

## GUIDELINES FOR GRANT SEEKERS

The CVMA Foundation, NFP (CVMF) is the benevolent arm of the Chicago Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), a nonprofit organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code. CVMF is the funding source for financial assistance to veterinarians for pet owners in the Greater Chicagoland area. This document provides guidelines for those interested in seeking financial aid for veterinary care for sick or injured pets.

**CVMA Member veterinarians may apply for funding to support cases that meet certain client, treatment, and patient eligibility criteria. Grants are awarded to a veterinarian, not a pet owner.**

**CLIENT ELIGIBILITY:** To be eligible for a grant award, the client must meet one of the following financial hardship categories. There are two methods of proving eligibility.

1. **Documented Financial Hardship** – Pet owners receiving one of the following forms of government assistance for low-income individuals or families. In these cases, documentation proving current participation (i.e., a copy of the approval letter) in one of the following government assistance programs must be submitted with a grant application.
  - Supplemental Security Income
  - Medicaid
  - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
  - Food Stamps or Unemployment
2. **Temporary Financial Hardship** – Under rare circumstances, pet owners experiencing temporary financial hardship may be eligible. The financial hardship must be unrelated to the veterinary expenses themselves. A letter or email authorized by the veterinarian that describes the circumstances causing the financial hardship must be submitted with the grant application. Supporting documentation from an impartial third party is also required.

**TREATMENT ELIGIBILITY:** The Fund will award a grant only for needed medical care (non-elective or emergency procedures) for sick or injured companion animals. Routine physical examinations, vaccinations, etc. will not be funded. General prophylactic dental care will not be funded. Spays and neuters will not be funded, unless it can be demonstrated that the procedure is essential to the continued health of the animal.

**PATIENT ELIGIBILITY:** The Fund provides financial assistance to treat any animal whose primary purpose is companionship, without restricting the type of animal species. To be eligible, the animal must be sick, injured, or in need of emergency care.

**FUNDING LIMITS:** Due to limited funding availability, grants are only available through CVMA member practices at this time. Veterinary practices are eligible for up to \$1,000 per calendar year for financial hardship cases. Practices may submit as many applications as necessary to reach the annual funding limits.

No family can receive more than \$1,000 in a calendar year. No family can receive more than \$1,000 for a lifetime grant maximum.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

**DETERMINING NEED:** In considering whether to apply for a grant from the Fund, veterinary practices are encouraged to ascertain fully whether a client can afford all or part of the expected cost of care. Only once it is determined that a client is truly unable to pay should the option of applying for a CVMF grant be introduced. In this way, practices can help ensure financial support is available for those most in need.

**SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION:** Veterinary practices may apply for a grant from the CVMF on behalf of their clients. No practice is obligated to apply to the program, but those interested in participating may do so by submitting a completed grant application. Applications must include sufficient information to clearly determine client and treatment eligibility, and patient diagnosis and treatment information. All applications must be accompanied by a detailed cost estimate showing fees for required treatment. **Applications must also be submitted within 3 weeks of treatment, if treatment has already taken place.**

**APPLICATION STATUS NOTIFICATION:** The CVMF will make every effort to notify the veterinary practice of application status within 3 business days of receipt of a completed application.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:** **Completed applications must be received by the CVMF no later than three weeks following the start of treatment.** For ongoing treatment, applications must be received no later than three weeks following initial treatment. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

Applicants are encouraged to submit their application as early as possible prior to scheduled treatment. The CVMF recognizes that in emergency situations it may not be possible to collect all required eligibility information to submit a completed application prior to treatment. In such circumstances, veterinary practices will have to decide whether to proceed with the treatment and subsequently submit an application.

The CVMF shall have the discretion to deny any grant application it deems inappropriate or that does not maximize benefit of the financial resources of the CVMF.

**PAYMENT:** Once treatment is provided, the veterinary practice submits a detailed invoice showing required treatment and fees to the CVMF by fax or regular mail. Payment will be made directly to the veterinary practice. The CVMF will pay in full invoices that do not exceed established funding limits (see CVMF Funding Limits section above). For invoices exceeding established funding limits, the CVMF will pay the annual funding limit. The veterinary practice may make arrangements with the client for payment of any balance above the annual funding limit or write off the balance.

*Thank you for helping pets in need!*