



26 read:

27 943.69 Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program.—

28 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.—The Legislature finds that:

29 (a) Law enforcement dogs are an integral part of many law  
 30 enforcement efforts statewide, including the apprehension of  
 31 suspects through tracking and searching, evidence location, drug  
 32 and bomb detection, and search and rescue operations.

33 (b) Law enforcement agencies agree that the use of law  
 34 enforcement dogs is an extremely cost-effective means of crime  
 35 control and that these dogs possess skills and abilities that  
 36 frequently exceed those of existing technology.

37 (c) The service of law enforcement dogs is often dangerous  
 38 and can expose them to injury at a rate higher than that of  
 39 nonservice dogs.

40 (d) Law enforcement dogs provide significant contributions  
 41 to the residents of this state.

42 (2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

43 (a) "Law enforcement agency" means a lawfully established  
 44 state or local public agency having primary responsibility for  
 45 the prevention and detection of crime or the enforcement of  
 46 penal, traffic, highway, regulatory, game, immigration, postal,  
 47 customs, or controlled substance laws.

48 (b) "Retired law enforcement dog" means a dog that was  
 49 previously in the service of or employed by a law enforcement  
 50 agency in this state for the principal purpose of aiding in the

51 detection of criminal activity, enforcement of laws, or  
 52 apprehension of offenders and that received certification in  
 53 obedience and apprehension work from a certifying organization,  
 54 such as the National Police Canine Association, Inc., or other  
 55 certifying organization.

56 (c) "Veterinarian" has the same meaning as in s. 474.202.

57 (d) "Veterinary care" means the practice, by a  
 58 veterinarian, of veterinary medicine as defined in s. 474.202.  
 59 The term includes annual wellness examinations, vaccinations,  
 60 internal and external parasite prevention treatments, testing  
 61 and treatment of illnesses and diseases, medications, emergency  
 62 care and surgeries, veterinary oncology or other specialty care,  
 63 euthanasia, and cremation.

64 (3) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Care for Retired Law  
 65 Enforcement Dogs Program is created within the department to  
 66 provide a stable funding source for the veterinary care for  
 67 retired law enforcement dogs.

68 (4) ADMINISTRATION.—The department shall contract with a  
 69 nonprofit corporation organized under chapter 617 to administer  
 70 and manage the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program.  
 71 Notwithstanding chapter 287, the department shall select the  
 72 nonprofit corporation through a competitive grant award process.  
 73 The nonprofit corporation must meet all of the following  
 74 criteria:

75 (a) Be dedicated to the protection or care of retired law

76 enforcement dogs.

77 (b) Be exempt from taxation under s. 501(a) of the  
 78 Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in s.  
 79 501(c)(3) of that code.

80 (c) Have maintained such tax-exempt status for at least 5  
 81 years.

82 (d) Agree to be subject to review and audit at the  
 83 discretion of the Auditor General in order to ensure accurate  
 84 accounting and disbursement of state funds.

85 (e) Demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently  
 86 disseminate information and to assist former handlers and  
 87 adopters of retired law enforcement dogs in complying with this  
 88 section.

89 (5) FUNDING.—

90 (a) The nonprofit corporation shall be the disbursing  
 91 authority for funds the Legislature appropriates to the  
 92 department for the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs  
 93 Program. These funds must be disbursed to the former handler or  
 94 the adopter of a retired law enforcement dog that served for 5  
 95 years or more as a law enforcement dog upon receipt of:

96 1. Valid documentation from the law enforcement agency  
 97 from which the dog retired which verifies that the dog was in  
 98 the service of or employed by that agency; and

99 a. That the dog served 5 years or more with that agency;

100 or

101 b. Documentation showing that the dog served a total of 5  
102 years or more with two or more law enforcement agencies; and

103 2. A valid invoice from a veterinarian for veterinary care  
104 provided in this state to a retired law enforcement dog and  
105 documentation establishing payment of the invoice by the former  
106 handler or the adopter of the retired law enforcement dog.

107 (b) Annual disbursements to a former handler or an adopter  
108 to reimburse him or her for the cost of the retired law  
109 enforcement dog's veterinary care may not exceed \$1,500 per dog.  
110 A former handler or an adopter of a retired law enforcement dog  
111 may not accumulate unused funds from a current year for use in a  
112 future year.

113 (c) A former handler or an adopter of a retired law  
114 enforcement dog who seeks reimbursement for veterinary care may  
115 not receive reimbursement if funds appropriated for the Care for  
116 Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program are depleted in the year  
117 for which the reimbursement is sought.

118 (6) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—The department shall pay to  
119 the nonprofit corporation, and the nonprofit corporation may  
120 use, up to 10 percent of appropriated funds for its  
121 administrative expenses, including salaries and benefits.

122 (7) RULEMAKING.—The department shall adopt rules to  
123 implement this section.

124 Section 3. For the 2022-2023 fiscal year, and each fiscal  
125 year thereafter, the sum of \$300,000 in recurring funds is

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126 | appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of  
127 | Law Enforcement for the purpose of implementing and  
128 | administering the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program.

129 | Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.