THE GRIMACE FUND
EMERGENCY VETERINARY ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The Ginger Cat Project Emergency Veterinary Assistance Fund exists to help owners of senior and medically needy companion animals manage unexpected veterinary expenses that would otherwise create a significant financial hardship.

The purpose of the Fund is to help keep beloved companion animals with their families and to support veterinary treatment when there is a reasonable expectation that the treatment will restore or maintain the animal's quality of life.

Because available funds are limited, grants are intended for situations in which financial assistance can make a meaningful difference in the animal's ability to receive appropriate medical care.

CORE GRANT CRITERIA

An application should generally meet **all three of the following core criteria** to be considered for funding:

1. ESTABLISHED, RESPONSIBLE CARE

The animal must be demonstrably well cared for and have an established relationship with the applicant.

The Grant Committee should look for evidence that:

- The animal is regarded and cared for as a companion and member of the family;
- The applicant has provided appropriate food, shelter, attention, and general care;
- The animal has received reasonable and appropriate routine veterinary care;
- The applicant has sought veterinary attention when the animal has become ill or injured;
- The animal's current medical condition is not primarily the result of ongoing neglect or failure to provide reasonable care; and
- The applicant demonstrates a genuine commitment to the animal's continued care.

Evidence of responsible care may include veterinary records, vaccination history, prior examination records, medication history, or other information provided by the applicant or veterinary provider.

The Fund is not intended to distinguish between applicants based on income, housing situation, employment status, or other personal circumstances beyond those relevant to the grant criteria.

2. FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

The veterinary expense must create a significant and unexpected financial hardship for the applicant.

The Grant Committee may consider:

- The total cost of the recommended treatment;
- The applicant's household financial circumstances;
- The applicant's ability to contribute toward the expense;
- The size of the expense relative to the applicant's available resources;
- Recent or unexpected financial hardship;
- Assistance available from other sources;
- Pet insurance reimbursement, if applicable; and
- Whether the requested grant would make treatment financially possible or substantially more manageable.

Applicants are not expected to be completely without financial resources in order to qualify.

The purpose of the Fund is to assist with a significant financial hardship, not necessarily to cover the entire cost of treatment.

The applicant's willingness and ability to contribute a reasonable amount toward the cost of care may be considered but should not, by itself, determine eligibility.

3. REASONABLE EXPECTATION OF SUCCESSFUL TREATMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE

The requested treatment must have a reasonable expectation of providing a meaningful medical benefit to the animal.

The Grant Committee should consider whether:

- The veterinary provider has identified a specific medical condition or problem;
- A reasonable treatment plan has been recommended;
- The proposed treatment is medically appropriate for the condition;
- The treatment has a reasonable likelihood of success or meaningful benefit; and
- Successful treatment is reasonably expected to restore, preserve, or substantially improve the animal's quality of life.

The Fund is intended to support treatment that provides the animal with a reasonable opportunity for continued comfort, function, and enjoyment of life.

The Fund is not intended to prolong suffering when available treatment is unlikely to provide a meaningful improvement in quality of life.

The Grant Committee should rely primarily on information provided by the treating veterinary professional when evaluating the medical aspects of an application.

The Grant Committee is not expected to independently diagnose an animal, prescribe treatment, or substitute its judgment for that of the treating veterinarian.

SENIOR OR MEDICALLY NEEDY ANIMALS

The Emergency Veterinary Assistance Fund is intended primarily to assist senior and medically needy companion animals.

For purposes of this program, a senior animal may be defined according to species, breed, size, or other reasonable veterinary considerations established by The Ginger Cat Project.

An animal that does not meet the organization's standard definition of "senior" may nevertheless qualify if the animal has significant medical needs or other circumstances consistent with the purpose of the Fund.

ELIGIBLE MEDICAL EXPENSES

Subject to available funds, eligible expenses may include:

- Emergency veterinary examinations;
- Diagnostic testing;
- Surgery;
- Hospitalization;
- Medications;
- Treatment of acute illness or injury;
- Cancer treatment;
- Treatment of significant chronic conditions;
- Necessary follow-up care; and
- Other medically necessary veterinary services approved by the Grant Committee.

The Grant Committee may establish reasonable limits on the amount awarded for any individual application.

EXPENSES GENERALLY NOT COVERED

The Fund generally will not cover:

- Routine wellness care;
- Routine vaccinations;
- Routine grooming;
- Elective procedures;

- Breeding-related expenses;
- Expenses unrelated to the qualifying medical condition;
- Expenses for which the applicant has already received full reimbursement;
- Veterinary expenses incurred before the applicant could reasonably have sought assistance, unless specifically approved by the Grant Committee; or
- Treatment that the Grant Committee determines does not have a reasonable expectation of providing meaningful benefit to the animal.

Exceptions may be made when consistent with the purpose of the Fund.

EVIDENCE OF RESPONSIBLE CARE

The organization recognizes that applicants may have different financial circumstances and that the absence of a particular document does not necessarily indicate inadequate care.

The Grant Committee may consider the totality of the circumstances, including:

- Length of time the applicant has cared for the animal;
- Veterinary history;
- Regularity of veterinary examinations;
- Preventive care;
- Vaccination history where appropriate;
- Previous treatment of medical conditions;
- Compliance with veterinary recommendations;
- Current medications and management of chronic conditions;
- The applicant's description of the animal's life and care; and
- Information provided by the treating veterinary provider.

A lack of perfect veterinary history should not automatically disqualify an otherwise appropriate applicant.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Because the Fund exists to support meaningful veterinary care rather than simply extend an animal's life, quality of life should be an important consideration.

When evaluating a treatment plan, the Grant Committee may consider whether successful treatment is reasonably expected to allow the animal to:

- Experience comfort with manageable pain;
- Eat and drink adequately;
- Move or function at a reasonable level for the animal's age and condition;

- Interact with the people or animals that are important to them;
- Participate in activities they normally enjoy;
- Maintain appropriate hygiene and basic bodily functions; and
- Experience more good days than bad days.

The Grant Committee recognizes that quality of life is individual to each animal and that senior or medically needy animals may have limitations that are appropriate to their age or condition.

The goal is not to restore an animal to its condition as a young, healthy animal, but to determine whether treatment has a reasonable expectation of restoring a **comfortable and meaningful quality of life appropriate to that animal.**

PRIORITY CONSIDERATIONS

When multiple eligible applications are received and/or available funds are limited, the Grant Committee may give priority consideration to applications involving:

- An urgent or time-sensitive medical condition;
- A significant financial hardship;
- A treatment plan with a reasonable likelihood of restoring quality of life;
- A situation in which the grant would make the difference between treatment being possible or not possible;
- A senior or medically needy animal that otherwise meets the program criteria;
- An applicant who has demonstrated responsible care for the animal; and
- A documented veterinary expense that is consistent with the purpose of the Fund.

These considerations are not intended to create a ranking system. They are intended to help the Committee make consistent decisions when resources are limited.

VETERINARY VERIFICATION

The Ginger Cat Project may contact the treating veterinary provider to verify information relevant to the grant application, including:

- The animal's medical condition;
- Recommended treatment;
- Estimated or actual cost;
- Urgency of treatment;
- Expected outcome; and
- Other information reasonably necessary to evaluate the application.

The organization should request only information necessary to administer the grant program.

GRANT AMOUNT

The Grant Committee may approve:

- The full amount requested;
- A portion of the amount requested; or
- No grant.

The maximum grant amount established by the Board is **$1,000.00** per application.

The Board may establish additional limits for individual applicants, households, or calendar years.

A grant does not need to cover the applicant's entire veterinary expense.

PAYMENT OF GRANTS

Whenever practical, grant payments should be made directly to the veterinary provider.

Payment to the applicant may be permitted when direct payment is impractical and the Grant Committee determines that payment to the applicant is appropriate.

The organization should maintain appropriate documentation of all grant payments.

APPLICATIONS INVOLVING END-OF-LIFE CARE

The Fund is primarily intended to support treatment that has a reasonable expectation of restoring or maintaining quality of life.

However, the organization recognizes that end-of-life circumstances can be complex.

Emergency assistance may be considered for medically necessary veterinary evaluation, pain management, stabilization, or humane euthanasia when such care is appropriate to prevent suffering.

The Grant Committee should not approve treatment solely for the purpose of prolonging an animal's life when the treating veterinarian indicates that meaningful quality of life cannot reasonably be restored or maintained.

APPLICATIONS INVOLVING PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

A pre-existing medical condition does not automatically disqualify an applicant.

The Committee should consider whether the current veterinary expense represents a new, acute, or unexpected medical need and whether the requested treatment has a reasonable expectation of providing meaningful benefit.

The applicant's history of appropriately managing the pre-existing condition should also be considered when evaluating responsible care.

MISREPRESENTATION OR FRAUD

An applicant who knowingly provides materially false or misleading information may be denied assistance.

If assistance has already been provided based upon materially false information, The Ginger Cat Project may require repayment of improperly obtained funds.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Any individual participating in the review or approval of a grant who has a personal, family, financial, or other material interest in an application must disclose the conflict and refrain from participating in the decision in accordance with the organization's Conflict of Interest Policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information submitted through the grant program should be treated as confidential.

Application information should be accessible only to individuals who require access for purposes of reviewing, administering, documenting, or legally complying with the grant program.

The organization should not publicly identify an applicant or disclose personal financial information without the applicant's permission, except where disclosure is legally required.

APPLICANT PUBLICITY

Applicants may be invited to voluntarily authorize The Ginger Cat Project to share the pet's name, photographs, and information about the assistance provided for fundraising, educational, or promotional purposes.

Such authorization must be separate from the grant decision.

An applicant's decision to permit or decline publicity will have **no effect on eligibility for or receipt of a grant.**

COMMITTEE DISCRETION

The Grant Committee should apply these criteria consistently while recognizing that each animal and family situation is unique.

Meeting the general criteria does not guarantee an award.

The Committee may request additional information when necessary to make a fair determination and may consider unusual circumstances when doing so is consistent with the mission and purpose of the Fund.

POLICY ADMINISTRATION

The Board of Directors should periodically review this policy to ensure that it remains consistent with:

- The mission of The Ginger Cat Project;
- The purpose of The Grimace Fund;
- Available funding;
- Experience administering the program; and
- Applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

The Board may amend this policy at any time.