

Thinking about starting a spay/neuter program? You're in the right place.

Every year, countless animals go unaltered because spay/neuter services are too expensive, too far away, or simply unavailable. These gaps lead to unnecessary suffering and strain animal shelters, rescues, and communities.

The good news? You can help change that.

Whether you're an animal advocate, a veterinary professional, a rescue leader, or just someone who sees a need and wants to help, this guide is for you. You'll explore practical delivery models and discover what might work best based on your goals, resources, and local needs.

You don't need to have it all figured out. You just need to start.
The right solution might be layered, hybrid, or totally unique. And we're here to help you find it.

There's no one-size-fits all solution. Often, the best approach is a combination of models, layered to reach different populations in different ways. You might combine a mobile clinic with a voucher program, or host pop-up events while working toward a permanent clinic. What matters is what works for you and your community.

You don't even have to be a nonprofit. Across the country, grassroots organizers, small rescue groups, vet clinics, and community changemakers are stepping up to expand spay/neuter access, and you can too.

Use this guide as a starting point, and know that mentorship, encouragement, and support are just an email away: info@unitedspayalliance.org



Brick-and-Mortar HQHVSN Clinic

Read more about the Brick-and-Mortar High-Quality, High-Volume Spay/Neuter (HQHVSN) Clinic model:
unitedspayalliance.org/brick-and-mortar-high-quality-high-volume-spay-neuter-hqhvsn-clinic/

What it is

A permanent physical clinic offering affordable, high-quality spay/neuter services on an ongoing basis. These clinics may serve the general public, rescue organizations, or targeted populations, and often become a long-term resource for the community.

Delivery Systems for Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Decision Guide

Brick-and-Mortar HQHVSN Clinic

This might work for you if...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have consistent access to a physical location with the necessary infrastructure. You want to provide a stable, ongoing source of spay/neuter services for the community. You have or can build a sustainable team of staff, including veterinarians and technicians. You can secure funding or a steady revenue stream to support ongoing operations.
Challenges to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upfront costs for securing or setting up a physical location (rent, equipment, etc.). Ongoing operational costs, including staff salaries, utilities, and supplies. Managing a steady stream of clients while maintaining quality and efficiency. Difficulty reaching remote or underserved populations without additional outreach efforts.
Questions to ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do we have the resources to maintain a physical clinic, including staffing and supplies? How will we manage client volume and scheduling to maximize efficiency without compromising quality? Are there community outreach programs in place to connect with underserved populations? What long-term funding strategies can we put in place to ensure the clinic's sustainability?
Veterinary considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a skilled veterinary team to handle the volume of procedures while maintaining high standards of care. Surgeons must be able to perform a large number of surgeries consistently while managing patient recovery. Veterinary technicians play a crucial role in prepping, assisting, and monitoring animals throughout the process.
Additional insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many HQHVSN clinics operate as nonprofits and rely on fundraising to subsidize costs. A brick-and-mortar clinic can provide continuity of care, including follow-up services for complications, which temporary models may lack. Clinics can often serve as a community hub for education, outreach, and other animal welfare services. Having a permanent location can provide a sense of stability and trust for the community but may require significant ongoing funding or revenue.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All About Animals Rescue (MI) Alley Cat Advocates (KY) Feral Cat Coalition (CA) Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon (OR) FixNation (CA) Spay Neuter Vets (GA)

MASH and/or Blitz Clinics

Read more about the MASH and/or Blitz Clinic model: unitedspayalliance.org/mash-blitz/

What it is	A short-term, pop-up style clinic that delivers high-volume spay/neuter services over one or several days, often in underserved areas. These clinics typically operate in temporary spaces like gymnasiums, warehouses, or community centers and rely on intensive planning and volunteer support. This model can also be adapted through a public-private partnership (see below), using an existing veterinary clinic as the temporary MASH site.
This might work for you if...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You need to provide spay/neuter services in areas with limited veterinary resources. • You want a flexible, mobile approach that can reach underserved communities. • You can coordinate short-term, high-impact events with volunteer support. • You are comfortable with intensive planning and logistics.
Challenges to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires extensive coordination for each event, including securing a location, supplies, and volunteers. • Can be physically and mentally demanding for veterinary teams. • Costs can add up quickly (surgical supplies, equipment, transportation, etc.). • Limited follow-up care due to the temporary nature of the clinics.
Questions to ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a strong local partner who can help with logistics and community outreach? • Do we have a reliable source of funding for clinic supplies and expenses? • Can we recruit and retain a veterinary team willing to work in high-intensity environments? • What plans are in place for post-surgery monitoring and potential complications?
Veterinary considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires vets who are skilled in HQHVSN and comfortable working in temporary setups. • Surgeons must be able to handle a high volume of procedures in a short time. • Requires trust in support staff to manage patient prep, monitoring, and recovery. • Can be ideal for veterinarians passionate about outreach and making a large impact in underserved areas.
Additional insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MASH clinics rely heavily on volunteers for logistical support, which can help reduce costs but also requires coordination and training. • Hybrid models that train local vets in HQHVSN techniques can provide long-term solutions by expanding the number of qualified professionals in the area. • Temporary nature may create gaps in post-op care, so follow-up plans should be considered when possible.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation Catnip (FL) • Spay Mexico • Spay Panama

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Mobile Clinics

Read more about the Mobile Clinic model:

unitedspayalliance.org/tackling-the-backlog-delivery-systems-to-support-spay-neuter-part-three-mobile-clinics/

What it is	A veterinary clinic on wheels that travels to different locations to provide spay/neuter services directly to communities. Mobile clinics may serve cats, dogs, or both, and may limit services to specific populations, such as low-income pet owners, rescue groups, or community cat caregivers. Some also offer additional basic veterinary care, depending on their practice model.
This might work for you if...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You need to reach underserved areas, especially "spay/neuter deserts" or veterinary deserts. You're looking for a flexible and mobile solution to provide care. You want to work with local rescues or organizations to provide a shared service.
Challenges to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High startup costs, especially for the vehicle and staffing. Need for a skilled, reliable team with a commitment to high-volume work. Efficient operations require strategic planning and smooth coordination of various moving parts.
Questions to ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much will I need to fundraise to get started, and what are the major expenses? Do I have access to a solid mentor or experienced mobile clinic operators? How can I ensure a consistent team and good morale?
Veterinary considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A veterinarian is essential for managing the clinic and setting the pace of surgeries. HQHVSN training can help improve surgical efficiency and safety. Managing anesthesia safely and effectively is key for reducing surgery time and promoting quicker recoveries.
Additional insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile clinics can often pay for themselves with proper management and efficient operations. Building partnerships with humane organizations can reduce administrative and operating costs. Some mobile clinics are fully funded by donors, especially for the vehicle.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fido Fixers (national) Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society: Catmobile (MA) Rascal Unit (OH) SNAP San Diego: Neuter Scooter (CA) Spay-4-LA (CA) TEAM Mobile Feline Spay/Neuter Clinic (CT)

Voucher Programs

Read more about the Voucher Program model:

unitedspayalliance.org/tackling-the-backlog-delivery-systems-to-support-spay-neuter-part-four-voucher-programs/

What it is	A financial assistance program that helps cover the cost of spay/neuter by subsidizing services through participating veterinarians. Voucher programs can be open to all or targeted to specific groups based on your community's needs, such as pet owners with limited income, community cat caregivers, rescue organizations, and others caring for animals in need of sterilization.
This might work for you if...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You want to provide financial assistance to individuals who need spay/neuter services but cannot afford them. You have strong partnerships with veterinary clinics and community organizations. You want to empower pet owners by giving them flexibility in choosing service providers.
Challenges to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring sustainable funding to cover the costs of vouchers and reimbursements. Maintaining effective relationships with a wide network of veterinary providers. Managing a large volume of applicants and keeping up with demand. Ensuring the application process is accessible and simple.
Questions to ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the best way to secure sustainable funding for the program? How can I ensure veterinarians are consistently participating and accepting vouchers? How will I handle cases where the number of applicants exceeds the available funding or provider spots?
Veterinary considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear communication is essential with participating veterinary providers regarding voucher eligibility, reimbursement terms, and scope of services. Partnerships with a variety of veterinary clinics and private practices are critical for ensuring widespread access. Keep veterinary partners informed about the volume of voucher applicants to avoid overwhelming them.
Additional insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voucher programs can be flexible and tailored to meet specific community needs, such as targeting low-income households or disaster relief efforts. Clear eligibility criteria and transparent application processes are essential for maintaining trust and efficiency. - Collecting data for impact assessments is important to improve the program and highlight its success.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal Welfare League of Arlington (VA) Massachusetts Animal Fund (MA) Pet Friendly Services of Indiana (IN)

Public-Private Partnerships

Read more about the Pubic-Private Partnership model:

unitedspayalliance.org/tackling-the-backlog-delivery-systems-to-support-spay-neuter-part-five-public-private-partnerships/

What it is	A collaborative model where private vet clinics partner with animal welfare or other nonprofit organizations to offer spay/neuter services during off-hours or designated clinic days. This model may be combined with a voucher program to help cover costs for clients in need, or used as a host site for a temporary MASH-style clinic operated by a partner organization.
This might work for you if...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your veterinary practice has unutilized time during normally closed hours • You want to support low-cost spay/neuter without burning out staff • You're looking for a way to generate extra revenue with minimal startup costs
Challenges to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding a suitable animal welfare organization partner • Managing the logistics of a high-volume clinic day • Ensuring smooth communication and coordination between your practice and the partnering organization
Questions to ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many hours/days can we realistically dedicate to this? • Which animal welfare organizations are interested in partnering with us? • What tasks can the partner organization handle to avoid overwhelming our staff?
Veterinary considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling enough time for surgeries without affecting regular patient care • Ensuring your staff is comfortable with high-volume procedures • Availability of supplies and equipment for the additional surgeries
Additional insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community goodwill and increased visibility in the community • Potential to build long-term relationships with animal welfare organizations • The event could generate word-of-mouth referrals for your practice
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spay FIRST! (OK) • Positive Tails (NYC)

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:

The Public-Private Partnership model has shown promise in select cases, particularly through the work of Spay FIRST!, and may still serve as a creative short-term solution or a stepping-off point toward more sustainable models. However, shifts in the veterinary industry, including staffing constraints and the rise of corporate ownership, have made this approach harder to sustain long-term. **If you're considering this model, it's important to evaluate local conditions carefully and approach it as part of a broader strategy for expanding access to care.**