

RABIES SAFE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM



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Executive Summary

The Rabies Safe Communities Program is an outreach arm of the district health department designed to assist local communities in rabies education and awareness by providing rabies vaccine to domestic pets. The target area is a mostly rural five county region comprising The Lord Fairfax Health District in Virginia. The high number of incidences of exposure of domestic pets to rabid animals and human exposures to unvaccinated domestic pets presents these communities with a public health threat of disease. This threat left in its current state of activity will continue to result in high dollar cost associated with post exposure prophylaxis, euthanasia of domestic animals for Rabies virus testing and a continued sense of fear and apprehension as a result of exposure.

While rabies control programs are historic in public health the persistence of the rabies virus to find new vectors and the ever burgeoning human population on wild lands continues to present this disease as an ever continuing threat to the health, safety and welfare of the public of this region. Therefore, while the concepts of rabies control are main stream the problem must be approached in an innovative and provocative manner to entice the public at large to take notice of the breadth of this disease so that it becomes a manageable concern and one that is dealt with by the public as a matter of course.

The program provides resources previously unavailable to the community at large consisting of the dissemination of information about the rabies disease and expanded access to a low cost vaccination for pets. Because access to obtaining vaccine for domestic pets continues to be an issue for a large number of residents in outlying areas the program provides outreach in the form of providing a mobile vaccination clinic. The financial goal of the program is to take all proceeds above and beyond operating cost and donate the funds to local animal shelters in an attempt to better the conditions for domestic animals and ultimately to financially assist local governments and animal agencies to move toward "no kill" shelters.

The Rabies Safe Communities Program will utilize existing relationships with local and county governments, local shelters, veterinarians and other animal friendly groups to help get the program message out to the public. Revenue will consist of 40% fee collection and 60% grant funding/in kind donation in the first year of operation.

Definition of Plan:

The Rabies Safe Communities Program is designed to reduce the number of rabies post-exposure prophylaxis required to be given to humans exposed by a domestic animal suspected of carrying the Rabies virus by increasing the number of domestic pets vaccinated. The Five County District provided 111 persons with post-exposure prophylaxis due to exposure to a suspected or confirmed rabid animal in 2006 or a 60% increase over the year 2005. The program is also designed to lower the number of domestic animals euthanized for rabies virus testing. According to census data the region supports 42,254 dogs however according to dog licensing data only 13,640 are known to be vaccinated. Educating the citizens and pet owners in the target area about the problem of rabies and the resources available to prevent rabies in domestic pets is a key component to achieving the goals of the program.

The Rabies Safe Communities Program is proposing to establish a mobile vaccination clinic to provide pet vaccinations to remote areas in the five county region and to those individuals unable to gain access to Rabies clinics or Veterinarians' offices because of lack of mobility. Moreover, an additional barrier to obtaining a Rabies vaccination for pets is the cost of the vaccine. One of the key components of the program is to provide a low cost option to what is currently available in the market. To educate the public and to promote the Rabies vaccination service, the program calls for a yearly animal fair in each of the counties which will provide a variety of services beyond and including the vaccination of domestic animals.

The Rabies Safe Communities Program coordinators are sensitive to the plight of lost and/or abandoned domestic pets and to the stressful and sometimes poor conditions in which they exist and recognize this concern is shared with many local and national animal advocate groups and individuals. In an effort to address an important public health problem it was discovered that another important social problem may be addressed as well. Therefore, the program calls for proceeds from the activities of the program minus operating costs to be donated to local animal shelters to help improve living conditions for animals and to assist the shelter administration to move toward a "no kill" policy.

The plan addresses the problem of the Rabies Virus disease in the Lord Fairfax Health District by:

- Providing a mobile vaccination clinic to remote areas of the five county region.
- Establishing convenient pet vaccination sites in and around the region to accommodate pet owners via the mobile clinic.
- Providing a low cost source for the vaccination.

- Promoting and educating the public about the seriousness of the Rabies virus through animal fairs designed to bring pet owners, local businesses, local governments, and animal organizations together in an effort to address the issue as a community.
- Providing decent living conditions for lost and abandoned domestic animals/pets by donating proceeds to local shelters to help finance improvements.

RSCP (Rabies Safe Communities Program) will employ a part-time veterinarian to oversee the actual administration of Rabies vaccine to pets via the mobile clinic. Volunteer Health Department staff will run the program and be responsible for maintaining the pool of interested volunteer animal advocates to help with clinics and animal fairs.

At the outset RSCP will kick off the program with a local animal fair in each of the five counties to promote Rabies awareness and to demonstrate the mobile clinic, providing information to the public about its uses and schedule of visits for the upcoming year. The program veterinarian will provide vaccinations throughout the course of the fair and educational services will be provided. Profit and not-for-profit organizations have agreed to participate in the animal fair providing information on pet products, goods and services related to the animal ownership industry.

Monies to provide educational services to the public and to help offset the cost to employ a veterinarian have been secured through several for-profit corporations interested in promoting animal safety and welfare and the mobile clinic van is available for purchase for a nominal fee from State Government. Other for-profit organizations have agreed to expend funds to assist in the customizing of the van as a donation to the program. As the program moves into full swing and clinic vaccination fees are collected along with animal fair proceeds a full-time staff position will be filled to run day-to-day operations.

Year one budget will be approximately \$25,700, with 40% of revenue coming from rabies vaccination fee collection and 60% coming from in-kind donations and corporate donations. By year two, a program coordinator will be hired on a part time basis to run the operation of the mobile clinic with continued support from the volunteer program coordinators.

Performance and success for RSCP will be measured as follows:

Reduction of the number of rabies post-exposure prophylaxis given to humans exposed to a known or suspected rabid animal in 12 month period. Goal: 20% reduction or 22 persons in first year.

An increase in the number of domestic pets vaccinated. Goal: 3000 additional vaccinations in first year.

The amount of available proceeds from activities for dispersal to local animal shelters will meet the goal of \$7,000 in year two.

Performance data will be collected through the usual sources as provided by State, County and local governments.

Industry Analysis:

The CDC estimates that 92% of all cases of rabies occur in the wildlife animal population and 8% in domestic animals. Over the last 100 years, the rabies disease in the United States has changed dramatically. Before 1960 the majority of animal cases of rabies occurred in the domestic animal population. In the 1950s for example, 4,979 cases of rabies were reported among dogs, and 18 cases were reported among humans. Rabies control programs which included extensive domestic animal vaccination campaigns were implemented in the 1940s and 1950s. While the number of rabies disease cases has dropped in the domestic animal population over the years (1980-1997, 95-247 cases of rabies reported in dogs according to CDC data), the number of cases of rabies has increased in the wildlife animal population. It is from this source that potential infection to humans and domestic animals continues to be a threat. Evidence that rabies disease continues to place pressure on public health is evidenced by the 16,000 to 39,000 persons receiving rabies post-exposure prophylaxes every year (1980-1997) in the United States according to CDC data.

The problem of rabies disease and control is considered a public issue and therefore regulations and programs fall under State and local government jurisdictional oversight and implementation. Virginia State law requires the licensing of dogs along with the requirement to inoculate domestic animals against the rabies virus. The task of prevention and control is given to the Virginia State Board of Health to promulgate the regulations. State licensed Veterinarians are responsible for administering the vaccinations to domestic pets and farm animals in private or in public practice and local Governments track vaccinated animals by issuing licenses to the public for dogs and in some jurisdictions cats as well. In the Lord Fairfax Health District local governments through shelter operations may conduct rabies vaccination clinics for dogs and cats. Statistically, one clinic is held per year in each of the counties in the target area. For 2006 approximately 250 dogs and 192 cats were vaccinated at shelter clinics. While this addresses the issue at hand to some degree, much more is needed to protect domestic animals from the possibility of contracting the rabies virus from the wildlife population and subsequently passing it to humans.

Current programs are designed to control the rabies virus in domestic animals by requiring rabies vaccinations, proof of which is given at the time of licensure of a domestic animal in local government offices. In Virginia localities, for the most part, cats are not required to be licensed and therefore a large segment of the domestic animal population with susceptibility to the virus have no monitoring or

assurance that a preventive vaccine has been given. Additionally, to address the problem of the rabies virus running rampant through the raccoon and other wild animal population some measures of control have been implemented consisting of the dropping of food pellets containing rabies vaccine.

Key success factors for industry are:

- Reduction of human cases of rabies disease to zero cases.
- Significant decrease in number of domestic animals contracting the rabies virus, ideally to zero cases.
- The eradication of the rabies virus in mammals.
- A successful program targeting the wildlife population.

Target Market:

The target area is comprised of five counties and is known as The Lord Fairfax Health District. The district includes the counties of Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah and Warren. Lord Fairfax is located in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley, in rural northwestern Virginia. The valley is filled with natural, scenic wonders and quaint homes. Lord Fairfax is headquarters of the Skyline Drive, Shenandoah National Park and world famous Luray Caverns. The Valley is located a short drive from Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia. This location offers a wonderful combination of rural living, beautiful scenery, numerous quaint little villages and easy access to the numerous cultural events, zoos and museums of Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia.

Based upon 2005 census data, it is estimated that 26,409 pet owning households exist in the area of interest. According to the National Veterinarian Association we can expect that the area is home to 42,254 domestic dogs and 48,546 domestic cats. Unfortunately, the majority of pet owners do not vaccinate their pets as required by law. According to county tax assessors only 13,609 of the 42,254 dogs in the district are known to be vaccinated. In some part this may be due to the availability of services or the cost of service may exceed the financial ability of some pet owners. Often pet owners do not address the threat of the rabies virus until a pet is entangled in an incident involving a wild animal or human. The program is designed to target these pet owners. This data clearly indicates the need for additional opportunities for vaccination of domestic animals in the area. This program will provide multiple opportunities to reach this population of unvaccinated cats and dogs.

Although cats are not required to be licensed in the target area, dogs are required to be licensed and proof of rabies vaccination is needed to purchase a license from the local county tax assessors office. Veterinarians are required by law to report all rabies vaccinations to the State Health Department Office of Epidemiology. Typically, a domestic pet will be given its first rabies vaccination which is valid for

one year in an attempt to allow the pet to build immunity to the dead virus. The second shot at the end of the first year is then good for three years.

In the LFH District in 2005, 573 animal bite cases were reported requiring 67 post-exposure prophylaxis at a cost of approximately \$1000 per treatment per individual for 4 weeks equaling approximately \$6700. The financial cost to the community is substantial. In the United States annual cost to save a human life can range from \$10,000 to \$100 million, depending on the nature of the exposure and probability of rabies in the area. Local zoonoses data for 2006 indicates a 60% higher number of post-exposure prophylaxis treatment to humans. Local records also show that staff employed by veterinarian offices and animal shelters are not always vaccinated for the rabies virus although they handle unvaccinated animals, including kittens and puppies too young to be vaccinated. Pre-exposure vaccination of humans employed in this capacity may alleviate the need for the more expensive post-exposure prophylaxis.

Competitors/Partners:

The outcome of RSCP is to reduce the number of prophylaxis vaccinations administered to humans by increasing rabies vaccinations to dogs and cats and by educating our community on the facts about rabies.

The many stakeholders that will benefit from involvement in this program include:

Local Animal Control - This office fields a large number of calls and investigations. The risk of exposure of staff to the rabies virus will decrease as the number of vaccinated domestic animals increases.

Local veterinarians and animal hospitals - These facilities help keep the domestic animal population vaccinated by providing rabies shots. RSCP will network to increase the number of vaccinated animals and help to reduce the burden on veterinarians. Veterinarians will gain exposure in the community by collaborating with the local health department. This in turn will increase their public relations and revenue.

Local SPCA & Animal Shelters – The benefit to this group will come from a more educated community and less animals with a potential for rabies. During the low-cost clinics these groups will gain much needed exposure on other issues like the importance of spaying and neutering domestic pets.

Local businesses - Wal-Mart, Tractor Supply, Southern States, Costco, pet stores, photographers, pet tattoo artists, spas/salons for pets will partner with RSCP providing different but equally important value added services. The Animal Fairs will allow involvement in the program by these partners which in turn will generate revenue and publicity.

Student groups and organizations - Students attending a local college or university as well as the local chapter of Future Farmers of America and the 4-H club will be a part of the volunteer pool and will donate manpower hours at the clinics and Animal Fairs. Organizations require their members to obtain a minimum number of volunteer hours through community events. This program will allow the students to meet this requirement.

Other government agencies - Commissioner of Revenue sells dog licenses each year. Our program will partner with this office to increase the number of licenses sold.

RSCP has identified some barriers to entry such as:

Virginia State Health Law requires approval of the local health director and local governmental officials to hold rabies vaccination clinics. It will be necessary for RSCP to work with the local health director to secure this approval. It is also necessary to continue to maintain good relationships with our local business partners to prevent any problems that could hamper our receiving local official approval.

Coordinating with fair ground officials will also require foresight and a solid plan. While local fair officials have shown interest in the Animal Fair a key component to the success of the program is garnering support and permission to hold the Animal Fair at the local fair grounds. Scheduling the Animal Fair will be crucial to participation and currently is scheduled for the day after the yearly County Fair event. Of concern is the public's willingness to return to the fairground for one more day of activity. Currently the local fairs and local health departments cooperate to provide other types of education to citizens through this venue.

Good relationships with local veterinarians will be a key component to success of the program. Objection to the mission of RSCP by these important members of the community may hamper efforts, however, the number of dogs/cats that do not have a rabies vaccination is a large population and one that cannot be addressed by only one method of service.

Marketing Strategy:

Our marketing strategy will be to utilize the combined staff from the LFHD health departments, animal control officers, veterinarians, veterinarian technicians and a multitude of volunteer staff to market the program to pet owners and community members. The RSCP will be promoted to pet owners as an affordable and convenient way to keep their pets immunized against rabies.

In all marketing and promotional materials, we will emphasize convenience as a benefit to owners in the target market – for example emphasizing the fact that with

the mobile unit owners will not have to travel long distances with their pets. More specifically, the following strategies will be used to generate referrals for the program:

Veterinarians: Local veterinarian offices will post and distribute promotional materials to each client, including dates for upcoming clinics. Outreach efforts will be directed to the 163 veterinarians in the target area with a potential client base of approximately 600,000.

Humane Society & SPCA: Visitors and new pet owners will be referred to the program. Expected number of visitors to the local shelters is 800 district wide representing potential rabies awareness education recipients (with current advertising).

Pet Stores & Retail Chains: RSCP will partner with participating pet shops to distribute promotional materials and referrals and to coordinate future on-site clinics. Participating pet shops have approximately 4000 visitors each year. Outreach with promotional material will be dependent upon budgeted amount of money spent on producing promotional material. However, notices and information posted in windows or bulletin boards will be available

Community Events: Coordinators will ensure the program is promoted at all community events, fairs and festivals and is featured in public schools during March Rabies Awareness week. RSCP anticipates reaching about 15,000 residents through community events district wide.

Students & Civic Organizations: RSCP will call on university pre-veterinarian students and local civic organizations to provide volunteer hours and resources to our program.

Media: Traditional forms of marketing will be used to increase awareness about the program, such as press releases to local papers, radio advertisements as well as featuring a link on the local health department website. Potentially advertisement could reach 40,000 people during a media blitz.

Project Operations and Management:

One of the most important aspects of the program is to coordinate volunteer personnel and hire and retain key personnel including a licensed veterinarian, veterinary technicians and eventually a part time paid coordinator. Health department employees will continue to play a key role in coordinating and/or assisting in the coordination of the Rabies Safe Communities Program.

Descriptions of the key staff and their roles follow:

Licensed Veterinarian: The veterinarian will be the primary service provider responsible for overseeing and certifying the administration of the rabies vaccine.

Veterinarian Technician: The veterinarian technician will prepare all vaccine records according to all state and local guidelines. The veterinary technician will answer technical questions and refer owners to the veterinarian's office when additional medical conditions are observed.

RSCP Coordinators/Health Department Personnel: Health department staff will coordinate dates, times and location of clinics, the movement of the van from location to location, assist with record documentation, collection and management of all payments, funding and resources.

Animal Control Officer: The animal control officer will be onsite to encourage an owner and pet friendly atmosphere. The ACO will offer the owner the convenience of purchasing a county dog/cat tag while at the clinic.

Volunteer Staff: Members from local community and civic organizations will be responsible for helping pet owners navigate their way through the clinic. Volunteer staff will be a necessary component to ensure a high level of customer service by providing assistance to the public and staff.

The Rabies Safe Communities van will be garaged at a designated health department office. Locations where the clinics are held will provide an adequate and approved electrical power source, potable water and sewage disposal – all adaptable to the standard van installations and in an accessible, visible but not obtrusive location at each site served.

Prior to the arrival of the van at each clinic site, the Health Department staff will serve as a liaison between the facility contact person where the clinic is to be held and all other program personnel to ensure proper coordination of the van for the delivery of on-site services.

Once the van arrives at the scheduled clinic location, volunteer staff will provide information about the program and services to customers, distribute forms and assist owners in completing necessary paperwork, including owner consent forms, pet description and vaccination history. Typical customer flow will be to utilize a (3) three site system where services are rendered in a customer friendly, efficient fashion. Volunteer personnel will escort pet owners to site #1 where health department staff will collect required paperwork and fees. Pet owners will move on to Site #2 where veterinarian technicians will administer the rabies vaccine (within the legal parameters of a Veterinarian Technician). Owners will pick up the rabies certificate and any other paperwork at Site#3. Based on time constraints and the limited ability to provide additional medical services, the veterinarian may recommend that the owner schedule an office visit appointment.

It will be encouraged that all owners and their pets enjoy a friendly, efficient and cost saving experience. A positive experience and good public relations will build greater acceptance of the program and grow greater public involvement. All vaccination records will be kept at a central location under the control of the RSCP coordinators within the health district so that owners may obtain future copies.

Outcome Measures will measure quality and quantity of services. Quality will be assured as all work performed in this program shall be performed and overseen by a veterinarian licensed by the State of Virginia. Successful determination of the quality of services will become evident annually when each county totals the number of vaccinations given and pet licenses issued. Increased occurrence in unvaccinated domestic animals exposed to the rabies virus drops significantly in populations utilizing consistent vaccination services. This is a trend we expect to document and report. Quality will be measured by the following customer projections. We expect to vaccinate an average of 300 pets per clinic, with 10 clinics per year. We anticipate that we will vaccinate 3000 domestic animals in the first year of operation.

Information Systems will be simplified by utilization of data processing software, already purchased and implemented through out the state of Virginia. Use of this data processing system is a usual and customary daily procedure for all health department staff. We will use the Canadian based program named Health Space for our operation, as it will greatly enhance our efficiency and functionality in processing vaccination records, track fees and report statistical data. With the Health Space program, rabies vaccination records become part of the data collection system, saving space and providing immediate access to vaccination records.

Partners are essential to our operation. A mobile vaccination van equipped to administer rabies vaccine to a large population of domestic animals will be purchased from the Lord Fairfax Health District. Specifications of the Rabies Safe Communities Program includes reliable and quality instruments, equipment and supplies at a competitive cost compared to the cost of receiving the same service in a veterinarians office. Supplies for the Rabies Safe Communities Program shall be stocked in a manner consistent with the use and storage space availability. Equipment and supplies will be centrally housed at the same health department office where the van is garaged. Vaccine suppliers are accustomed to these modes of delivery and can arrange regular inventory checks. Health department staff will inventory and order supplies on the last Friday of each month. Health department staff may contact a supplier if there is a need for a supply between regular monthly orders.

Implementation Plan and Timeline:

Target Time Frame	Goal/Desired outcome
September 2006-April 2007	Develop a strong business plan
April-June 2007	Establish and Finalize partnerships
June-August 2007	Advertise Kickoff Event and Polish plan with finishing touches and obtain mobile van
August 2007, September-October 2007	Kickoff Event at Shenandoah County Fairgrounds, follow with kickoff event at Warren, Page, Clarke and Frederick County Fairgrounds – debut mobile van
October 2007 – October 2009	Hold additional clinics

Risks and Exit Plan:

RSCP is an outreach program which relies on active community involvement. Any venture of this type carries with it the respective associated risks, be it lack of capital venture, funding, grants, long term sustainability and or legal and liability issues. The risks versus potential rewards must be carefully evaluated and considered so as to successfully implement the goals set forth by the program and the insurance of its long term sustainability and success. This would require continued participation derived from involvement with the private sector, of-in-kind contributions, corporate sponsorships and alliances, donations, fairs and active marketing strategies.

Should the time present itself and in the event the long term sustainability and success of the program appears to be in jeopardy (due to the need of capital, donations, sponsors, and the lack in the public's interest in the program), the exit plan calls for the sale of the van, closure of the program and the distribution of any remaining funds to the respective institutions such as the Humane Society and ASPCA.

The Financials:

Assumptions

Revenues: The program will be largely dependent on in kind donations for funding the purchase of the mobile van, office equipment use and overhead during the first year. Fees will be collected for providing the rabies vaccine and for participation in the various animal fairs scheduled in the fall.

In-Kind Items: The Virginia Department of Health has committed the use of computers, printers, fax machines, and a small office space for administering the program. Volunteer staff is available from a volunteer pool comprising a number of groups established to assist the program coordinators with the clinics and animal fairs.

Expenditures: Expenditures include payment to a veterinarian and technician as well as the cost to retrofit a van. Future additional expenditures include the part time salary for a project coordinator. Other expenditures are listed in the table below.

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Revenue					
Vaccinations \$10.00/injection	\$10,500	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Partner/Vendor Fees	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Fundraisers (Dinner, golf scramble)	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Total	\$11,500	\$23,500	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000
Expenses					
Vet/vet tech \$300/clinic x 15 clinics	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500
Vaccine and supplies 1/injection x #/injection	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Part time Coordinator Salary	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Insurance for mobile van	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
Modification of van	\$5,000.00	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel costs of van (gas)	\$1,000.00	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Maintenance of van	\$500.00	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
Marketing/Advertising	\$500.00	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
Office Equipment use	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200
Office Space	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
Office Supplies	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200
Computer Time	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200
Total	\$14,200	\$19,700	\$19,700	\$19,700	\$19,700
Revenue Minus Expenses	-2700	\$4,300	\$4,300	\$4,300	\$4,300
In-Kind Donations					
Van	\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Office Space	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
Office Supplies	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200
Computer Time	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200
Office Equipment Use	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200
PetSmart Charities	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$8,200	\$700	\$700	\$700	\$700

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Commonwealth of Virginia, www.state.va.us, Code of Virginia