

City of Gainesville, Texas - TNR Program Policy

The City of Gainesville endorses Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) as a method of controlling feral cat populations and as a means of establishing a system of community-based resources dedicated to:

- Ensuring feral cats are spayed/neutered, vaccinated and adequately cared for by TNR Caregivers;
- Abating nuisances or other public health or safety threats caused by feral cats; and
- Reducing the number of feral cats euthanized at the City's animal shelter.

TNR in Gainesville will be accomplished through a partnership between TNR Sponsors, TNR Caregivers and the City of Gainesville. Responsibilities for each of these three entities are detailed below.

Sponsors Responsibilities:

1. Sponsors must obtain a no-cost permit from the City of Gainesville to serve in this capacity.
 - a. To obtain a permit, a sponsor must:
 - i. Fill out a sponsor application form to be reviewed and assessed by the City.
 - ii. Be approved by the Police Chief and agree to comply with the requirements set forth in this policy.
 - iii. Demonstrate the ability, capacity and willingness to comply with the requirements set forth in this policy.
2. Sponsors must establish processes to evaluate and approve (or deny) TNR Caregiver application requests.
3. Sponsors must oversee the activities of the TNR Caregivers for which they serve as Sponsor by:
 - a. Maintaining access to Caregiver records, including number of cats in each colony, and vaccination and spay/neuter records that are searchable by microchip number for each cat in each Caregiver colony.
 - b. Providing for Caregivers, at a minimum, Department-approved written educational training addressing uniform standards and procedures for colony maintenance.
 - c. Assisting to resolve any complaints over the conduct of a TNR Caregiver for which they serve as Sponsor.
4. Sponsors must fully cooperate with the City in resolving:
 - a. Any situation involving TNR Program Cats posing a potential threat to public health and/or safety, including the possible risk of rabies transmission;
 - b. Any investigation into animal cruelty involving TNR Program Cats;
 - c. Any nuisance investigation involving TNR Program Cats;
 - d. Any situation involving TNR Program Cats in unsafe or inappropriate areas.

Caregiver Responsibilities:

1. Caregivers must register with an appropriately-permitted Sponsor.
2. Caregivers must take appropriate and reasonable steps to:
 - a. Vaccinate the TNR Program Cat colony population for rabies and to update the vaccinations in accordance with state law;

- b. Spay or neuter colony population by a licensed veterinarian;
 - c. Eartip the left ear of cats that are in the TNR Program.
 - d. Cats are not considered TNR Program Cats until they have been spayed or neutered, vaccinated, eartipped and records have been filed as required below.
3. Caregivers must provide their Sponsor with records, including number of cats in each colony, and vaccination and spay/neuter records that are associated with each TNR Program Cat.
4. Caregivers must provide food, water and if feasible shelter for TNR Program Cats.
5. Caregivers must obtain proper medical attention for any TNR Program Cat that appears to require it.
6. Caregivers must observe the TNR Program Cats at least twice per week and monitor any illness or unusual behavior noticed in any TNR Program Cat.
7. Caregivers must obtain approval of the owner of any property, or any authorized representative of the owner, to which TNR Caregiver requires access to provide TRN Program Cat care. All property within 1000 feet of the perimeter fence of the Frank Buck Zoo is ineligible for a TNR Program Cat Colony location.
8. Caregivers must take reasonable steps to (1) remove kittens from the TNR Program Cat Colony after they have been weaned, (2) place kittens in adoption programs, homes or foster homes for the purpose of subsequent permanent placement, and (3) capture and spay the mother cat.
9. Caregivers must provide Sponsor with an annual accounting of (1) the number and gender of all cats in their colony at beginning of year, (2) the number and gender of all cats in their colony at the end of the year, and (3) explanation of any variances.
10. Caregivers must pay for medical and vaccination services that are provided by the City or the City's animal shelter before redeeming a TNR Program Cat.
11. Caregivers must fully cooperate with their Sponsor and or the City to address:
 - a. Any situation involving TNR Program Cats posing a potential threat to public health and/or safety, including the possible risk of rabies transmission;
 - b. Any investigation into animal cruelty involving TNR Program Cats;
 - c. Any nuisance complaint investigation involving TNR Program Cats;
 - d. Any situation involving TNR Program Cats in unsafe or inappropriate areas.

City of Gainesville Responsibilities:

1. The City of Gainesville's responsibilities will be carried out by the Police Chief or his/her designee
2. The City is ultimately responsible for resolving complaints received involving feral cats, TNR Program Cats, TNR Sponsors and TNR Caregivers.
3. In response to a nuisance cat complaint, the City shall:
 - a. Offer educational material on humane techniques to deal with nuisance cats.
 - b. Offer loaned trap service for the resident to trap the nuisance cat and bring to the animal shelter.
 - c. Offer other trap service resource referrals.
 - d. Utilize its authority as established in the City of Gainesville Animal Control Ordinance.

4. If a cat is brought to the animal shelter, the City shall: (Animal control will release captured TNR Program Cats (any eartipped cat) on site and will not take them to the shelter unless it is a nuisance cat or sick.)
 - a. Determine if cat is part of the TNR program.
 - i. If it is not a part of the program the shelter will follow normal shelter protocol to deal with the animal or transfer the cat to a TNR program.
 - ii. If it is a part of the TNR Program, the shelter shall notify the Sponsor for the TNR Cat.
 1. If the TNR Program Cat has not been previously deemed a nuisance, City may release the TNR Program Cat to a TNR Caregiver.
 - a. Vaccination verification must be provided to the shelter prior to release or the TNR Program Cat must be vaccinated prior to release.
 - b. Shelter shall determine if the cat is too sick or diseased to be rereleased in which case the shelter may medically treat or humanely euthanize the TNR Program Cat.
 - c. The cat shall be micro chipped.
 - d. TNR Caregiver is responsible for paying medical, vaccination and micro chipping expenses that are provided by the City shelter.
 2. If the TNR Cat has been deemed to be a nuisance more than once, City will not release cat to TNR Caregiver to be returned to the environment in which it has been previously removed as a nuisance.
 - a. City may release cat to another entity that agrees to relocate cat in an area the City determines will not pose a nuisance threat (i.e. barn cat program).
 - b. City may humanely euthanize the TNR Cat if has been deemed a nuisance more than once.

City of Gainesville Authority:

1. The City has the authority to revoke TNR Sponsor and TNR Caregiver status if City determines the Sponsor or Caregiver has failed to comply with policy requirements.
2. For the purposes of this policy, the City shall determine when there is a potential threat to public health or safety, when TNR Program Cats are in unsafe or inappropriate areas, or if TNR Program Cats are at risk of harm or suffering.
3. If the City determines that a TNR Program Cat or TNR Program Cat Colony poses a threat to public health or safety, are in unsafe of inappropriate areas, or determines the TNR Program Cats are at risk of harm or suffering, the City shall have the discretion to undertake any lawful action deemed necessary including removing individual TNR Program Cats or entire TNR Program Cat Colony.
4. If Sponsor and/or Caregiver are unsuccessful in correcting an identified nuisance, the City may remove nuisance TNR Program Cat or TNR Program Cat Colony.