

SAFCC FERAL SHELTER PROGRAM – January 2024

Overview:

The Feral Shelter Program was started to address the problem of homeless cats without shelter from the elements, and to provide colony feeders and anyone caring for a homeless cat sturdy, differently-sized Styrofoam shelters to fit 1-4 cats, along with straw for the best insulation. These are available at no cost, although donations are always welcome.

Q: How do I contact the program?

A: Send an email to feralshelters@sananonioferalcats.org

Please include your name, phone number and need. Your phone number is crucial, as we need to contact you to make an appointment to meet. We are a volunteer organization, so schedules need to be coordinated. Since people may not answer unfamiliar phone numbers due to spam, you'll be sent a text first with an introduction asking you to return the call. If you don't have a cell phone, please indicate that in your email. You will usually get a response the same day, depending on what time the email is received. You won't be called past 7pm unless requested.

Q: How do I get a shelter?

A: When we contact you, we'll set up a time and date to meet you at our storage facility to pick out your shelters. You can have up to 3 at a time, although we may be able to make exceptions for large colonies. The Styrofoam shelters and straw are free of charge, but donations are always welcome.

Q: Do you have rubber tote shelters?

A: Sometimes, but not often. If you're interested, we can put your name on a wait list and contact you on a first come, first served basis. Because they are harder to get and very popular, there is a minimum donation of \$20.

Q: Where is your storage area located?

A: Our storage area is in a residential area with space donated by a generous volunteer. For that reason, you will be notified of the location when the appointment date and time is made. It is located near Bandera Rd and Hwy 410 just outside the Loop. If this is too far for you, under special circumstances we might be able to meet halfway, although it's best for you to pick out your own shelters.

Q: What if I want to donate items?

A: Thank you! Styrofoam boxes need to have an **interior** measurement of at least 17 1/2" L x 14 1/2" W x 14 1/2" H. In addition, they should be in good condition and clean with any identifying address labels removed.

If donating at least 4 boxes or a special or large item, we can arrange to pick them up, but ask that you please include pictures of the items in your email so we can get a good look. There are times when things being offered aren't going to work but we might be able to suggest another option. If you are able to deliver the items to us, that's a big help.

Q: Once I know where you're located, can I drop stuff off whenever?

A: No, appointments must be made. Well-meaning people in the past have left items that were not usable in the driveway in front of our storage area. Neither the owner nor the neighbors appreciated it, and the items had to be discarded in a dumpster. Even if you've donated before, please contact us for an appointment.

Q: Once I know your phone number, can I call or text you or share your phone number with others?

A: Sorry, but the best way to reach us is by email for all requests. Unknown numbers may be deleted or not returned. Email is the best way to keep records of everything and make sure you don't get lost among personal texts.

Q: If I make a donation, can I get a receipt?

A: Absolutely!

Q: Where does all your stuff come from?

A: Primarily, donations. The majority of our Styrofoam boxes come from different vendors such as medical clinics, businesses and veterinary hospitals. We prefer these boxes because they are sturdy, thick, larger than you get in the store and are meant for industrial use. We also get donations from the public who order food through companies like Omaha Steaks and NutriSystem and want a way to recycle them. Most of our straw is provided by a SAFCC volunteer who gets bales from a farm and delivers them to us.

Q: Is Styrofoam waterproof?

A: No, Styrofoam is not waterproof. The inexpensive type that's used as coolers with very thin material wears down quickly. However, the industrial strength-type Styrofoam we are able to procure can last at least 3 years in winter weather. This comes from a feral shelter volunteer in Michigan who uses the same type boxes we do...and if it can last outside for 3 years in Michigan, it can last in Texas.

Q: Why do you ask for money if everything is donated?

A: We sometimes have to purchase straw and buy totes, when we see them on sale. A drill was purchased to help put the shelters together. As a volunteer organization, everything we do for the

community comes from donations, which helps us continue to help cats and the people who care for them.

Q: What if I have more questions?

A: Contact Program Manager Robert Breeze at email feralshelters@sanantonioferalcats.org or contact the Helpline at (210)877-9067.



