

**§ 17F-21. Disposition of retired service animals.**

(a) Upon determination that any service animal is no longer fit or needed for public service, the State or unit of local government may transfer ownership of the animal at a price determined by the State or unit of local government and upon any other terms and conditions as the State or unit of local government deems appropriate, to any of the following individuals, if that individual agrees to accept ownership, care, and custody of the service animal:

- (1) The officer or employee who had normal custody and control of the service animal during the service animal's public service to the State or unit of local government.
- (2) A surviving spouse or, if unsurvived by a spouse, surviving children of the officer or employee killed in the line of duty who had normal custody and control of the service animal during the service animal's public service to the State or unit of local government.
- (3) An organization or program dedicated to the assistance or support of service animals retired from public service.

(b) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

- (1) Service animal. – Any horse, dog, or other animal owned by the State or a unit of local government that performs law enforcement, public safety, or emergency service functions.
- (2) Unit of local government. – As defined in G.S. 159-7(b). (2016-101, s. 1; recodified from N.C. Gen. Stat. 20-187.4 by 2023-46, s. 5.)