



For Release

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Gigi's Launches \$2M National Grant Program to Expand Access to Care for Shelter Dogs

Initiative will fund 24 transport vans for animal welfare organizations across the nation

COLUMBUS, OHIO — Gigi's today announced the launch of the [Gigi's Canine Transport Van Grant Program](#), a national initiative designed to expand access to veterinary care and adoption pathways for shelter dogs nationwide.

Funded through a \$2 million donation from [The Stanton Foundation](#), the program will award \$80,000 grants to animal welfare organizations to fund dog rescue transport vans—critical infrastructure that enables dogs to reach the care they need.

Over the next two years, Gigi's will fund 24 transport vans, with grants awarded quarterly.

"Dogs don't lack homes—they lack access to care and pathways to adopters," said **Justin McKinniss, Executive Director of Gigi's**. "Transport is one of the biggest barriers preventing dogs from reaching veterinary and behavior services in communities where adoption is in demand. This program is designed to close that gap."

From Local Operations to National Impact

Based in Canal Winchester, Gigi's has built its model around expanding access to care for shelter dogs—recognizing that outcomes are often limited by a lack of resources.

Today, Gigi's operates a fleet of three transport vans, driving more than 41,000 miles annually across Ohio to move over 1,400 dogs each year from underserved rural, Appalachian shelters into veterinary care, adoption pathways, and placement partners across the Columbus community.

"This program is personal for us," said McKinniss. "We've seen firsthand how access to transport changes outcomes for dogs in rural shelters. Now, we're able to extend that impact to organizations across the country."

Gigi's was selected to lead and expand this initiative following the conclusion of The Stanton Foundation's canine van transport grant program, which it previously piloted.

Raising the Standard for Transport

In addition to funding, grant recipients will be required to implement Gigi's science-backed research, G.E.T. Protocol™, to improve safety, reduce stress, and prevent disease.

These protocols focus on reducing short & long-term stress through:

- Environmental control with temperature and sound
- Safe crate spacing and handling practices
- Behavior supplementation & medication
- Sanitizable interiors to limit disease transmission

"When transport is stressful or poorly managed, it can set dogs back before they ever reach care," said **Dr. Meghan Herron, DACVB, Gigi's Sr. Director of Behavior, Research and Education**. "By combining



funding with structured protocols, we're helping ensure dogs arrive stable, safe, and better positioned for treatment and placement—raising the standard for transport nationwide.”

Who Can Apply

The program prioritizes animal welfare organizations that:

- Operate as 501(c)(3) or municipal shelters
- Maintain at least a 50% canine focus
- Serve rural or under-resourced regions
- Demonstrate financial need and existing transport operations

Each grant supports the purchase of a transport van, including required HVAC systems and custom branding.

Applications are now open and organizations can learn more on gigis.org/transport-van-grants.

About Gigi's

[Gigi's](https://gigis.org) is a regional access-to-care organization getting homeless dogs from rural Appalachian Ohio shelters into homes faster and healthier. Utilizing protocols backed by our own research, we provide rural shelters with transport, veterinary and behavior services and adoption from our campus in Columbus, Ohio. Because of our founding donors' gift, 100% of every donation fuels the work creating life-saving impact. Since 2018, Gigi's has served more than 20,000 dogs. Learn more about how Gigi's is *improving the lives of shelter dogs™* at gigis.org, and follow @gigisfordogs on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/gigisfordogs), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/gigisfordogs), and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/gigisfordogs).

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