



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 law enforcement dogs possess skills and  
36 abilities that 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. The term also includes a  
48 correctional facility, as defined in s. 944.242(1).

49 (b) "Retired law enforcement dog" means a dog that was  
50 previously in the service of or employed by a law enforcement

51 agency in this state for the principal purpose of aiding in the  
52 detection of criminal activity, operation of a correctional  
53 facility, enforcement of laws, or apprehension of offenders and  
54 that received certification in obedience and apprehension work  
55 from a certifying organization, such as the National Police  
56 Canine Association, Inc., or other certifying organization.

57 (c) "Veterinarian" has the same meaning as provided in s.  
58 474.202.

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

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

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

76 criteria:

77 (a) Be dedicated to the protection or care of retired law  
 78 enforcement dogs.

79 (b) Be exempt from taxation under s. 501(a) of the  
 80 Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in s.  
 81 501(c)(3) of that code.

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

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

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

91 (5) FUNDING.—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

124 (7) RULEMAKING.—The department shall adopt rules to  
 125 implement this section.

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126           Section 3. Effective July 1, 2022, for the 2022-2023  
127 fiscal year, the sum of \$300,000 in recurring funds is  
128 appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of  
129 Law Enforcement for the purpose of implementing and  
130 administering the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program.

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