

PAWS AND CLAWS CAT RESCUE

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



**Paws
& Claws**
CAT RESCUE



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Supporters-

2023 was a year of massive growth and exciting changes. We opened up the Paws and Claws Cat Adoption Center, our first facility, in May and, by the end of the year, we had saved over 500 cats, more lives than any other year.

When I founded Paws and Claws in 2020, I had many hopes and big goals for what we would achieve, but we have far exceeded all expectations. In less than four years, we have built a powerful foster program, saved cats from shelters near and far, grown our volunteer program to over 100 weekly onsite volunteers, adopted out over 1,000 cats to wonderful families, and built a community that I feel so lucky to be part of. With your support, I know we can accomplish anything.

Thank you for being on this journey with us. There is much more to come thanks to you and your fierce belief in our mission.

Ashlynn Boyce

ASHLYNN BOYCE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR





OUR MISSION

Paws and Claws Cat Rescue is a 501(c)3 foster centric organization with an Adoption Center in Evanston, IL.

Founded in May of 2020, we focus on cats who are at risk of euthanasia in local municipal shelters as well as those in areas with fewer resources and higher euthanasia rates.

Our goal is to provide every animal in our care with behavioral, emotional and medical care and to eventually match them with an adopter.

We are dedicated to preventing and alleviating the suffering caused by abuse, neglect, and overpopulation.

We help cats mentally and physically heal, and give them a chance to find love, a full life, and a forever home.

Dogs and cats enter shelters at roughly the same rate but 60% of the animals euthanized in U.S. shelters are cats. We rescue all types of cats, from the tiniest orphaned neonates to seniors. And we focus on those who may get overlooked, including FIV+ cats, black cats, and undersocialized/shy cats.

Upwards of 90% of our animals come from municipal shelters, many of which are legally obligated to take in every animal who comes to them regardless of space, time, or resources and thus forced to make euthanasia decisions.

We hope that in partnering with these shelters, we can pull animals out of their care and minimize these tough decisions.

OUR STORY

Founded by Evanston resident Ashlynn Boyce and her family at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Paws and Claws is the culmination of a long-time commitment to fostering neonatal kittens, and under-socialized cats - with a specific focus on TNR for community cats.

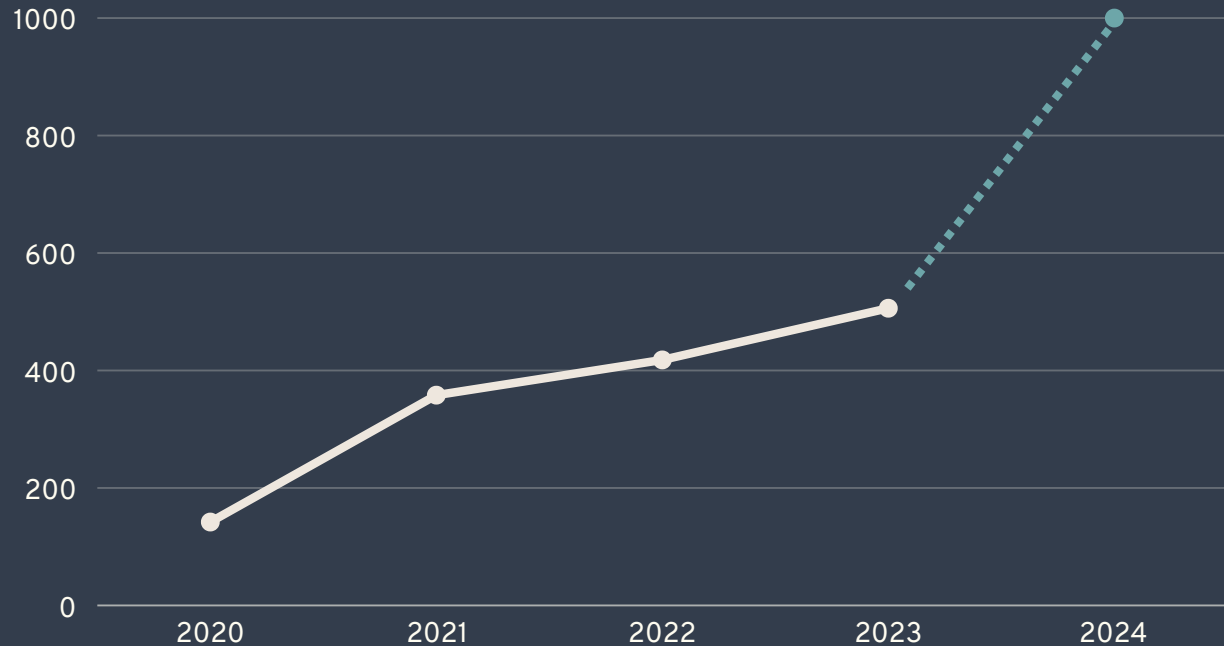
With 11,000 animals euthanized annually in Illinois alone (as of 2022 this number is now 6,000), Ashlynn felt compelled to aggregate many of the best practices she had seen through her work with other rescues and build a nurturing environment for overlooked vulnerable cats and a community for the people who love those cats.

After three years of operating as a foster-based organization, in May of 2023 the rescue opened its first facility, the Paws and Claws Cat Adoption Center located in Evanston. This center is the heart of Paws and Claws' operations and houses free roaming cat rooms for adoptable cats, isolation space for sick cats, housing for new cats coming from other shelters, a surgical suite, storage space, offices and a hub for community events and gatherings.

As of December 2023, the organization has rescued over 1,400 cats from 40 different municipal shelters across the Midwest and southern part of the United States. They have partnerships with 12 local veterinary clinics and a contract with an in-house vet tech and veterinarian. The rescue relies on its network of over 160 foster families in the Chicagoland area to open their hearts and homes to its animals until they are matched with their forever homes. Paws and Claws sees itself as a community of "crossing guards" for these vulnerable animals, helping them move from their past —whether that be from a traumatic home, a kennel, or a euthanasia list— to a safe and loving forever home.



NUMBER OF CATS SAVED BY YEAR



OUR IMPACT

While growing our intake by 24% between 2022 and 2023, Paws and Claws Cat Rescue also created an impact by and through:

- Expansion of a variety of programs
- Launched 'Cat Care Crew', our volunteer program with 170+ recurring volunteers
- Opened our first facility, the Paws and Claws Adoption center, which will allow for a 50% increase in the number of lives that we are able to save
- Increased the amount of money that we fundraised by 29.19%
- Added engagement opportunities onsite for people of all ages
- Extended lifesaving cat intake by working with two new states
- Hosted volunteer socials and appreciation events
- Grew Paws and Claws' team of staff
- Diversified the types of medical case cats we took on as an organization



7,148

Felines euthanized in Illinois each year (based on 2022 reports)

506

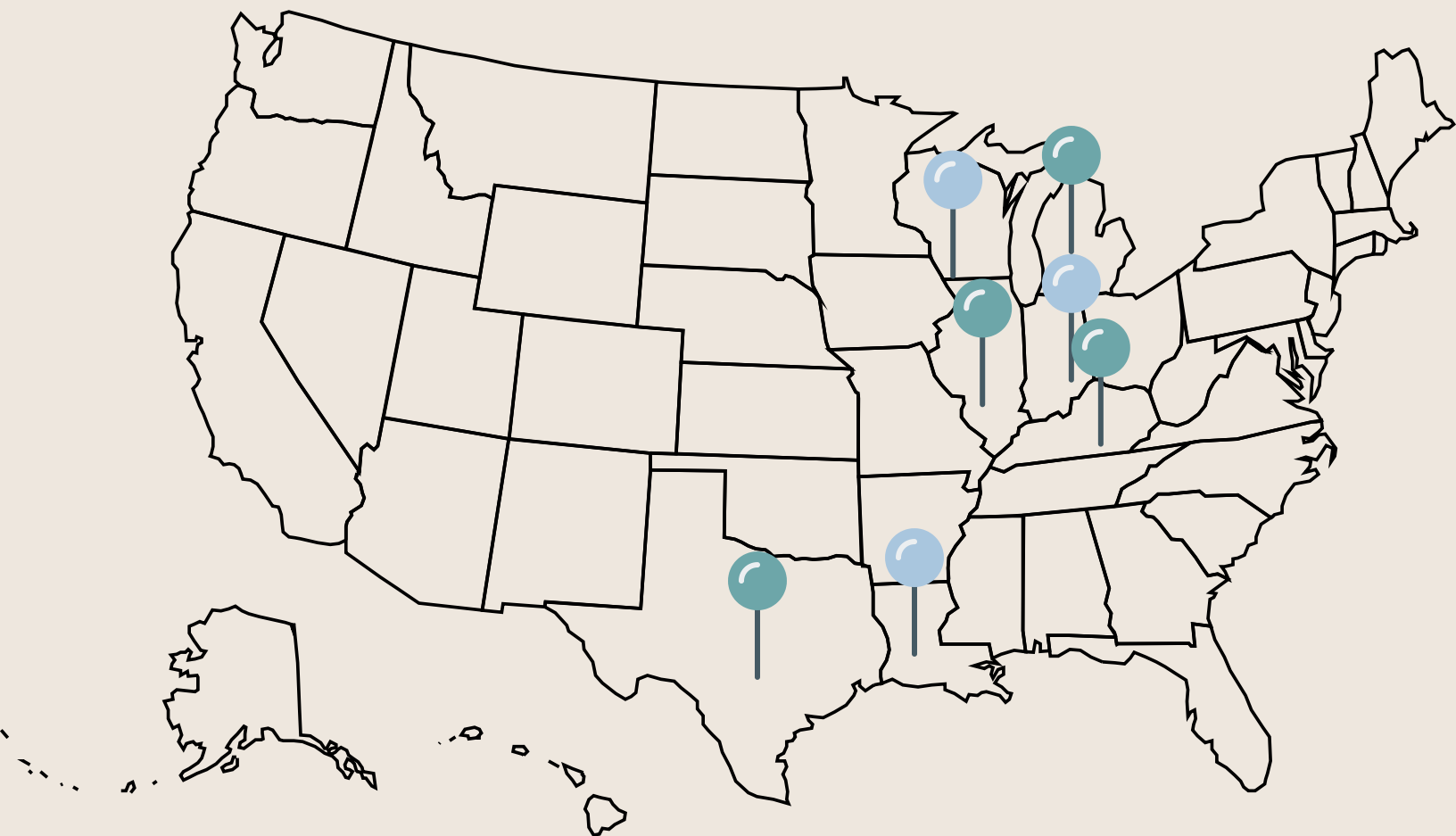
Felines saved in 2023 by Paws and Claws Cat Rescue.

86%

Percent of felines saved in the United States (based on 2022 reports)

97%

Percent of felines saved at Paws and Claws Cat Rescue in 2023.



WHERE OUR FELINES COME FROM

We take in under-socialized cats who are at risk from various states including Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, Kentucky, Texas, and Louisiana.

Most of our animals come from open admission animal control facilities that have high euthanasia rates due to the fact that they are required to accept every animal who is brought to them.

Additionally, we take in kittens and their feral mothers until the kittens are weaned and the mothers can be spayed and returned to their outdoor homes; neonatal kittens without mothers; and, kittens who are weaned.

Occasionally, we will take in cats who no longer have a home and are being surrendered or animals who come from other vulnerable situations.

Our Values



Community

We prioritize building meaningful connections between animals and their devoted caretakers. Fostering strong community bonds among our volunteers, fosters, adopters, donors, supporters, and partners is a core value, creating a nurturing environment where everyone is united by their love for cats and a shared commitment to our cause.



Support and Inclusion

Our cat rescue embodies a culture of support and inclusion. We work to create a welcoming community where people of all backgrounds come together to preserve the well-being of our feline friends. Together, we form a united family, bound by a shared love for cats and a commitment to fostering a compassionate and inclusive environment.



Responsibility

We proactively address the root causes of the pet overpopulation crisis by promoting responsible pet ownership. This includes advocating for affordable veterinary care, championing pet-friendly housing initiatives, supporting Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs, and actively seeking alternative rehoming solutions outside of traditional shelters. We believe that responsibility begins with understanding and addressing the core issues that contribute to the challenges faced by our feline companions.



Kindness

Our approach comes from a place of compassion and understanding. We work to listen to everyone involved with or interacting with our organization in any way. By making kindness a focal point in our approach, we work to create a positive environment.

PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

PAWS AND CLAWS CAT ADOPTION CENTER

Located at 829 Chicago Ave., this is Paws and Claws' first facility- thanks to support from GoodApple- which features state-of-the-art cat care areas and resources, ultimately allowing Paws and Claws to save more lives



SURGICAL SUITE

The surgical suite allows us to perform on-site procedures from routine spay/neuter procedures to more complex, urgent surgeries. Built to industry standards and with best practices in mind, our surgical suite houses special medical equipment to provide the best care to our animals



ADOPTABLE ROOMS

Housing free-roaming, adoptable cats, these rooms act as a temporary home for our felines while they search for their forever homes. The adoptable rooms feature perches, wall beds and tunnels as well as big windows to ensure the cats are content and enriched while with us.



ISOLATION SPACE

Created for cats who are sick, injured, or in need of quarantine, the isolation spaces provide an area for felines to receive all medications and necessary medical care while recovering.



COMMUNITY SPACE

Located at the front of the adoption center, this hub with large windows and high ceilings, is filled with couches, chairs, a retail area, reception desk, flat screen tv, and more.



We extend thanks to [Good Apple](#) a highly-specialized media and measurement agency for their generous support.

FOSTER PROGRAM



We welcome everyone interested in fostering, regardless of past pet experience, whether you have pets/children, work long hours or travel often. Our foster program is built on support and each of our fosters has direct access to staff via a mobile number. We provide all supplies and cover medical costs ensuring that financial position is not a barrier to fostering.



On average a healthy cat who is adoption ready will be in a foster home for 3-4 weeks while kittens and cats with additional medical/behavioral needs might stay in foster for several months.

In 2023, we had 161 fosters who we are immensely grateful for and look forward to continuing to grow this program. Learn more at pawsandclawscatrescue.org/foster.

ADOPTION PROGRAM

Adoption day is the end goal for most of our felines. Our adoption process is rooted in matchmaking and we work with each family to pair them with a feline who will be a good fit for their home, lifestyle and current family members.

Our team provides resources to ensure adopters are prepared to bring home and care for their new furry friend. We also provide a lot of post-adoption support and often keep in touch with adopters for years. We have a Facebook group for alum to stay connected and share photos of their felines.

Additionally we commit to our cats for life and promise that if for any reason the adopter is no longer able to care for their pet we will take them back.

To learn more, visit pawsandclawscatrescue.org/adopt.



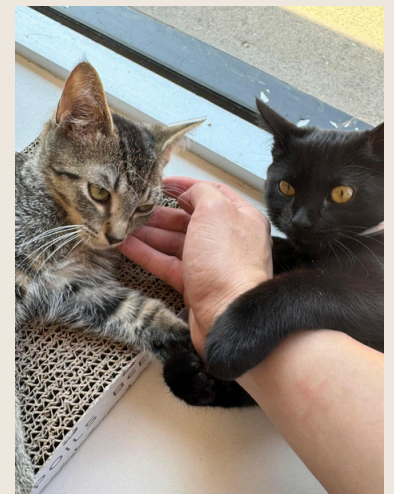
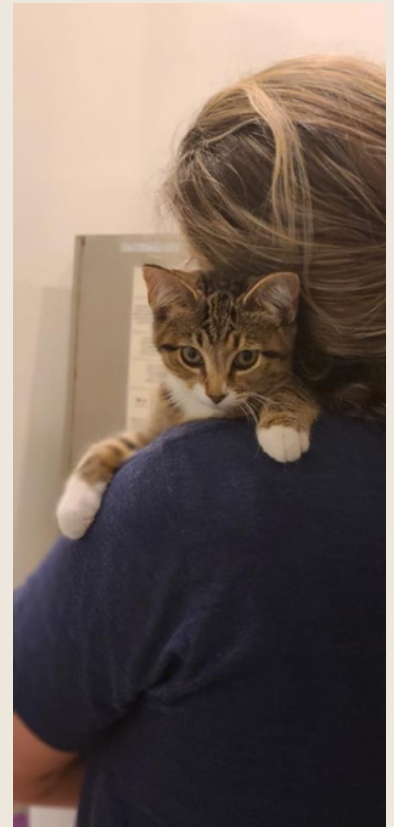
VOLUNTEERS

The Adoption Center's volunteers are the heart of Paws and Claws. Our medical, foster, adoption programs, and operation need many hands to help things run smoothly. From making sure our cats are fed, cared for, and happy, to helping with various initiatives that help our growth and continued operational success, the individuals who dedicate their spare time to contributing to this impact are the life source of our success.

In addition to our Cat Care Crew, which has two daily two hour shifts, with 171 recurring volunteers, we utilize our volunteers for other important needs, including kitten transport, adoption counseling, event planning, administrative work, writing, branding, graphic design, and social media.

We host variety of events at the center ranging from children's birthday parties to morning yoga classes. These events would not be possible without our volunteer programs.

To learn more, visit pawsandclawscatrescue.org/volunteer.





EVENTS

Combining the crucial need to continue to raise funds and community impact of coming together for our important cause, our events are a catalyst for growth and togetherness, securing the longevity of our vital work and organization.

Adoption Center Grand Opening

In May 2023, close to 200 members of our community joined us to celebrate the opening of our first facility. Featuring a ribbon cutting ceremony, silent auction, tour of the adoption center, games, food, and more, this was a great milestone for our organization



Rally for Rescues

In September 2023, we held our flagship event, Rally for Rescues in Baker Park. At the biggest Rally ever, we had games, merchandise, activities, crafts, cats and kittens, food, treats, an extensive silent auction, entertainment, and so much more.

This year's Rally raised record amounts, totaling \$17,694.

Other Events

From events at the adoption center ranging from Cat Yoga and kids parties to dinners to thank our monthly donors, volunteers, and sponsors, to pop ups at restaurants, we have hosted diverse events throughout the year. We're eager to continue to expand this work in the next year and beyond.



Stories of Lives Saved

Yang



Yang was a senior cat we rescued from a shelter in Indiana after her owner passed away and she landed on the euthanasia list. Unfortunately, she quickly declined and needed critical, lifesaving care from an emergency hospital when her liver and kidneys stopped working. Our medical team placed a feeding tube, and we began at home support for a slow safe recovery over many weeks. At one point Yang was on 12 medications per day to help her get better!

After two months of lots of TLC, her feeding tube was removed and she was adopted by her foster!

Camden

In early August, Camden was rescued from being one of the thousands of cats euthanized annually in Illinois, with just five minutes to spare. Camden arrived at Paws and Claws with swollen, infected eyes and an upper respiratory infection. He received consistent supportive care, including eye drops, multiple doses of medication daily, and warm compresses for his eyes. He slowly started to improve, and he began to regain a bit of vision, something we had never thought possible.

About a week and a half into his medical journey, he started to display symptoms consistent with ringworm, a fungal skin infection. After undergoing his ringworm treatment, he was neutered. He sadly tested positive for feline leukemia, a lifelong virus that weakens a cat's immune system, but his condition has vastly improved and we will continue to care for him and provide everything he needs.



Smilodon

When one of our shelter partners asked if we would take an abandoned cat found starving in the middle of a forest preserve, we said yes, not realizing how much she needed us until she was dropped off. Smilodon was extremely emaciated. You could feel every single bone in her small body. She also had a large abscess under her tail that was very painful. Our vet performed a procedure to drain the wound in the hopes it would heal. After several weeks of small frequent meals to help her slowly regain weight, lots of rest, and careful care of her wound, Smilodon is doing much better and looks like a completely different cat.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

As a 100% donation-funded organization, all donors, ranging from individual contributors to supporting corporations and foundations make the integral work that we do possible.

Because we do not receive any funding support from government entities or taxpayers, we rely fully on the community to help us keep our doors open.

We are 99% volunteer run; we do not have paid kennel staff, so the labor, feed, and care of the felines in our facility is almost completely driven by our volunteers. These individuals also help with every level of administrative work, so that our funds go towards our mission and the cats in our care.

Throughout the year, we have taken measures to reduce expenses, such as medical expenses, by becoming even more strategic with our resources.

However, each cat that comes into our care costs an average of \$264 from intake to adoption. With adoption fees landing around \$160, this leaves more than \$100 remaining per cat of funds required to provide everything they need.

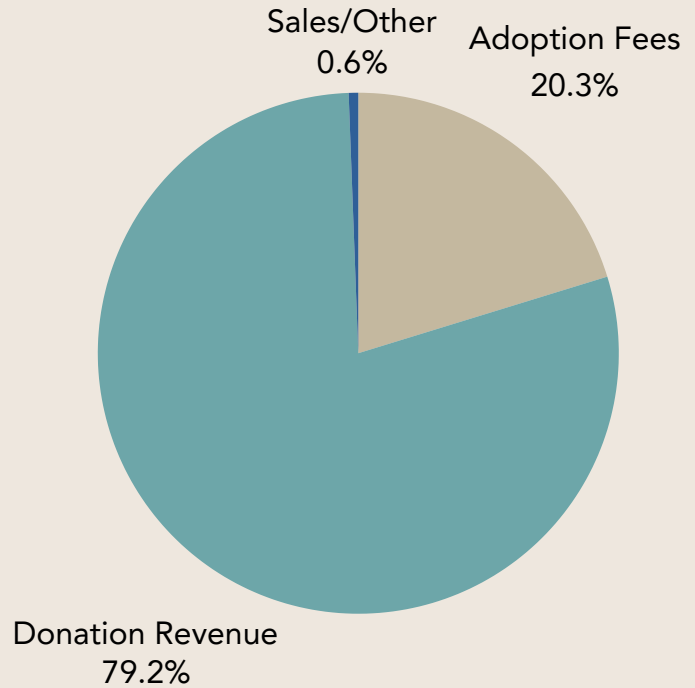
We are grateful for the individuals, foundations, and corporations who help bridge this gap.

The community backing that drives our mission is apparent in all aspects of our organization, and we look forward to continuing to garner much-needed financial support that will allow us to double the number of cats we save by end of 2024.

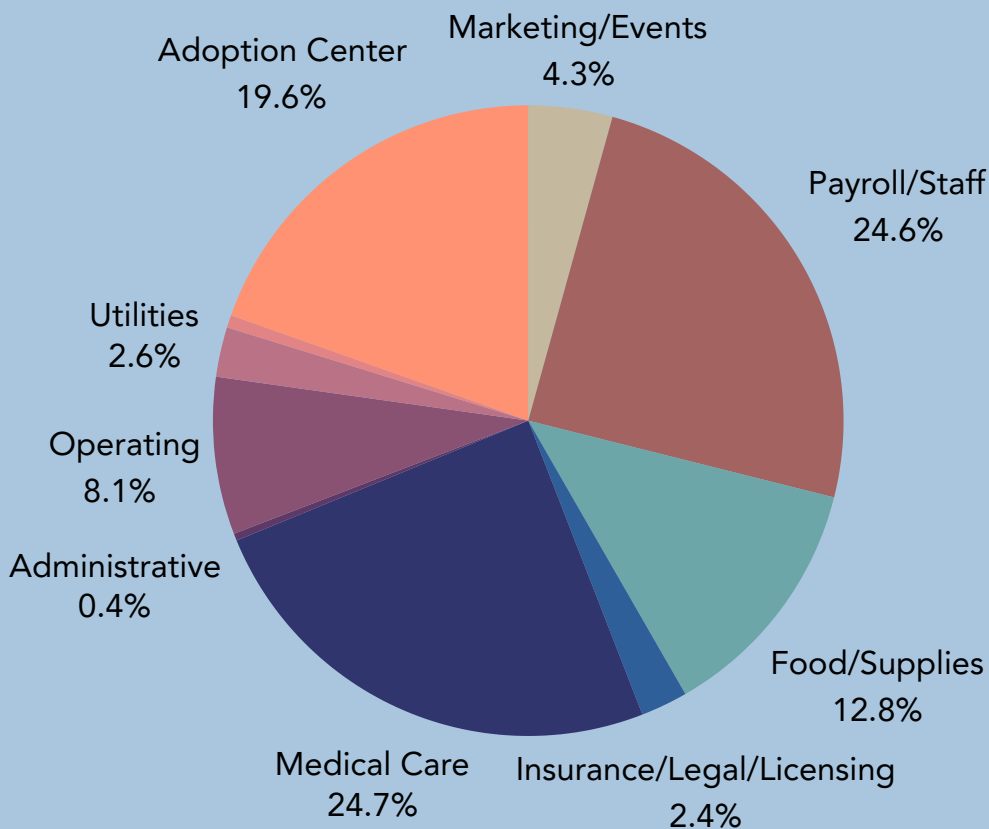


Financial Breakdown

Revenue



Expenses



What's Next?

As we look to the year ahead, we feel empowered and excited about our future. With the need of felines always at the core of our goals, strategy, and priorities, 2024 is going to be the year that we double the amount of lives we save. We plan to rescue more than 1,000 cats in 2024!

In addition to and in line with this important goal, our focus is on optimizing our strategy while growing our foster and volunteer programs to support the work that we set out to complete.

Without the support of donors through corporate capacities, foundational impact, and individual gifts, we cannot reach these new, needed heights. As a 100% donation-run organization, the support of a diverse portfolio of donors is what solidifies our future.

Please consider championing Paws and Claws Cat Rescue. Your support is not simply a donation; it's an investment in the future of felines. Together, we can, and will, achieve our shared vision of preventing and alleviating the suffering caused by abuse, neglect, and overpopulation in felines. Together, we can, and will, save lives.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions or to discuss how your support can make an even greater impact.

We are immensely grateful for your support, and we look forward to sharing the impact of your generosity with you.



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