

**Model Ordinance – Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return Programs**

**MUNICIPALITY**

**ORDINANCE NUMBER**

AN ORDINANCE to amend [SECTION] of the [MUNICIPAL STATUTES/CODE] creating a trap-neuter-vaccinate-return (TNVR) program.

**WHEREAS**, Trap Neuter Vaccinate Return (TNVR) programs provide a pathway for citizens to humanely trap community cats, bring them to an animal shelter or rescue organization for sterilization and rabies vaccination, and then release them back into the community where they can continue to live as they had lived before.

**WHEREAS**, implementing a TNVR program will enable [MUNICIPALITY] to manage the cat population in a humane and effective manner.

Be it ordained by the Mayor and Council of [MUNICIPALITY, COUNTY, AND STATE] as follows:

**SECTION 1.** For the purposes of this ordinance, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

- A. “Community Cat” shall mean a free-roaming cat who may or may not be feral and may be cared for by one or more residents of the immediate area.
  - i. A community cat is not considered a pet and need not be licensed or registered with [MUNICIPALITY].
- B. “Community Cat Caregiver” shall mean a person who, in accordance with a Trap Neuter Vaccinate Return program, provides care to a community cat.
  - i. Care may include, but is not limited to, providing food, shelter, or medical attention to a community cat.
  - ii. A community cat caregiver shall not be considered the owner, harbinger, controller, or keeper of a community cat.
- C. “Ear-tipping” shall mean the removal of the distal one-quarter of a community cat’s left ear, to identify a community cat as having been sterilized and lawfully vaccinated for rabies. Ear-tipping shall be performed under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian, under sterile conditions while the cat is under anesthesia, and in compliance with applicable state and federal laws.
- D. “Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return” or “TNVR” shall mean the process of humanely trapping, sterilizing, vaccinating for rabies, ear-tipping, and returning community cats to their original location.

**SECTION 2.** The following shall be permitted in [MUNICIPALITY] when performed as part of a TNVR program:

- A. Trapping, for the sole purpose of sterilizing, vaccinating, and ear-tipping a community cat.
- B. Releasing ear-tipped community cats at the location where they were originally trapped. If a shelter or rescue organization receives a community cat that has already been ear-tipped, the organization may release the cat to its original location without further treatment, unless further veterinary care is necessary.
- C. Community cat caregivers may reclaim community cats in the care of shelters or rescue organizations without providing proof of ownership or paying an adoption or reclamation fee, provided they do so for the purpose of carrying out TNVR programs or releasing ear-tipped community cats in their original locations.
- D. Release of a community cat to its original location as part of a TNVR program may not be considered abandonment.
- E. Providing food and water to community cats before they are trapped or after they are returned to their original location as part of a TNVR program.

**SECTION 3.** [MUNICIPAL ANIMAL CARE/CONTROL NAME] shall promote the utilization of TNVR practices as a means of controlling the local feral cat population and reducing the euthanasia rate of cats received by the facility.

**SECTION 4.** This ordinance shall take effect immediately.

## **Explanation of the Model Ordinance**

### **a. Section 1**

Section 1 provides definitions for the terms “community cat,” “community cat caregiver,” “ear-tipping” and “trap-neuter-vaccinate-return.” Section 1 also provides that a community cat is not considered a pet and need not be licensed or registered as such.

### **b. Section 2**

Section 2 provides that activities associated with a TNVR program are permissible under municipal law, and further provides that community cat caregivers may retrieve a community cat from a local shelter or rescue organization without providing proof of ownership or paying a fee and may release the cat without such release being considered abandonment.

### **c. Section 3**

Section 3 provides that the municipal animal care and control organization shall promote the utilization of TNVR practices as a means of controlling the feral cat population.

### **d. Section 4**

Section 4 provides that the ordinance will take effect immediately upon enactment.