

**North Carolina Association of County Commissioners
2004-05 Ralph W. Ketner Employee Productivity Awards Application**

County:	Cabarrus	Employee:	James F. Cook, Jr.	Email:	jcook@cabarrusdss.net
County Department:	Social Services	Employee Title:	Director		
County Phone:	(704) 920-1400	County Mailing Address:	1303 South Cannon Blvd., Kannapolis, NC 28083		
Is this project being submitted on behalf of two or more employees?				No	Yes
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If yes, please provide below a listing of all project employees in Number 6. Employee & title as listed above should be for lead team member.

Fair Labors Standards Act Designation: In order for your project to be eligible, you MUST indicate one of the following. If you do not know, please contact your personnel director

EXEMPT: **NON-EXEMPT:** **BOTH (if applicable to team):**

1. Productivity Improvement Title:	SNIP (Spay / Neuter Improvements for Pets)	
2. Implementation Date (must be between January 1, 2004 and December 31, 2004)	October 1, 2004	
3. Please describe the productivity improvement. (Please limit response to these 2 pages.)		
<p>The Spay/Neuter Improvement for Pets (SNIP) program has been in existence for only 7 months in Cabarrus County, and is already being viewed as a unique, effective, and efficient step in dealing with the overpopulation and euthanasia of unwanted pets. In addition to being a humane remedy to killing abandoned cats and dogs, the program is viewed as a way to decrease future costs for sheltering and euthanizing animals. This is particularly important in times of budget constraints, and when monies designated to this could now be returned to the taxpayers or utilized in a more palatable way in the eyes of the public by county government. To be eligible to receive this benefit, an individual or family must receive Food Stamps, Medicaid, Work First Family Assistance, Special Assistance, Low Income Energy Assistance, or be a recipient of Medicaid that pays the Medicare B premium. When this was realized, the most reasonable entity to manage the SNIP program was the Department of Social Services, and primarily the public assistance area. This produced an almost perfect blend in serving the entire family, including pets, who in many cases are extremely important to disabled or elderly individuals who are living alone. DSS staff could see the individual at intake or review, and make them aware of the additional benefit of SNIP for their cats or dogs. If eligible for public assistance, it took only a few simple steps to explain the program and issue a voucher that could be taken to any number of local veterinarians who had contracts with Cabarrus County to provide this service. The voucher would be for \$50.00 for a spay/neuter or \$60.00 for a spay/neuter/rabies vaccination. Once the spay/neuter/rabies vaccination was completed, the voucher was returned to DSS to be sent to County Finance to pay the veterinarian for the service. This involved only a small price to pay in time, which was far outweighed by both the overall future cost savings and the avoidance of euthanasia for unwanted dogs and cats in Cabarrus County.</p>		

4.	Please describe why this project was initiated or what problem it addressed:		
	SNIP was developed to address two problems, 1) the ever increasing cost of sheltering and euthanasia of stray and abandoned animals in Cabarrus County, and 2) to provide a humane alternative to this ever-increasing problem. Studies by the Humane Society of the United States showed that 95% of pet overpopulation originates from impoverished areas, particularly those areas due to loss of jobs, which at the time was a significant problem in Cabarrus County. Cabarrus County was already over the national average of animal euthanasia, with 28 animals killed per 1,000 people in the county population, compared to 16 per 1,000 nationally. This was not only extremely costly, but was totally unnecessary, particularly once we learned of funding through the Spay/Neuter program with the NC Department of Health and Human Services. These funds to supplement the cost of spay/neuter were obtained through an additional \$10.00 license plate fees when purchasing the "I CARE" plate, and also at local veterinary offices when a \$1.00 fee was added to the cost of a rabies vaccination and a special "I CARE" rabies tag was voluntarily purchased. This funding was held for reimbursing spay/neuter costs for low-income persons in NC cities and counties. The County determined that a proactive approach to dealing with this problem would be much more likely to impact the pet overpopulation and euthanasia situation in Cabarrus County. Thus the development of the SNIP program at Cabarrus County DSS. This program has been promoted through news releases, fliers, and public awareness at community rabies vaccine clinics.		
5.	Please quantify the improvement's results in terms of cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of services provided.		
	<i>(Please indicate what resources were used to achieve your results, and what was done with the time savings, if any accrued).</i>		
	SpayUSA estimates that a dog and a cat, left un-spayed or un-neutered, and considering their offspring reproducing as well, in 6 years, can produce 133,088 puppies and kittens. Considering the average cost of shelter and euthanasia being \$75 per animal, if only 20% of this number were taken by animal control and euthanized, the cost would be \$1.9 million over the 6-year period. So far in Cabarrus County, we have issued 118 vouchers for spay/neuter, and so far 67 have been returned for payment. This is an actual cost of \$3,450.00, with a potential cost, if all vouchers are returned, of \$6,010.00. The time cost involved for DSS staff is minimal, but the time saving for animal control staff could be quite significant over a 6-year period. So far, Cabarrus County has authorized funding to cover 500 animals or \$25,000.00, as well as \$15,000.00 to provide educational materials and training to the public on pet care. This is reimbursable through the NCDHHS fund, but makes a statement from the Board of Commissioners that they see this as a preventive measure to save taxpayers' dollars for the future. The Commissioners' foresight in this effort may not be totally realized for some years from now, but their initiative and concern can be seen in the present.		
6.	Please provide any other descriptive information you would like to be considered by the review committee.		
	The problem of pet overpopulation prompted the Cabarrus County Board of Commissioners to set up a Task Force to review various issues related to animal control, which could make recommendations to the Board. This plan was an outgrowth of this Task Force. Cabarrus County DSS was the developer of the plan and process to get the reduced cost spay/neuter vouchers into the hands of the public that they serve, which was the group that was identified as those who were most likely to have animals who were reproducing without any controls. This team consisted of: James F. Cook, Jr., Director; Trish Baker, Economic Services Program Administrator; and James H. Polk, Adult and Family Services Program Administrator.		
County Manager's Name:	John Day	Supervisor's Name:	James F. Cook, Jr.

Return by **JUNE 1, 2005** via email Rebecca.Troutman@ncacc.org or fax to (919) 733-1065