



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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MUNICIPAL ANIMAL SHELTERS AND THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS

By: Janet L. Kaminski Leduc, Senior Legislative Attorney

You asked if southeastern Connecticut municipalities allow residents to volunteer at municipal animal shelters.

SUMMARY

There is no relevant state law that addresses municipalities' use of volunteers at municipal animal shelters. This is a local issue. We surveyed 12 southeastern Connecticut municipalities to determine whether they have policies governing the issue: Griswold, Groton, Ledyard, Lisbon, Montville, New London, North Stonington, Norwich, Preston, Stonington, Voluntown, and Waterford. Of these 12, three did not respond to our inquiry (Griswold, Lisbon, and New London).

Of the nine municipalities that responded, only Waterford allows volunteers to work at the local animal shelter. Volunteers must be at least 18 years old and sign a liability waiver form acknowledging that they will not sue the town in case of injury. Of the other eight municipalities, seven cited liability concerns for not allowing residents to volunteer; North Stonington indicated that it does not accept volunteers because it does not have a need for them.

Table 1 lists the eight municipalities that do not use volunteers, the reasons cited, and information source.

Table 1: Reasons Municipal Animal Shelters Do Not Use Volunteers

Municipality	Reasons for Not Allowing Volunteers	Source
Groton	(1) Liability concerns (2) Some aggressive animals are euthanized, which could be hard on volunteers.	Donna Duso, Animal Control Officer (ACO)
Ledyard	Liability (Occasionally uses volunteers for projects outside of the shelter, such as putting up fencing.)	Town website at http://www.town.ledyard.ct.us/FAQ.aspx?QID=67
Montville	Liability	Chris Martel, ACO
North Stonington	Does not need assistance. The shelter holds up to four dogs at any time, which is easily maintained by the animal control staff.	Matthew Roohr, ACO
Norwich	Liability	Police Chief Fusaro's office
Preston	Liability (Allowed the Boy Scouts to perform work related to the shelter, but the boys were not allowed to work with the animals.)	Patty Daniels, ACO
Stonington	Liability	Rae-Jean Davis, ACO
Voluntown	Liability	Flo Harmon, ACO

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