

Territory Business Services Grant Response Template: Financials, Issues & Ideas

Companion Animal Grant

- **Organisation Name:** Canberra Street Cat Alliance
 - **Reporting Period:** 1/10/2024-30/06/2025
 - **Date Submitted:** 10/07/2025
 - **Contact Person:** Vanessa Parton, **Personal information**
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Summary

The ACT Companion Animal Grant provided a major boost to Canberra Street Cat Alliance (CSCA)'s ability to recruit and retain foster carers over the last kitten season. The high, and rising, cost of pet food means that many members of the community who might be interested in fostering cats in their own homes are unable to do so. While we always attempt to provide food to carers through the distribution of food donations, these food donations are not predictable in their timing or quantity. By providing support through the food program, we were able to commit to full provision of food for carers. We purchased over 200 kg of premium dry cat food and 100 kg of premium wet cat food. In addition, we received an unexpected boost of a further donation of premium wet cat food from a pet food manufacturer. This meant that foster carers were able to be fully supported in their foster care journey in terms of food.

During the reporting period (1 October 2024 to 30 June 2025), we placed 227 cats and kittens into foster care across 49 unique carers. This represents a 12% increase compared to the same period the previous year (1 October 2023 to 30 June 2024), when we placed 203 cats and kittens with 52 unique carers. While the total number of carers remained similar across both years, the 2024–2025 period included a number of new carers fostering for the first time. This renewal of the foster care pool is essential to address the natural attrition of carers over time, as some step back due to work, travel, family, or other commitments.

Our initial intention was to use part of the grant to upgrade the housing for cats in our intake facility. However, after a careful review of available veterinary and shelter housing products within the budget, we determined that the options were not suitable for some of the cats in our care- particularly adult cats from the streets with limited prior human interaction. These cats can display extreme fearfulness, skittishness, flightiness, or aggressive behaviours. Housing solutions for such animals need to provide sufficient space and carefully considered access, including the configuration and operation of doors. While most cats do not present handling difficulties, we concluded that the available housing systems within the budget would not meet the specific needs of more challenging cases.

We therefore made the decision to continue using our existing system of dog crates for the time being, which remain the safest and most flexible solution for our current intake.

We are extremely grateful to have received the ACT Companion Animal Grant, which has made a meaningful difference to our organisation and the animals in our care.

Financial Reporting

A. Budget Summary

Budget Summary

Category	Amount Budget	Actual Expenditure
Personnel	\$	\$
Equipment	\$ 15,000	\$0
Vet bills	\$	\$ 21,323.26
Other (Food)	\$10,000	\$ 3,676.74
Total	\$	\$25,000.00

Narrative Explanation

- Please see the variation document for an explanation of the change in spending from equipment to vet bills.

Issues and Challenges

In our initial proposal, we outlined plans to conduct a dedicated foster care recruitment drive. Unfortunately, this was not achieved due to limited volunteer resources. As a completely volunteer-run organisation, we are not always able to anticipate or respond to the competing work and personal demands faced by some of our senior volunteers. Significant work commitments during the reporting period meant that we did not have the capacity to deliver specific foster care training sessions.

Despite this, we were still able to recruit new foster carers organically through applications received via our website and through community engagement at various events. Had we had the volunteer capacity to run the planned foster care recruitment drives and training sessions, it is likely that we could have increased our fostering capacity even further.

Similarly, the initial proposal included plans to upgrade the housing system at our intake facility. A key challenge we encountered was that none of the cages or housing systems available within the budget were suitable for unsocialised cats. Most products were designed either for pet cats in boarding facilities or for short-term housing in veterinary clinics. Neither of these scenarios aligns with the specific needs of the cats we care for- many of whom will immediately attempt to bolt if a cage door is opened in a way that exposes the entire front of the enclosure. Additionally, many of the available cages were too small to accommodate essential items such as feral cat dens, litter trays, and other comforts that help support the welfare of these cats.

B. Financial Challenges

Not applicable

Ideas and Innovations

A. Process Improvements

We have no suggestions for process improvement, as the process of applying for and reporting on the ACT Companion Animal Grant was clear, smooth, and well-structured. The guidelines were clear and communication throughout the process was timely and helpful. We are grateful for the support provided.

B. Program Enhancements

While we did not implement formal new strategies during this reporting period, we continued to strengthen our community engagement through informal conversations at events and through our social media presence. These interactions led to organic foster care recruitment and greater community awareness of our work.

A key lesson from this period is the importance of having sufficient volunteer capacity to implement recruitment and training activities. We learned that while organic recruitment is valuable, structured drives and training sessions would further strengthen our foster carer base. Moving forward, are exploring ways to build volunteer capacity. We are also currently developing simple, onboarding and training resources for new foster carers as well as mentoring system to better support them when volunteer availability for induction events is limited.

C. Additional Feedback

Just an expression of gratitude to the staff involved in this grant process and for the priority given by the ACT Government to supporting animal rescue groups.

6. Attachments

Please find attached:

- 1) An Excel Spreadsheet listing the expenditure on food and desexing
- 2) A PDF containing details of the food support program including receipts/invoices
- 3) A PDF containing receipts/invoices of the desexing expenses.

7. Declaration

I certify that the information provided in this report is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Name: Vanessa Parton
Title: President.
Signature:  Personal information
Date: 10/11/2025.