

**Rural Practice Enhancement Grants:  
FAQs for VMLRP applicants, recipients and their employers**

*This document pertains to Rural Practice Enhancement Grants made through the Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP), and the relationship between these grants and the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP).*

**1. For VSGP, 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** (VSGP-P) 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** (VSGP-S) 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-S will be impacted the VMLRP service contract.

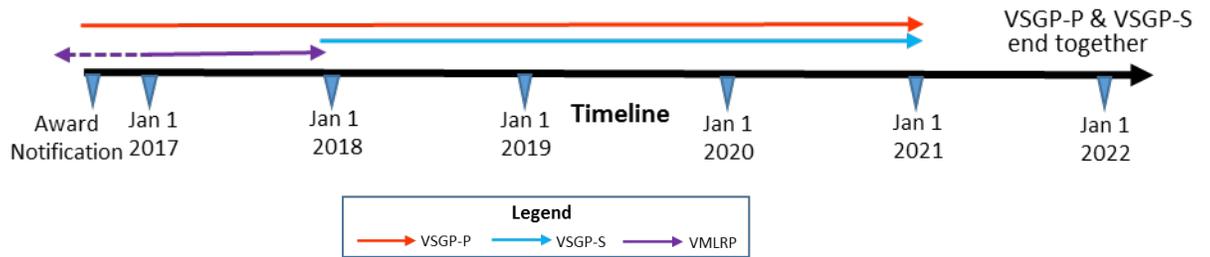
**2. I received both a VMLRP award and a VSGP award. How do I fulfill the service commitments?**

The shortage situation form specifies the minimum % FTE (based on a 40-h work week) service commitment required of either a VMLRP or VSGP recipient. If an individual receives both awards, **the VMLRP service requirement must be satisfied first AND the time claimed for one award cannot be used to meet the service requirements of the other award.** Additionally, % FTE cannot exceed 100% (or 40 h/week) for any single person. All calculations of % FTE will be such that the service period is rounded up to the nearest half year. Listed below are a few possible scenarios.

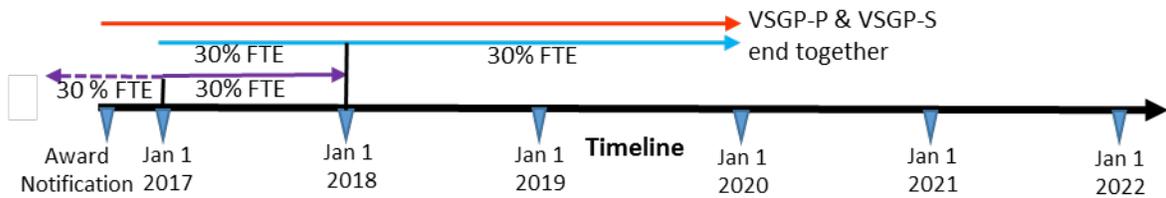
**NOTE:** The examples illustrated below are not all-inclusive. If you have questions about your specific situation, please contact the VSGP program office at [vsgp@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:vsgp@nifa.usda.gov). If you are proposing concurrent VMLRP and VSGP service, your application should clearly describe how the increased (additive) % FTE service obligation will be met during the time period when both awards are active.

**Scenario #1: A VMLRP recipient with one year left on the VMLRP contract receives a VSGP award. The shortage situation form states that 30% FTE is required.**

- Two likely options to fulfill the VSGP service commitment for this recipient are:
  - Consecutive service - Serve the last year of VMLRP at 30% FTE then start VSGP for 3 years at 30% FTE.

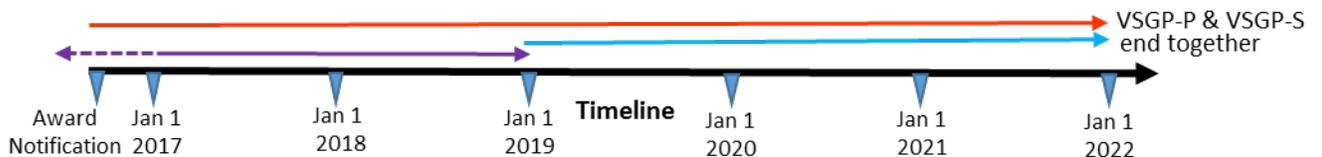


- Concurrent service – Serve one year at 60% FTE (30% FTE for VMLRP plus 30% FTE for VSGP) followed by two years for VSGP at 30% FTE. If the recipient is unable to achieve 60% FTE due to insufficient workload of the type specified in the shortage situation, but 31-59% is possible, NIFA will work with the recipient to determine the best option to meet the VSGP service obligation.

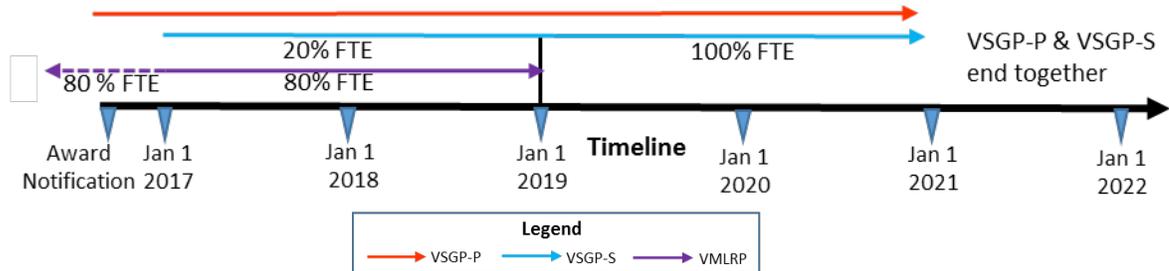


**Scenario #2: A VMLRP recipient with two years remaining on the VMLRP contract receives a VSGP award. The shortage situation form states that an 80% FTE is required.**

- Two likely options to fulfill the VSGP service commitment for this recipient are:
  - Consecutive service – Serve two remaining years at 80% FTE for VMLRP, then three years at 80% FTE for VSGP.



- (2) Concurrent service – Serve two years at 100% FTE (80% FTE for VMLRP plus 20% FTE for VSGP), then two years at 100% FTE. If 100% FTE cannot be reliably achieved due to available workload of the type specified in the shortage situation, but 81% - 99% is possible, NIFA will work with the recipient to determine the best option to meet the VSGP service obligation.



**Scenario #3: An individual receives both a VMLRP award and a VSGP award in FY 2016.** Please contact the VSGP office ([vsqp@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:vsqp@nifa.usda.gov)) to discuss service options.

**3. I own a veterinary practice and employ a VMLRP recipient. How does this affect my practice's (i.e., qualified entity's) service commitment for VSGP?**

The shortage situation nomination form specifies the minimum % FTE (based on a 40-h work week) required of either a VMLRP or VSGP recipient. If a practice receives a VSGP award and currently employs a VMLRP recipient, **the VMLRP recipient's hours toward serving the shortage area under VMLRP cannot be used by the practice to fulfill VSGP service requirements.**

Additionally, % FTE cannot exceed 100% (or 40 h/week) for any single person and all calculations of % FTE will be such that the service period is rounded up to the nearest half year. Listed below are a few example scenarios.

NOTE: These examples are not all-inclusive. If you have specific questions about your situation please contact the VSGP program office at [vsqp@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:vsqp@nifa.usda.gov). Additionally, your application should clearly describe how the service obligation will be met if proposing a concurrent service option.

**Scenario #1: A practice currently employs a VMLRP awardee required to serve 30% FTE (12 h/week) for VMLRP. The practice receives a VSGP award for the same shortage situation requiring 30% FTE from the practice.**

- Two likely options to fulfill the VSGP service commitment for the practice are:
  - (1) Concurrent service - VMLRP recipient serves 30% FTE for VMLRP and another member of the veterinary staff serves 30% FTE for VSGP. If the VMLRP recipient is providing more than the 30% FTE (12 h/week) required for VMLRP, the additional hours can count toward the practice's 30% FTE service requirement for VSGP; or
  - (2) Consecutive service - If the practice cannot complete the 30% FTE for VSGP in addition to the 30% FTE already provided by the VMLRP recipient (e.g., because there is not

enough workload serving the shortage situation), then the practice must delay VSGP service until after the VMLRP service obligation is completed.

***Scenario #2: A practice currently employs a VMLRP awardee required to serve 80% FTE (32 h/week). The practice receives a VSGP award for the same shortage situation requiring 80% FTE from the practice.***

- Two likely options to fulfill VSGP for the practice are:
  - (1) Concurrent service of 160% FTE - VMLRP recipient serves 80% FTE for VMLRP and another member of the veterinary staff serves 80% FTE for VSGP. If the VMLRP recipient is able to provide 100% FTE (40 h/week) service for VMLRP, the additional 8 hours (20% FTE) can count toward the practice's 80% FTE service requirement for VSGP. The remaining 60% FTE obligated under VSGP can be served by other veterinary professionals in the practice; or
  - (2) Consecutive service - If the practice cannot complete, in the same shortage situation, the 80% FTE required for VSGP concurrently with the time already committed by VMLRP recipient, then the practice must delay their VSGP service until after the VMLRP service is completed.

In all situations, service hours proposed to fulfill a VSGP service requirement should not impede the ability of a VMLRP recipient to meet his/her minimum % FTE required service commitment.

**4. When filling out the Current and Pending Support form in the VSGP application, how do I document time spent fulfilling a VMLRP service requirement?**

This form requires that the applicant (Project Director) and other senior personnel (if applicable) list all active and pending projects, along with corresponding time obligations, to demonstrate that all proposed project(s) and/or service commitment(s) can be fulfilled.

For individual applicants, a VMLRP award, whether pending or current, must be listed. The time commitment is the % FTE on the shortage situation form. Any additional time associated with a proposed VSGP project should be listed separately.

If the applicant is a veterinary practice that employs a VMLRP recipient, and the practice proposes to include the VMLRP recipient as key personnel involved in fulfilling the practice's VSGP service requirement, the VMLRP award and associated time commitment must be listed on the Current and Pending Support form. If the practice does not intend to include the VMLRP recipient as key personnel on the VSGP project, the VMLRP award does not need to be listed. HOWEVER, the fact that a VMLRP awardee is employed by the practice should be noted clearly in the narrative of the application and the relationship between their activities and those proposed as part of the VSGP service commitment should be discussed.

In any case, for concurrent VMLRP and VSGP awards, the FTE for a single person must not exceed 100%. For VMLRP recipients or employers of VMLRP recipients serving shortages that require > 50% FTE (which if doubled would exceed 100%), the project period may be extended to accommodate any additional service obligation. See questions 1 & 2 above for different

scenarios. Please contact the VSGP Program Office for guidance if the total duration of your proposed scenario exceeds 5 years.