

# NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

## Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program

MODIFICATIONS: 2/23/2026 – This NOFO has been modified from the original announcement. Edits are indicated using red font so the public/potential applicants can identify the changes within the solicitation.

Edits appear on page 1, 3, 8, and 9

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: February 19, 2026

APPLICATION DEADLINE: March 5, 2026

ANTICIPATED PROGRAM FUNDING: **\$25,500,000**

AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL AWARD

RANGE: \$15,000 - \$166,800

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.313

**ANNOUNCEMENT**  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
United States Department of Agriculture

**Assistance Listing Number (ALN):** The Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.313.

**Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines**

| Task Description            | Deadline  |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Application:</b>         | 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time, March 5, 2026<br>[Ref to <a href="#">Part I, B</a> of this NOFO]                              |
| <b>Letter of Intent:</b>    | 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time, February 19, 2026   |
| <b>Applicants Comments:</b> | Within six months from the issuance of this notice<br>(NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month) |

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to the extent permitted by law, will no longer make grants or otherwise fund programs or activities that improperly discriminate on the basis of race or sex, including discrimination in the name of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies. Instead, USDA will prioritize merit and efficiency. USDA recognizes programs and initiatives will have the greatest impact when these programs and initiatives put American farmers, ranchers, and foresters first by:

- solving the most pressing challenges they face;
- protecting America’s food, fuel, and fiber supply to enhance national security;
- supporting production of healthy and safe food for consumers;
- expanding and developing domestic markets;
- training the next generation of agriculturalists; and
- fueling innovation to keep American farmers at the forefront of productivity.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is committed to advancing these principles and encourages applicants to actively engage farmers, ranchers, and foresters when applying for funding opportunities to ensure relevancy and adherence to them. NIFA also encourages agricultural leaders to engage in the peer review panel process to ensure American producers are better served through research, education, and extension activities.

**Stakeholder Input.** NIFA seeks comments on all Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) so it can deliver programs efficiently, effectively, with integrity, and with a focus on customer service. NIFA considers comments to the extent possible when developing NOFOs, and uses comments to help meet the requirements of Section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 ([7 U.S.C. 7613\(c\)\(2\)](#)). Applicants may submit written comments to [Policy@usda.gov](mailto:Policy@usda.gov). Please use the following subject line: Response to the VMLRP NOFO.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The amount available for support of VMLRP in FY 2026 is approximately \$8 million of FY 2025 funding and \$17.5 million of FY 2026 funding, totaling \$25,500,000.

NIFA requests applications for the VMLRP for FY 2026 to repay qualified educational loans for eligible veterinarians in exchange for veterinary services in designated shortage situations in the United States and U.S. [Insular Areas](#).

This notice identifies the objectives for VMLRP services, deadlines, funding information, eligibility criteria for applicants, and application forms and associated instructions.

## FY 2026 UPDATES

Major updates were made to the previous FY 2024 VMLRP NOFO. Those applying should review this NOFO thoroughly. The changes are as follows:

1. The maximum award amount has been increased to \$40,000 per year for 3 years with an additional payment of \$15,600 per year to cover tax liability, for a total maximum award of \$166,800: \$120,000 for loan repayment and \$46,800 for tax liability.
2. VMLRP applications are to be submitted through the online cloud-based platform, Box.com. After NIFA receives a letter of intent (LOI) from an interested applicant, an individualized folder will be created for the applicant to upload their application to Box.com.
3. There is new guidance on the professional narrative content and structure for new and renewal applicants.
4. There are updated evaluation criteria for new and renewal applicants.
5. Eligibility for a renewal application. Renewal applications will be accepted from those with a previous VMLRP agreement start date of January 1, 2022, January 1, 2023, or January 1, 2024. This is an exception from the traditional 2 years of eligibility to ensure those that were unable to apply to the FY 2025 NOFO have an opportunity to renew.
6. Loan documentation. Applicants will need to attest that they have loans meeting the minimum debt threshold of \$15,000 in their initial Letter of Intent. Loan documentation will only be required when an applicant is recommended for an award. If recommended, loan documentation must be submitted within 14 calendar days of award recommendation. The requirements for the submission of Master Promissory Note(s)/Consolidated Promissory Note(s) for the financial loan document have moved from Part IV. Application and Submission to Part VI. Award Administration.

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## **PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Legislative Authority**

In December 2003, the National Veterinary Medical Service Act (NVMSA) passed into law adding Section 1415A to the [National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1997 \(NARETPA\)](#). This law established a new Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) ([7 U.S.C. 3151a](#)) authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out a competitive program of entering into agreements with veterinarians under which they agree to provide veterinary services in veterinarian shortage situations.

Section 7105 of the [Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008](#) amended Section 1415A to revise the determination of veterinarian shortage situations to consider (1) geographical areas that the Secretary determines have a shortage of veterinarians; and (2) areas of veterinary practice that the Secretary determines have a shortage of veterinarians, such as food animal medicine, public health, epidemiology, and food safety. This section also gave priority to agreements with veterinarians for the practice of food animal medicine in veterinarian shortage situations.

The regulations at [7 CFR 3431](#) outline the process and procedures for designating veterinarian shortage situations as well as the administrative provisions for VMLRP.

### **B. Purpose and Priorities**

The purpose of the VMLRP is to ensure an adequate supply of trained food animal veterinarians are placed in identified shortage situations. The VMLRP incentivizes food animal veterinarians to serve in veterinary shortage situations in exchange for veterinary education loan repayment assistance. A short-term objective of the program is to match the specific area needs with the knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences, goals, and aspirations of applicants. The long-term objective of the program is to sustain clinical private and public practice in shortage areas by providing educational loan repayment support to veterinarians.

Each year<sup>1</sup> since 2021, State Animal Health Officials (SAHOs) and Federal Veterinary Medical Officers (VMOs) identify more than 220 veterinary shortage situations across the United States and [Insular Areas](#) and more than 160 veterinarians compete to receive one of the approximately 80 to 120 loan repayment awards the program can fund annually. Although states can choose to nominate fewer veterinary shortage situations than they are allocated, most states continue to nominate the maximum number of veterinary shortage situations allocated to their state. This indicates that demand for the program remains strong throughout the country, particularly in animal agriculture-intensive states where shortages are most acute and widespread.

The VMLRP is aligned with Objective 1 of the [USDA Rural Veterinary Action Plan](#): Enhance and Streamline Veterinary Grant Programs

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<sup>1</sup> 2025 was an exception to this, and the FY26 VMLRP NOFO will utilize FY25 shortages that were identified in the fall of 2024.

**Table 2: Program Key Information**

| Title                     | Description   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Program Code:             | VMLRP   |
| ALN                       | 10.313  |
| Project Type:             | Loan Repayment  |
| Letter of Intent Deadline | February 19, 2026   |
| Application Deadline      | March 5, 2026   |
| Award Duration:           | New Applicant: 3 Years<br>Renewal Applicant*:<br>1 Year: \$15,000-\$40,000 eligible student loan debt<br>2 Years: \$40,001-\$80,000 eligible student loan debt<br>3 Years: \$80,001+ eligible student loan debt |
| Anticipated # of Awards:  | Approximately <b>100-150</b> .<br>Multiple awards per veterinary shortage situation area can be made ( <a href="#">Section V. Part E</a> for selection criteria).   |
| Maximum Award Amount:     | Maximum Loan Award: \$120,000<br>Maximum Tax Liability: \$46,800  |
|                           | Maximum Total Award<br>(Loan + Tax Liability): \$166,800  |

\*Terms of the fully executed agreement as a renewal varies based on the applicant’s eligible Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) educational debt. The minimum eligible DVM debt is \$15,000 on the application submission deadline date.

Additional requirements regarding expected performance goals, indicators and targets may be required as a condition of award.

### C. Program Area Description

This loan repayment program contains two general categories of participation:

1. Mitigation of private practice veterinary shortage situations in food animal medicine.
2. Mitigation of public veterinary practice and specialty veterinary discipline shortage situations.

The VMLRP supports workforce development in critical agricultural sectors. The program incentivizes veterinarians to serve in areas with geographic or specialty shortages critical to food safety and animal and public health. It prioritizes addressing shortages in food animal veterinary practice and in specialties such as, but not limited to, epidemiology, food safety, and public health.

The VMLRP achieves outreach objectives by placing highly trained and respected veterinarians in rural areas where much of the nation’s food animal production occurs. With their broad expertise in biomedical and animal sciences and strong ties to local farming communities, veterinarians play a key role in NIFA’s outreach and extension capacity, as well as in national agrosecurity, food security, and public health. Veterinarians in specialized roles facing shortages, such as state veterinarians, epidemiologists, food safety inspectors, animal disease laboratory directors and university faculty, also provide an important communication link among state and federal government agencies, animal owners/producers, and the public.

## PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

### A. Available Funding

The amount available for the VMLRP in FY 2026 is approximately \$8 million of FY 2025 funding and \$17.5 million of FY 2026 funding, totaling \$25,500,000. USDA is not committed to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

NIFA anticipates that approximately 90 percent of available funds will be awarded to veterinarians for mitigating [Type I and Type II](#) shortages of private practice food animal veterinarians. Approximately 10 percent of available funds will be awarded to veterinarians serving in [Type III](#) shortages in public practice, specialty practices, or other discipline areas such as, but not limited to, food animal medicine, public health, epidemiology, and food safety.

### B. Application Restrictions

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this NOFO. There are two types of VMLRP applications for FY 2026:

1. *New application:* A new application is one from an individual who is not a current VMLRP awardee. New applicants will apply to serve a veterinary shortage situation area that is designated and active in the fiscal year they apply. (See [Appendix III](#) for applicable definitions.)
2. *Renewal application:* A renewal application is an application from a veterinarian who previously accepted a VMLRP agreement and is in the last year of the VMLRP agreement or is in the first year after their VMLRP agreement has ended<sup>2</sup>. An applicant submitting a renewal application will apply using the assigned veterinary shortage situation identification code from their original award. (See [Appendix III](#) for applicable definitions.)

**Note:** A previous VMLRP awardee who is beyond the first year<sup>3</sup> after their agreement expired is considered a new applicant. An applicant who has previously received an award and is interested in applying to serve in a shortage situation area that is different than their current or previous agreement will need to submit a new application.

### C. Types of Designated Veterinary Shortages

There are three types of veterinary shortage situations, all based on a 40-hour work week:

1. Type I – at least 80 percent of time (32 hours per week) committed to private practice food supply veterinary medicine.
2. Type II – at least 30 percent of time (12 hours per week) committed to private practice food supply veterinary medicine in a rural area.
3. Type III – at least 49 percent of time (19.6 hours per week) committed to public practice.

Further descriptions of each shortage situation type can be found on the [Veterinary Shortage Situations](#) resource page under “Type of Shortage Situations.” Flexibility in meeting Designated Veterinary Shortage hourly requirements on a strict weekly basis may be considered if a participant experiences significant challenges, including, but not limited to, seasonality in demand for food animal services. VMLRP program staff are available to consult with existing awardees regarding such situations, and concerns over their potential should not deter applicants.

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<sup>2</sup> For FY26 RFA only, renewal applications may also be submitted from those who are in the second year after their VMLRP agreement has ended. See Section III.A. for additional eligibility information.

<sup>3</sup> See above.

## PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### A. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants for the VMLRP must meet all the requirements discussed in this NOFO. Failure to meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline will result in exclusion from consideration or preclude NIFA from making an award. There is no limit to the number of times a VMLRP award can be renewed if eligible and selected. If the applicant continues to meet the eligibility criteria and have qualifying veterinary educational debt, they may apply for a renewal award.

#### **Applicants are eligible for the VMLRP if they meet all the following requirements:**

1. Meet all the requirements outlined in [7 CFR 3431.10](#).
2. Have a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree, or the equivalent, prior to the start of service agreement in the application year, from a college of veterinary medicine accredited by the [American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education](#).
3. Have a minimum qualifying educational loan ([see 7 CFR part 3431.3](#)) debt of \$15,000 from a lender capable of accepting incoming Automated Clearing House (ACH) payments at the application submission deadline date. Applicants unable to verify this with the lender should contact [vmlrp@usda.gov](mailto:vmlrp@usda.gov) (Subject: lender payment acceptance assistance) for assistance.
4. Secure an offer of employment or establish and/or maintain a practice in a NIFA-designated veterinary shortage situation area within the time period specified in the VMLRP agreement offer.
5. Provide certifications and verifications as defined in [7 CFR part 3431.16](#), Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program.
6. Not owe an obligation for veterinary service to the federal government, a state, or other entity under an agreement with such federal, state, or other entity unless such obligation will be completely satisfied prior to beginning service under the VMLRP. Any applicant with such an obligation should contact the VMLRP via email prior to application to [vmlrp@usda.gov](mailto:vmlrp@usda.gov) for clarification and guidance related to the obligation. Requirements of the service obligation must be provided.
7. For Renewal Applicants ONLY: In addition to the items above, renewal applicants must have a previous VMLRP agreement start date of January 1, 2022, January 1, 2023, or January 1, 2024. If a renewal applicant is uncertain if their VMLRP agreement start date is applicable, the applicant should contact the VMLRP program staff via email to [vmlrp.applications@usda.gov](mailto:vmlrp.applications@usda.gov) to verify their information.

**Veterinary Services Designated Shortage Situations and Map** – To determine which veterinary shortage situations are currently designated, consult the [Veterinary Services Shortage Situations Map](#). The map will automatically populate the current fiscal year's designated veterinary shortage situations.

The location of services, species that must be served for [Type I and II](#) shortages, specific %FTE requirements for [Type II](#) shortages, discipline designations for [Type III](#) shortages, and required activities for all shortages, are identified for each shortage situation. VMLRP applicants will use this information to select shortage situations they are willing and qualified to fill and to guide the preparation of their applications. If offered a VMLRP award, NIFA will use this information to

assess awardee compliance with terms of agreement. Therefore, it is important for the applicant to carefully review ALL the requirements stated for each veterinary shortage situation.

**Federal Employees** – There are no prohibitions against the participation of federal employees if they meet all eligibility requirements for participation in the VMLRP. Full-time federal government employees (e.g., USDA-APHIS or USDA-FSIS, etc.) who wish to apply for a veterinary shortage situation outside of their current federal employment must meet the following:

1. Eligibility requirements outlined in detail in [Part III Section A](#) of this NOFO.
2. Certain employees may be required to report outside employment, as well as the VMLRP award, and get clearance from the relevant Department or Agency Office of Ethics (see [Outside Employment/Activities](#)).

**Duplicate or Multiple Submissions** – Duplicate or multiple submissions are not allowed. NIFA will disqualify both applications if an applicant submits duplicate or multiple submissions.

**B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

**No Match Required** - The VMLRP has no matching requirement. NIFA will not factor matching resources into the review process as an evaluation criterion.

## PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

### A. Letter of Intent (LOI)

VMLRP applicants are required to submit a LOI stating their intent to apply to the program. If an applicant does not submit an LOI by the deadline, they will not be able to apply for the VMLRP that year. The LOI must be sent in an email to [VMLRP.applications@usda.gov](mailto:VMLRP.applications@usda.gov). The deadline for LOI submission in FY 2026 is Thursday, February 19, 2026, by 5 PM Eastern Time.

#### 1. Format for LOI Submission:

*Email Subject:* FY 2026 LOI Submission

*Body of Email:*

Hello VMLRP Staff,

I am confirming my intent to apply to the VMLRP. I attest that, at this time, I have eligible DVM loans meeting the minimum debt threshold of \$15,000. My estimated DVM loan debt is: \$XXX,XXX. Please use the following contact information for my application:

Name: < Last, First>

Email:

Phone Number:

#### 2. Correspondence and Receipt of LOI

Upon receipt of a LOI, NIFA staff will create an individualized folder for each applicant in the online Box.com platform. Applicants will receive a confirmation email after a LOI is received and a folder on Box.com is created. This email will include specific instructions on how to upload documents to the individual folder for application submission. An email will be sent from Box.com inviting applicants to access their individual folder for application submission.

### B. Method of Application

Application materials can be accessed in two ways:

1. Application materials can be downloaded from the [Required Application Forms](#) webpage.
2. Applicants who have trouble downloading the materials, should contact the VMLRP program staff via email at [vmlrp.applications@usda.gov](mailto:vmlrp.applications@usda.gov). The request should include the requestor's name, e-mail address, and phone number in the body of the email.

Download and install a version of Adobe Reader that is compatible to access and complete application materials. **Table 3** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application.

**Table 3:** Steps to Obtain Application Materials

| Steps                             | Action   |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Step One: Download Adobe Software | Download and Install <a href="#">Adobe Reader</a> (see <a href="#">Adobe Software Compatibility</a> for basic system requirements) |

| Steps   | Action  |
|---|---|
| Step Two: Locate and Download Application Materials | Download <a href="#">Required Application Forms</a> |

**Table 4: VMLRP Application Instructions**

| Instruction   | References  |
|---|---|
| Review Eligibility of Veterinary Services Shortage Nomination Form from the State Animal Health Official (SAHO) and select the Shortage Area for submission.                                    | <a href="#">Veterinary Services Shortage Situations Map</a>         |
| Documents must be in a portable document format (PDF) format.   | <a href="#">Creating PDFs with Adobe Guide</a>                      |
| Documents must be merged into a <b>single PDF document</b> . Instructions are indicated below for which forms must be combined into a PDF document.   | <a href="#">Merging PDFs with Adobe Guide</a>                       |
| Documents must be an electronic copy of the PDF.  | <a href="#">Print PDF to Electronic Copy with Adobe Guide</a>       |
| Reduce the file size of the application before submission.  | <a href="#">Optimizing PDF to Reduce File Size with Adobe Guide</a> |
| Sign the PDF documents.   | <a href="#">Sign PDFs with Adobe Guide</a>                          |
| Follow the submission instructions.   | N/A   |
| Contact the <a href="#">VMLRP program</a> staff for technical support and keep a record of the correspondence.  | vmlrp.applications@usda.gov   |
| Contact the <a href="#">VMLRP program</a> staff if applicant does not receive correspondence from NIFA regarding an application received within <b>20</b> business days of submission due date. | vmlrp.applications@usda.gov   |

**Program Document (for both New and Renewal applicants):** VMLRP requires seven (7) documents for Type I and Type II shortage area applications and six (6) documents for Type III shortage area applications combined into one master Program Document in PDF. If any one of the following 7 (or 6) documents are missing from the Program Document, the application will not be considered for review or funding.

1. [Application Part 1: Program Form](#)
2. Resumé
3. Unofficial Transcript(s)
4. Veterinary license and APHIS accreditation
5. Professional Narrative
6. Map
  - a. Type I and Type II shortage area applications must include a map of the selected shortage situation area along with the practice area clearly defined.
  - b. Type III shortage area applications do not require a map.
7. Three [Application Part 3: Recommendation Forms](#) (Submitted by recommenders)

directly to NIFA)

For a program informational webinar please visit the [NIFA calendar](#) for dates, event registration, and link. If you need reasonable accommodation to participate in any of the informational webinars listed, please contact the event host listed no later than 10 days prior to the event.

## **General Instructions for Application Documents**

### **1. [Application Part 1: Program Form](#)**

You must indicate the shortage situation you propose to fill by entering the shortage identification code in Section 1 of this form. See the [Veterinary Services Shortage Situations Map](#) to find current shortage identification code.

A renewal applicant should enter the shortage identification code of the original shortage situation they are currently serving or served through a VMLRP award.

### **2. Resumé**

This document should summarize your education, work history, credentials, trainings/seminars, certifications, and other accomplishments and skills. The information provided should demonstrate your abilities to serve in the designated shortage area. The body of the resumé is limited to two (2) pages. An additional page (optional) may be included to list publications, patents, etc.

Renewal applicants must provide an updated resumé to add any academic degrees, work experience, professional awards and honors, or other special achievements that have taken place since the last VMLRP application.

**DO NOT include** demographic information, photographs, financial information, or a Social Security Number.

### **3. Unofficial Transcript(s)**

An unofficial transcript from your professional veterinary degree program is required. If you attended more than one school during your DVM studies, unofficial transcripts from all schools must be provided. If your degree has not posted to your transcripts prior to the application deadline, provide an unofficial transcript to date.

Renewal applicants must submit unofficial transcript(s), including coursework taken since the original VMLRP award.

### **4. Veterinary License and USDA APHIS Accreditation**

Include a copy of your State veterinary license and your USDA APHIS accreditation status. For a copy of your USDA Accreditation go to the USDA APHIS website [USDA APHIS | For Veterinarians](#), and enter your last name and accreditation number. The copy of your USDA APHIS accreditation should include your name, category II, the state, and the renewal date. If you have not received your license and accreditation indicate this by checking the “pending” box on the Application Part 1: Program form.

### **5. Professional Narrative**

The Professional Narrative demonstrates that you understand the needs of the shortage area you are applying to and that you have a plan to address these needs. It should showcase any special training or unique skills that you have or that will be advantageous in mitigating the shortage. The narrative should describe your background, professional and personal goals, and planned activities to meet these goals. In short, this section provides the opportunity to tell how you are the best-fit candidate to fill this shortage situation. You are limited to four (4) pages.

There are separate instructions for the content of the narrative of new and renewal applicants. New and renewal applicants are required to create a document with a Professional Narrative that must conform to the following guidelines:

- a. Narrative should have three sections: (1) Introduction, (2) Approach for Mitigation of Veterinary Shortage, and (3) Sustainability/Long Term Goals.
- b. Use standard electronic page width with one-inch margins, 12-point font, and double spaced.
- c. Use an easily readable font (e.g., Geneva, Helvetica, or Times New Roman).
- d. Do not exceed four (4) double-spaced, typed pages. This limit has been established to ensure fair competition.

**DO NOT include** demographic information, financial information, or a Social Security Number in the Professional Narrative.

**6. New Applicant Professional Narrative Content Suggestions:** In each of the three sections of the Narrative, below are items you may wish to consider addressing, as applicable.

**a. Introduction**

- i. Describe how you will provide services, addressing solutions to the specific problems and needs identified in the veterinary shortage situation you are applying to as stated by the State Animal Health Officials (SAHO) and from your professional knowledge. (Note that veterinary shortage situation nominations clearly state the specific problems and needs on page two of the shortage nomination form).
- ii. State why you are professionally, geographically, and functionally poised to effectively relieve the veterinary shortage to which you have applied to serve. If you are a new graduate, describe your relevant coursework, training, internships, or externships that have prepared you to serve the shortage situation area.
- iii. Describe, and to the extent possible quantify, how you will utilize what the practice/institution offers for you as the applicant to meet the shortage area by leveraging your skills and resources, if awarded (take into consideration nomination %FTE, # of clients, # of farms, # of herds, # of farm calls weekly, monthly, quarterly and yearly, how it is equipped or will be equipped, etc.).
- iv. Type I and Type II applicants: Consider detailing how you are particularly equipped to provide veterinary services to the must serve species and activities identified in the shortage nomination.
- v. Type III applicants: Consider detailing how you are particularly equipped to address the specialty area and activities listed in the shortage nomination.
- vi. You may wish to reference your resumé rather than include each of these

bullets in your professional narrative. Where applicable, the introduction may include descriptions of:

1. Formal pre-professional educational training (e.g., undergraduate, or graduate degree programs and credentials).
2. Formal training during pursuit of the DVM (or equivalent) degree (e.g., electives, curricular emphases).
3. Formal, post-DVM (or equivalent) training and specialization (e.g., graduate degree programs, internships, residency programs, and board certifications).
4. Professional employment experience in private or public veterinary practice, or other relevant work experiences before, during, or after earning the DVM (or equivalent) degree.
5. Specialty short-course certifications, accreditations, or licensures (e.g., APHIS accreditation, agrosecurity training series, food animal production management courses, certified proficiency-training in foreign animal disease diagnostics).
6. Awards, honors, or special achievements.

**b. Approach for mitigation of veterinary shortage**

i. Explicitly describe the strategies, tactics and/or business plan you will employ to mitigate the need of the shortage area you are applying to serve. Where applicable, this section may include descriptions of:

1. Planned stakeholder and client involvement to determine veterinary service prioritization, planning, implementation, and evaluation; include a description of the relationships with local community leaders, organizations, and producers; identifying best strategies to mitigate veterinary service shortages, and most effective methods of evaluating the effectiveness of strategies employed.
2. Describe proposed activities over the three-year service commitment that will address the shortage nomination needs.
3. Approach to tracking the number of clients, farms, or number of animals serviced.
4. Plans for promotional strategies to increase/enhance veterinary services to clients in the veterinary shortage situation area.
5. Pitfalls that might be encountered and any plans for solutions.
6. Limitations to proposed activities stated in the shortage situation area based on your professional experience.

**c. Future/ Long Term Goals**

- i. Describe existing and future involvement in the community you are applying to serve. If you are new to the area, describe opportunities for establishing involvement within the community, and its activities.
- ii. Estimate the impact of your proposed mitigation approach on local livestock, livestock operators, and local economic vitality and to ongoing state-federal interests including health of animal populations, food safety, food security, and public health during and after the award period. For example, how will your service to the shortage situation area be sustained after the service commitment, or what lasting impacts will your service have in the shortage area?

7. **Renewal Applicant Professional Narrative Content Suggestions:** In each of the three sections of the Narrative, below are items you may wish to consider addressing, as applicable.

a. **Introduction**

- i. Explain the reasons why you are continuing to provide services and address the solutions to the specific problems and needs identified in the veterinary shortage situation you are applying to serve as stated by the State Animal Health Officials (SAHO) and from your professional knowledge and experience serving the area.
- ii. Briefly summarize what you have done to mitigate the shortage and address challenges or limitations the shortage area continues to experience (this will be covered in more detail in the Impact Section below). (Note that veterinary shortage situation nominations clearly state the specific problems and needs on page two of the shortage nomination form).
- iii. State why you are professionally, geographically, and functionally poised to effectively relieve the veterinary shortage area to which you have applied to serve.
- iv. Describe, and to the extent possible quantify, how you will utilize what the practice/institution offers for you as the applicant to meet the shortage area by leveraging your skills and resources, if awarded (take into consideration nomination %FTE, # of clients, # of farms, # of herds, # of farm calls weekly, monthly, quarterly and yearly, how it is equipped or will be equipped, etc.).
- v. Type I and Type II applicants: Consider detailing how you are particularly equipped to provide veterinary services to the must serve species and activities identified in the shortage nomination.
- vi. Type III applicants: Consider detailing how you are particularly equipped to address the specialty area and activities listed for in the shortage nomination.
- vii. You may wish to reference your resumé rather than include each of these bullets in your professional narrative. Where applicable, this section may include descriptions of:
  1. Formal pre-professional educational training (e.g., undergraduate, or graduate degree programs and credentials).
  2. Formal training during pursuit of the DVM (or equivalent) degree (e.g., electives, curricular emphases).
  3. Formal, post-DVM (or equivalent) training and specialization (e.g., graduate degree programs, internships, residency programs, and board certifications).
  4. Professional employment experience in private or public veterinary practice, or other relevant work experiences before, during, or after earning the DVM (or equivalent) degree.
  5. Specialty short-course certifications, accreditations, or licensures (e.g., APHIS accreditation, agrosecurity training series, food animal production management courses, certified proficiency-training in foreign animal disease diagnostics).

6. Awards, honors, or special achievements.
- b. **Impact of previous award service and future approach for veterinary shortage**
  - i. Describe scope of the impact, and to the extent possible quantify, your service during the current award (increased # of clients, # of farms, # of herds, # of farm calls weekly, monthly and yearly, etc.) within the shortage area.
  - ii. Describe the impact of your service in the shortage area on local livestock, livestock operators, local economic vitality, and to ongoing state-federal interest to the health of animal populations, food safety, food security, and public health.
  - iii. These impacts should be supported by appropriate metrics (e.g., percent increase in clientele base or service radius, increase in number of livestock served, decreased rates of morbidity or mortality, or other measures of clientele, animal health and productivity, number of community outreach events presented and number of attendees, impacted on clientele profits and/or sustainability)
- c. **Long-Term Goals:**
  - i. Address how receiving a renewal VMLRP award will continue your professional success mitigating the shortage area.
  - ii. Describe your current involvement in the community and how that has developed since your previous award.
  - iii. Estimate the impact of your proposed mitigation approach (impact of future award) on local livestock, livestock operators, and local economic vitality and to ongoing state-federal interests including health of animal populations, food safety, food security, and public health during and after the award period. For example, how will your service to the shortage situation area be sustained after the service commitment, or what lasting impacts will your service have in the shortage area?

8. **Shortage Situation and Practice Area Map for Types I & II Shortage Areas**

For those applying to a [Type I or Type II shortage situation](#), a map (limited to 1 page) must be provided to identify the location of the proposed shortage situation in relation to the location of the veterinary practice from which the applicant will be working. For mobile practices, identify beginning and end locations for a typical workday.

Any spatial features may be added to the map (e.g., circles, arrows, or points) to highlight these areas. Any spatial features added to the map are the only portion of the application that may be handwritten. Please make sure the map is clear and legible. Examples of shortage situation and practice area maps can be found on the [VMLRP Applicants](#) webpage under the “Before you start your application, please review thoroughly:” section called “[Example Maps](#)”.

9. [Application Part 3: Recommendation Form](#)

Each individual you request to be a recommender must complete an Application Part 3: Recommendation Form. The form includes ratings and short answers designed to allow

reviewers to assess your capabilities to provide veterinary services in the specific shortage situation. Recommenders are encouraged to review and consider the information describing the relevant shortage situation that can be found on the [Veterinary Services Shortage Situations Map](#).

Three separate individual recommendations are required. If fewer than three recommendations are received by the application deadline, your application will not be accepted and will not be considered for further consideration.

Use an easily readable font face (e.g., Geneva, Helvetica, or Times New Roman). All sections of this form must be typed. Handwritten responses on any part of this form will not be accepted, and your application will not be considered for further consideration. Wet ink or electronic signatures are acceptable signatures for recommenders.

VMLRP does not have requirements for whom to choose to provide recommendations; it is your decision to select people who will best support your application. We encourage you to choose your recommenders based on the information you provided in your professional narrative and who can support your ability to serve the specific requirements in the shortage nomination form. We encourage you to reach out as early as possible to your recommenders to ensure that recommendation letters get submitted by the application deadline.

It is your responsibility to contact and follow up with recommenders to ensure all required recommendations are completed and submitted in accordance with the applicable instructions. Recommenders will receive an email verification of receipt of the recommendation from NIFA.

### **C. Funding Restrictions**

VMLRP loan repayment awards are capped at \$40,000 for each year of service rendered, with tax payments (capped at \$15,600 per year) in addition to the award amount. In accordance with [7 CFR 3431.13\(b\)](#), NIFA reserves the right to further increase the total award amount available under this opportunity if additional appropriations or other available funding resources permit. Loan repayments are made directly to the participant's lending institution on behalf of the participating individual. Lending institutions must be capable of accepting incoming Automated Clearing House (ACH) payments. If you are unable to verify this with your lender, please contact [vmlrp@usda.gov](mailto:vmlrp@usda.gov) (Subject: Lender Payment Acceptance Question) for assistance.

The quarterly repayments will be applied to the principal, interest, and related expenses on government and commercial educational loans received by the participating individual for attendance at an American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education (AVMA-COE) accredited college of veterinary medicine resulting in a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree or the equivalent. The VMLRP will only repay debt incurred at an institution that is accredited at the time of attendance and graduation. If the school was accredited on the first day of attendance, the VMLRP will repay debt incurred at that institution during the time of your attendance, up until graduation. This includes any scenario involving an individual transferring from a non-accredited institution to an accredited institution.

Individuals with a degree from an institution that was not AVMA-COE accredited at the time the degree was conferred are ineligible for award. This is regardless of whether the individual may have attended an accredited institution prior to transferring to a non-accredited institution from which they received their DVM. Regarding accreditation of foreign schools, VMLRP will repay debt incurred at an institution during the time that institution was accredited, which could be several years after the establishment of the school. If an institution received accreditation status during a participant's attendance at such an institution, only the portion of veterinary school loans that were disbursed after the institution's date of accreditation shall be repaid by the VMLRP. If you received your DVM degree from an institution that was not accredited at the time the degree was conferred, you are ineligible for the VMLRP award.

Tax payments equal to 39 percent of the total loan repayment amount given will be paid directly to the participant to assist with offsetting the additional income claimed when receiving a VMLRP award. The participant is required to pay this amount to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). These tax payments are not tax-exempt and will be reported to the IRS along with loan payments paid to a servicer on the participants' behalf. The participant will receive a Form 1099-G (Certain Government Payments) from the National Finance Center (NFC) at the beginning of the year following the close of each calendar year. If you do not receive a form 1099-G by the end of February of that year, reach out to 1099 Help Desk at 1-800-421-0323 or by email at [1099helpdesk@usda.gov](mailto:1099helpdesk@usda.gov).

#### **D. Submission Requirements**

Applicants are urged to submit early. If you wait until the last days before the due date to submit your application, you risk missing the deadline.

##### **1. LOI & Application Submission Dates and Times**

For the FY 2026 NOFO, LOIs must be received by 5:00 PM Eastern Time on **Thursday, February 19, 2026**. Applications must be uploaded to the Box.com folder by 5:00 PM Eastern Time on **Thursday, March 5, 2026**.

##### **2. Submission of Application**

- a. **Application submission:** Applicants must upload a single Program Document in PDF format, with the forms in the order listed in [Part IV \(Application and Submission\), Section B \(Method of Application\)](#) of this NOFO to their individual folder in Box.com by the application deadline. Applicant access to individual folders in Box.com will be removed by the application deadline at 5:00 PM Eastern Time on Thursday, March 5, 2026.
- b. **Correspondence and receipt of application materials:** If the applicant has not received correspondence from NIFA regarding receipt of a submitted application within 20 business days of application deadline, the applicant must contact the VMLRP program staff by email at [vmlrp.applications@usda.gov](mailto:vmlrp.applications@usda.gov) to request confirmation of receipt of their application. Failure to alert NIFA that confirmation of receipt has not been received could result in the application not being reviewed by the peer review panel.

### 3. Submission of Recommendations

- a. **Recommendation Submission:** Any recommendations not included in the program document must be emailed (preferred) to [vmlrp.applications@usda.gov](mailto:vmlrp.applications@usda.gov) or faxed to 1-833-208-8205. Subject of the email should read “VMLRP Recommendation, Applicant Last Name, First Name.” Recommendations received by mail or handwritten will not be accepted and your application will not qualify for further consideration. Wet ink or electronic signatures are acceptable for recommendations.
- b. **Correspondence and receipt of recommendations:** It is always the applicant’s responsibility to contact and follow up with recommenders to ensure all required recommendations are completed and submitted in accordance with the applicable instructions. Recommenders who submit recommendations by email or fax receive an email verification of receipt of the recommendation from NIFA when it is processed.

Applications received by mail will not be accepted and your application will not qualify for further consideration. Do not submit an additional copy of the VMLRP application by email or mail. For questions regarding the submission of applications, please email: [vmlrp.applications@usda.gov](mailto:vmlrp.applications@usda.gov).

## **PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. NIFA's Evaluation Process**

NIFA evaluates each application in a two-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements set forth in this NOFO. All administrative requirements must be met for the application to proceed to the next level of review. Second, a scientific peer-review process will be used to technically evaluate applications that have met the administrative requirements using a review panel (see [NIFA Peer Review Process](#)).

#### **Scientific Peer Review Process:**

NIFA selects reviewers for the review panel based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors:

1. The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities.
2. The need to include experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields.
3. The need to include other experts (e.g., agricultural producers, range or forest managers/operators, researchers, educators, evaluators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs.
4. The need to include experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and federal agencies, and private profit and nonprofit organizations) and geographic locations.
5. The need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to the reviewer's area of expertise, geographic area, and entity type, as appropriate.
6. The need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each application to producers and the general public.

After each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, the responsible program staff of NIFA will recommend that a proposal is either approved for support from currently available funds or declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

NIFA reserves the right to negotiate with the submitting individual regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any project for funding.

After the review process has been completed, NIFA sends copies of reviews, *not* including the identity of reviewers, and a summary (if applicable) of the review panel comments to the submitting individual.

**Conflicts of interest.** NIFA takes extreme care to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may influence the review or evaluation (see [NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications](#)).

## **B. Evaluation Criteria**

NIFA will use the following criteria to evaluate applications to this program:

### **1. New applicants**

#### **a. Expertise and Experience (50%)**

The applicant's education, training, and experience demonstrates they have the knowledge and skills to mitigate the needs indicated within the veterinary shortage situation. The applicant has documented accomplishments, achievements and/or awards that demonstrate their knowledge and skills through the following components as it relates to the application:

- i. Formal pre-professional educational training (e.g., undergraduate, or graduate degree programs and credentials).
  - ii. Formal training during pursuit of the DVM (or equivalent) degree (e.g., electives, curricular emphases).
  - iii. Formal, post-DVM (or equivalent) training and specialization (e.g., graduate degree programs, internships, residency programs, and board certifications).
  - iv. Professional employment experience in private or public veterinary practice, or other relevant work experiences before, during, or after earning the DVM (or equivalent) degree.
  - v. Specialty short-course certifications, accreditations, or licensures (e.g., APHIS accreditation, agrosecurity training series, food animal production management courses, certified proficiency-training in foreign animal disease diagnostics).
  - vi. Awards, honors, or special achievements.
  - vii. Resumé, transcripts, and recommendations either support or provide evidence of their stated skills and abilities.
- b. Achievability, Sustainability and Fit to the Shortage Area (35%):** This criterion relates to the applicant's ability to demonstrate success in the shortage situation. The applicant will be evaluated on:
- i. The proposed mitigation plan of the shortage situation area by indicating the goals or business plans to address the circumstances, needs and solutions of the area.
  - ii. The mitigation approach addressing the short and long-term strategy to reduce the risk(s) of the specific veterinary shortage situation.
  - iii. Addressing the opportunities for continuing or establishing roots within the community and community involvement activities.
  - iv. Overall fit of applicants' experiences and expertise to the must serve species and specified activities required to meet the needs of the shortage area.
- c. Clarity and quality (15%):** This criterion are based on the overall clarity and quality of the application to include:
- i. Clarity and quality of the professional narrative and resume.
  - ii. Clarity and quality of the map.
  - iii. Formatting, spelling, and grammar errors.

### **2. Renewal applicants**

#### **a. Expertise and Experience (50%):**

The applicant's education, training, and experience demonstrates they have the knowledge and skills to mitigate the needs and address challenges or limitations indicated within the veterinary shortage situation and their professional experience. The applicant has documented accomplishments, achievements and/or awards that demonstrate their

knowledge and skills through the following components as it relates to the application:

- i. Formal pre-professional educational training (e.g., undergraduate, or graduate degree programs and credentials).
  - ii. Formal training during pursuit of the DVM (or equivalent) degree (e.g., electives, curricular emphases).
  - iii. Formal, post-DVM (or equivalent) training and specialization (e.g., graduate degree programs, internships, residency programs, and board certifications).
  - iv. Professional employment experience in private or public veterinary practice, or other relevant work experience before, during, or after earning the DVM (or equivalent) degree.
  - v. Specialty short-course certifications, accreditations, or licensures (e.g., APHIS accreditation, agrosecurity training series, food animal production management courses, certified proficiency-training in foreign animal disease diagnostics).
  - vi. Awards, honors, or special achievements.
  - vii. Resumé, transcripts, and recommendations either support or provide evidence of their stated skills and abilities.
- b. **Impact, sustainability, and mitigation of shortage situation (35%):** This criterion relates to the goals accomplished, the services provided in the previous VMLRP service agreement and what they plan to accomplish in the renewal. Renewal applicants will be evaluated on:
- i. The impact of their services provided in the shortage situation area supported by appropriate metrics.
  - ii. An update of future goals or business plans of the mitigation approach to address the needs and solutions of the nomination based on the applicant's professional experience in the area and on the specific veterinary shortage situation.
  - iii. Long-term goals that the applicant desires to complete beyond the VMLRP agreement.
  - iv. The developed ties within the community and community involvement activities developed during the previous award service agreement.
  - v. Provided plan for how to continue or increase community involvement.
  - vi. Overall fit of applicant's experience and expertise to the must serve species and specified activities required to meet the needs of the shortage area.
- c. **Clarity and quality (15%):** This criterion are based on the overall clarity and quality of the application to include:
- i. Clarity and quality of the professional narrative and resume.
  - ii. Clarity and quality of the map.
  - iii. Formatting, spelling, and grammar errors.

### C. Organizational Management Information

Applicants must submit specific management information prior to an award and update the information as needed. Applicants may only need to provide an update if there was a change in previously provided information under this or another NIFA program. NIFA provides the requisite forms during the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible for award under this program, there are factors that may exclude an applicant from receiving federal financial and non-financial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual, or a determination that an applicant is not responsible).

All submitted applications shall be reviewed to ensure administrative compliance and completeness prior to an evaluation by the VMLRP application review panel. A complete review of each applicant's loan documents by NIFA will also take place prior to the announcement of awards.

**D. Application Disposition**

Applicants may withdraw at any time before NIFA makes a final funding decision. NIFA will retain all applications, including withdrawn applications and unfunded applications. An electronic copy of each application not selected for funding, including those that are withdrawn, will be retained by VMLRP for three years.

**E. Selection Criteria for Multiple Applicants to a Shortage Area**

Multiple highly ranked applicants to a veterinary shortage situation area can be awarded if applicants work at different clinics within the veterinary shortage situation area, both have been recommended for Outstanding or High Priority categories in the final ranking by panelists, and the SAHO approves placing multiple VMLRP awardees in the same veterinary shortage situation area.

## **PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. General**

Within the limit of VMLRP funds available, the NIFA awarding official shall make an award and agreement offers to responsible and eligible applicants whose applications are determined most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this NOFO. The effective date of an award shall be January 1 of the following calendar year in which the application is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. All funds awarded by NIFA under this NOFO shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application, the VMLRP authorizing statute at [7 U.S.C. § 3151\(a\)](#), the VMLRP regulations at [7 CFR Part 3431](#), and the terms and conditions of the award.

### **B. Loan Verification Documents**

Loan documentation will be required when an applicant is recommended for an award. If recommended, the following loan documentation **MUST** be submitted within 14 calendar days of award recommendation combined into one master Loan Document in PDF uploaded to Box.com. If the documentation requested is not provided within the deadline, the application will not be considered for funding. NIFA may request additional information as needed during review.

1. [Application Part 2: Financial Form](#)
2. Loan Servicer Account Statement and Individual Loan Details
3. [Federal Student Aid](#) Loan Summary
4. [Federal Student Aid](#) Individual Loan Detail Report(s)
5. Master Promissory Note(s)/Consolidated Promissory Note(s) are only required for all private lender loans and consolidations not available in the [Federal Student Aid](#) documentation.

For more description of each document please visit the [VMLRP Loan Document Tutorial](#) for details on preparing the loan documentation. If you have any questions, email the [vmlrp@usda.gov](mailto:vmlrp@usda.gov).

**Note:** If your original award is from 2022 or older, applicants with consolidated loans must submit a list of loans that were included in the consolidation.

### **C. Award Announcement & Package**

All VMLRP applicants will be informed by email of the final funding decisions related to the FY 2026 NOFO by **Wednesday, September 30, 2026**.

The award package will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum:

1. Legal name and address of applicant to whom the NIFA Director has issued an award under the terms of this notice of funding opportunities.
2. Designated veterinary shortage situation code, including the state.
3. Service period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the service agreement without requiring re-competition for funds.
4. Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the NIFA Director during the service period.
5. Legal authority, or authorities, under which the award is issued.
6. Applicable award terms and conditions for the VMLRP.

7. Other information or provisions deemed necessary by NIFA to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

An individual may submit a written request for termination of the agreement to [vmlrp@usda.gov](mailto:vmlrp@usda.gov) no later than 30 days after the execution of the agreement.

1. The submittal shall include an explanation for the need to be released from the obligations of the agreement already signed.
2. If any funds have been disbursed, they may be required to be returned, which will be determined upon review of the request submitted.

#### **D. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications and the projects outlined in this NOFO (some are listed here: [Federal Regulations](#)). Unless specifically noted by statute or award-specific requirements, [NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide](#) applies to all NIFA awards.

#### **E. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements**

##### **Program Outputs**

The principal program output for FY 2026 will be verifiable mitigation of well-defined, high priority veterinary shortage situations in an estimated 60 to 80 locations across the country, for a period of three years.

##### **Reporting Requirements**

Reporting requirements are described in full detail in the participant webinar after award offer. Below is a list of the reporting currently required.

1. Quarterly Reporting: Service Verification report form
2. Annual Progress Report
3. Shortage Situation Service Changes (if applicable)
4. Loan History from loan servicer
5. Proof of tax payments made with VMLRP funds
6. Copy Proof of active license and/or APHIS Accreditation during entire term of award
7. Automated Clearing House (ACH) Enrollment OMB 1510-0056 for tax payments needed
8. Recipient updates throughout term of the award such as:
  - a. Contact information changes
  - b. Employer changes
  - c. Loan servicer changes
  - d. Early loan payoff notifications
9. Final Progress Report at the end of the period of performance

**SPECIAL NOTE:** A Final Progress Report is required from all awardees. This report is subject to review for completeness and must be approved by the VMLRP program staff prior to disbursement of the final payment.

## **PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION**

### **A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget**

***Delegation of fiscal responsibility.*** Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, awardees may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

***Changes in the VMLRP Agreement.*** The awardee may only make minor changes to the approved agreement, as long as they do not significantly affect its purpose of addressing a specific veterinary service shortage in a certain area or field. To ensure that all applications are reviewed in a fair and consistent manner, a switch from one shortage area to a different shortage area than an applicant applied to serve will not be considered once an application has been reviewed by the peer review panel.

### **B. Access to Review Information**

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent to the applicant upon request 60-90 days after the review process has been completed.

### **C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards**

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of NIFA transaction records, which are available to the public. Information the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, applicants should clearly mark any information within the application they wish to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary. NIFA will retain a copy of an application that does not result in an award for three years. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An applicant may withdraw at any time prior to the final action thereon.

### **D. Regulatory Information**

This program is not subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 ([44 U.S.C. Chapter 35](#)), the collection of information requirements contained in this notice have been approved under [OMB Document No. 0524-0050](#).

### **E. Definitions**

Please refer to [7 CFR Part 3431, Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program](#), for applicable definitions for this program.

### **F. Materials Available on the Internet**

Numerous tools and reference materials are available via the [VMLRP](#) website.

### **G. Language Access Services**

NIFA offers language access services, such as interpretation and translation of vital information, free of charge. If you need interpretation or translation services, please visit [NIFA Language Access Services](#).

## **APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACTS**

For Programmatic questions please email.

### **General Program & Application Questions Contact**

[VMLRP.applications@usda.gov](mailto:VMLRP.applications@usda.gov)

Fax: 833-208-8205

### **Financial & Award Administrative Contact**

[vmlrp@usda.gov](mailto:vmlrp@usda.gov)

Fax: 844-332-8008

### **U.S. Postal Mailing Address:**

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

U.S. Department of Agriculture

P.O. Box 419205, MS 10000

Kansas City, MO 64141-6205

### **Courier/Package Delivery Address:**

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

U.S. Department of Agriculture

2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000

Kansas City, MO 64141-3061

## **APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - APHIS  
Assistance Listing Number – ALN  
Authorized Representative - AR  
Automated Clearing House - ACH  
Code of Federal Regulations - CFR  
Doctor of Veterinary Medicine - DVM  
Electronic Fund Transfer - EFT  
Federal Student Aid - FSA  
Fiscal Year - FY  
Food Safety and Inspection Service - FSIS  
Internal Revenue Service - IRS  
National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1997 - NARETPA  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture - NIFA  
National Veterinary Medical Service Act - NVMSA  
Notice of Funding Opportunity - NOFO  
Portable Document Format - PDF  
State Animal Health Official - SAHO  
United States Department of Agriculture - USDA  
Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program - VMLRP

## APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS

Refer to [7 CFR 3430 Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions.](#)

### Service Agreement:

Service agreement is an agreement signed by an applicant and the Secretary for the VMLRP wherein the applicant agrees to accept repayment of qualifying educational loans and to serve in accordance with the provisions of NVMSA for a prescribed period of obligated service.

### Fully Executed Service Agreement:

The Secretary/Director or their authorized representative and the applicant sign the service agreement.

### Lending Institution:

A lending institution is an establishment that focuses on dealing with financial transactions. Organizations such as a bank, credit union, or finance company that makes loans.

### New Application:

A new application is one from an individual who is not a current VMLRP awardee. New applicants will apply to serve a veterinary shortage situation area that is designated and active in the fiscal year they apply. It may include a former VMLRP awardee who completed a service agreement more than one year ago<sup>4</sup>. A new application can also be submitted by a former awardee applying to a different service area than the one they are currently serving.

### Renewal Application:

A renewal application is an application from a veterinarian who previously accepted a VMLRP agreement and is in the last year of the VMLRP agreement or is in the first year<sup>5</sup> after their VMLRP agreement has ended. An applicant submitting a renewal application will apply using the assigned veterinary shortage situation identification code from their original award.

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<sup>4</sup> For FY26 RFA only, renewal applications may also be submitted from those who are in the second year after their VMLRP agreement has ended. See Section III.A. for additional eligibility information.

<sup>5</sup> See above.