

Since its founding in 1990, Alley Cat Allies has been contacted by staff, faculty, and students of campuses around the country for support in caring for cats on their grounds. As part of Alley Cat Allies' longstanding goal of promoting humane care for outdoor cats, we created a program just for people helping cats who have made their home on or near educational institutions. Our resources used for cats in other settings can easily be applied to cats living on and around campuses. To learn more visit [www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org).

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Photos: Troy Snow



# Cats on Campus

## A Trap-Neuter-Return Program for Feral Cats



Amid the students, professors, and college administrators, there are other residents on campus—feral cats. You may not even notice them at first. They typically hide during the day and come out at night, and they are generally leery of humans.

**Feral cats are members of the domestic cat species, but are not socialized to humans and are therefore not adoptable. Feral cats have been living outdoors in close proximity to humans for over 10,000 years. They live in groups called colonies and have strong social bonds with their family members.**

With proper resources and information, caring individuals can learn how to trap feral cats for neutering. Trap-Neuter-Return, also referred to as TNR, stabilizes colonies—no new kittens. It also improves cats' lives: they are healthier and do not experience the strains of mating or pregnancy.

Uninformed administrators may attempt to trap and remove the cats—an approach ending in the cats being taken to a shelter, where they are likely to be killed. Removing cats from an area creates a vacuum, which more cats move into and breed to fill.

**Trap-Neuter-Return is an effective and humane way to curb the growth of feral cat colonies. Cats are humanely trapped and taken to a veterinarian, where they are neutered and vaccinated. Cats who are friendly toward humans and kittens are put up for adoption. Feral cats are eartipped (while under anesthesia, the tip of their left ear is clipped) and then returned to their original colony site. Their population gradually reduces over time.**

### Your campus wants compassionate solutions.

An overwhelming majority of Americans—81%—believe it is more humane to leave a stray cat outside to live out her life than have her caught and killed, according to a national survey conducted by Harris Interactive for Alley Cat Allies. Trap-Neuter-Return programs foster compassion and cooperation in campus communities because they are ethical and humane programs for cats.

### A Cats on Campus program can help.

Trap-Neuter-Return programs have been successfully implemented on campuses across the nation for the past two decades, including Stanford University, Auburn University, the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Arizona State University, Texas A&M at College Station, North Carolina State, and many more.



Your educational institution is not the first to think about a program for feral cats. You can get to the root of the issue—humanely and effectively—using the hands-on, real-world experience of other campuses that have gone before you.

Alley Cat Allies has the connections and the information to help through our Cats on Campus program.

It is not uncommon for feral cat colonies to reside on campuses. A significant number of Cats on Campus groups have formed to protect and care for these cats. These groups speak on the cats' behalf to administrators and conduct Trap-Neuter-Return as well as colony management.

Alley Cat Allies can put you in touch with groups that have implemented Trap-Neuter-Return programs at educational institutions. And, we can provide you with information on the steps you need to take for feral and stray cat populations.



## Steps to Implementing a Cats on Campus Program

Follow these steps to getting your Cats on Campus program off the ground. Find more information about starting an organization to help cats at [www.alleycat.org/StartingAnOrg](http://www.alleycat.org/StartingAnOrg).

### 1. Gather Information.

Identify all cats on campus, as well as the individuals currently caring for the cats. Track where the cats are eating and living, and how many cats are in each colony. Determine what, if anything, your school's administration is doing or thinking about doing for or about the cats. Research what other campuses around the country have done to get their programs off the ground by joining our listserv and reading through the archive. Find out more at [www.alleycat.org/CampusCats](http://www.alleycat.org/CampusCats).

### 2. Organize volunteers.

Involve students, professors, neighboring residents, rescue groups, and local humane societies in the process. People want to be part of a humane program as long as they are given guidance and structure. A network of volunteers helps to ensure that your program will be sustainable after you leave.

### 3. Contact your school's administration.

If your campus is trapping and removing cats, ask your school's administration or physical plant to discontinue and adopt a Trap-Neuter-Return program. Over 70% of cats who enter the sheltering system are killed, and if cats are being trapped and removed from campus, they are almost certainly among those numbers. Even if there is no program in place, now is the time to bring the administration on board. Use the information in this brochure and online at [www.alleycat.org/CampusCats](http://www.alleycat.org/CampusCats), as well as your knowledge about other groups and their successes from the listserv, to educate yourself and others about feral cats. The administration should know about the humane programs that are available. It can offer legitimacy to your organization, and may be able to provide monetary support.

### 4. Coordinate a campus Trap-Neuter-Return plan.

Use your volunteer base to set up controlled feeding stations, trap the cats, transport them to the veterinarian for sterilization, and care for them until they can be returned to their outdoor home. Learn more at [www.alleycat.org/Trap-Neuter-Return](http://www.alleycat.org/Trap-Neuter-Return).

### 5. Work with local veterinarians.

To find the right veterinarian, contact those in your area who belong to Alley Cat Allies' Feral Friends Network. Access a list of local Feral Friends at [www.alleycat.org/Response](http://www.alleycat.org/Response). Ask local veterinarians to donate or discount their services. If one exists, contact your university's veterinary school for assistance—and provide veterinary students with invaluable hands-on experience.

### 6. Organize colony care.

Work with volunteers to provide food and water regularly, build shelters, and monitor the cats. As caregivers, your group can provide something else that is critical: giving the cats a voice by educating others on campus. Education and in some cases, mediation, are essential aspects of Trap-Neuter-Return and colony care. You can find colony care guidelines at [www.alleycat.org/ColonyCare](http://www.alleycat.org/ColonyCare).

### 7. Set up a program for socialized cats and pet cats.

Encourage students who are ready for the responsibility of a pet to foster or adopt friendly cats and kittens from the Trap-Neuter-Return program. Also, share low-cost spay/neuter resources with them for their owned cats.



**Network with other Cats on Campus groups**

**Join Alley Cat Allies' Cats on Campus listserv. Share advice and questions with faculty, students, and volunteers helping cats on campuses nationwide. Learn more at [www.alleycat.org/CampusCats](http://www.alleycat.org/CampusCats).**

