



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

National Institute  
of Food and  
Agriculture

**National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Federal Assistance  
Policy Guide:  
Section VIII: Other NIFA Assistance Programs  
pp. 167-175**

**NIFA Office of Grants and Financial Management**

April 21, 2021

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

## VIII. Other NIFA Assistance Programs PROGRAM SPECIFIC

### A. 4-H Youth Development Program

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created the Cooperative Extension Service as a partnership between USDA, the land-grant university (LGU) system, state and local governments. The 4-H Youth Development Program is the youth outreach program of the land-grant universities' Cooperative Extension Services and NIFA. 4-H serves as a model program for the practice of positive youth development.

Funding for Cooperative Extension programs conducted by LGUs is provided at the Federal level by NIFA and at the state and local government levels. Other Federal agencies may provide additional funding to support certain programs. Additional support is provided by National 4-H Council (a private non-profit organization).

As a Federally-funded and protected-status positive youth development program, 4-H National Headquarters is housed within the Division of Youth and 4-H at NIFA. 4-H National Headquarters is responsible for the organization, supervision, and administration of the national 4-H Youth Development Program. 4-H programs at land-grant institutions are run by the institutions through the Cooperative Extension Directors and Administrators. NIFA and Cooperative Extension System work cooperatively pursuant to a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) and in collaboration with the National 4-H Council. In recognition of the unique 4-H public-private partnership, the MOU signed by Extension Committee on Policy (ECOP) and NIFA in collaboration with National 4-H Council is available online. When funds are available, NIFA is authorized to make grants to youth serving organizations, including the National 4-H Council. Recipients of NIFA funds, including all 4-H related entities, are subject to the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681), which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex.

NIFA also works collaboratively with the non-profit National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAE4-HA) to increase the professional development opportunities and information for 4-H professionals. The NAE4-HA is authorized to use the 4-H emblem in accordance with the applicable legislative and regulatory limitations.

The National 4-H Council is an independent non-profit, charitable organization governed by an elected Board of Trustees. NIFA, as the 4-H National Headquarters, works collaboratively with the National 4-H Council, and does not control the actions of the Council. The purpose of the 4-H Council is to build and manage financial resources, national reputation, and brand awareness for 4-H. The 4-H Council seeks, receives, holds, and distributes funds or property to augment, enhance, and support the mission of 4-H.

**4-H Emblem:** The 4-H name and emblem is a Federal mark, with protections and standards that exceed that of trademarks and copyrights. Using the 4-H name and emblem at the national level is a privilege that requires Federal authorization. Likewise,

the land-grant universities authorize for use within their respective states. 4-H name and emblem authorization may be revoked at any time for misuse. Anyone engaging in unauthorized use or misuse of the 4-H name and emblem is subject to Federal prosecution under Public Law 772, Title 18, United States Code 707.<sup>26</sup> NIFA oversees authorization of use of the 4-H name and emblem. Congress entrusted the name and emblem to the Secretary of Agriculture (7 CFR 8) and the Secretary of Agriculture delegated its responsibilities to the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics, who further delegated the authority to NIFA (7 CFR 2.21(a)(1)(cxiii); 7 CFR 2.66(92); 7 CFR 8.2). USDA holds the 4-H Name and Emblem in trust for the educational and character-building purposes of the 4-H program. Visit the NIFA website for additional information on the [use of the 4-H Name and Emblem](#), or to apply for authorization to use the 4-H Name and/or Emblem.

**B. 1994 Institution Endowment Interest Distribution (Tribal)**

The 1994 Tribal Endowment provides funding to increase extension program capacity and to promote and strengthen higher education instruction in the food and agricultural sciences at tribal colleges and universities, also known as 1994 institutions, and to address special needs, take advantage of important opportunities, and/or demonstrate long-term sustained benefits of extension projects at 1994 institutions. 1994 institutions are considered LGUs established for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts (7 U.S.C. 301 *et seq.*). Endowment funds should support integration of agricultural research, extension, and education functions at 1994 institutions to better link research to technology transfer and information dissemination activities, should encourage regional and multi-state programs to address relevant issues of common concern and to better leverage scarce resources, and should achieve agricultural research, extension and education objectives through multi-institutional and multifunctional approaches and by conducting research at facilities and institutions best equipped to achieve those objectives (7 U.S.C. 7612). Projects should be responsive to any NIFA identified goals. The Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 confers various rights and obligations of land-grant universities to eligible tribal colleges and universities.

1994 endowment funds are endowment interest funds distributed annually, as required by Section 533(c) of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994. Institutions receive interest distributions from the Federally-established endowment fund, the “Native American Institutions Endowment Fund” or the “1994 Institutions Endowment Fund” (7 U.S.C. 301 note). Eligible 1994 institutions will receive payments based on the established formula from the interest earned on the endowment corpus (7 U.S.C. 301 note). No withdrawals will be made from the corpus of the endowment (7 U.S.C. 301 note). The interest income is distributed according to the following formula: 60 percent of the interest income earned on the endowment is distributed among the 1994 institutions based on the “Indian student count” for each 1994 Institution for the fiscal

---

<sup>26</sup> The protection provided by 707 is broader than that provided for ordinary marks. Section 707 prohibits unauthorized use of the 4-H name and emblem (18 U.S.C. 707).

year and 40 percent of the income is distributed in equal shares to the 1994 Institutions (7 U.S.C. 301 note). NIFA is responsible for computing and distributing the interest income. The “Indian student count” is a number equal to the total number of Native American students enrolled in each tribally controlled college or university determined in a manner consistent with 25 U.S.C. 1801(b) on the basis of the quotient of the sum of the credit hours of all Native American students so enrolled, divided by 12 (25 U.S.C. 1801(a)(8)).<sup>27</sup> [More information](#) is available on the NIFA website.

Annual availability of the 1994 Endowment funds will be announced in writing, directly to Presidents of 1994 Land-Grant Institutions. Fund availability is also announced on the NIFA website.

1. Eligibility

Any Tribal college or university that is accredited or making progress towards accreditation that is designated as a 1994 land-grant Institution under the Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 is eligible for funding.<sup>28</sup> (7 U.S.C. 301 note).

2. Cost Considerations

All funds distributed to 1994 institutions are to be used in accordance with the requirements of the Second Morrill Act, 7 U.S.C. 321 *et seq.* There is no matching requirement associated with the 1994 Tribal Endowment Fund.

---

<sup>27</sup> Subsection (b) of Section 1801 provides: The following conditions shall apply for the purpose of determining the Indian student count pursuant to subsection (a)(8) of this section: (1) Such number shall be calculated on the basis of the registrations of Indian students as in effect at the conclusion of the third week of each academic term. (2) Credits earned in classes offered during a summer term shall be counted toward the computation of the Indian student count in the succeeding fall term. (3) Credits earned by any student who has not obtained a high school degree or its equivalent shall be counted toward the computation of the Indian student count if the institution at which the student is in attendance has established criteria for the admission of such student on the basis of the student’s ability to benefit from the education or training offered. The institution shall be presumed to have established such criteria if the admission procedures for such studies include counseling or testing that measures the student’s aptitude to successfully complete the course in which the student has enrolled. No credits earned by such student for purposes of obtaining a high school degree or its equivalent shall be counted toward the computation of the Indian student count. (4) Indian students earning credits in any continuing education program of a tribally controlled college or university shall be included in determining the sum of all credit hours. (5) Eligible credits earned in a continuing education program (A) shall be determined as one credit for every ten contact hours in the case of an institution on a quarter system, or 15 contact hours in the case of an institution on a semester system, of participation in an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction, as described in the criteria established by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training; and (B) shall be limited to ten percent of the Indian student count of a tribally controlled college or university (25 U.S.C. 1801(b)).

<sup>28</sup> Accreditation means accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary of Education to be a reliable authority with regard to the quality of training offered (25 U.S.C. 1804).

### 3. Reporting Requirements

1994 Institutions must submit their 1994 Institution Endowment Annual Report, 1994 Institution Endowment Report Contact Form, and SF-425 Federal Financial Report. [Forms are available](#) on the NIFA website.

## **C. *Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities***

Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs) are supported through a number of competitive grants administered by NIFA and the HSACU Fund. The HSACU Fund is an endowment fund administered in a manner similar to the 1994 Institution Endowment Fund (7 U.S.C. 3243). This section specifically discusses the HSACU Endowment.

### 1. Eligibility

A Hispanic-Serving Agricultural College or University is a college or university that qualifies as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and offers an associate, bachelors, or other accredited degree programs in agriculture-related fields (7 U.S.C. 3103(10)).

Institutions are not eligible to be considered HSACUs if they are 1862 land-grant institutions, are included on the Excluded Parties List System (now SAM), not accredited, or an institution with Hispanic students receiving less than 15 percent of the degrees awarded in agriculture-related programs over the two most recently completed academic years. The Department of Education's Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) coding system is used as the source of information for the purpose of classifying the program as agriculture-related.

HSACU institutions are not specifically identified in the legislation establishing the endowment. NIFA published its Final Rule, effective April 27, 2012, "Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities Certification Process" to identify the process through which eligible institutions receive HSACU certification (77 Fed. Reg. 25036-01). The Final Rule is codified at 7 CFR Part 3434. An updated File Rule is published every year that includes the list of institutions that are granted HSACU certification by the Secretary and are eligible for HSACU programs for the period starting October 1 and ending September 30 each fiscal year.

The HSACU list will be updated every 5 years. Institutions that meet the eligibility requirements and offer agriculture-related programs will be certified as HSACUs and certification will remain valid for 1 year. An institution not certified as a HSACU may appeal its denial through NIFA's established process, as described in 7 CFR 3434.8. The certification process does not involve any reporting requirements (7 CFR 3434.10(a)). For additional information on defining HSIs eligibility please see 20 U.S.C. 1101a(a).

## 2. Allocation

Funds appropriated annually will be deposited into the account in which the corpus of the endowment is held. All interest earned on the endowment fund will also be held by the Secretary of the Treasury until funds are distributed annually to eligible institutions. The corpus and the interest will be invested in an interest-bearing account. Annual payments will be made to eligible institutions from the income earned on the endowment, not from the corpus. The income will be distributed as follows:

- 60 percent will be distributed among the HSACUs on a pro rate basis based on the Hispanic enrollment count of each institution.
- 40 percent will be distributed in equal shares to the HSACUs.

An annual payment of \$80,000 will be made to each HSACU (7 U.S.C. 3243). For additional information please see 7 U.S.C. 3243.

## 3. Allowable Costs

All funds must be used in accordance with the requirements of the Second Morrill Act, 7 U.S.C. 321 *et seq.* and the applicable cost principles in 2 CFR 200.

### **D. Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program**

The Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP), authorized by the National Veterinary Medical Services Act (NVMSA), helps qualified veterinarians offset a significant portion of the debt incurred in pursuit of their veterinary medicine degrees in return for their service in identified high-priority veterinary shortage situations. NIFA carries out NVMSA by entering into educational loan repayment agreements with veterinarians who agree to provide veterinary services in veterinarian shortage situations for a determined period of time (7 U.S.C. 3151a).

In exchange for a commitment to provide veterinary services in a designated veterinary shortage area for at least 3 years, NIFA may repay up to \$25,000 of a student loan debt per year. Loan repayment benefits are limited to payments of the principal and interest on government and commercial loans veterinarians received to attend an accredited college of veterinary medicine and actually earn a degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine or the equivalent. Repayment of loans is available if the loans were used for tuition expenses, reasonable educational expenses, including fees, books, and laboratory expenses incurred, and reasonable living expenses.<sup>29</sup> (7 U.S.C. 3151a). Under

---

<sup>29</sup> "Reasonable living expenses" are ordinary living costs incurred by the program participant while attending the college of veterinary medicine, exclusive of tuition and educational expenses. Reasonable living expenses must be incurred during the period of attendance and may include food and lodging expenses, insurance, commuting and transportation costs. Reasonable living expenses must be equal to or less than the sum of the school's estimated standard student budgets for living expenses for the degree of veterinary medicine for the year(s) during which the program participant was enrolled in the school. However, if the school attended by the program participant did not have a standard student budget or if a program participant requests repayment for living expenses which are in

this program, additional payments can be made to reimburse participants for individual tax liability incurred because of this repayment program (7 U.S.C. 3151a).

#### 1. Veterinary Shortage Situations

When determining if an area qualifies as a “veterinary shortage situation,” NIFA considers (1) geographical areas determined to have a shortage of veterinarians; and (2) areas of veterinary practice that NIFA determines have a shortage of veterinarians, such as food animal medicine, public health, epidemiology, and food safety (7 U.S.C. 3151a). In determining veterinary shortage situations, NIFA will consider stakeholder input on the impact of the designation on meeting critical veterinary needs.

NIFA solicits nominations for veterinary shortage situations annually through publication in the Federal Register, NIFA’s website and/or other appropriate forums. If necessary, nominations will be solicited only every 2 to 3 years. Each state’s animal health official is the person responsible for submitting and certifying veterinary shortage situations in their state. Nominations should be responsive to the criteria set forth in the nomination solicitation and should incorporate the input of the leading health animal experts of the state.

Submitted nominations are reviewed by a NIFA peer panel composed of experts in the field of animal health. The panel evaluates nominations according to the criteria identified in the solicitation. The panel considers the objectives and activities of the veterinarian position in the veterinary service shortage situation and the risks associated with not securing or retaining the position and make a recommendation regarding each nomination. NIFA reviews the recommendations of the peer panel and designate the veterinary shortage situations.

For additional information on veterinary shortage situations please see 7 CFR 3431.

#### 2. Program Administration

The purpose of the VMLRP is to ensure that there is an adequate supply of trained food animal veterinarians in shortage situations and to provide USDA with a pool of veterinary specialists to assist in and control eradication of animal disease outbreaks (7 CFR 3431.8). Priority should be given to agreements with veterinarians practicing in food animal medicine in veterinary shortage situations (7 U.S.C. 3151a). Food animals are animals of following species: bovine, porcine, ovine/camelid, cervid, poultry, caprine, and any other designated species (7 CFR 3431.3). Applicants for loan repayment must respond to the annual RFA available on the NIFA website.

---

excess of the standard student budgets described in the preceding sentence, the program participant must submit documentation, as required by the Secretary, to substantiate the reasonableness of living expenses incurred (7 CFR 3431.3).

Veterinarians are eligible to competitively apply for loan repayment through VMLRP if they meet the following criteria:

- Have a degree of DVM, or the equivalent, from a college of veterinary medicine accredited by the AVMA Council on Education.
- Have qualifying educational loan debt.
- Secure an offer of employment or establish and/or maintain a practice in a veterinary shortage situation, as determined by the USDA within the time period specified in the VMLRP service agreement offer.
- Provide certifications and verifications in accordance with 7 CFR 3431.16. This includes a personal statement on how the applicant would meet all the requirements of the program and sufficient documentation to support eligibility, including state and local licensure, and national accreditation through the National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP).

Veterinarians owing a service obligation to another entity (i.e. State government, Federal government, other institution) are not eligible to apply for the VMLRP until their prior service obligation is completed (7 CFR 3431.9).

### 3. Application Process

An annual RFA will be released when the application packages is available. The annual RFA should be consulted for specific information on how to prepare and submit an application for the VMLRP. NIFA's website has an [application guide](#). Applications for the VMLRP are not submitted through Grants.gov.

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

To download the application forms, go to [the VMLRP webpage](#) click on the "Applicants" link, and then click on the "Application Forms" link.

If there is no access to the web page or trouble downloading material, potential applicants may contact the VMLRP Program Office by email at [vmlrp@usda.gov](mailto:vmlrp@usda.gov). When emailing the VMLRP Program Office, please include the name, mailing address, email address, and phone number in the body of the email. The message should request a copy of the RFA and the associated application forms for VMLRP.

The application is composed of eight forms:

1. [Applicant Information Form \(NIFA-01-10\)](#)
2. [Personal Statement \(NIFA-02-10\)](#)
3. [List of Recommenders \(NIFA-03-10\)](#)
4. [Loan Information Form \(NIFA-04-10\)](#)
5. [Contract \(NIFA-05-10\)](#)
6. [Certifications for Application \(NIFA-06-10\)](#)
7. [Intent of Employment \(NIFA-07-10\)](#)
8. [Recommendations \(NIFA-08-10\)](#)



Guidance on how to complete the required forms is provided in the annual RFA for the VMLRP. [Additional guidance](#), including Frequently Asked Questions, are located on the NIFA website.

Applications are reviewed through a peer review process using a peer panel. Panelists are selected based on their training and experiences in relevant veterinary clinical medicine, veterinary science, or veterinary specialty area fields from the public or private sector. Applicants are assessed on the criteria identified in the RFA, the likelihood that the applicant will meet the terms and conditions of the VMLRP agreement, and if they will continue to serve in a veterinary shortage situation after the end of the agreement or if they will pursue a career in food supply veterinary medicine. The following components are also assessed: (1) major or emphasis area(s) during formal post-secondary training (e.g., bachelor's degree major, minor); (2) major or emphasis area(s) during formal training for DVM/VMD degree; (3) specialty training area/discipline (e.g., board certification or graduate degree); (4) non-degree/non-board certification training or certifications (e.g., animal agrosecurity coursework and certifications); (5) applicant's personal statement; (6) awards; (7) letters or recommendation, if applicable; and (8) other documentation. Applicants are ranked by the peer panel based on the evaluation criteria (7 CFR 3431.12). Selected applicants must comply with all State and local regulations and licensure requirements in the jurisdiction where serving, be a citizen, national, or permanent resident of the United States, sign a service agreement to provide veterinary services in one of the veterinary shortage situations, and comply with the terms and conditions of the service agreement (7 CFR 3431.10).

Successful applicants agree to serve in a veterinary shortage situation for a minimum of 3 years (7 CFR 3431.13). The signed service agreement will provide the terms and conditions by which selected veterinarians must abide by including what will constitute a breach of the agreement and the remedies for such action. The service agreement includes the amount of funds to be distributed annually, as well as the treatment of income tax liability as a result of the loan repayment. The service agreement will also indicate if the participant is eligible to apply for a renewal of their existing agreement. Renewal applications are subject to peer review and approval, acceptance is not guaranteed, and the applicant must continue to serve the veterinary shortage situation at the time of application for renewal. Additional information may be requested from the applicant in a renewal application. The service agreement will notify recipients of all required reporting (7 CFR 3431.17).

To ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the service agreement, all participants must submit a quarterly service obligation verification form to NIFA. NIFA is also authorized to conduct site visits and audits to ensure compliance with the service agreement.

Additional information on how to complete an application for loan repayment and

the current RFA can be found on the [NIFA website](#).

4. Waiver of Requirements

A program participant can ask for a waiver or suspension of the service obligations incurred by making a written request to NIFA setting forth the bases, circumstances, and causes which support the requested action. NIFA may waive any service or payment obligation incurred by a program participant whenever compliance by the program participant is impossible or would involve extreme hardship to the program participant and if enforcement of the service or payment obligation would be against equity and good conscience (7 CFR 3431.22).

5. Breach of VMLRP Service Agreement

If a program participant fails to complete the period of obligated service, including failing to comply with the applicable terms and conditions of a waiver granted by the Secretary, the program participant must pay to the United States an amount as determined in the service agreement. The amount due must be paid within 90 days of the date the participant failed to complete the period of obligated service (7 CFR 3431.21). Early termination of a service agreement will subject a participant to monetary damages and/or other penalties. See “Section 6. Recovery of Funds” under “Section M. Remedies for Non Compliance” for specific policies and procedures for the recovery of funds in the event that these VMLRP funds are not returned within a 90-day period.

6. Emergency Service to the Federal Government

NIFA may enter into agreements of 1-year duration with veterinarians with loan repayment service agreements for service to the Federal Government in emergency situations, as determined by the Secretary, under terms and conditions specified in the agreement. For this service, an amount, in addition to the loan repayment amount, will be paid for principal and interest of qualifying educational loans (7 CFR 3431.23). This authority will be used on an as needed basis in the event of an emergency situation.