

Excerpt from the Connecticut Humane Society's Grey Muzzle grant application

They say if it's not broken, don't fix it. But if it is, and you can make it better, then that's the route you take. That's part of the mission at the **Connecticut Humane Society (CHS)**—even when healing an ill, injured, or old pet takes weeks or months or more.

Providing expert, comprehensive reparative veterinary services can be prioritized today. One reason for the available time and resources? Word on the street—and verified through hard data—is that New England isn't overloaded with pets. The region doesn't have enough adoptable pets for every individual or family who wants to rescue one. It's heard anecdotally through conversations with other animal welfare partners, through presentations and national and regional animal-related conferences, or if someone is looking to adopt a pet in New England...especially if they leave empty-handed.

Organic, through-the-door intake of pets is decreasing (vs. transport of pets from higher volume shelters in other parts of the country). In Connecticut, the numbers speak for themselves—the State Department of Animal Control shows a fivefold decrease in impoundments when compiling the data from Connecticut's 169 municipalities. At CHS, similar, just-as-dramatic declines are occurring: Owner surrendered pets have reduced by over 30%.

In a nutshell, emptier shelters have stemmed from the widespread success of spay/neuter initiatives and the evolving role of pets as family members. And where local shelters were previously too overwhelmed by the volume of animals coming in, they are now in the position to save pets who previously would not have been able to be cared for—the oldest, the sickest, and a combination thereof.

CHS is unique among other private animal shelters and rescues in Connecticut in that it has a multifaceted, full-time veterinary team on staff, along with medical equipment, surgical suites, and shelter space in each of its three locations (Waterford, Newington and Westport). Having these resources allows CHS to take on cases that other Connecticut shelters do not have the capacity for.

With limited financial and medical resources, municipal animal control departments are rarely able to provide routine preventative care (vaccinations and spay/neuter), never mind treatment for medical conditions such as dental disease, injury, or illness. The State of Connecticut's ongoing dire fiscal crisis and its impact on town budgets only makes municipal animal control's capacity all the more limited. Animal control officers (ACOs) work regularly with CHS as well as other private rescues around the state to find pets homes. But when the most vulnerable pets—senior dogs—come along, there are few equipped to take on their medical needs. And while some ACOs or rescues can take on a case here or there, it is at a cost that threatens their ability to help the next pet who comes through their doors with a serious medical need. An unaddressed medical issue can prolong a pet's suffering, lead to more severe conditions, and/or deter a potential adoptive family due to the upfront cost.

CHS seeks the Grey Muzzle Organization's (GMO) partnership to advance the important and worthwhile effort of treating Connecticut's most at-risk companion animals: senior dogs in the care of municipal animal control and/or senior dogs pulled from animal control by other private rescues.