**Section 996.400 Application Requirements and Proof of Eligibility**

a) *An owner* of a companion animal shall *submit* an Application/Eligibility Voucher For Low-Cost Spay/Neuter (application) and *proof of eligibility to the Department*. Applications are available on the Department's website at http://www.idph.state.il.us/pdf/Spay\_Neuter\_Eligibility\_Appplication.pdf. (Section 25 of the Act) An owner may submit applications for no more than two companion animals during any State Fiscal Year. The owner shall complete a separate application for each companion animal.

b) Only one proof of eligibility is required to be submitted to the Department with the application or applications. The following shall be considered proof of eligibility:

1) A copy of a letter or other documentation from the Illinois Department of Human Services identifying the owner and showing the amount of monthly SNAP benefits received by the owner. The letter or other documentation must be dated no more than 60 days prior to receipt by the Department or must clearly indicate that the owner is eligible for the SNAP benefits for a period including the date of receipt by the Department; or

2) A copy of a letter or other documentation from the Social Security Administration identifying the owner and showing the amount of monthly SSDI benefits to be received by the owner during the current year.

c) A manager of a feral cat colony shall submit to the Department an application and a copy of a letter from the municipality or county that recognizes the trap, sterilize, and return program and identifies the manager of the feral cat colony. A manager may submit applications for no more than five feral cats during any State Fiscal Year. The manager shall submit a separate application for each feral cat. Only one copy of the letter recognizing the trap, sterilize, and return program is required to be submitted with the application or applications.

d) The Department will review the application or applications to ensure compliance with this Section.

1) If the application is approved, the Department will affix an approval code, an issue date, and an authorization stamp to the bottom of the application and return the stamped application to the eligible companion animal owner or feral cat colony manager. This stamped application will serve as the eligibility voucher to be presented to a participating veterinarian. The Department will enclose a listing of participating veterinarians with the approved eligibility voucher (see Section 996.600(c)).

2) If the application is not approved, the Department will return the application to the companion animal owner or feral cat colony manager with the reason for denial. Applications that are denied for a lack of proper proof of eligibility may be resubmitted with the proper proof of eligibility and will be reconsidered by the Department.

e) If the companion animal owner or feral cat colony manager has not presented an eligibility voucher to a participating veterinarian within six months after the issue date, that eligibility voucher is void.

1) The companion animal owner or feral cat colony manager may request a replacement for a void eligibility voucher by returning the void eligibility voucher to the Department, along with a new application. No further proof of eligibility will be required, unless the new application is received more than one year after the issue date of the original eligibility voucher.

2) The Department will review the application for compliance with this Section. If the application is approved, the Department will affix a new approval code, a new issue date, and an authorization stamp to the bottom of the new application and return the stamped application to the eligible companion animal owner or feral cat colony manager. The Department will retain the void eligibility voucher.