



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2020.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Pittsylvania County
Program Title: Doggie Bag Thrift Store
Program Category: Community & Economic Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Richard Hicks
Title: Deputy County Administrator
Signature: 

Doggie Bag Thrift Store

Our county, just like municipalities across the state, strives to identify issues that we are facing and find creative, or innovative ways to tackle these issues. These solutions must take into account the needs of our citizens, impact on our employees, and be fiscally responsible. One of these challenges we were facing was the number of items being brought to our trash convenience sites across the county. While trash to some, we recognized that much of what was overwhelming our convenience sites was perfectly good furniture, fixtures, bikes, and household items. These items were discarded, and we had some citizens attempting to scavenge the dumpsters for these items, which presented a significant safety issue. There are several thrift stores across Pittsylvania County, so why weren't people taking these items to them for resale? Upon talking to many citizens about this, the answers ranged from it was more convenient to take the items to the convenience sites, to the fact that most county thrift stores are not locally owned, and the profits benefit other communities.

In 2017, the Pittsylvania Pet Center was opened to provide our citizens a 21st-century community animal shelter which was committed to saving the lives of all adoptable animals, while providing programs and resources to our citizens to ensure animals in our county are receiving the best care possible, and staying out of the shelter system. Every municipality is required to operate or contract an organization to operate a public intake shelter. When you consider that the Pet Center receives approximately 2,000 animals a year, often sick, injured, or never having seen a veterinarian, let alone receiving vaccinations and monthly preventatives we are facing some animal welfare challenges, due largely to irresponsible owners.

To run an animal shelter of our size, while meeting our mission of saving every adoptable animal, comes a significant cost to our county. Animal shelters like ours, no matter how good they are, lose money. This makes fundraising and grant funds so very important in our ability to fulfill our mission while minimizing the cost to our taxpayers.

Our county recognized the opportunity to reduce the amount of perfectly good items from ending up overflowing our trash convenience sites, provide a thrift store that our citizens can get behind, and raise money to offset our lifesaving efforts for animals in Pittsylvania County. The Pet Center had some undeveloped space in the back of our building, from its days as a car dealership. While we had space, it needed some improvements and we had to make it as convenient as possible for people to donate, and figure out staffing for our store. The SPCA of Pittsylvania County was already operating a thrift store in a building that was entirely too small and not in the best location. We reached an agreement with the SPCA to manage the thrift store in the back of the Pet Center, the county would update the space for use and provide assistance with donations and promotion. We spent \$6,500 in building and grounds funds to make the space ready for our new thrift store, and our Sheriff's department helped with some inmates in completing the work. Last spring, the county designated some collection sheds at three manned convenience sites to receive donations for our thrift store. This enabled us to start minimizing materials at our sites and build our inventory for the store. The partnership with the SPCA provided us with free staffing, and we share 40% of the profits from the store with them.

We opened the Doggie Bag thrift store in March 2020, and within our first three days, the store made \$3,000. Just after this, we were forced to close the store due to the COVID-19

shutdown. Despite this, donations have continued to come in, as well as compliments from our citizens about how great the partnership is and how the proceeds are helping the animals of Pittsylvania County. We have more recently reopened the Doggie Bag, and while not as many people have been coming in due to COVID – 19, we have made another \$1,600 from our store.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our Thrift Store, we are already seeing positive results. We have seen a reduction in the amount of trash going into our convenience sites. The SPCA has a bigger and better store with more visitors through our partnership, and this has strengthened our commitment to aiding one another in animal welfare. The portion of the proceeds that are going to the SPCA is being used to care for their animals, which would otherwise be in our care. Ultimately 100% of the proceeds are helping Pittsylvania County. Through this collaboration, we have addressed multiple concerns and found a way to generate funds from what someone else considered trash, and our citizens are happy about this partnership and how the funds are helping animals in our community. As business picks back up, we have plans to set up three new collection sites in other parts of the county. While we had to invest some time and money into this venture, the benefits far outweigh the costs, and the Doggie Bag thrift store will help a lot of animals in need for many years to come.

Brief Overview –

Pittsylvania County was looking for ways to address the high volume of perfectly good items and furniture that ended up in our convenience centers, which was encouraging the unsafe practice of scavenging, as well as finding a revenue stream to minimize the costs to operate our county animal shelter. The solution was to open our thrift store, which would garner community support, and help our county's animals.

By partnering with the SPCA of Pittsylvania County (non-profit animal rescue), we strengthened the relationship that they had with our Pet Center, and our store staffing was covered for a percentage of the profits. The SPCA fundraises to help citizens and animals in our county, and this aids the Pet Center in their life-saving mission. This venture has resolved, several issues, given our citizens a program and store they can be proud of, in which 100% of the proceeds go right back into helping our animals in need throughout the county.

Executive Summary –

We believe strongly that out of every issue that arises, there is an opportunity to find creative solutions to address the issue and make our county stronger. The Doggie Bag Thrift store is a great example of this process. Through this venture, we have reduced the volume of items going to our convenience centers, taken perfectly good items, and generated profits to assist in the expenses of the Pittsylvania Pet Center and the SPCA of Pittsylvania County. This thrift store has enhanced community support for both organizations, and our citizens are happy to support a thrift store in which the proceeds go right back into helping our community. The Doggie Bag thrift store is a great example of how the county and a local non-profit can partner to help one another and make our county a better place for animals and the people that love them. The investment on the county's end to make all of this happen has been relatively minimal when you consider the benefits, as well as the profitability of this venture with no inventory costs, no new overhead expenses, and a staff that works for their percentage from the store.



Richard N. Hicks

Deputy County Administrator

BUSINESS SAVVY. PEOPLE FRIENDLY.
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