



Burlington County Feral Cat Initiative

A Non-Profit Organization Developing an Effective Strategy for the Permanent Reduction of Feral and Stray Cat Populations in Burlington County, New Jersey

How Does My Township Enroll With Your Program?

Thank you so much for inquiring about our program! BCCI is run by volunteers . . . we all have regular full time jobs and we handle our never-ending BCCI duties in our not-so-spare time. We are inundated with requests for help and information. In addition, we rely solely on donations and grants for funding, so much of our time is spent raising money. Somehow our small group is able to make major accomplishments, probably because the wonderful people who we work with never stop giving!

The Burlington County Feral Cat Initiative (BCCI) is a TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) program that is endorsed by the Burlington County Health Department and the Board of Chosen Freeholders. The Health Department and the Freeholders support our program for various reasons. The main reason being public safety, since BCCI provides rabies vaccination free of charge to stray/feral cats whose caregivers enroll in our program, and we educate the public on the importance of rabies vaccinations and spaying and neutering. In addition to the public safety factor, townships want our program implemented because our program saves taxes. **To date, our program is implemented in Beverly City, Lumberton, Shamong, Southampton, Tabernacle and Woodland Townships and many other Burlington County towns are on our waiting list – waiting for funding.**

In order for residents of a township to enroll in our program, first the township must implement our feral-friendly model ordinance. After that, we offer a free TNR seminar to train caregivers how to properly trap and care for their colonies, as all caregivers must be TNR Certified before they can receive our free services. The caregivers must also sign our Caregiver Agreement and fully abide by the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Through our program, all of the cats of a colony are trapped, after which the cats are examined by a veterinarian, are spayed/neutered, receive rabies/distemper vaccinations, and are ear-tipped and id-micro chipped for identification purposes **FREE OF CHARGE**. Feral cats managed through BCCI will no longer reproduce and will no longer represent a risk of transmitting rabies or other diseases to humans.

Once the cats are treated through our program, nuisance complaints significantly decrease, as there is no more fighting over females or mating behavior. Microchips allow the identification of each individual cat and, if picked up by animal control, the cat's medical (surgical and vaccination) history is immediately available. Therefore, the TNR-treated cat can be quickly reclaimed by its caregiver, which minimizes expenditure of resources by animal control agencies (tax dollars).

We also work in conjunction with wildlife advocates. Currently, our organization is operating a pilot program on the practice of TNR in wild-life sensitive habitats, following protocol developed by the New Jersey Feral Cat & Wildlife Coalition. Other members of the coalition include, the Humane Society of the U.S., New Jersey Audubon Society, New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife, Neighborhood Cats, Alley Cat Allies, New Jersey Animal Rights Alliance, In Defense of Animals, Animal Legal Defense Fund, New Jersey State Health Department, the New Jersey Office of Animal Welfare and the Burlington County Animal Shelter.

As stated previously, we have many towns on our waiting list. The only deterrent to allowing these towns into our program is funding. In short, the towns must remain on our waiting list until we are able to raise enough funds to support the towns currently enrolled, with a surplus to add more towns.

However, Lumberton Township, our most recent admission, resulted when a Lumberton resident approached her township officials with an offer they could not refuse . . . she entered into an agreement with the officials that if they passed the feral-friendly model ordinance and paid \$2,500, she would raise the balance of the funds needed to get BCCI's program implemented. She organized various fund raisers and raised the money within a few months! We feel that this will be the wave of the future, and will be the quickest route for interested people to have their towns admitted into our program.

BCCI is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and all fund raising must be done under our guidelines, but we also help with the fund raising and provide "how to" suggestions to guarantee good results. Please contact us if you are interested in more details.