
My Dog Is My Best Friend. Can I Create a Trust for a Pet?

My sister recently rescued an adult dog from a shelter. Unfortunately, many shelter dogs are not as lucky. The law only treats pets as personal property, nearly the same as a car or piece of furniture. Anyone who owns a pet knows a pet is more than property, it is a family member. Still, if no one agrees to care for your pet, it will end up in a shelter. Shelters are not required to keep animals, and many shelters are overfilled. If the shelter cannot find a home for the pet, it may end up being euthanized.

What would happen to your pets in your absence? If you become disabled or pass away, will your treasured pet have a place to go? A person can prevent a pet from becoming homeless or euthanized by setting up a Pet Trust.

A Pet Trust can provide necessary funding to support your pet for the rest of its life and provide incentive for a caretaker to provide a home for your pet if the need arises. The Pet Trust can be designed to fund only in the event of your incapacity or death. Upon your pet's passing, you can direct the remaining trust assets to a family member, friend or favorite charity.

By Jack Reardon, J.D., LL.M.

About the author: Attorney Reardon is a shareholder of the New London firm, Cipparone & Zaccaro, P.C. He holds a doctorate of law as well as a Master of Laws in Estate Planning and Elder Law.

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