



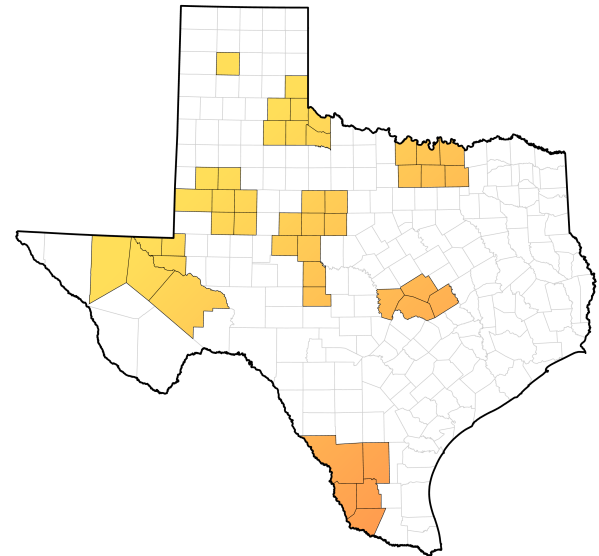
For Immediate Release  
February 2, 2026

# USDA Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program and Veterinary Services Grant Program Applications Now Open

## Veterinarians Interested in Food Animal Medicine Encouraged to Apply

AUSTIN, TX – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is now accepting Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) applications for the eight situations in Texas designated as having veterinary shortages. These areas include Bell, Borden, Burnet, Childress, Coke, Collingsworth, Concho, Cooke, Cottle, Culberson, Dawson, Denton, Grayson, Hall, Hardeman, Howard, Jim Hogg, Loving, Lynn, Martin, Nolan, Pecos, Potter, Reeves, Runnels, Starr, Taylor, Ward, Webb, Williamson, and Zapata Counties.

The designated shortage areas identify where large animal veterinarians are currently needed, and veterinarians are eligible to apply for loan repayment if they agree to serve at least three years in one of these areas. Veterinarians who commit to providing food animal veterinary services in a designated shortage area will enter into an educational loan repayment agreement with USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), who will repay up to \$40,000 per year with a maximum of \$120,000 for a three-year contract.



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.

To apply, a letter of intent is required to be submitted to [VMLRP.applications@usda.gov](mailto:VMLRP.applications@usda.gov), by February 19, 2026 at 4 PM Central. Please visit the [VMLRP website](#) for instructions, additional program information, and eligibility details. NIFA staff will hold a Technical Assistance Webinar on February 3, 2026 at 2:30 PM Central to assist veterinarians with the VMLRP application process. Veterinarians can register for the webinar here: <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/events/vmlrp-technical-assistance>.

The final VMLRP application must be submitted by March 5, 2026 at 4 PM Central. For more information about the VMLRP, please visit the following webpages or [email](#) the VMLRP team with questions.

- [VMLRP Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#)
- [Application Information](#)
- [Veterinary Shortage Situation Area Map](#)



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 2026 awards will be offered September 30, 2026, and the service agreement begins January 1, 2027.

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. Funded by NIFA, the VSGP has \$3.8 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 \$200,000 in RPE awards and \$300,000 in EET awards. Active VMLRP awardees can apply to the VSGP-RPE program using the veterinary shortage situation area they are currently serving. The 2026 Veterinary Shortage Situation areas are published here: <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/vmlrp-map>.

The deadline for VSGP applications is Thursday, April 16, 2026 at 4 PM Central. Existing veterinary clinics in a designated shortage area intending to apply for VSGP must register for a Unique Entity ID with the System for Award Management (SAM) at the [SAM Website](#). For more information about the VSGP, please visit the following webpages.

- [Veterinary Services Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity](#)
- [VSGP Applicants](#)
- [Veterinary Services Grant Program](#)

While the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) does not administer these programs, the TAHC is designated to nominate and certify veterinary shortage situations identified by the USDA. The [TAHC authorized personnel department](#) can provide additional information on applying for the VMLRP and VSGP in Texas.

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*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](http://www.tahc.texas.gov).*