§ 219-l. Authorization to adopt service award programs. 1. No political subdivision shall be required to adopt a service award program. Any service award program adopted pursuant to this section shall be governed by the provisions of this article.

2. A political subdivision may adopt a service award program for the volunteer ambulance workers of ambulance companies which are either:

(a) a municipal ambulance service of the political subdivision; or

(b) a voluntary ambulance service which provides service to the political subdivision under contract with the governing board thereof and has its principal headquarters in the political subdivision.

3. The governing board of a political subdivision which intends to adopt a service award program shall engage the services of the program actuary designated by the comptroller for the purpose of determining the estimated annual cost of the program. The program actuary shall determine estimated annual cost of the program on the basis of an interest rate, mortality tables and other appropriate assumptions and methods selected by the actuary. The cost of obtaining such estimate shall be a charge against the political subdivision, provided, that if the political subdivision is an ambulance district or a fire protection district, the town in which the district is located may temporarily advance moneys from its general fund to pay for the services of the actuary and the district shall reimburse the town with interest from moneys raised for that purpose in the district's next succeeding fiscal year.

4. Following such determination of the estimated annual cost of a service award program, the program may be adopted only by resolution of the governing board of a political subdivision receiving the affirmative vote of at least sixty percent of the governing board and the approval of a proposition authorizing the adoption of the program at a referendum of the electors of the political subdivision.

5. The resolution authorizing adoption of a service award program shall state:

(a) the name of each volunteer ambulance company having volunteer

ambulance workers who are potential participants in the program;

(b) the activities for which points shall be granted toward a year of ambulance service;

(c) the amount of the benefit provided under the program;

(d) whether the program provides credit for years of ambulance service rendered by a participant during the five calendar years immediately preceding the adoption of the program;

(e) in the case of a service award program which provides credit for years of ambulance service rendered by a participant during the five calendar years immediately preceding the adoption of the program, the timing and method of financing the cost of providing such credit;

(f) the date as of which the program shall take effect;

(g) in the case of a service award program to take effect on a day other than the first day of January, whether points toward a year of ambulance service shall be granted for activities performed prior to the effective date of the program and on or after the immediately preceding first day of January; and

(h) the date on which the proposition authorizing the adoption of the program shall be submitted to referendum; and

(i) entitlement age- the age at which volunteers are eligible to begin receiving service awards.

6. The proposition authorizing adoption of the service award program shall be submitted to referendum not less than thirty days and not more than ninety days after the governing board votes to authorize the adoption of the program. Notice of the referendum shall be published at least once, not less than fourteen days prior to the date of the referendum, in the official newspaper of the political subdivision or, if the political subdivision does not have an official newspaper, in one or more newspapers having general circulation in the political subdivision. The referendum shall be conducted and the cost thereof charged in the same manner as other referenda held by the political subdivision.

7. The proposition shall state:

(a) the estimated annual cost of the service award program;

(b) the portion of the estimated annual cost of the program, if any,

to be paid by one or more other political subdivisions;

(c) the estimated annual cost per participant;

(d) the estimated annual administration fee;

(e) whether the program provides credit for years of ambulance service rendered by a participant during the five calendar years immediately preceding the adoption of the program and the estimated cost of providing such credit; and

(f) in the case of a service award program to take effect on a day other than the first day of January, whether points toward a year of ambulance service shall be granted for activities performed prior to the effective date of the program and on or after the immediately preceding first day of January.

8. Upon approval of the proposition, the service award program shall be deemed adopted by the political subdivision in accordance with the terms of the resolution adopted by the governing board.

9. (a) Once a service award program has been adopted, participation therein by the sponsor may be terminated, or the benefits under the program may be changed, or the program may be amended to provide credit for years of ambulance service rendered by a participant during the five calendar years immediately preceding the adoption of the program, by resolution of the governing board of the sponsor receiving the affirmative vote of at least sixty percent of the governing board and the approval of a proposition at a referendum of the electors of the sponsor.

(b) The activities for which points shall be granted toward a year of ambulance service may be changed by resolution adopted by the affirmative vote of at least sixty percent of the governing board of the sponsor without referendum; provided, that, consistent with the provisions of subdivision three of section two hundred nineteen-m of this article, if the effect of the amendment is to increase the number of points granted for the performance of the activity, decrease the amount of an activity required to earn the points granted for the performance of the activity, or both, such amendment shall be subject to a mandatory referendum. Any amendment to a service award program shall only take effect as of the first of January next succeeding completion

of the proceedings required for adoption of the amendment and shall only apply prospectively.

(c) The sponsor's participation in a service award program adopted for the volunteer ambulance workers of one or more ambulance companies described in paragraph (b) of subdivision two of this section shall be suspended to the extent that service credit shall not be granted for activities performed by the volunteer ambulance workers of any such ambulance company during any period in which the company ceases to provide service to the sponsor under contract with the governing board thereof.