



For Immediate Release
March 6, 2024

2024 USDA Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Assistance Applications Open

AUSTIN, TX – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is now accepting Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) applications for the five situations in Texas designated as having veterinary shortages. These areas include Coke, Concho, Cottle, Dimmit, Foard, Freestone, Hardeman, Kinney, Knox, Limestone, Maverick, Menard, Navarro, Nolan, Real, Runnels, Taylor, Uvalde, Wilbarger, and Zavala Counties.

This federal grant program incentivizes large animal veterinarians to practice in areas of the state where veterinarian assistance is needed most. Providing financial relief and rewards in veterinary shortage areas can directly benefit the food animal and animal agriculture industry locally and beyond. The USDA's VMLRP provides opportunities for rural areas to be awarded up to \$200,000 for veterinarians and clinics in specific shortage areas. The VMLRP may award veterinarians up to \$75,000 toward student loan debts.

The VMLRP is authorized by the National Veterinary Medical Services Act and helps qualified veterinarians offset a significant portion of debt incurred while pursuing their veterinary medicine degree in return for at least three years of service in a designated veterinary shortage situation. The 2024 awards will be offered September 30, 2024, and the service agreement begins January 1, 2025.

To be eligible to apply for VMLRP funds, an applicant must:

1. Possess a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM (or equivalent)) degree from a school of Veterinary Medicine accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Council on Education (COE);
2. Have qualified educational loan debt with a combined minimum of \$15,000;
3. Be able to secure employment in a designated veterinary shortage situation within 90 days of award notification; and
4. Meet all other terms and conditions of the application process.

In order to apply, a letter of intent is required to be submitted to VMLRP.applications@usda.gov, by April 1, 2024. Please visit the [VMLRP website](#) for additional eligibility details.

Applications may be submitted through April 12, 2024. For more information about the VMLRP please visit the following webpages or [email](#) the VMLRP team with questions.

- [Request for Applications \(RFA\)](#)
- [Application Information](#)
- [Annual Reports and Statistics](#)
- [Veterinary Shortage Situation Area Map](#)

While the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) does not administer this program, the Commission is designated to nominate and certify veterinary shortage situations identified by the USDA.

As a companion to the VMLRP, the 2014 Farm Bill authorized the establishment of the Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP) to incentivize service in veterinary shortage situations. The USDA's National Institute of Food and



Agriculture (NIFA) Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP) has \$4 million in funding for this program. The VSGP strives to support through Education, Extension and Training (EET) funds for accredited schools and organizations and through Rural Practice Enhancement (RPE) funds for veterinary clinics that provide services in veterinary shortage situations. This program aims to bolster the capacity of private practitioners to provide food animal veterinary services by developing, implementing and sustaining these services in designated rural veterinarian shortage situations. The VSGP offers veterinary clinics in designated shortage areas up to \$125,000 for new equipment, travel expenses, or general overhead costs.

The [TAHC authorized personnel department](#) can provide additional information on applying for the VSGP in Texas. For more information regarding the program itself and details on who is eligible to apply, visit <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/funding-opportunities/veterinary-services-grant-program-0>.

###

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) was established in 1893 as the Livestock Sanitary Commission and charged with protecting the state's domestic animals "from all contagious or infectious diseases of a malignant character." TAHC remains true to this charge while evolving with the times to protect the health and marketability of all Texas livestock and poultry. Learn more about the TAHC by visiting www.tahc.texas.gov.