

The Stryker K-9 Care Fund – Program Overview

Background:

The Stryker K-9 Care Fund being established by the Saskatchewan SPCA is one of the very first programs in Canada to provide owners with assistance for the cost of routine and emergency veterinary care for retired police dogs.

Police dogs play a valuable role in Canadian law enforcement, protecting both police officers and the community. Often the K-9 unit is the first to respond to an emergency situation. The dogs are trained to handle a variety of important policing tasks, including tracking, person search, evidence search and criminal apprehension.

As well, police dogs and their handlers are great ambassadors for law enforcement services, visiting schools and doing demonstrations at community events.

The working career of a police dog is generally six to eight years. Police dogs and their handlers work year-round, in all kinds of weather. The work of a police dog is physically demanding and can be dangerous; dogs have been severely injured or killed in the line of duty.

Each police dog is paired exclusively with one handler, a regular member of the police force who has volunteered to be a part of the canine unit. While on the job, the dog and handler work together as a close-knit team; when off-duty, the dog lives with the handler.

After retirement, most police dogs stay with their handler. If the handler is unable to keep the retired dog, a suitable new home is found.

Once the police dog has retired, the handler/owner is responsible for all costs associated with the dog, including veterinary care. The dogs may suffer from a variety of medical problems and orthopedic conditions relating to their police work.

Purpose:

To contribute to the quality of life of retired police dogs by assisting owners with the costs of routine and emergency veterinary care for these animals.

Eligibility:

The Stryker K-9 Care Fund offers financial assistance for the routine and emergency veterinary care of retired police dogs. The program applies to police dogs that have retired from active service with the RCMP or a municipal police force in Saskatchewan.

Each dog is eligible to receive up to \$1,000 per year from the Stryker K-9 Care Fund.

Applications for funding are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. A total of 10 grants for up to \$1,000 each will be available in the first year of the program (April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016). Applications for funding must be made annually.

Eligible Expenses:

Funding from the program may be used to help with costs including but not limited to the following:

- A complete yearly physical, including age appropriate blood work
- Medication and monitoring
- Dietary supplements (when recommended by a veterinarian)
- Diagnostics
- Medically necessary surgeries
- Euthanasia
- Cremation

The program does not cover the cost of food or cosmetic surgeries such as tail docking, ear cropping or devocalization.

Application Process:

To be considered for funding under the program, an application must be submitted for each dog. Each year, dogs will be chosen to receive funding toward the cost of eligible medical procedures, medication and services for the dog.

Submission of an application does not guarantee that funding will be provided. Applications will be reviewed and approved on a first-come, first-served basis.

Application forms are available on the Saskatchewan SPCA website and through K-9 units in the Saskatchewan RCMP and municipal police services.

The successful applicants will be notified and sent an expense form that must be submitted to the Saskatchewan SPCA along with:

- paid invoices relating to the eligible expenses; and
- veterinary record/records relating to the eligible expenses.

Expense forms for the 2015/2016 program must be submitted by **March 31, 2016**. The Saskatchewan SPCA will issue a cheque within 60 days of receiving the expense form along with all required invoices and records.

Funding:

The Saskatchewan SPCA has committed \$10,000 for the first year of operation of the program (April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016). The Saskatchewan SPCA will raise designated funds for the continued operation of the program.

Initially 10 dogs will be eligible for funding to a maximum of \$1,000 each. In future, as funds permit, consideration will be given to increasing the amount of the annual grants and/or increasing the number of grants given.

For more information on the Stryker K-9 Care Fund, please call the Saskatchewan SPCA: 1.877.382.7722 or email info@sspca.ca