended. One of the largest obstacles for this analysis was changing circumstances regarding Spay Our Strays programs, concerns, goals, and partnerships.

One example is the organization’s kitten foster program. It had been growing rapidly over the last five to six years, increasingly requiring a significant portion of the organization’s funds and volunteer time. In March of 2020 the SOS foster coordinator formed their own nonprofit focused on the care and adoption of neonatal kittens. This change has provided a new avenue for Spay Our Strays to address kittens potentially improving the organization’s efficiency. The full impact of such a change will not be realized until after 2020 is well underway and cannot be considered in this study.

Recommended Next Steps
I would suggest Spay Our Strays solicit stakeholder feedback to improve their knowledge base of their community’s awareness of trap-neuter-return practices, community cats, and Spay Our
Strays. This information will be invaluable for the organization to identify community needs and gain insight into their reputation as a service provider for community cats and their caregivers. I would suggest the organization use the six major stakeholder categories identified by the author to decide what vehicles are best to solicit their feedback. Information could be collected through one-on-one interviews and surveys. The interviews would collect insight into how community cats and trap-neuter-return programs impact the interviewee’s work and personal life. Below is a list of proposed questions to ask stakeholder representatives during one-on-one interviews.

1. How do you define “community cat”?
2. How have community cats impacted your personal life, professional life and/or your community?
3. How familiar are you with trap-neuter-return or similar programs?
4. Have you ever used one of these programs? Please explain.
5. Based on your experiences with community cats and TNR or similar programs, what issues have you seen?
6. In your view, what are the major issues Kentucky’s community cat caregivers and resource providers face right now?
7. How do these issues relate to your area/county?
8. What issues or factors do you predict affecting your local community cat caregivers and resource providers in the future?
9. When considering donating money and items or volunteering your time, what characteristics do you look for in a non-profit?

Potential follow-ups to these initial questions:
10. How familiar are you with Spay Our Strays specifically?
11. Why have you focused on these issues?
12. Please explain your first experience caring for or seeing a community cat, and when did you first hear about community cats?
13. How do you think the people in our community/county feel about community cats? What about TNR or similar programs?
14. Does your criteria for non-profits vary for national versus local organizations? To what degree do you take the size of an organization into account?

Responses from the interviews could be used to develop a stakeholder survey later. A survey can be developed using a variety of free online software such as Google Forms and distributed via a URL in an email, text, or social media post. Surveys can also be printed for in-
person distribution based on the stakeholder’s accessibility and preference. Questions should cover Spay Our Stray’s effectiveness at serving its community by examining each program’s and the organization’s consistency with their mission as explained in organization documents. Effectiveness would be determined by how much they have contributed to: the reduction of colony populations, reduction of kittens in the field, caregivers’ ability to provide the necessary amount of food, shelter, and medical care to maintain their colony’s overall health. The responses can be used to identify Spay Our Stray’s strengths and weaknesses and guide recommendations for new organizational goals. Goals could include the development of new programs, ending or reorganizing poorly performing programs, and reallocating resources.
Appendix A: IRB History

12-16-2019 – PI sent for Assurance Signatures

12-26-2019 – PI submitted

1-6-2020 – ORI requested additional submission information

1-13-2020 – PI responded to ORI’s request for information

1-13-2020 – ORI requested additional submission information

1-13-2020 – PI responded to ORI’s request for information

1-13-2020 – XP/XX Reviewer(s) selected

1-27-2020 – IRB requested revisions/additional information

2-2-2020 – PI responded to IRB’s request for revisions

2-3-2020 – ORI processed revisions

2-3-2020 – XP/XX reviewer(s) selected

2-16-2020 – IRB requested revisions/additional information

3-16-2020 – PI responded to IRB’s request for revisions

3-18-2020 – ORI requested additional submission information

3-23-2020 – PI responded to IRB’s request for revisions
3-24-2020 – ORI processed revision

3-24-2020 – XP/XX reviewer(s) selected

3-27-2020 – IRB exemption certification issued
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