

Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) Frequently Asked Questions

Program Information

What is the VMLRP?

The VMLRP is an educational loan repayment program for veterinarians (i.e., individuals who earned a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree (or equivalent) from an accredited college of veterinary medicine). In return for loan repayment, VMLRP award recipients provide veterinary service in a designated veterinary shortage situation for three years. The intent of the program is to strengthen the nation's animal health infrastructure and supplement the Federal response during animal health emergencies.

I am currently employed in a designated veterinary shortage area. Can I receive credit toward my service obligation for the service already performed?

No, the three years of service required for the VMLRP begin when agreements are executed.

How can I apply to the VMLRP?

As was done for the FY 2010 application cycle, paper applications must be mailed to NIFA for the FY 2011 application cycle. The application forms can be downloaded from the [Applicants](#) section of the VMLRP website.

How many applications do you receive annually? How many awards are given out?

In FY 2010, NIFA announced its first funding opportunity for the VMLRP and received 260 applications from which 53 awards were issued. However, given the brief history of this program, there is no way to estimate the number of applications that will be submitted on an annual basis. Additionally, the number of awards depends on a few unknown factors such as the amount of eligible debt held by successful applicants and the quality of applicant pool, but our intention is to maximize the number of awards with the funding available for awards under this program.

How are applicants selected for VMLRP awards?

Applications will be evaluated by a panel of reviewers who are selected based upon training and experience in relevant veterinary clinical medicine, veterinary science, or veterinary specialty area fields. In carrying out its review, the peer review panel will take into account the **quality of match** between your professional training and experience and the circumstances and needs of the designated shortage situation you propose to fill. The following evaluation criteria will be considered in the context of the factors and circumstances necessary for 1) most effective mitigation of the specific veterinary shortage situation, 2) prioritizing the relatively more severe shortages and, 3) achieving the highest likelihood that awardees will realize employment satisfaction and professional success during and beyond the term of the VMLRP agreement.

When will applicants be notified about their awards?

VMLRP applicants will receive notice of award funding by September following the application deadline.

Who funds NIFA and the VMLRP?

NIFA and the VMLRP are supported by annual congressional appropriations. The Federal budget line item designation for the VMLRP, within appropriations to the USDA NIFA, is National Veterinary Medical Services Act (NVMSA).

Will the VMLRP be offered next year?

Yes, NIFA plans to hold an application cycle for the VMLRP next year. However, funding for the next cycle (i.e., FY 2012) is contingent upon the availability of appropriations for FY 2012. It is not possible to predict potential appropriations to this or any other program prior to appropriation action each year.

Where can I get more information about the VMLRP?

Visit the VMLRP website at www.nifa.usda.gov/vmlrp or contact the VMLRP program office by email at vmlrp@nifa.usda.gov. We aim to respond to all email inquiries within two business days of receipt.