

## **Veterinary Services Grant Program - RPE** **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**Please note:** This is a tool to help applicants with some of the more frequently asked questions. It is not a substitute for reading and carefully following all of the instructions in the Request for Applications (RFA) and the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. In fact, many of these questions will not make sense unless you have read the Request for Applications and/or the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide first. You can download the RFA from the “View RFA” link at the NIFA Funding Opportunity page <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/veterinary-services-grant-program-vsgp> and read more about the Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP) at [www.nifa.usda.gov/vsgp](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/vsgp).

### **Rural Practice Enhancement Projects**

1. **If I receive a Rural Practice Enhancement grant, when does the service requirement start?** If you are in a position to begin serving the shortage situation when the award is made, your service period can begin right away. This will also be the start date of your project period. If you need some time to purchase and set up the equipment or get business affairs in order, you may delay the start of the service period until January 1.

Project periods will end at the end of the service requirement. For VMLRP applicants, recipients or employers of VMLRP recipients, please visit the [VSGP FAQs in relation to VMLRP](#) for additional details.

2. **What is the difference between service period and project period? Are they the same?** The project period and service period are not the same, but they will overlap.

The VSGP project period is the period during which the activities proposed in the grant application will take place. It begins when funds are awarded (no later than Sept 30, 2016) and ends when the corresponding service period ends.

The VSGP service period corresponds to the years during which the grant recipient mitigates the veterinarian shortage situation at the % full time equivalent (% FTE) specified in the shortage description.

If the VSGP awardee is also a VMLRP awardee or employer, the start and end dates of VSGP service period will be impacted by the VMLRP service contract. Please visit the [VSGP FAQs in relation to VMLRP](#) for additional details.

3. **The R&R Other Project Information Form asks about Animal Use. How do I determine if I need Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval?** As stated in the RFA, if animals are being handled for clinical purposes only then you should indicate that vertebrate animals are not being used on the R&R Other Project Information Form and any additional corresponding Assurance Forms.

Handling of animals beyond activities necessary for clinical assessment and/or treatment will require IACUC approval. The only exceptions are when a veterinarian uses his/her own animal as a

personal teaching aide e.g., to demonstrate how to restrain or administer medication, or when trainees voluntarily provide and use their own animals to practice skills or procedures.

If you are not sure if your planned activities require IACUC approval please contact the program office at [vsgrp@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:vsgrp@nifa.usda.gov).

4. **I am a private practitioner and believe that the education and extension activities I am planning for my mobile practice will require IACUC approval. How do I find an IACUC?** We recommend contacting the university closest to you. Most universities have an IACUC and may be willing to review your plans.
5. **I am a sole practitioner registered as an LLC (or other business structure). Should I apply for a VSGP grant as an individual or entity?**  
You must only apply as a business, not as an individual.
6. **I am applying as an individual. Grants.gov doesn't require that I have a DUNS or SAM account, so why does the RFA state that I must obtain these?** All applicants need a SAM account at the time they are offered an award, and it could take up to six weeks to obtain. Any delay in obtaining a SAM account may result in an award not being executable because all funds must be obligated by NIFA before the end of the federal fiscal year.  
  
All RPE applicants must obtain a DUNS number to help protect your identity.
7. **Can VSGP funds be used to build new facilities or add to existing facilities (e.g., stocks)?** No. The legislation authorizing VSGP specifically prohibits using the funds to build a new building or facility or to acquire, expand, remodel, or alter an existing building or facility, including site grading and improvement and architect fees.
8. **Can I apply to more than one shortage situation?** Yes. However, only one award will be offered per applicant and only one award will be offered for any veterinarian shortage situation.
9. **Does coordination with other qualified entities affect the RPE review process?** No. Preference for coordination with other only applies to the Education, Extension and Training program area. However, collaboration can be a way to strengthen the goals and impact of the project described.
10. **How do I report "Estimated Program Income" in Section 15, Line D of the SF424 (R&R) form?**  
Program income is only the income generated as a result of the grant funds. Estimate the anticipated increase in revenue that will be made possible by the new equipment, mobile facilities, personnel or other resources supported by the grant.
11. **I would like to purchase equipment items such as a centrifuge or ultrasonic cleaner that cost less than \$5000. Can I purchase these items using these grant funds? If so, where do I list them?** Yes, these items would fall under overhead and be listed as "Materials and Supplies" in Section F of the Budget. Please ensure your budget narrative addresses the items incorporated under this line item, clearly describes the purpose of proposed expenditures, and explains how requested funds will enhance current practice operations as they relate to the shortage situation.

**12. What are common mistakes previous applicants have made?**

- Budget and project duration were not clearly stated.
- More than one shortage area was being requested.
- Three digit shortage area and state were not included in the title.
- Project narrative exceeded page limits; i.e. 8 pages for an RPE application  
(6 pages for text and 2 additional pages for figures and tables)
- RFA was not followed carefully.
- Clearly stated objectives were not included.
- The Time tables did not cover entire duration of the project. (RPE = 3-4 years)
- All documents were not in PDF format.
- Including letters of support from individuals who were not committing to a specific role in the project.
- Inconsistent font, font size, line spacing, and margins were used throughout application.  
(overall formatting inconsistencies)
- Project period described in application did not meet requirements as outlined in RFA.  
(for example application described a one year period when the RFA required a minimum of 3 years.)